



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR THE NATIONAL HERITAGE,
THE ARTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

NATIONAL
CULTURAL
POLICY

2021



Acronyms & Abbreviations

ACM	Arts Council Malta
BA	Broadcasting Authority
CCS	Cultural and creative sectors
EU	European Union
EUNIC	European Union National Institutes for Culture
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HM	Heritage Malta
MAVC	Mikiel Anton Vassalli College
MCAST	Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology
MVPA	Malta School for Visual and Performing Arts
NCP	National Cultural Policy
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSO	National Statistics Office
PBS	Public Broadcasting Services
PCO	Public Cultural Organisation
SCH	Superintendence of Cultural Heritage
UCA	Urban conservation area
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UoM	University of Malta
WHS	World Heritage Site

NCP 2021 working group

Chairperson

Mr Mario Azzopardi (co-author)

Members

Mr Toni Attard (lead editor and co-author)

Ms Esther Bajada

Dr Noel Camilleri

Ms Mary Anne Cauchi

Mr Adrian Debattista (co-author)

Dr Reuben Grima (co-author)

Mr Albert Marshall (co-author)

Mr Caldon Mercieca (co-author)

Dr Georgina Portelli (co-author)

Dr Joanna Spiteri

Dr Valerie Visanich (co-author)

Translation by Simon Bartolo

Cover photo taken from an event from Festivals Malta

Photo Credit : Stephen Buhagiar

The working group acknowledges the contribution and participation of individuals and representatives of cultural organisations, Ministries and public entities in the public consultation process included as part of the drafting process of this document.

Table of Content

Executive Summary	9.
Introduction-The right to culture	13.
Cultural Policy Implementation, Evaluation and Monitoring	14.
Assesment and Development of the Institutional Capacities	15.
Communication Plan	15.
Regional and Local Councils	15.
Tools for Implementation	15.
Priority Area Strategic Frameworks	16.
Evaluation and Monitoring	16.
CHAPTER 1 Strenghtening Cultural Governance	18.
Policy Objectives	19.
Cross-Sectoral Policy Framework	19.
Cultural Governance	20.
The Role of the Independent Sector	20.
The Ministry responsible for Culture	20.
Inter-Minestrial Cooperation for the Cultural and Creative Sectors	21.
Upgrading Policy-Making Structures	21.
Regulatory Authorities	21.
National Councils, Entities and Commissions	23.
Judiciary Specialised in Cultural Heritage	25.
Public Cultural Organisations, Agencies and Operational Departments	25.
Capacity Building in the Public Sector	29.
Culture and Economic Development	29.
Decentralisation and Devolution to Regional and Local Councils	30.
Locality of Culture Award	30.
Participatory Cultural Governance	30.
Outcomes	32.

CHAPTER 2 Increasing cultural access and widening participation **34.**

Policy Objectives	36.
Culture in Social Inclusion, Integration, Diversity Policies and Strategies	37.
Attendances to Cultural Events and Visits to Cultural Sites	37.
Volunteering in Arts and Culture	38.
Inclusive Programming by Public Cultural Organisations and Heritage Institutions	39.
Sustainable Culture for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing	40.
Applied Arts, Heritage and Arts Therapies in Community and Health Services	40.
Arts and Heritage on Prescription	41.
Community Cultural Spaces	41.
Community Cultural Mediators	42.
Active Ageing	42.
Cultural Participation and Access for People with Disabilities	43.
Exceptional Young Talent	43.
The Maltese Language	43.
Digital Language Diversity	44.
Cultural Heritage for Wellbeing and Cohesion	45.
Outcomes	45.

CHAPTER 3 Elevating the status of the artist and professionals in cultural heritage and creative sectors **48.**

Policy Objectives	51.
Setting up a National Emergency Cultural Fund	51.
Loan Provision and Guarantee Facilities	51.
Income Averaging Mechanism	51.
Reduced Rate of 7.5% Income Tax for Artists	51.
VAT Rate on Arts & Culture	51.
Quota for Home-Grown Music on Broadcast Radio	52.
Royalties for Artists	52.
Copyright Depository	52.

Safeguarding and Promoting Maltese Artisanal Food Products	53.
Basic Income During Sabbatical for Artistic Research	53.
Continuos Professional Development	53.
Public Cultural Ogranisations as Investors in the Arts and Artists	53.
Boosting Quality in Television Broadcasting	53.
Establish the Institute of the Moving Image	54.
Support and Protect Independent Media	55.
Endowment for Artists	55.
Artist-Led Organisations and Platforms	55.
Social Enterprise	56.
The Mobility of Artists and Cultural Professionals	56.
Reducing Bureaucracy to Produce Events	56.
National Recognition for Artists	57.
Sectoral Strategies	57.
National Year for Arts and Culture	57.
Outcomes	57.

CHAPTER 4 Improving artistic and cultural education **59.**

Policy Objectives	63.
Universal Access to Arts Education	63.
Primary Education: Creative Arts Coordinators	63.
Secondary Education	64.
Post-Secondary Education	64.
Partnerships between Schools, Artists and Cultural Instituions	66.
Resources and Infrastructure for Arts Education	66.
Training and Professional Development	66.
Public Cultural Ogranisations, Heritage Institutions and Cultural Education	67.
Connecting Cultural Education and Industry	67.
Lifelong Learning Opportunities	68.

Outcomes	68.
-----------------	------------

CHAPTER 5 Developing Cultural Infrastructure **70.**

Policy Objectives **73.**

Culture for Climate Action	74.
----------------------------	------------

Art in Public Spaces	75.
----------------------	------------

Public Spaces Art Fund	75.
------------------------	------------

Creative Clusters Network	76.
---------------------------	------------

Concert Hall	76.
--------------	------------

Multipurpose Theatre	76.
----------------------	------------

Studio Spaces	77.
---------------	------------

Art Galleries	77.
---------------	------------

Rehabilitating Local Theatres	77.
-------------------------------	------------

Digital Cultural Infrastructure	77.
---------------------------------	------------

Outcomes **78.**

CHAPTER 6 Protecting and safeguarding Cultural Heritage **79.**

Policy Objectives **82.**

UNESCO World Heritage Sites	82.
-----------------------------	------------

Valletta (UNESCO World Heritage Site)	83.
---------------------------------------	------------

UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Tentative List)	83.
--	------------

International Commitments	83.
---------------------------	------------

International Collaboration On Heritage Science Research	84.
--	------------

Traditional Streetscapes and Village Cores	84.
--	------------

Quality of the Built Environment	84.
----------------------------------	------------

National Inventory, GIS of Cultural Heritage Assets	84.
---	------------

Intangible Cultural Heritage	85.
------------------------------	------------

Underwater Cultural Heritage	86.
------------------------------	------------

Traditional Maltese Festas	87.
----------------------------	------------

Outcomes **88.**

CHAPTER 7 Promoting a culturally distinctive Gozo 91.

Policy Objectives 92.

Cultural Communities 92.

Cultural Heritage 93.

Supporting Research and Conservation 94.

Sustainable Cultural Tourism 94.

Innovation in Cultural and Creative Practices 95.

International Co-operation 95.

Youth Participation 95.

Outcomes 96.

CHAPTER 8 Advancing International Cultural Relations 97.

Policy Objectives 99.

Arts Council Malta Representative Offices Abroad 99.

EUNIC Cluster in Malta 99.

The Cultural Diplomacy Fund 100.

Culture in Development Assistance 100.

Bilateral Agreements 100.

International Obligations 101.

Cultural Ambassadors 101.

Internationalisation of Public Cultural Organisations and Heritage Institutions 101.

The Maltese Diaspora 101.

International Co-Productions 102.

Outcomes 102.

Conclusion 104.

CULTURAL POLICY: THE BLUEPRINT FOR OUR FUTURE

The National Cultural Policy we are unveiling is built on two turning events in recent memory. Its foundation was formed when the Cultural sector was going through an exciting period.

It later evolved in light of challenges we had never experienced before, due to a global pandemic.

Therefore this Policy has more significant value as it will continue to ensure the resilience of the Cultural sectors of creativity, arts and heritage, which are key pillars in our economy.

We will continue to strive by building on the wonderful experiences we have had together, by continuing to invest in all artists and cultural practitioners, and above all by enhancing the collective wellbeing.

At the same time, this Policy is seeking to take the necessary precautionary measures in the eventuality of the sudden emergence of unfortunate events.

What we've experienced in the last two years has taught us many lessons, especially the ever-evolving alliance between culture and digitalisation.

In designing this Policy, attention was paid to ongoing discourse, both locally and in the international community. On a local basis, ten public meetings were held and a draft was presented for discussion before this document was completed.



Emphasis is being placed on our obligations as members of the European Union and UNESCO, which in recent years have raised Culture to the top of the political agenda, by publishing key documents with numerous specific goals to be achieved for sustainable development.

When it comes to Culture, public discussion is no longer limited to an exhibition, concert or visit to a heritage site. These traditional forms remain important. However, Culture today looks at wider horizons: from its contribution to climate action to the implementation of arts and heritage on prescription policy within contemporary models of community health and wellbeing.

The main purpose of this Policy is inclusivity because Culture belongs to everyone. Our Culture is what distinguishes us from other nations. Our Culture attracts tourists to share their experiences on our islands, even re-visiting Malta on multiple occasions.

This Policy identified eight areas with a total of 182 outcomes to be carried out in the coming years. It directs us to a future that continues to improve our wellbeing and sustain the cultural, creative and heritage sectors. In doing so, we will be securing a brighter future than ever before.

José Herrera

Minister for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government

Executive Summary



VISION

Embracing culture for the wellbeing of all

01



MISSION

Inspired by cultural rights, Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021 integrates culture in national development with a global outlook that contributes towards sustainable development.

02



PRIORITIES

- Strengthening cultural governance
- Increasing cultural access and widening
- Elevating the status of the artist and professionals
- Improving artistic education
- Developing cultural infrastructure
- Protecting and safeguarding cultural heritage
- Promoting a culturally distinctive Gozo
- Advancing international cultural relations

03



TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Legislation
- Funding
- Research
- Strategies
- Capacity building
- Infrastructure

04

Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021 (NCP 2021) sets an ambitious vision to embrace culture for the wellbeing of all. Inspired by cultural rights, the mission of cultural policy, the second official national cultural policy for Malta, is to integrate culture in national development with a global outlook that contributes to sustainable development. The policy asserts the principle that culture is dynamic and ever changing, and creative practitioners through culture and the arts are the meaning makers that question and push the boundaries of society. Government recognises that in this respect, culture is then a dynamic force that can help negotiate integration and fight exclusion by engendering wellbeing for strong communities and a resilient cohesive society. A stronger cultural sector led by artists, cultural practitioners, civil society and communities, is fundamental to freedom of expression and to tolerance, and thus to democracy. An enlightened society through arts and culture leads to a culture of openness, innovation and creativity.

As Malta's diverse identities continue to evolve and shape an increasingly culturally diverse nation, the creation of new cultural expressions by diverse communities becomes even more significant to combat stereotypes and counter insularity, xenophobia and cultural territoriality that threatens the spirit of mutuality and reciprocity in contemporary Maltese society. This policy takes a proactive approach to identify and remove barriers to ensure full and equal participation in cultural life, as experienced by people of different gender, cultural background, age and sexual orientation, among others.

NCP 2021 reflects on the global and local impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural and creative sectors and society at large. It provides a policy response to address the challenges faced by the sectors, the need to intensify support for the sectors and the opportunities that emerge from the aspirations of the community.

NCP 2021 sets 8 priorities and outlines 182 policy outcomes implemented through 6 tools for implementation.

The main policy objectives for each policy priority are as follows:

1 Strengthening Cultural Governance

- Strengthening cross-sectoral policies through an inter-ministerial cultural policy framework.
- Reaffirming the adoption of the arm's length principle in public cultural governance.
- Investing in capacity building of public sector employees as cultural and heritage managers, and leaders in the public cultural and heritage sector.
- Increasing decentralisation and devolution to regional and local councils.
- Supporting the development of participatory cultural governance.

2 Increasing cultural access and widening participation

- Ensuring that everyone, whoever they are, irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or religious belief, and from whichever walk of life they set out from, has access to culture, heritage and the arts, and the benefits and wellbeing they generate.
- Supporting culture's central role in the building of a fairer, more prosperous and resilient society.
- Support and consolidate the valuable efforts already being made by Local Councils and NGOs to widen and increase community participation in heritage, culture and the arts.
- Increasing and developing audiences in the arts – theatre, music, dance, film, visual arts and festivals.

- Increasing readership and appreciation of literary works and its dissemination abroad.
- Increasing and developing visitor experiences for museums, libraries, archives and heritage sites.
- Increasing active participation and involvement in cultural, heritage and artistic activities.
- Leveraging cultural, social and content innovation to ensure the fuller development of communities and society.

3 Elevating the status of the artist and professionals in the cultural, heritage and creative sectors.

- Promoting and safeguarding the right of culture, heritage and creative practitioners to freedom of expression.
- Promoting and safeguarding the right of associations representing artists, cultural and heritage workers, and related professions, recognised in law, to promote the professional and socio-economic interests of their members.
- Promoting and safeguarding the right of artists and other cultural, heritage, and creative professionals to have access to platforms in which they may express their views on their status and on any other questions concerning them.

4**Improving artistic and cultural education**

- Improving the provision of artistic and cultural education in compulsory education and promoting an interdisciplinary approach in school curricula.
- Supporting the inclusion of culture, in all its diverse expressions, as a curricular subject in its own right, from the teaching of history and performing arts to the teaching of design and crafts, but also as a pillar of STEAM and as cross-curricular subject that intersects across the wider educational framework.
- Strengthening partnerships between schools, artists, cultural practitioners and cultural institutions.
- Supporting the training and professional development of teachers, artists and cultural practitioners to attain the highest quality artistic and cultural education.
- Strengthening links between artistic and cultural education and industry.
- Promoting lifelong learning opportunities in artistic and cultural education.
- Developing and strengthening the specialised arts education offered at the MAVC schools, as well as other institutions that offer higher education in the visual and performing arts.

5**Developing cultural infrastructure**

- Leveraging the potential of culture as a platform for climate action.
- Addressing the longstanding infrastructural lacunae in the arts through sustainable means.

- Enhancing Malta's offer of publicly run cultural venues by transforming them into hubs for social and cultural engagement generating positive impacts on the lives of residents and visitors.
- Empowering non-governmental operators through the optimal use of underutilised resources, with an emphasis on local and regional cultural development.
- Developing creative clusters to support the sector in developing within a healthy and holistic ecosystem.
- Involving stakeholders and creators in the cultural and creative sectors for innovative development.

6**Protecting and safeguarding Cultural Heritage**

- Establishing the principle that access to and engagement with cultural heritage is not a luxury but a fundamental right of every person, and an essential contributor to the wellbeing and quality of life of present and future generations.
- Ensuring that all sectors and all levels of government respect, promote and prioritise the safeguarding of cultural heritage and cultural landscapes, for the benefit of present as well as future generations, and ensuring that short-term profit is never allowed to take precedence over this long-term public good.
- Promoting sustainable and creative engagement with cultural heritage resources to reap benefits in the fields of education, sustainable tourism, health and wellbeing, social inclusion, intercultural understanding and scientific research.

7

Promoting a culturally distinctive Gozo

- Positioning Gozo as a distinctive cultural region in both cultural heritage and contemporary culture.
- Empowering cultural communities in Gozo to act as catalysts in Gozo's cultural development and to further develop their capacity as contributors to local, social and cultural wellbeing.
- Promoting sustainable cultural tourism.
- Encouraging more young people to engage and participate in Gozo's culture, including professional activity.

8

Advancing international cultural relations

- Converging the two policy domains of culture and foreign affairs to ensure that a coherent policy framework is in place to enable the required synergies.
- Implementing an internationalization strategy for the establishment of representative offices abroad, with the purpose of strengthening Malta's participation with clusters of EU National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC).
- Participating actively in bilateral and multilateral programmes that provide effective tools to facilitate this process.

Introduction - The right to Culture

The past decade has seen a shift in cultural policy from a focus on cultural and creative development to a wider understanding of the links between the cultural sector and the rest of society. A deeper understanding of the complexities and interdependencies involving the social, economic and environmental conditions and parameters of society has emerged. Whilst addressing the immediate needs of arts and culture and reaffirming the intrinsic value they bring to society, this policy also acknowledges the role culture has in tackling global issues such as democracy and collective action, climate change, and other matters related to social and environmental sustainability. While local knowledge and actors remain the building blocks and core resources for effective action, an awareness of the interconnectedness of society's major challenges has led to increased and more meaningful efforts to harness this energy into a more concerted drive, both within large institutional settings as well as through more grassroots initiatives.

This structural shift means that such efforts have now moved towards a focus on the holistic wellbeing of society. NCP 2021 seeks to respond to these challenges and tap into the opportunities that new technologies and the digital transformation, increased civic awareness and a stronger demand for action are posing within our social realities. The way in which people access, create and experience culture is constantly changing, presenting new opportunities and challenges. This also has a direct impact on cultural policy that has a dual role in addressing gaps and imbalances that emerged through time and in providing a visionary framework built on contemporary issues and trends.

Cultural Policy 2021 is an opportunity to re-examine the fundamental role of culture in public policy and renew the political commitment that champions the transversality of culture in Malta's creative, social and economic development.

In response to the UN sustainable development goals, the National Cultural Policy seeks to address, with urgency, global concerns that Malta is committed to contribute to and actively pursue with its international partners.

The Constitution of Malta enshrines culture in the declaration of principles by calling on the State to promote the development of culture and scientific and technical research.

NCP 2021 outlines the policy principles and actions to safeguard this constitutional declaration. In addition, it advocates for a reaffirmed commitment for the inclusion of culture and cultural rights in the Constitutional reform.

NCP 2021 is informed primarily by Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)¹ that establishes that **everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits**. It is further informed by Article 5 of the 2001 UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, that recognises cultural rights as inseparable from human rights.

In the UN Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights (2018)² Karima Bennoune points out that 'cultural rights are at the intersection of civil and political rights and economic and social rights. Cultural rights are transformative and empowering, providing important opportunities for the realisation of other human rights.' More importantly the special rapporteur states that 'A lack of equal cultural rights, combined with economic and social inequalities, make it difficult for people to exercise their civil and political rights and to enjoy their right to development'.

This policy also draws on principles of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions³. This Convention, which Malta is committed to ratify as part of the implementation of this policy, recognises that culture and creative industries have become essential for inclusive economic growth, reducing inequalities and achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

¹General Assembly resolution 217A https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

²Bennoune K.(2018) Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights. UNESCO Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/237/65/PDF/>

³The 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions UNESCO <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/passeport-convention2005-web2.pdf> N1823765.pdf?OpenElement

In line with the 2005 convention and through NCP 2021, Government is firmly committed to adopt and implement policies to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expression. In addition, Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021 will serve as the main instrument through which Malta will implement, monitor and measure its commitments towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

NCP 2021 is also guided by the adopted conclusions of the Council of the European Union on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022⁴. The work plan sets out the following five priorities for European cooperation in cultural policymaking: sustainability in cultural heritage, cohesion and well-being; developing an ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content; gender equality and international cultural relations. From the perspective of policy consideration, gender equality, diversity, inclusion, access and participation are transversal issues across these five priorities.

The cultural policy outlines eight priorities and proposes specific outcomes that may be implemented through any of the six tools for action. This policy is grounded on evidence gathered in the past years and draws on both quantitative and qualitative assessments of the sector's performance and trends within the context of regional, European and international developments. The policy also addresses cross-sectoral cultural impacts and issues, including changing demographics and urban transformation, social inclusion and cultural access, sustainability and wellbeing, and cross-sectoral economic impacts within a wider urban, social, economic and environmental context.

CULTURAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION EVALUATION AND MONITORING

The effective implementation of the cultural policy depends on the various stakeholders directly responsible for the cultural sectors and the political commitment of authorities concerned. Culture is hereby recognised as an integral part of other spheres of society and goes beyond the cultural ecosystems. Therefore, other public entities in addition to the Ministry responsible for Culture will collectively strive towards the implementation of this policy.

As indicated, participatory cultural governance will underpin these processes and inform their outcomes. This will ensure that policies are grounded by the lived realities of those that are likely to be impacted by them and in turn, resources and actions are mobilised effectively with the necessary checks and balances in place. Thus, policy mechanisms need to take heed of the specificities of any formal and informal structures to be involved or potentially involved in order to ensure contextual relevance. Systems and resources need to be in place to support this participatory approach which can vary depending on the degree of centralisation associated with policies and the environmental contexts in question. The involvement of civil society and the relevant sectors to varying degrees in policy decision-making and review is meant to contribute towards an increased sense of collective policy ownership - strengthening trust between institutions and civil society. In accordance with the governance framework of this Policy, the Ministry responsible for Culture will be at the forefront to support this approach.



⁴The Work Plan for Culture was adopted on the 27th November 2018

ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES

An assessment and development of the institutional capacities that influence the effectiveness of cultural policy is needed to identify the necessary measures for capacity-building. This is applicable across all public institutions and agencies that have some degree of responsibility for the various dimensions and sectors of culture, going beyond just the Ministry responsible for Culture. This allows the adaptation of cultural policy that is in line with the conditions and characteristics of the sectors' environment from an institutional, political, economic and social perspective. The process involves training of responsible agents, consultation with the public and private stakeholders concerned and securing ownership of cultural policy across institutions.

The institutional approach would require ongoing inter-ministerial cooperation that will assist in setting up sustainable structures that support cultural development within wider national governance.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

An ongoing participatory process linked with a relevant communication plan is to be adopted when implementing cultural policy by all public and private stakeholders. This entails the formulation of arguments and dissemination measures targeting authorities, civil society and all stakeholders to demonstrate culture's role in society as a public good.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL COUNCILS

Regional and Local Councils will be given ownership with defined responsibility of regional cultural strategies based on the National Cultural Policy principles and objectives. This will decentralise administration of the implementation of cultural policy which supports the participatory governance approach to be adopted. This policy will thereby provide horizontal principles on which regional cultural strategies are based across cultural strands.

TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Public entities and non-state actors will be responsible to deliver goals falling under the policy priorities by adapting the following tools for implementation:

- **Funding:** This includes funding programmes and overall government investment supporting the development of the cultural and creative sectors (CCSs). The policy also aims towards implementing supporting mechanisms that encourage long-term financial sustainability, reducing dependency on public funding. In turn, this can contribute towards a more diverse spectrum of cultural expression.
- **Legislation and regulation:** The Ministry responsible for Culture shall develop, update and transpose relevant legislation and regulation for the creative and cultural sectors in consultation and partnership with the relevant non-state stakeholders, from within and outside the CCSs. A review of current legislation to implement new or updated regulation is to be conducted.
- **Capacity Building:** Effective implementation requires the right skill set through continuous professional development and training. This will be applicable to public sector employees implementing policy as well as initiatives that aim to enhance capacity building in the cultural and creative sectors. Cross-sectoral capacity building will also be instrumental in ensuring more reflexivity throughout implementation and impact awareness beyond the immediate policy contexts.
- **Infrastructure:** Plans to develop the appropriate cultural infrastructure should be designed in partnership with all public and private stakeholders. This infrastructure refers to both systems in place and physical resources needed for the relevant policy priorities to be fulfilled.

- **Strategy:** Strategies called for in this policy are to be developed and reviewed in a participatory manner to be reflective of their respective stakeholder groups. Local and regional strategies are to take into account the different local contexts and social complexities by involving civil society.
- **Governance:** As outlined in this policy the governance model will be driven by a policy framework that reaffirms the arm's length principle. This ensures a level of autonomy to public entities in developing their own initiatives while increasing transparency with the general public in relation to decision making procedures.
- **Research:** Evidence-based policy implementation is key to the continuous relevance of cultural policy and will be part of the design stage of policy initiatives. Knowledge gaps in the creative and cultural sectors need to be identified and addressed through appropriate research plans that are designed in consultation with the sector stakeholders and through the collaborations of academic and professional entities. This research plan should also seek to examine further the barriers that limit cultural participation amongst all people living in Malta and adopt a gender perspective and seek to uncover inequalities between women and men, from different social groups in the cultural sector. The already existing research base needs to be continuously updated and expanded to reflect innovative methodological approaches that can be applied as well as enabling improved insight of policy impacts. This will be reflected in the continuous evaluation and monitoring approaches adopted with regards to the implementation of the NCP 2021. An observatory can be set up made up of representatives from relevant public entities and NSO which carries out longitudinal data collection and analysis on the trends of Malta's CCSs.

PRIORITY AREA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

Complimentary priority area strategic frameworks based on the above policy priorities and with input from the government and non-governmental stakeholders. Each of these frameworks shall then focus on the arts, heritage and media with NCP 2021 as their common basis. Priority area working groups will be developing these strategies through continuous dialogue and collaboration between each other so as to have integrated frameworks. To ensure this, representatives from each working group will form a cultural forum that ensures the smooth integration and continuity of the strategic frameworks. Contextually relevant topics linked to the policy priorities will be addressed throughout the implementation with the appropriate working methods.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

The Ministry responsible for Culture will be the key oversight public body monitoring the implementation of the cultural policy, assisted by other Ministries on joint policy initiatives and priority area working groups. It will also lead the mainstreaming of culture in other national policies and strategies. Key performance indicators (KPIs) for the next 10 years based on the policy priorities are to be established in order to allow for an impartial evaluation. The entities that will conduct the evaluation and monitoring are to be involved in drawing up the indicators and an evaluation schedule is to be established ahead of the actual processes. The indicators themselves are to be subject to adjustment if necessary, by the Ministry responsible for Culture based on recommendations from the evaluations carried out by the responsible entities in consultation with other relevant entities. The evaluation should look at the implementation of activities, budgets and planned timeframes as well as the measurement of policy outcomes and goals. Strategies adopted should be evaluated for their applicability and effectiveness and be open to change if required. The involvement of all those involved in the policy implementation should also be examined closely embedding a participatory process to evaluation.

Evaluation and monitoring will:

- Take place on a longitudinal (e.g. quarterly, yearly) basis taking a cross-sectoral or sector specific approach based on the policy objective and KPIs that is being evaluated and monitored. Evaluation should be a continuous process.
- Be able to influence policy and change aspects of it if needed based on the evidence that is being collected.
- Be based on an integrated approach to wellbeing taking into account cultural, social, economic, political, environmental and technological factors that impact or are impacted by cultural policy.
- Encourage independent research initiatives that can be supported/ commissioned by public institutions. Regular collaborations between ACM, PCOs, University of Malta, MCAST and NSO would contribute largely towards research in arts related policies. Malta Enterprise, University of Malta and NSO would focus on the creative industries and the cultural sectors. SCH, Heritage Malta, UoM and NSO will focus on Heritage policy research not limited to academic research but also addressing the impacts and potential of uses of heritage. Media policy research will be under the remit of the Broadcasting Authority, Arts Council Malta, Public Broadcasting Services and Malta Film Commission. This does not exclude the possibility of having entities from different sectors collaborating on certain research projects. The Ministry responsible for Culture will oversee all these processes and make recommendations where necessary.
- Undertake a study to determine the contribution of cultural heritage to the economy and to the Gross Domestic Product. Investment in more in-depth studies that determine the interlinkages and impacts between the arts, media, cultural heritage sectors and the rest of the economy and GDP. This enables a closer look at a sector-specific economic performance and impact thereby contributing to more informative sector policy evaluation. Both direct and indirect economic contributions of the CCSs are to be analysed, with the latter possibly including the role of tourism.
- Take place before, during and after new policy measures are implemented to gain a broad understanding of the feasibility, impact and effectiveness of the said measures.
- Address all policy priorities and be embedded into the policy making processes.
- Give equal weight to the usefulness of qualitative and quantitative data – this is of course dependent on the policy objective/measure being monitored and evaluated.
- Involve independent institutions and organisations to ensure methodological objectivity, rigour, scientific robustness and critical analysis.

Monitoring the implementation of cultural policy requires evaluation systems that are structured and flexible in accordance to the policy areas. Evaluation models adopted need to be sensitive to that which is being evaluated and adopt multidisciplinary and methodologically innovative approaches. This requires constant development and adjustment in line with international trends on evaluation and research. While there needs to be delineation between evaluation and academic research on cultural value and policy, they need to be informed by each other where appropriate.

The overall framework for measuring and collecting data on this policy together with the analysis of this research will also reflect the reporting mechanisms and indicators, requested by international organisations, such as the UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda, of which Malta is a party.

CHAPTER 1

STRENGTHENING CULTURAL GOVERNANCE

The President's Palace
Photo: Heritage Malta



In establishing a more robust cultural governance model, Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021 strives to develop further an evidence-based policy framework centered on increased participation of relevant stakeholders.



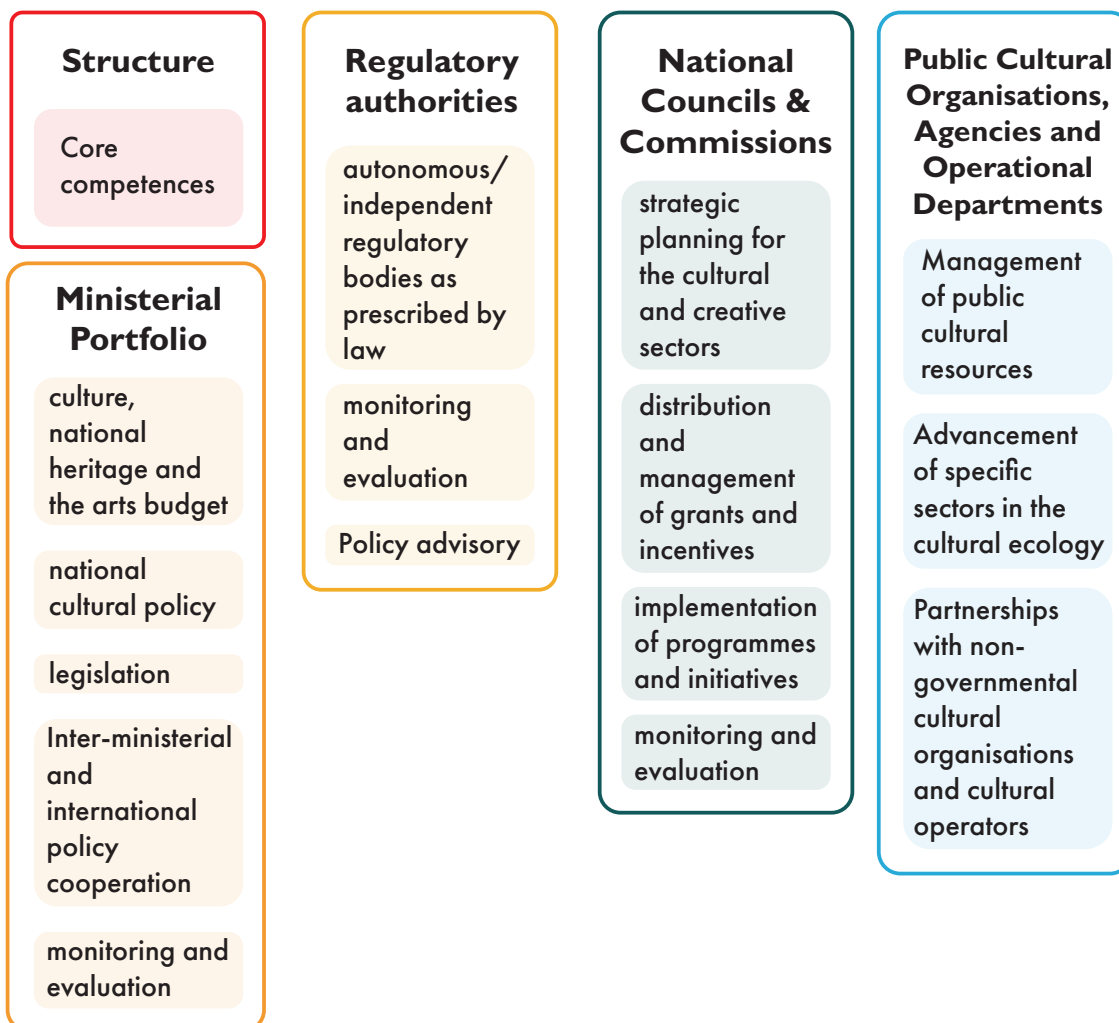
POLICY OBJECTIVES

The cultural governance objectives of the National Cultural Policy 2021 are to:

- Strengthen cross-sectoral policies through an inter-ministerial cultural policy framework;
- Reaffirm the adoption of the arm's length principle in public cultural governance;
- Invest in capacity building of public sector employees as cultural managers and leaders in the public cultural sector;
- Increase decentralisation and devolution to regional and local councils;
- Support the development of participatory cultural governance.

CROSS-SECTORAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

The governance model in Malta's public administration for the cultural and creative sectors is developed through four distinctive structures:



CULTURAL GOVERNANCE

NCP 2021 reaffirms the arm's length principle established in the NCP 2011 for the governance of the public cultural sector. This principle ensures that public agencies and public cultural organisations are empowered to lead and to fulfil their legal remit in line with the general provisions of public administration. Whereas the government appoints the governing bodies and provides such institutions with financial allocations from the Consolidated Fund to perform their functions as prescribed by law, it encourages public entities to develop their own programmes and lead initiatives at arm's length from the Ministry responsible for Culture.

To promote further the implementation of the arm's length principle, guarantee public accountability and ensure good governance, NCP 2021 calls for:

- Transparent and publicly known criteria for the selection and appointment of leadership positions in relevant councils, commissions, agencies and public cultural organisations. Specific attention will be given to increase sectoral representation and to address gender and other inequalities.
- The inclusion of public appointments of regulatory authorities and national agencies in culture to be specified in the Second Part of the Fifth Schedule of the Public Administration Act, thus enabling the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Appointments to conduct pre-appointment hearings of persons nominated for certain public appointments in culture, the arts and national heritage.

NCP 2021 reiterates an arm's length funding policy for all competitive funding programmes in the form of financial grants and incentives. Such programmes will continue to be entrusted to a public agency with a legal remit to administer such funds and will follow a principle of open competition with a fair, accountable and transparent selection process by a pool of experts appointed through publicly known selection criteria.

Guidelines, application processes, selection procedures and results will continue to be publicly known and communicated across various platforms and formats. In addition, fund managers will ensure that the process of digitisation and simplification to reduce bureaucracy will continue to be rolled out across all funding programmes.

THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

NCP 2021 affirms that the successful implementation of this policy is dependent on the sustainability and diversity of Malta's creative ecology created by the independent and third sectors, composed of artists, other cultural and creative professionals, non-Governmental organisations and creative enterprises. This policy considers the independent sector as a partner in the implementation of this policy through its governance, funding and other measures. In addition, this policy affirms that the growth of the sector requires a level-playing field between publicly funded organisations and the private sector, thus ensuring that the role of the State as policy maker and investor in culture, as a public good, is used to leverage both public and private investment and to safeguard, promote and sustain the growth of the independent sector.

THE MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR CULTURE

In the cultural governance framework, the Ministry responsible for Culture shall:

- 1 Develop national policies for the cultural and creative sectors.
- 2 Oversee the implementation of the national cultural policy and other national and international programmes and conventions.
- 3 Monitor and evaluate the implementation of such policies, programmes and conventions.
- 4 Secure a national budget for culture and disburse funds from the Consolidated Fund to public entities.
- 5 Develop, update or transpose relevant legislation.



Coordinate policy matters with other ministries, national and international organisations.



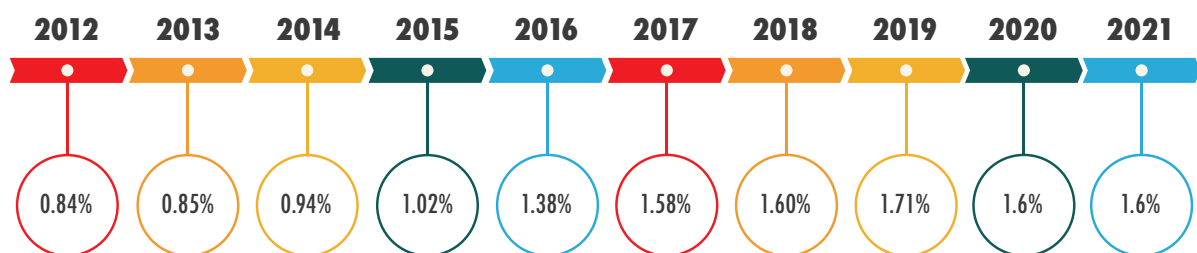
Liaise with regulatory and operational cultural bodies to ensure that legal remits are fulfilled and relevant strategies in line with the national cultural policy are designed and implemented.

Historically, policies for the cultural and creative sectors in Malta have been addressed by different ministerial portfolios, government departments and public agencies. Whereas, the Ministry responsible for culture has traditionally been responsible for policies in arts and national heritage, while other policy areas related to film, broadcasting, crafts, publishing, libraries, archives and arts education have often been developed by other Ministries.

In addition, new areas in the creative economy and cultural policy linked to science and technology, will need to be integrated within a framework that embraces interdisciplinary cooperation.

In order to implement the electoral promise to double the funding for culture, NCP 2021 seeks to benchmark this unprecedented investment to reach a minimum target of 2% of total government expenditure on the cultural and creative sectors.

CCS National Budget as a % of total government expenditure per year



INTER-MINISTERIAL COOPERATION FOR THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS

In order to increase policy cooperation for the cultural and creative sectors across different ministries, NCP 2021, proposes that the Directorate for Culture will be responsible for ensuring collaboration across Ministries in the cultural and creative sectors. The Directorate will therefore be required to bring together policy units from different ministries that have a direct and indirect impact on the sectors. This collaborative policy aims to reduce policy fragmentation in the sectors empowered to propose, develop and implement policy measures outlined in NCP 2021 and other national and international policy instruments.

UPGRADING POLICY-MAKING STRUCTURES

With a vision that strengthens further the policy remit of the Ministry for Culture, NCP 2021, proposes the upgrading of the department of culture to a directorate general, equipped with the necessary resources to fulfil the functions identified above. This development will also ensure institutional memory and continuity within a permanent policy-making structure of a Ministry responsible for Culture.

REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

Heritage

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage is the regulator of cultural heritage as outlined in the Cultural Heritage Act of 2002.

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage's mission is to fulfil the duties of the State, as the statutory regulator of cultural heritage, in ensuring the protection and accessibility of Malta's cultural heritage. Its functions include but are not limited to:

-  carrying out monitoring of ongoing restoration works;
-  to authorise and surveil over archaeological investigations and monitoring on land and at sea;
-  compiling a National Inventory of cultural objects (immovable and movable) as well as intangible heritage;
-  surveillance of import/export and movement of cultural heritage;
-  advises and coordinates with the Planning Authority when reviewing planning applications related to development which may affect cultural heritage;
-  advise government, the Minister, government entities, NGOs and the public on all matters affecting cultural heritage, including restoration and conservation and underwater cultural heritage;
-  to promote and conduct research in cultural heritage fields, including the National Research Agenda;
-  ensure and promote best policies, standards and practices in cultural heritage management, research and conservation, data management, and documentation and adoption of international instruments and standards on cultural heritage.

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage is also required by law to publish a yearly report on the status of cultural heritage.

As identified in this policy, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage is to be strengthened further to address the increased workload and legal requirements.

The effectiveness and operational capacity of existing national frameworks for UNESCO matters should be carefully examined and reformed. The National UNESCO Commission and the UNESCO World Heritage Applications Steering Committee should be reviewed and placed on a sounder operational footing so as to be effective and as inclusive as possible.

Broadcasting

Established in 1961, the Broadcasting Authority monitors and regulates all radio and television broadcasts originating from the Maltese Islands. It is an independent statutory body consisting of a Chairman and four other members appointed by the President of Malta acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister given after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

The BA supervises all local broadcasting stations and ensures their compliance with legal and license obligations as well as the preservation of due impartiality, in respect of matters of political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy, while fairly apportioning broadcasting facilities and time between persons who belong to the different society spectrum. The Broadcasting Authority ensures that local broadcasting services consist of public, private and community broadcasts that offer varied and comprehensive programming to cater for all interests and tastes.

While the Broadcasting Authority should continue to regulate local broadcasting services in open flexible ways to foster creativity and better programming, NCP 2021 envisages that it is time to revise the legislation that regulates this sector in order to be reconceived to address the recent evolution and evolution in the technological, cultural and social landscapes of contemporary broadcasting.

This revision includes but goes beyond, the transposition of the EU's Audio-visual Media Services Directive. Furthermore, NCP 2021 recommends actions in relevant policy areas, including the use of Maltese language in media, the quota for Maltese music in broadcast radio, media literacy and professional training in broadcasting.

NATIONAL COUNCILS, ENTITIES AND COMMISSIONS

Arts Council Malta

Established through Act 15 of 2015, ACM developed the remit of the former Malta Council for Culture and the Arts with new functions to encourage and promote the culture and creative sector. The remit of Arts Council Malta is to advocate and be a strategic leader and catalyst for the cultural and creative sectors through the implementation of strategies and management of competitive funding programmes and incentives. By promoting innovation in the sectors and stimulating a creative ecosystem for the generation of contemporary creative content, Arts Council Malta is the main body that acts as a broker for the sector and other sectors, facilitates and promotes the sustainable development of creative individuals and organisations and fosters active and participatory citizenship in culture amongst other functions.

An important legal remit of Arts Council Malta and central function in the implementation of this policy is its responsibility to strengthen the organisations listed as Public Cultural Organisations (PCOs). Arts Council Malta is required to assess and monitor the strategies, financial estimates and financial records of PCOs. This, together with continuous improvement in methods of data gathering, will contribute towards the building of a knowledge base that will assist and inform PCOs in their decision-making.

NCP 2021 calls on Arts Council Malta to evaluate the impact of the Create 2020 strategy and to set in motion the development of an updated strategy cycle based on the objectives of this policy.

NCP 2021 also calls on the ACM to take responsibility for fostering a broader understanding of new digital technologies and their deployment in the context of the new realities resulting from Covid-19 and ensure the sustainability of the Maltese cultural and artistic sector and the embracing of an up-to-date culture of how artists present their work, address their audiences and survive the serious threats that the sector is facing.

Committee of Guarantee

The Committee of Guarantee has been set up through the Cultural Heritage Act in order to ensure and facilitate the collaboration between the different agencies that have direct or indirect responsibility for the protection and management of the cultural heritage sector. It is also responsible for advising the government on the National Strategy for Cultural Heritage.

NCP 2021 calls on the Committee of Guarantee to review areas of weakness in the current planning framework that have resulted in the loss of cultural heritage, and to make practical recommendations to address these systemic weaknesses.

NCP 2021 calls for planning laws and other forms of legislation that are known to impact heritage protection to be reviewed and if necessary amended. A Review Commission composed of cultural heritage and legal experts shall be established to undertake a holistic review of existing laws.

Malta Film Commission

The Malta Film Commission is a public entity established by Chapter 478 (Act No. 7 of 2005) of the Laws of Malta, with the role of advising the Minister responsible for the film sector on policies pertaining to the promotion, development and support of the audiovisual and film servicing industry. Over the years, the role of the Film Commission has evolved from an entity that promotes the production of foreign films in Malta, to one that also develops the Maltese Film Industry through the management of Screen Malta, the Malta Film co-production fund and training programmes. In recent years, the Film Commission has upgraded the cash rebates for filmmakers making the financial guidelines more attractive to the film industry in general. The Film Commission should continue receiving every support so that it can attract foreign productions to our shores.

NCP 2021 calls for the Malta Film Commission to develop an updated strategy for the film industry that includes development of the indigenous film industry, sustainable film servicing, further development of the Ricasoli film facilities, sound stages, post-production facilities with VFX capabilities and capacity building in the sector. Through these initiatives and infrastructure, a sustainable local film industry can be attained.

Also, NCP 2021 calls for the MFC to seek proactive ways to synergise initiatives that create sustainable opportunities for the development of an indigenous film industry. In this regard, there should be a concerted effort to align film funding administered by the MFC with the public funding of Film Malta that falls under the remit of the Ministry responsible for Culture.

For Maltese TV and film to be competitive on an international market, PBS, Arts Council Malta, the Malta Film Commission, Film Malta and respective Ministries will need to consolidate their efforts to enter international markets through co-production deals and international visibility of the local content, together with industry.

National Book Council

The National Book Council is the public entity established in 2017 through Subsidiary legislation 327.580 under the remit of the Ministry for Education. The Council is an autonomous institution which acts as a cultural and educational agent with the aim of promoting books and reading in society and to represent the interests of authors and publishers alike. It organises the Malta Book Festival and the National Book Prize amongst other national as well as smaller scale events, administers Public Lending Rights, organises several literary contests and is also the local agent for ISBN and ISMN.

NCP 2021 calls on the NBC to acknowledge the importance of Translation as an integral part of its remit and seeks to strengthen its funding.

Arts Council Malta co-produced the film "Storbju" with a private company, using Maltese and international cast and crew. The film is based on the historic events of 7 June 1919.

Malta Crafts Foundation

In a bid towards re-vitalising the crafts sector, NCP 2021 reaffirms the policy direction to separate the different aspects that were originally under the Craft Council's remit, that of 'the regulator' and that of 'support and marketing / related functions'. The Malta Crafts Foundation will take over the latter role, while also managing the two main crafts villages – Ta' Qali crafts village in Malta and Ta' Dbiegi in Gozo.

The main scope of the Foundation will be to promote the revival of traditional Maltese crafts through instilling a steady interest and appreciation of Maltese crafts among resident and non-resident communities.

The Malta Crafts Foundation will take over the organisation of Craft Fairs, Gieħ l-Artigjanat and Malta's participation in Artigiano in Fiera in Milan. It will also lead to other initiatives which promote innovation in the crafts sector and provide opportunities for the professional development of Maltese artisans and the development of their products.

The Malta Crafts Foundation will also work on a strategy for the crafts sector so as to ensure that artisans are provided with the support needed to innovate and flourish in the present competitive business environment.

The strategy will reflect the principles of this Policy and focus on promotion, quality and innovation.

NCP 2021 calls for a legislative framework to establish the Malta Craft Foundation and appropriate measures to be taken to ensure that the regulatory processes under current legislation are updated to reflect this policy direction.



JUDICIARY SPECIALISED IN CULTURAL HERITAGE

NCP 2021 further calls for serious consideration of the establishment of specialised magistrates and judges who are purposely trained to handle cases involving cultural heritage. Certain existing tribunal procedures are known to fail in the protection of cultural heritage assets and have fallen short of implementing the precautionary principle. A specialised judiciary is today becoming a critical need as Malta's cultural heritage faces unprecedented pressures.

PUBLIC CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS, AGENCIES AND OPERATIONAL DEPARTMENTS

Public Cultural Organisations

Public Cultural Organisations as listed in the Second Schedule of Arts Council Malta Act share a common objective to invest public funding in culture and the arts to foster creativity, social well-being and economic activity.

While acknowledging increased public investment in PCOs over a number of years, this policy reiterates the commitment to invest public funding responsibly and effectively. As outlined in Arts Council Malta's Create 2020 strategy, *'Malta's flagship cultural entities require increased human and technical resources to address the demanding requirements of a fast-moving sector'*.

This policy calls on Arts Council Malta to continue leading a network of all Public Cultural Organisations to increase inter-PCO collaboration and to share resources and expertise. Through this policy, each PCO is required to develop a yearly plan and strategy that reflects the goals and targets set out by ACM based on the objectives of NCP 2021. This policy also guarantees the independence of Public Cultural Organisations in artistic programming, reflecting the principles of diversity and freedom of cultural expressions. In this regard, NCP 2021 calls on ACM to further formalise the creation of a dedicated post for PCOs Relations Management, including the bolstering of organisational relationships between the PCOs and ACM.

Public Cultural Organisations include the following:

- Festivals Malta
- Kor Malta
- Malta Philharmonic Orchestra
- Mediterranean Conference Centre
- MICAS
- Pjazza Teatru Rjal
- Spazju Kreattiv
- Teatru Malta
- Teatru Manoel
- Valletta Cultural Agency
- Żfin Malta

NCP 2021 acknowledges that the remit of some public cultural organisations still requires the necessary infrastructure and legal framework to fulfil the required functions. Through the setting up by ACM of a dedicated Manager to act as PCOs Relations Manager as mentioned above, this policy will ensure that the appropriate measures will be taken to address the administrative, legal and operational lacunae of PCOs. By leveraging financial and human resources, NCP 2021 is committed to invest further in established and new PCOs to deliver excellence and to support the growth of Malta's creative ecology.

Following the vision of this policy and the valorisation of cultural resources for the wellbeing of society, national venues are requested to shift focus from genre-specific activity hubs to multi-genre, open platforms for cultural exchange, developed in consultation with the sector and with a view to long-term social, cultural and economic sustainability.

The National Archives of Malta

The National Archives of Malta is entrusted with the mission "to preserve the collective memory of the Maltese nation through records" (Cap. 477 of the Laws of Malta). This will remain the driving force of the functioning of the institution in the foreseeable future.

NCP 2021 sees that there are three strategic targets the National Archives is aiming to fulfil during the coming years. These are:

- Reengineering the physical infrastructure it operates from;
- Upgrading the skill sets of operators in the sector; and
- Widen the concept of memory capture in terms of typology and media.

Achieving these targets requires political, financial and academic support. Intensive networking between the involved public bodies and in full consultation with stakeholders making use of services is a must. The National Archives intends to fulfil these three strategic targets.

Public Libraries

In a world of constant change and challenges, libraries are no exception and must adapt and evolve in order to continue to be relevant and valued. New infiltrating technologies as well as new demands and expectations have changed the role of libraries and librarians to better serve and meet the needs of their communities, both libraries and librarians must become more dynamic and responsive.

The network of public libraries aims to serve the needs of its patrons by transforming libraries to community centres with innovative technology, programming, services and collaborations. Libraries should be a haven to everyone and provide open access and knowledge to all communities and cater for people of different age groups, background and learning abilities. To this end, the collections, services and activities are moulded to meet the communities' needs. Where before libraries were regarded as book depositories, nowadays the vision has changed to a more service-driven and user-oriented library.

NCP 2021 will continue to ensure that the network of public libraries aims to be more proactive and innovative so as to ensure that users' diversity needs and expectations are met.

National Library

Over the next five years, the National Library of Malta will work on a number of strategic priorities and objectives as the main focuses of its vision. By defining and reaching such objectives, the Library is adapting to reflect changing circumstances both now and in the foreseeable future. The vision assumes a future in which the metadata, services and extensive holdings of this national institution are accessible to everyone, everywhere, at all times. It is important that services are reliable and oriented towards users' needs. The overall aim is to make any successes and changes visible.

The National Library will intensify its collection activities and adapt its acquisition processes and instruments to handle all types of publications, other than paper-based ones. Retrospective acquisitions will also be actively expanded by means of the purchase of rare antiquarian items, including books and flat works, from auctions and private sources, thus continuing to render the National Library of Malta a centre for academia and erudition.





Over the next five years, Malta Libraries will embark on an ambitious project of digitization of its holdings. Selection of material for digitisation will be based on a number of primary factors including alignment with the Library's collection development priorities and strengths; uniqueness or rarity of the works, and physical fragility of the material. This material will form the basis for the Library's permanent digital collection and made freely accessible for subsequent users, subject to copyright and access conditions, and the resources required to make the material more freely available. Metadata will also be compiled alongside the scanning process.










Furthermore, the National Library will continue to prioritise restoration and conservation. The National Library has unique treasures which it is its duty to safeguard and preserve. The conservation of parchment and paper presents particular problems, given the climatic conditions in Malta. Such issues have always been a priority at the National Library and various collections are being regularly fumigated, apart from the restoration of already damaged volumes. Over the next five years, it is envisaged to acquire the latest equipment and adopt the most updated best practices in order to ensure the enduring value of the National Library collections for posterity.





Heritage Malta

Heritage Malta is the national government agency, set up in 2002 under the provisions of the Cultural Heritage Act, entrusted with the management of national museums and heritage sites and their related collections in Malta and Gozo, including two UNESCO World Heritage Sites, one of which is a serial inscription consisting of six sites. The agency is responsible for the management of Malta's vast patrimony in heritage sites, buildings, collections and museums and the development of measures to ensure educational promotion, accessibility and conservation.

During the coming years, Heritage Malta will pursue a number of strategic objectives:




-  Promote the national heritage strategy in public forums, documents and policies, and the fostering of public debate and consciousness on the objectives of the national strategy.
-  Invest adequately in research about individual sites, how they relate to their context as well as other contemporary sites in Malta and the Mediterranean.
-  Adopt a visitor-centred museology approach in all museums and cultural heritage sites, in line with trends abroad.
-  Convert the traditional museum into a community space and cultural resource.

-  Promote the alternative use of heritage venues for exhibitions, events and other cultural activities in order to broaden visitor participation and strengthen the links between cultural heritage and the arts.
-  Establish the Collections Management System for the national collection of intangible and tangible artefacts.
-  Improve the physical and intellectual accessibility of collections, sites and museums.
-  Exhibit and support the digitisation resources to promote the collection of intangible cultural heritage in line with national requirements and international obligations.
-  Increase the intellectual accessibility to cultural material and encourage creative ideas on experiencing cultural heritage. COVID-19 has shown the need for a holistic well thought long term strategy in digital accessibility. The digital access should be balanced with physical, intellectual and economic access.
-  Increase the use of digital and online media for the enjoyment, use, promotion and marketing of Malta's cultural heritage to enhance cultural tourism.
-  Facilitate access to cultural heritage through alternate methods including mobile educational collections in venues such as schools, hospitals, correctional facilities, and other public spaces.
-  Create, promote and implement outreach programmes to enrich educational curriculum with the aim to make museums an extension of the classroom.
-  Make museums' learning role built around individual visitor needs. Digitisation and learning programmes are built together to provide experiences outside the museum itself. Edutainment and transmedia are the tools that will be used when educating and interpreting cultural heritage.

-  Initiate and implement a national digitization project of the cultural heritage. All cultural heritage to be accessible online and through mobile devices and tools to ensure avant-garde representation using high end technologies such as VR, AR etc.
-  Engage in museum development initiatives with communities, PCOs and non-governmental entities.
-  Trigger community and crowd engagement through education and short courses related to the care, promotion and accessibility of cultural heritage.
-  Work closely with the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector to initiate volunteer programmes within the museums sector.
-  Participate actively in EU research platforms such as Digital Europe, Horizon Europe and COST.

NCP 2021 calls for every effort to continue putting visitor requirements at the forefront, and to increase the number of visitors to museums and sites as much as possible. However, over-tourism leads to overcrowding, destruction of cultural heritage, environmental degradation, visitor and local residents' dissatisfaction. Consequently, this drive will always be guided and balanced by the conservation requirements of the cultural heritage assets, such as exposure to light, footfall, touch, etc. Similarly, the increase in the number of visitors must result from carrying capacity studies such as Limits of Acceptable Change, which guide curators and managers how much increase of persons can a site take per hour/day/week, without compromising the integrity of the same site and thus safeguarding it for future generations.

Together with the SCH and in collaboration with educational institutions, Heritage Malta shall:

-  promote training courses and other professional development paths followed by 'training maps' for different levels of employees working in the field of cultural heritage;
-  maintain the effectiveness and relevance of vocational, graduate and post-graduate courses in areas of cultural heritage, cultural heritage management and conservation so that these reflect labour market needs and related national occupational standards; and
-  collaborate on joint projects and research.

Public Broadcasting Services

The Public Broadcasting Services (PBS) is the national television and radio station. NCP 2021 calls for continuous and more regular investment in the technology to produce in-house programmes using cutting-edge technology. NCP 2021 also calls for the development of what used to be Television House, in so far as a theatre studio is developed to house bigger productions with audience participation. PBS should also invest in its human resources through training in local and foreign institutions, job shadowing in foreign television stations.

PBS should aggressively seek opportunities to enter into co-production arrangements, especially with foreign broadcasting organisations of its size. An emphasis should be made on such arrangements that promote programming that celebrate the social and cultural identities of countries that make up the Mediterranean Region.

In consultation with the Ministry whose remit shall include broadcasting, PBS should engage in discussions to identify more clearly the Public Service Obligations (PSO) of the National Public Broadcaster in order to have more lucid terms of reference. Appropriate public funding should be provided for PBS to fulfil these obligations. At present, PBS is the European public broadcaster that receives the least public funding for this purpose.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

NCP 2021 envisages further investment in building the capacity of public sector employees operating in the cultural and creative sectors. Through ongoing targeted and tailor-made health and safety, technical, management and leadership courses for public sector employees in the cultural and creative sectors, the policy will strive to increase the competitiveness of the sector in Malta and Gozo, and enhance the public sector's service delivery in this field.

Such programmes will ensure that the workforce keeps abreast of new developments and is adequately trained to meet the challenges of the constantly evolving sector.

CULTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Globally, the creative economy generates \$2.6 trillion in revenues and creates 30 million jobs. In Malta the creative industries account for 7.9% of total GVA, exceeding the direct contribution of the construction and civil engineering sector and the accommodation and food services sector. They also create 12,000 jobs and play a key role in propelling the sustainable development goals by incorporating people-centred values and sustainability across their economic, social and environmental objectives.

The development of the first creative economy strategy in 2012, led to important policy developments that positioned the cultural and creative sectors as pillars of economic development. With new investments directed towards creative start-ups and new policy competences such as design and video games, the creative economy managed to demonstrate the resilience of a developing sector. However, research shows that the gaps in the economic performance of different sub sectors are widening.

The period between 2015 and 2017 was characterised by the further strengthening of growth in the CCSs. Nevertheless, if we exclude the creative business services sub-sector, the more traditional CCSs registered an annual average decline of 4.1%. A more significant and related decline in relative terms was also recorded in the Arts sector.

These developments were, however, reflective of the performance in the film industry, primarily artistic services rendered to the film industry. The decline in the arts did not persist in 2017 when the sub-sector registered a strong growth of 19.4% in gross value added. This represented the strongest growth among the sub-sectors of the CCSs in that year but only led to a partial recovery following the previous year's decline. (Economic Policy Department, 2019)

Employment in the CCSs increased by a significant annual average rate of 6.8% over these two years, in line with recent trends. Notwithstanding the decline in gross value added in the Arts, the sub-sector registered the strongest growth in employment of 12.0%.

The research by the Economic Policy Department also suggests that despite the overall strong performance over the years, the CCSs are yet to mature and there is scope to further strengthen the indirect contribution of the CCSs, particularly the linkages with the various other industries in Malta and Gozo.

In order to retain the momentum on the creative economy, NCP 2021 calls on Malta Enterprise to lead the development of an updated creative economy strategy that builds on the current findings, the principles of this policy and the priority sectors that merit specific attention such as fashion, design, crafts and video games.

Malta Enterprise will continue leading CCS initiatives, schemes and incentives in collaboration with entities such as Arts Council Malta to promote the economic aspect of the sector and support the growth of creative enterprises.

NCP 2021 also recommends the integration of innovation and design in established set-ups. Promoting innovation and design could help induce new vigour in a business that is struggling to grow further. To address this, a support measure will be introduced to provide innovation and design incentives to help business access innovators and creative persons that may challenge their status quo.

Further research is needed to better quantify the contribution of specific sectors to the creative economy, such as archaeological monitoring or conservation of built heritage.

DECENTRALISATION AND DEVOLUTION TO REGIONAL AND LOCAL COUNCILS

The White Paper on Local Government Reform published in 2018 proposes measures for the assurance of Local Government autonomy and decentralization. This policy development will have an impact on cultural governance on a local and regional level.

In order to ensure that the process of decentralisation includes the cultural and creative sectors and empowers regional councils and local councils to engage in cultural governance, NCP 2021 calls on the development of distinctive regional cultural strategies that reflect the spirit of the reform, the cultural specificities of the regions and the objectives of this policy.

The regional dimension and the diversity within the regions of Malta and Gozo need to be carefully developed, embracing local cultural identities within an evolving multicultural environment. Regional cultural development will identify and valorise elements of distinctiveness and uniqueness in its various forms and expressions as well as promote a continuous process of evolution and change to enable culture to adapt to social changes and to effectively drive them.

In recent years, regional and local councils have become active players in cultural development. From numerous yearly festivals to ongoing initiatives for communities, Local Government has become an important stakeholder in culture and the arts. Several events are held by local councils in all types of cultural activities including commemoration days, agrarian feasts, historical re-enactments and drama, amongst others.

The cultural remit of Regional Councils and Local Councils will be widened to include, amongst others, improved resource management for local cultural infrastructure and cultural heritage, and initiatives for cultural innovation and community engagement.

NCP 2021 also recognises the need for the implementation of such regional cultural development strategies, by having coherent administrative procedures for the management and co-management of cultural events and

These include lifelong learning programmes which reflect the needs of the community, taking into consideration shifts in demographics and population in the last few years in different regions⁵. Specifically, in regions with a high concentration of non-Maltese residents (North, South Eastern, Central regions), the Regional Councils shall design programmes tailor-made for this shift with the objective to integrate all residents of the regions.

Albeit the distinctive characteristics of regions, this policy also supports measures for collaboration and networking of regions in their design of their cultural programmes and their role in the management of cultural heritage, their input in the restoration of facades and in their efforts for sustainable management of the cultural environment.

LOCALITY OF CULTURE AWARD

As part of a policy that promotes decentralisation and devolution to regional and local councils, a new programme will be developed to award a locality with the title of Locality of Culture. Open competition between towns and villages would boost cultural development on a local level by addressing the specific priorities of the locality, celebrating local identities and improving the wellbeing of its citizens and visitors.

PARTICIPATORY CULTURAL GOVERNANCE

A strong democracy, embedded in principles of cultural rights, should promote processes that engage citizens in cultural governance.

Malta's NCP 2021 affirms that by placing people and values at the core of its guiding principles, diverse communities shall be included in an open, participatory and effective process. The involvement of citizens in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of cultural policies and programmes will increase the awareness of the cultural values they represent. In addition, participatory cultural governance will build further trust between citizens and public cultural organisations and ensures transparency and accountability in public resources for the cultural and creative sectors.

⁵NZO, (2019) World Population Day: 2019. Available at: https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_C5/Population_and_Migration_Statistics/Documents/2019/News2019_108.pdf

This principle also reflects the importance given to participatory governance in the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). SDG 16.7 calls for global action on efficient governance as the basis of sustainable and more equal development 'to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels'.

In order to uphold this principle, Government shall ensure that participative processes in cultural governance, particularly to gender equality, are developed and promoted with the implementation of this policy. The principle of participatory governance is defined as governance responsibilities that are shared among different stakeholders, be they Regional Councils, Local Councils, public cultural organisations, non-governmental organisations, local communities or artists. It ultimately provides citizens with an opportunity to share control and power with the others, which represents a guarantee that they will be entirely included in decision making processes. Research also suggests that participatory cultural governance can also contribute to the development of 'cultural pluralism (aesthetic and multi-ethnic), creative autonomy, the increase and diversification of sources for financing culture, polycentric cultural development, encouraging cultural participation and cooperation' (Primorac and Obuljen Koržinek, 2016:4)

The Arts Council Malta Act introduced participatory governance practices in the articles that define the constitution of the Board and in the power to create expert groups. The Act stipulates that at least one of the members of the Board shall be selected from a list of at least five persons nominated by associations and constituted bodies representing professionals and practitioners active in the sectors. In addition, Arts Council Malta may appoint expert groups to advise the Council in response to specific matters related to the cultural and creative sectors and each expert group may perform other functions as the Board may specify in the instrument of appointment. SCH should be consulted and represented *ex-ufficio* on Arts Council Malta whenever there are elements of cultural heritage involved.

In the creation of new public cultural organisations, this Policy calls on such institutions to integrate participatory cultural governance within their legal and operational framework. It also encourages established public cultural organisations and agencies to integrate participatory cultural governance in their strategies and programmes as a deliverable of this policy.

As participatory cultural governance gains more importance in the strategic development of public cultural organisations and agencies, NCP 2021 draws on the good practice developed over the years by *Il-Karnival ta' Malta*. Although *Festivals Malta* has the public remit to oversee the overall organization of *Il-Karnival ta' Malta* with a designated artistic director, the co-curation of the Carnival programming is held with the participation of the Carnival Committee and the independent association of Carnival participants. This ensures that companies are directly involved in the execution, promotion and development of this traditional festival. NCP 2021 encourages and supports participatory practices that are not only limited to the curatorial aspects of cultural programmes or venues but that evolve into inclusive decision-making processes that provide further active participation of the artistic community, cultural operators, communities and citizens.

OUTCOMES

- 1 As part of Government's electoral programme to double the funding for culture, a minimum investment target of 2% of total government expenditure will be set as benchmark for the cultural and creative sectors.
- 2 Reaffirm the Arm's length principle in the governance of public cultural organisations and national cultural agencies.
- 3 Mainstream cultural policy in other national policies and strategies.
- 4 Develop inter-ministerial and inter-agency cooperation through the establishment of policy working groups.
- 5 Ensure that the role of the State as policy maker and investor in culture, as a public good, is used to leverage both public and private investment and to safeguard, promote and sustain the growth of the independent sector.
- 6 Call upon Arts Council Malta to evaluate the impact of the Create 2020 strategy and to set in motion the development of an updated strategy cycle based on the objectives of this policy.
- 7 Call upon Arts Council Malta to continue leading a network of all Public Cultural Organisations (PCOs) to improve inter-PCO collaboration.
- 8 Call upon the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage to research and publish the yearly status on cultural heritage, while also calling upon Government to continue to ensure that the SCH is adequately empowered and resourced to fulfill its functions .
- 9 Review the National UNESCO Commission and the UNESCO World Heritage Applications Steering Committee to place them on a sounder, effective, and more inclusive operational footing.
- 10 Evaluate the potential establishment of specialised judiciary to rule on matters of cultural heritage protection.
- 11 Establish a Review Commission, with the active participation of the SCH, to review existing legislation that has an impact on cultural heritage protection and make recommendations for its improvement.
- 12 Establish the Malta Craft Foundation and take appropriate measures to ensure that the regulatory processes under current legislation are updated to reflect this new policy direction.
- 13 Enact a legislative framework for the National Book Council outlining the objectives and guiding principles of the Council, introducing participatory governance from industry and guaranteeing the required autonomy to implement the relevant policies and programmes.
- 14 Ensure that all public funding programmes entrusted to a national council, commission or agency reflect the guiding principles and objectives outlined in this policy.
- 15 Ensure that all public funding programmes for culture and the arts will continue to follow a principle of open competition with a fair, accountable and transparent selection process by a pool of experts appointed through publicly known selection criteria.
- 16 Invest in capacity building of public sector employees operating in the cultural and creative sectors.
- 17 Call on Malta Enterprise to lead the development of an updated creative economy strategy that builds on the current findings, the principles of this policy and the priority sectors that merit specific attention such as fashion, design, crafts and video games.

- 18/ Malta Enterprise will lead CCS initiatives, schemes and incentives in collaboration with entities such as Arts Council Malta to promote the economic aspect of the sector and support the growth of creative enterprises, and collaboration with the SCH in matters that may have an impact on cultural heritage and the historic environment.
- 19/ Introduce innovation and design incentives to help businesses access innovators and creative persons that may challenge their business model and help them find creative solutions.
- 20/ Clarify the legal status of all PCOs and define the operational parameters to ensure their artistic autonomy.
- 21/ Consolidate the efforts of relevant public institutions in broadcasting and film to enter international markets through co-production deals and give international visibility of the local content.
- 22/ Commence a long-term process of decentralisation and devolution in cultural governance entrusted to regional councils and local councils through the development of distinctive regional cultural strategies that reflect the spirit of the Local Government reform, the cultural specificities of the regions and the objectives of this policy.
- 23/ Introduce a national competitive programme awarding the title for 'Locality of Culture'.
- 24/ Develop and promote participative processes in cultural governance as part of the implementation of this policy.
- 25/ Heritage Malta will pursue a number of strategic objectives in the coming years.



Concert by the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo : Darren Agius

CHAPTER 2

INCREASING CULTURAL ACCESS AND WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Haġar Qim is a heritage site frequented by visitors
Photo: Heritage Malta

Given their unparalleled value, heritage, culture and the arts can play a crucial role in augmenting wellbeing by mitigating the exclusion of people, lessening isolation and strengthening social cohesion. They also affect self-identity⁶ and support a sense of collective self⁷ by engendering greater sense of belonging and satisfaction⁸ with life in general.

Active inclusion enables everyone, including the most disadvantaged, to fully participate in society in all spheres and at all levels of engagement. Wider cultural participation that removes barriers, safeguards everyone's right to equal opportunities to enjoy their individual human rights and achieve their full potential, is the overarching priority for the NCP 2021.

Social inclusion is not about stigmatising those who need to be included, rather it is about challenging and changing exclusionary perceptions for the benefit of all communities and a more cohesive society. In light of dynamic economic and social challenges, demographic changes due to immigration and internal EU mobility that may question fundamental principles on a national and wider EU level, NCP 2021 affirms that it is now more necessary than ever to find the right tools to effectively combat exclusion and isolation, increase participation and facilitate social cohesion and wellbeing.

It is also relevant to keep in mind that beyond entertainment, with the rise of the new technologies, the knowledge economy and the realities of culture-led regeneration, culture is no longer simply an aspect of leisure time use but is also entrenched in the fabric of economic and daily life⁹.

NCP 2021 is, therefore, ambitious in its goals to increase access and widen cultural participation, inclusion and overall wellbeing. Its goal is to see more families with children, young people, women and elderly people reap the benefits of cultural participation. Equally, it wants to ensure wide access for those emergent communities who may not as yet be participating actively.

People may experience exclusion due to multiple factors such as race, ethnicity, age, place, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, language, class and socio-economic status. People experiencing exclusion can be more prone to isolation and marginalisation. It is important to keep in mind, that in contemporary societies exclusion can be simultaneously a process and a condition (Berndt & Collini 2013)¹⁰ resulting from multifaceted and interrelated changes in society that in turn bring about more disadvantages and problems. This is pertinent to the present realities, fashioned by de-industrialisation, unemployment, expired skill sets, aging populations, economic and migration issues, rapidly changing neighbourhoods which may have an impact on the resilience of communities and thus impact cohesiveness.

The Europe 2020 strategy agenda for growth and jobs cites the fight against exclusion and poverty as one of its targets with EU leaders committed to lifting 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion. The 2018 Employment and Social Developments in Europe review¹¹ confirms positive trends but highlights the increasing need for new skills and inclusion. On an EU level, 113 million people are at risk of poverty and social exclusion¹². The Eurostat Income and Living Conditions survey country statistics for Malta (2017) show that although there is a great improvement, 19.2% of the population is still at risk; with women, the unemployed, the elderly and children less than 18 years of age being the more at-risk sections of the population. Out of these, 22% are children and young people under the age of 18 and a further 26% are people over the age of 65.

It is therefore evident that a concerted effort has to be made so as to continue bringing down the numbers of those in or at risk of poverty and exclusion. As acknowledged in the National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion 2014-2024 and the Implementation and Evaluation Report for 2014-2016, culture has its part to play and Government will continue to support policy makers across sectors as well as cultural institutions to come together and create policies and mechanisms that work for the people who require them.

⁶Newman, A, Goulding, A, and Whitehead, C, Contemporary visual art and the construction of identity, maintenance and revision processes in older adults, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, International Journal of Heritage Studies, 2013

⁷Chatterjee HJ, Noble G. Museums, Health and Wellbeing. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013.

⁸Crypers K, Krokstad S, Holmen TL, et al. Patterns of receptive and creative cultural activities and their association with perceived health, anxiety, depression and satisfaction with life among adults: the HUNT study, Norway. J Epidemiol Community Health 2012;66:698-703. doi:10.1136/jech.2010.113571

⁹Luigi Sacco PI (2013) Culture 3.0: The impact of culture on social and economic development, & how to measure it. Scientific support for growth and jobs: Cultural and creative industries Conference Bruxelles, October 24, 2013

¹⁰Berndt, M. and Collini, L. 2013. Exclusion, marginalization and peripheralization. Working Paper 49. Berlin, Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning

¹¹Employment and Social Developments in Europe.2018

¹²<https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19719&langId=en>

¹³<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions/data/database>

This approach is highly recommended by the report of the OMC group for Culture as a tool for Social Inclusion (Workplan for Culture 2014-2018) that strongly advocates a cross-sectorial approach between culture and policy makers in other sectors such as the Social Welfare, Health, Education, Employment, Economy and Justice sectors to engender social inclusion and cohesion.

Government has prioritised participation, development of cultural rights, cultural socialisation and cultural inclusion. It has invested in and actively supports this through various incentives and public funding programmes, more specifically, Il-Premju tal-President għall-Kreativita, the Creative Communities funding programme; festivals such as Żigużajg Arts Festival for Children and Young People and the Culture Pass. In 2018, Government introduced a Heritage Passport that gives free access to Heritage Malta sites to a child and two accompanying adults, a policy initiative that together with Heritage Malta's open day initiatives increased opportunities for citizens to access these sites. The programme has also been extended to senior citizens.

It is nonetheless useful to note that the 2016 NSO survey on cultural participation found that over 30% of respondents still felt that most people are socially excluded from cultural opportunities and that a further 43% felt that public funding for the arts does not benefit them. These perceptions coupled with the tangible Eurostat figures on poverty and social exclusion in Malta need to be addressed and the NCP 2021 shall actively seek to change these perceptions.

The positive effects of cultural participation on general wellbeing can be observed in many Eurostat surveys on cultural participation and standard of living surveys¹³. Culture therefore needs to be present at the table as an equal partner with the other stakeholders in the coalition mitigating exclusion for the strengthening of cohesion and wellbeing.

Couched firmly therefore, within the framework of human and cultural rights, the five priorities of the work plan for culture and harnessing the innovative energy of the creative sector, NCP 2021 will further build on the foundations of the previous cultural policy document (2011). It shall prioritise cultural rights, children's right to culture, diversity, inclusion, gender equality, wellbeing and social cohesion.

Furthermore, there is evidence that higher cultural participation also has some bearing on the innovation capital of European Union Member States. In this respect, as a policy objective the NCP 2021 is keen to see cultural, social and content innovations, new processes and business model innovation in the cultural sector that will benefit communities and society in general. Innovation is not simply a prerogative of technology or science and harnessing the vibrant creativity of the cultural sector can only reap benefits for all people in Malta.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

In order to increase cultural access and widen participation for cohesion and wellbeing, through a cultural-rights lens, NCP 2021 strives to:

- Ensure that everyone, whoever they are, irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or religious belief, and from whichever walk of life they set out from, has access to culture and the arts, and the benefits and wellbeing they generate.
- Support culture's central role in the building of a fairer, more prosperous and resilient society.
- Increase and develop audiences in the arts – theatre, music, dance, film, visual arts and festivals.
- Increase readership and appreciation of literary works.
- Increase and develop visitor experiences for museums, libraries, archives and heritage sites.
- Increase active participation and involvement in cultural and artistic activities.
- Leverage cultural, social and content innovation for the benefit of communities and society.

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Culture_statistics_-_cultural_participation_by_socioeconomic_background

CULTURE IN SOCIAL INCLUSION, INTEGRATION AND DIVERSITY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Given the breadth and multi-level scenarios of social exclusion that exist, it would be less than appropriate for Government to assume that art and culture are the remedy for combating social exclusion on their own. However, in partnership with other sectors, culture and the arts can deliver a robust response to exclusion and the compound challenges presented by the complex nature of poverty, marginalisation, demographic changes, an increasingly aging population, and the dynamic flux of political, economic and technological landscapes. Government is fully committed to the fight against poverty and social exclusion, and the setting up of a structure to promote the strategy on social inclusion with the responsibility of designing policies, particularly for the prevention of poverty and implementing laws and wider monitoring procedures¹⁴. Culture clearly needs to be part of this process and bring the concept of cultural welfare to the table.

Diversity is a basic tenet of the European Union and Government is firmly of the view that the value of cultural diversity enriches our communities and society with added opportunities for development and understanding. Malta has a vibrant ecology of cultural expression that is firmly grounded in community based voluntary activity, strong affiliation with place and resilient community cohesion.

Deeper cooperation between Culture and the Human Rights and Integration Directorate, the Children’s Commissioner, the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability, the Commission for Active Ageing, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality and the Education sector will be encouraged to drive a rights and equality agenda for cultural policy. In line with the EU Work Plan for Culture, this approach would ensure the mainstreaming of a gender equality, migrant integration, disability, child, youth and active ageing perspective for culture policy and strategy.

There is a need for greater synergy between cultural heritage stakeholders and the Planning Authority, with a focus on the rehabilitation and revitalisation of traditional village cores through sensitive regeneration programmes in line with the provisions of the Declaration on the Preservation and Regeneration of Cultural Heritage in Historic Cities (UNESCO, 2014). This has an impact on the well-being of society as it creates more close-knit and thus resilient communities. Village-centred lifestyles and economies stimulate local identities and ease pressure on ODZ development, and reduce use of private cars.

These policy crossovers will be addressed through the direction of the Culture Directorate who shall work in close collaboration with the different Ministries to reach these aims.

ATTENDANCES TO CULTURAL EVENTS AND VISITS TO CULTURAL SITES

According to the 2015 EU-SILC ad-hoc module¹⁵ on social and cultural participation in terms of attendance, Malta falls below the EU-28 average on any cultural activity as per below:

	Any Cultural Activity	Cinema	Live Performances	Cultural Sites
EU-28 Average	64	46	43	43
Malta	51	34	30	26

Participation in cultural activities at least once in the previous 12 months, 2015 (% of population aged 16 and over)
Source: Eurostat

The attendance levels for Malta listed above are also indeed in line with the national Cultural Participation Survey of 2016 carried out by NSO¹⁶, albeit more specific categorisations of cultural activity were used in the latter which can partially explain the statistical variations. Malta’s barriers to attendance tend to be cited mostly as broadly being a lack of interest and time constraints (e.g. due to other commitments and responsibilities) and these tend to be above the EU-28 average.

¹⁴ L-Aqwa Żmien pg. 80, prop.29, Electoral Programme (2017)

¹⁵ Eurostat, EU-SILC 2015 (2017) - Cultural Statistics - frequency and obstacles in participation, accessed from: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Culture_statistics_-_frequency_and_obstacles_in_participation#Cultural_participation.C2.A0.E2.80.93.C2.A0attending_cultural_events_or_visiting_cultural_sites

¹⁶NSO, (2017) Cultural Participation Survey 2016

Lack of interest as a barrier is evident in both the EU-SILC figures (53.8% of Malta's population considers lack of interest as a main barrier compared with the EU average of 38.6%) and the national statistics (the majority of non-attendees to specific cultural activities state they are not interested). Meanwhile the national survey indicated that in 2016, 56.9% of Malta's population had stated that other commitments prevent them from attending cultural activities. While the EU-SILC 2015 does not directly address time as a barrier, it is included with "Other Reasons" for which Malta also surpasses the EU-28 average of 36% by 3.9 percentage points. On the other hand, financial reasons are the least likely to be considered as barriers to attendance in Malta, relative to other barriers (as per national survey) and other EU member states (as per the EU-SILC 2015).

Meanwhile, participation in traditional activities continues to dominate the cultural calendar of the Maltese people, like the annual week-long celebration of the patron saint of each town/village (festa), Carnival celebrations which take place before Lent, and local council festivities which include commemoration/celebration days organised by any of the 68 Local Councils in Malta and Gozo. The 2016 cultural participation survey shows that, 68% had attended a village festa, 52% a Good Friday Lenten procession, 33% a local council activity and 32% Carnival (Briguglio 2017).

NCP 2021 aspires to improve attendance for cultural events by addressing the barriers that are currently hindering people from attending specific art forms and cultural events.

This will require a concerted effort to integrate audience development in all relevant strategies and objectives of public funding and initiatives for culture and the arts in a long-term process that builds relationships with existing and potential audiences in ways which make the arts and culture relevant to people's lives.

VOLUNTEERING IN ARTS AND CULTURE

Various local communities in Malta and Gozo are at the heart of popular and traditional Maltese arts and culture. Across generations, local communities have built a rich cultural tradition on unstinting voluntary activity. 10% of respondents in the 2016 Cultural Participation Survey stated that they had volunteered with an arts, cultural or heritage organisation in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Malta's intangible cultural heritage, manifested through various local celebrations such as parish feasts, Good Friday processions and carnival, brings together members of the community in a collective manifestation expressed through various artistic and artisanal means. Statistics compiled from a survey among 90 band clubs carried out in 2018 by NSO indicated that in 2017 band clubs counted 27,326 members. Of these, 3,524 were resident or trainee band players. Just over a quarter of band club members were females. The highest female presence was registered among trainee band players, while the lowest was in band club committees (NSO 2018). Numerous public funding initiatives have been launched in recent years to support the purchase of musical instruments, digitization of music and restoration of artefacts. Such initiatives will continue to be sustained through this policy. In addition, support to improve the health and safety conditions for the manufacturing of fireworks will also be embedded as a policy deliverable.

The 2016 Cultural Participation Survey reveals that in the 12 months preceding the survey, 8.5% of respondents were actively involved in a parish feast, 5.1% in a Good Friday procession and passion plays and 2.5% in Carnival (NSO 2017).

Voluntary activity in arts and culture is also present through numerous amateur artistic groups in the field of drama, choral singing, historical re-enactments and folk dancing. The custodians of the vast majority of the 78 theatres surveyed in Spazji Teatrali (Farrugia & Buhagiar [eds], 2017) are volunteers, however, a decline in volunteering especially by young people and maintenance costs have led to most theatres to close down.

NCP 2021 reaffirms the importance of funding programmes such as the Theatre Spaces Funding Scheme that offers the financial means to make structural and other improvements in selected spaces, leading to the spaces becoming both functional and more professional and to encourage decentralization in the use of theatre spaces in Malta and Gozo by diversifying areas, audiences and opportunities. Such spaces as indicated in the policy chapter on the status of artists can also accommodate individual performers and performing arts practitioners including companies with rehearsal, workshop and performing spaces.

NCP 2021 affirms the importance of the Creative Communities fund as a flagship programme for community-led creative and artistic activities, primarily addressing local communities. It will continue to provide the opportunity for training, research and the development of artistic projects led by the community for the community, while celebrating cultural diversity.

Cultural heritage NGOs and their volunteers have also been contributing to the management of local heritage sites entrusted to them through guardianship deeds or other partnerships with Government and Local Councils. As outlined in the principles on participatory governance, NCP 2021 will further promote the importance of increased participation by cultural voluntary organisations in the leadership of arts and culture and in the proposed decentralisation efforts.

Whilst recognising the invaluable contribution volunteers and voluntary organisations in arts and culture give to the nation, NCP 2021 acknowledges that sustaining voluntary activity is a challenging endeavour. As dependence on private and public donations increases and specific sectors register a decline in volunteers, NCP 2021 is introducing volunteering in arts and culture as a cultural policy measure.

Reflecting upon the principles of the National Strategy on Volunteering 2019 – 2024 and the remit of the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector, NCP 2021 seeks to:

- 1 Safeguard the independence of voluntary arts organisations.
- 2 Promote the value and importance of volunteering for arts and culture.
- 3 Support platforms that provide volunteers and voluntary organisations in arts and culture with opportunities to share good practices, capacity building and improve collaborations.
- 4 Support training initiatives in volunteering with the aim of improving voluntary activity by underrepresented groups and attracting prospective volunteers.
- 5 Increase guardianship deeds and devolution of public sites to cultural voluntary organisations in collaboration with Regional and Local Councils.
- 6 Sustain public funding programmes to support voluntary cultural organisations address digitisation, innovation, health and safety and community engagement.
- 7 Streamline arts and culture in national programmes and funding initiatives for voluntary organisations.
- 8 Incentivise donations for voluntary cultural organisations.

INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING BY PUBLIC CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS AND HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS

While the role of culture for social inclusion, wellbeing and cohesion in partnership with other sectors is vital, the sector needs to acknowledge that exclusion is also present in the cultural field itself and reflected in how cultural value is consumed and how it is produced (O'Brien & Oakley, 2016)¹⁷.

This may be manifested in the form of artistic hierarchies, exclusive ingrained dispositions towards high versus low culture, programming practices or traditions together with accompanying economic and information barriers.





Public cultural organisations and heritage institutions therefore have a responsibility to widen access, increase diversity and ensure programming practices that are inclusive and reflect the changes in society.

SUSTAINABLE CULTURE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND WELLBEING

Apart from the more general Arts Council Malta funding programmes which also encourage projects with social inclusion dimensions, Il-Premju tal-President għall-Kreatività favours more creativity and arts driven projects proposed by organisations working with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. The Premju's mission statement states that its "aim is to engage these creative groups in creativity and arts-driven projects and thereby increase their level of integration and engagement in society". This is a successful programme that is well subscribed to, but it is also becoming increasingly obvious that for some NGOs this has become a lifeline from funding cycle to cycle. Given that the services offered by some of the NGOs are not available on a wider or state platform, it is vital that these organisations and their projects continue.

Effective arts programmes with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups require longer timeframes and better funding to provide the necessary time and space for organisations to adapt to the needs of the participants. For this reason, Il-Premju tal-President għall-Kreatività would require significant investment to support additional three-year projects with the possibility of renewal. On the other hand, one-year projects should continue to be included in the programme to provide the opportunity for new organisations to benefit from the programme through one-year pilot projects or to embark on a clearly defined one-year project in both scope and reach.

In order to support further sustainability in arts and heritage practices for social inclusion and wellbeing NCP 2021 proposes:

-  The establishment of a national platform for arts, cultural heritage and wellbeing, that brings together organisations, artists and heritage workers who are active in the field. The platform will strive to share good practices, advocate for arts and heritage in community, health and social practices, research and document activity in the field.
-  Capacity building and training opportunities for artists and heritage workers to work in communities and within health and social practices.
-  Capacity building and training opportunities for non-arts organisations working in the field of the programme to work with the arts and heritage.
-  A review of public funding programmes in order to ensure a more sustainable service provision that gives access to the more vulnerable groups in society.

APPLIED ARTS, HERITAGE AND ARTS THERAPIES IN COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES

The role of arts and culture is being increasingly recognised as a potent force in preventative health care, therapeutic alternatives and general wellbeing. The evidence for this has been demonstrated by the recorded outcomes of a broad range of practice internationally, a substantial body of academic research conducted in this area. The concept of wellbeing has come very much to the fore in the national policies of European Union member states and other European governments.

The interconnectedness of public health issues with other transversal societal factors and the need to focus on preventative and community-based healthcare, make a stronger case for advocating a trans-sectoral, cross-governmental approach to health promotion. This would entail addressing health care and well-being issues, most specifically with social solidarity, welfare and social development services.

In the field of arts and culture for health and wellbeing there is a broad range of practice - e.g. Arts and museums in a Healthcare environment, participatory arts and museums programmes, arts and heritage on prescription, art psychotherapy, dramatherapy, dance and movement therapy, music therapy, and expressive arts for wellbeing - that underscores the complexity of defining this area. NCP 2021 shall actively support research with stakeholders in this area to develop measures that tap into culture's potential to increase wellbeing not only from a therapeutic perspective in care settings but also on a wider community-based consideration.

2019 has been an important year for the Creative Arts Psychotherapists as their professions were recognised and will be protected under the Psychotherapies Professions Act. The legislation safeguards both the Creative therapists and people seeking their service. The next step would be to provide more formal, stable work for these professionals within public healthcare since the profession is currently dependent on project funding.

It is worthwhile to note that a small number of qualified creative arts psychotherapists are already within the healthcare system as part of the psychological services team as psychologist assistants. However, the current professional status and salary scale within the Public Sector does not reflect the specialised postgraduate qualifications required for creative psychotherapists to be warranted under the Psychotherapy Professions Act as registered psychotherapists with the Psychotherapy Professions Board. This situation often leads creative therapists to seek employment outside the national health care services for career progression.

In recent years, non-arts institutions in Malta have been implementing art and creativity, heritage interpretation, and, in some cases, therapeutic art activities or institutional environment enhancement initiatives in state hospitals, museums and heritage sites, care or correctional settings. These however are usually one-off projects that cannot be sustained due to lack of human resources and funding.

NCP 2021 calls for an action plan for cross sectoral partnerships to address the need for cultural inclusion and management in communities, hospitals, residential homes, museums and heritage sites, schools, prisons and other facilities that cater for the vulnerable or disadvantaged. To support this action plan, Government will further explore the possibility of a wellbeing fund and mechanism that can further its vision and leadership in this regard. The aim is to adopt a transversal mainstreaming approach to culture for health, wellbeing and social cohesion, at governmental, ministerial, institutional, local council and services level. This approach also takes into account that social inclusion is one of the eleven priorities for Cohesion Policy in 2014-2020 ("thematic objective 9") which is actively supported by the European Social Fund and the European Agenda for Culture and Council Work Plan for Culture 2019-23 which both prioritise the social dimension of culture.

ARTS AND HERITAGE ON PRESCRIPTION

There is a growing body of evidence which shows that different arts and heritage being prescribed have a positive impact on a variety of health conditions¹⁸. This includes self-esteem and confidence boosts, physical health improvements, better social connections and the acquisition of new skills.

NCP 2021 calls for the implementation of an arts and heritage on prescription policy within contemporary models of community health and wellbeing to support specific health conditions such as dementia and mental health, as well as more generally enhancing wellbeing and quality of life, health behaviours, including social engagement to lessen isolation and self-exclusion, especially amongst the elderly.

COMMUNITY CULTURAL SPACES

Challenges to the social fabric may appear through the reinforcing of differences and cultural boundaries, including those of place, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, disability, ageism, religion and perceptions of the radical other, alien to one's culture, community and value system.

¹⁸ Lackoi, K., Patsou, M., and Chatterjee, H.J. et al. (2016) Museums for Health and Wellbeing. A Preliminary Report, National Alliance for Museums, Health and Wellbeing. Available at: <https://museumsandwellbeingalliance.wordpress.com>

It is here that cross sectoral policy action needs to harness the possibilities offered by the cultural sector particularly to combat racism, polarisation at grass root level by addressing integration issues and a more nuanced reading of the communities who may feel challenged by this. The Migrant Integration Strategy 2020¹⁹ published by the then Ministry for Justice, Equality and Governance outlines Government framework for the integration of migrants settled in communities. The role for culture here is ample and requires a deeper partnership with the Human Rights and Integration Directorate for more sustainable and long-term projects that will facilitate integration and cohesion through culture and the arts.

The NCP 2021 proposes the creation of socio-aesthetic community spaces and events where community participants and artists can explore individual ways of action and the shaping of a collective, collaborative process. This is where newly emergent and established community members can come together to build stronger ties and cohesive communities through culture.

The identification and development of community cultural spaces or cultural hubs on a local or regional basis should focus on underutilized resources in localities and serve as de-centralised multi-genre activity centres for cultural and creative practices.

COMMUNITY CULTURAL MEDIATORS

Government recognises the invaluable role of NGOs, Local Councils, cultural societies, religious organisations and community leaders and representatives in sustaining dialogue and cohesion. It is vital therefore to introduce the role of community cultural mediators at the local government level that can facilitate creative activity to reflect the more diverse cultures in our communities. The NCP 2021 looks at investment and capacity building at this level in order to ensure stronger civic engagement. Postgraduate programmes in anthropology, archaeology, education, history of art, history, museum studies, and related disciplines are encouraged to contribute to the development of these competencies in tomorrow's professionals.

ACTIVE AGEING

The publication of the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014-2020²⁰ outlines the framework to encourage changes in perception and attitudes with regards to elderly people and how they can remain active participants in communities and society. The document highlights that by 2050, the percentage of elderly people will double to 28.2% of the population, from the present 16.3%. It is therefore vital that the cultural sector furthers its engagement with this sector of society to ensure continuing access to culture and the arts. As cited earlier, the Eurostat Income and living condition statistics for Malta show that the elderly are likely to be more at risk. They are also more likely to be overrepresented in hospitals and other care giving facilities or more subject to isolation in the community.

NCP 2021 will, in line with the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing, look to support Public Cultural Organisations, museums and historical sites, libraries, archives, cinemas, visual arts galleries and theatres to make programming policies that further make them accessible to this sector of society.

Initiatives such as the Heritage Malta Senior Passport will be extended to the arts, targeting proactive cultural participation initiatives and audience engagement programmes that reflect the interests, aspirations and lifestyle of the elderly. This will require PCOs to adapt and create programmes and events that address both physical and digital accessibility.

Through closer partnership with the National Commission for Active Ageing, NCP 2021 will also look at an action plan for community engagement and wellbeing through culture for active ageing. The action plan will seek to improve active participation and leverage traditional knowledge and collective memory.

¹⁹ INTEGRATION = BELONGING Migrant Integration Strategy & Action Plan Vision 2020 Ministry of European Affairs and Equality (2017)
²⁰ National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014-2020 Commission for Active Ageing

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities²¹ which Malta ratified in 2012 was a guiding document for Malta's first cultural policy in 2011. The 2011 Cultural Policy ushered in positive changes in how people with disabilities access and participate in culture in Malta. Notwithstanding the positive outcomes, there are still some further hurdles to overcome. It is important that we now go beyond the focus of physical access to cultural venues and ensure better and wider access to cultural materials in accessible formats and through new technologies and digital platforms, particularly for audio-visual media, TV and cinema content, and libraries. Public cultural organisations should also reflect this inclusive ethos more visibly in their programming content. NCP 2021 shall also look beyond simple access to culture for people with disabilities as consumers or as therapeutic intervention. Inspired by the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413) and the framework of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, and its second priority, establishing an ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content, NCP 2021 shall look to increase the participation of creatives with disabilities so that they and their work are equally represented and visible across the sectors.

In order to support this measure, NCP 2021 envisions that dedicated infrastructural and financial support is provided for arts and cultural organisations providing training and artistic opportunities for disabled artists and disabled people pursuing artistic and cultural experiences, including integrated work with non-disabled artists. This policy also seeks to widen access to students with disability who may wish to join the Malta School for Visual and Performing Arts.

In addition, NCP 2021 calls on Public Cultural Organisations and cultural institutions, through the appropriate training of staff and investment in resources to mainstream cultural participation and access for people with disabilities in their programmes. The right to participation in arts and culture should address the capacity of people with disabilities in their roles as producers and consumers of cultural content.

Whereas this policy favours a process of inclusivity in programming it also acknowledges the need for specific support services to ensure access and participation. This includes amongst others, relaxed and signed performances, specialised works for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and expanding digital services to provide the best possible cultural experience. Resources for disabled artists including backstage facilities, rehearsal spaces, studios and performance spaces should also reflect this mainstreaming policy.

EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG TALENT

It is increasingly evident that Maltese children under the age of 16 who show exceptional prodigy in the arts are seeking to audition and enrol at prestigious institutions abroad at an early age. Families seeking the best possible outcome for their talented children are facing difficulties and financial hardship to realise this objective. Proactive inclusion therefore necessitates consideration and provision for the exceptionally talented too. Exceptional talent equally needs recognition, nurturing and support.

To this effect, the NCP 2021 proposes the allocation of financial support to those children under the age of 16 who gain entry to prestigious schools, conservatories or academies abroad.

THE MALTESE LANGUAGE

Even if Maltese is a majority language within the Maltese islands (NSO Participation Survey 2017), it is a minority language in a European and global context, more so in the digital domain. The widespread usage of varieties of English also has bearing on the functional use of Maltese at a local level. The functional use for English is reinforced by social desirability factors, internal EU mobility, robust tourism and weak enforcement of bilingual legislation and lack of digital tools for Maltese. That language can be a formidable barrier to participation in cultural and the arts, should not be underestimated. The NSO Cultural Participation Survey (2017) found that most of the respondents favoured speaking, writing, listening to the radio, and watching live theatre productions in the Maltese language. They also expressed an overall preference (57%) for Maltese art and culture.

21 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

NCP 2021 shall ensure that the Maltese language is supported by sustained and increased functional use at all levels in Public Broadcasting, Public Cultural Organisations, Heritage sites and museums, libraries and archives, as well as for communication purposes within government entities among their internal and external clients.

NCP 2021 supports the leadership role of the Broadcasting Authority to improve the quality of the use of the Maltese language in public broadcasting through training initiatives for journalists, producers and presenters, and legislative measures for broadcasters.

NCP 2021 recommends more investment in libraries and to ensure that the National language is promoted via adequate literature grants, use of Maltese in media, education support, research and more urgently through digital resource tools and infrastructure. As online content in Maltese continues to increase at a steady rate, investment and support for an online Spellchecker in Maltese is urgently required.

In addition, the teaching of Maltese language and literature for the Maltese Diaspora will become a priority in the provision of cultural services to the community as part of the internationalisation objectives of this policy.

NCP 2021 acknowledges that the national language also has its role to play in cohesion, as it is the preferred language for speaking (67%)²². It also shall take into account the upward shift in immigration which is also reflected in the increase of foreign nationals in education (6.7%)²³, the majority of which were EU nationals. During academic year 2014/2015, foreigners accounted for 6.7 % of the total students enrolled in formal education.

The NCP 2021 therefore recommends the setting up of a children's literature and storytelling centre with emphasis on Maltese oracy skills. This infrastructure can reinforce the functional use for Maltese as a tool for creativity. A national children's literature and storytelling centre would also be of benefit for wider migrant inclusion and integration policy framework direction. The centre can provide a socio-aesthetic space for learning and creativity that in turn fosters greater cohesion.

NCP 2021 supports the leadership role of the Broadcasting Authority to improve the quality of the use of the Maltese language in public broadcasting through training initiatives for journalists, producers and presenters, and legislative measures for broadcasters.

DIGITAL LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

Government is committed to facilitate the development and distribution of language tools to support the use of Maltese as a medium for teaching and learning and therefore widening take-up of ICT in the Maltese language ²⁴.

The digital language vitality of any language is the degree to which that language is present, used and usable over the Internet and digital devices (PCs as well as mobile phones, smartphones, tablets, game consoles, Internet TV etc.). Maltese has restricted functional use across the digital domain due to scarcity of infrastructure and resource which are heavily weighted in favour of English.

Given that digital tools for Maltese are scarce, speakers and users of Maltese are facing exclusion due to the current trajectories of digital development. They will be finding themselves steadily excluded from using their own language in an increasingly digitised society. A language that is excluded from the digital environment is at a disadvantage as its usage becomes even more restricted. In order to address this matter, NCP 2021 recommends that the Malta Games Fund prioritises funding for Maltese tools in game development and edutainment.

To this goal the NCP 2021 also recommends more involvement of NGOs who work towards the strengthening of the Maltese language. Furthermore, Malta seeks membership to CLARIN - the European Research Infrastructure for Language Resources and Technology that could provide needed support to accelerate the development of tools for the Maltese language.

²² Cultural Participation Survey NSO (2017)

²³ https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/population-demographic-situation-languages-and-religions-49_en

National Digital Strategy (2014-2020) Digital Malta

²⁴ <https://digitalmalta.org.mt/en/Documents/Digital%20Malta%202014%20-%202020.pdf>

CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR WELLBEING AND COHESION

Cultural Heritage can play an important part to help people understand more about themselves and others. It can frequently act to bring all parts of the community together. The Special Eurobarometer on Europeans and Cultural Heritage (2017)²⁵ found that around 55% of people in Malta think that cultural heritage is important to them personally with 56% and 60% who also think cultural heritage is important for their community and region respectively. Overall, a total of 60% think it is important for Malta. However, more relevantly for this culture and wellbeing focus, 73% of people in Malta think that living close to places related to cultural heritage can improve people's quality of life.

Participation in cultural heritage projects has the power to develop strong connection between individuals and groups. The NCP 2021 will actively support and encourage heritage institutions to be self-reflexive, more analytical of their role to ensure that heritage is approached critically as a dialogue between past and present.

Government has recognised the value of intangible heritage and its significance to our identity and more inclusive communities. In 2017, the Maltese Parliament unanimously approved the ratification of the 2003 UNESCO Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Government further consolidated this commitment by the setting up of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Board to implement the convention.

The NCP 2021 would like to further this policy direction where more heritage and public cultural organisations engage with and support traditions, rituals, festive events, knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts which present people as active makers of heritage. It shall encourage the perception of heritage as shared memory and its role to produce cultural diversity as a common good rather than just as an act of group recognition. The policy will strive for the legitimisation and representation of minority and community perspectives in the heritage preserved.

In this respect NCP 2021 advocates a more tangible policy that safeguards those intangible heritage skills that very often have a long association and narrative with specific communities.

To this effect NCP 2021 proposes that a knowledge acquisition fund and apprenticeship scheme for Intangible Heritage knowledge transfer is established to encourage master artisans to share their knowledge with apprentices. Those crafts that are considered at high risk will be prioritised. This is necessary to stem the irreplaceable loss of knowledge and master skills. The standout case here is the dire state of the traditional Maltese wooden boat building skills where the last generation of master craftsmen is passing away without any incentive to pass on their irreplaceable knowledge. Given its value as an identifier of Maltese heritage and culture, it is not enough to preserve old boats for posterity's sake but to ensure the survival of the boat building craft itself.

OUTCOMES

-  Ensure that all public programmes, initiatives and strategies for culture and the arts reflect the principle of cultural rights irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs.
-  Prioritise audience development to improve current attendance levels and aspire towards reaching a European average in attendance to live performances, cinema, visits to museums and heritage sites.
-  Integrate culture in social inclusion, integration and diversity policies and strategies.
-  Acknowledge and promote the value created by volunteers and voluntary organisations in arts, culture and heritage, and safeguard their independence in activism and non-governmental activity.
-  Support platforms that provide opportunities for volunteers and voluntary organisations and improve collaborations.

²⁵ https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/toolkits/special-eurobarometer-europeans-and-cultural-heritage_en

- 6 Support training initiatives in volunteering with the aim of improving voluntary activity by underrepresented groups and attracting prospective volunteers
- 7 Increase guardianship deeds of cultural heritage sites, and devolution of other public properties and venues to cultural voluntary organisations in collaboration with Regional and Local Councils.
- 8 Sustain public funding programmes that support voluntary cultural organisations in addressing digitisation, innovation, training, conservation, heritage interpretation, health and safety and community engagement.
- 9 Streamline arts and culture in other national programmes and funding initiatives for voluntary organisations.
- 10 Incentivise donations for voluntary cultural organisations.
- 11 Ensure that programming including commissioning and interpretation of content, objects and sites by Public Cultural Organisations and heritage institutions are inclusive and diverse.
- 12 Establish a national platform for arts, cultural heritage and wellbeing, that brings together organisations and artists who are active in the field. The platform will strive to share good practices, advocate for the arts in community, health and social practices, research and document activity in the field.
- 13 Invest in capacity building and training opportunities for artists to work in communities and within health and social practices.
- 14 Invest in capacity building and training opportunities for non-arts organisations working in the field of the programme to work with the arts.
- 15 Review public funding programmes for arts and culture in order to provide a more sustainable service provision that gives access to the more vulnerable groups in society.
- 16 Develop an action plan and a funding mechanism for cross sectoral partnerships to address the need for cultural inclusion and management in communities, hospitals, residential homes, museums and heritage sites, schools, prisons and other facilities that cater for the vulnerable or disadvantaged.
- 17 Introduce the services of Creative Arts Psychotherapists within public healthcare.
- 18 Implement an arts and heritage on prescription policy within contemporary models of community health and wellbeing to support specific health conditions such as dementia and mental health, as well as more generally enhancing wellbeing and quality of life, health behaviours, including social engagement to lessen isolation and self-exclusion, especially amongst the elderly.
- 19 Support the creation of socio-aesthetic community spaces and events where community participants and artists can explore individual ways of action and the shaping of a collective, collaborative process.
- 20 Introduce the role of community cultural mediators at local governmental and regional level who can facilitate creative activity to reflect the more diverse cultures in our communities.
- 21 Introduce the competencies required for community cultural mediators in existing graduate degree programmes in related disciplines.
- 22 Introduce an Arts Passport for senior citizens on the same lines as Heritage Passport
- 23 In line with the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing, support Public Cultural Organisations, museums and historical sites, libraries, archives, cinemas, visual arts galleries and theatres to make programming policies that promote active ageing.

24/ Provide dedicated infrastructural and financial support for arts and cultural organisations providing training and artistic opportunities for disabled artists and disabled people pursuing artistic and cultural experiences, including integrated work with non-disabled artists.

25/ Mainstream cultural participation and access for people with disabilities through the appropriate training of staff, investment in resources and provision of services such as relaxed and signed performances and expanding digital services to provide the best cultural experience for all.

26/ Provide support to children of exceptional talent under the age of 16 who gain entry to prestigious schools, conservatories or academies abroad.

27/ Improve the quality of the use of Maltese language in public broadcasting through training initiatives for journalists, producers and presenters and legislative measures for broadcasters.

28/ Increase Maltese language content funded through public funding programmes.

29/ Support the creation of an online Spellchecker in Maltese.

30/ Set up a children's literature and storytelling centre with emphasis on Maltese oracy skills.

31/ Include the creation of Maltese tools in game development and edutainment.

32/ Seek membership to CLARIN - the European Research Infrastructure for Language Resources and Technology to accelerate the development of tools for the Maltese Language.

33/ Engage with and support traditions, rituals, festive events, knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts which present people as active makers of heritage.

34/ Establish a knowledge acquisition fund and apprenticeship scheme for intangible heritage knowledge transfer to encourage master artisans to share their knowledge with apprentices.

Valletta Pageant of the Seas, organised by Valletta Cultural Agency –
Photo: Jonathan Borg



CHAPTER 3

ELEVATING THE
STATUS OF THE
ARTIST AND
PROFESSIONALS
IN CULTURAL
HERITAGE AND
CREATIVE SECTORS

A performance by Żfin Malta



NCP 2021 serves as an overarching instrument to ensure a sustainable and effective recovery of the cultural and creative sectors in the aftermath of several challenges that have hit the artists and professionals in cultural and creative sectors during the pandemic. The pandemic highlighted those pre-existing conditions that were exacerbated during the crisis.

Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021 recognises the central role of artists in the creation and production of a diversity of cultural expressions. Artists provide the intellectual, aesthetic and critical stimuli that inspire change and shape a creative future for Malta. Whilst ensuring that artists and their work is respected and celebrated, NCP 2021 serves as a guarantor for the protection of their rights. Reflecting upon the UNESCO 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, NCP 2021 has the objective to improve the professional, social and economic status of artists as well as environmental sustainability.

In the past decade, substantial research has been conducted to measure various aspects of the status of the artist in Malta. Whereas findings in various studies indicate an overall positive performance and growth of Malta's cultural, heritage and creative sectors, in certain instances also outperforming the rest of the economy, specific attention is to be given to the arts and the media and the working conditions of professionals working in the field.

Most professionals in the cultural, heritage and creative sector operate through small enterprises, often in an individual capacity as a freelancer. These professionals face a number of challenges which limit the full pursuit and exploration of the potential of their life vocation. Their distribution of income ranges from a large number of 'amateur' artists who actually subsidise their artistic creations and often yield negative turnover and a small number of 'professional' artists who earn significantly higher-income levels²⁶. Devoting time to artistic creation is in itself welfare enhancing, which increases the artists' utility.

Thus, artists are prepared to subsidise their artistic creations in exchange for the utility that they get. However, this is only possible if they have a primary source of income, and this often leads artists to operate on a part-time basis as indicated in Table 1 below or on an amateur level.

Employment registration under the creative, arts and entertainment category indicates that this is predominantly characterised by self-employment. The latest employment figures indicate that there are 805 full-time employees, of which 414 are self-employed and 1,205 part-time employees registered under the NACE economic activity of creative, arts and entertainment activities. Employment in publishing activities and in motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities are exclusively within the private sector with full-time employment registering 908 and 440 full-time employees respectively.

Table 1: Registered Employment Data for November 2019 sub-divided by employment type, sex and region

Nace	Nace Description	Employment Type	Sex		Region	
			Males	Females	Malta	Gozo
58	Publishing activities	Full-time	681	227	879	29
		Part-time only	50	69	114	5
		Part-time as a secondary job	88	42	117	13
59	Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities	Full-time	312	128	426	14
		Part-time only	71	51	115	7
		Part-time as a secondary job	128	47	163	12
60	Programming and broadcasting activities	Full-time	174	91	257	8
		Part-time only	42	29	67	4
		Part-time as a secondary job	76	38	109	5
90	Creative, arts and entertainment activities	Full-time	471	334	770	35
		Part-time only	241	292	494	39
		Part-time as a secondary job	405	267	618	54
91	Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities	Full-time	290	160	405	45
		Part-time only	26	46	70	2
		Part-time as a secondary job	35	13	45	3

²⁶ Creative Economy Working Group (2013) Creative Economy Strategy, Ministry of Finance and Economy [https://www.artscouncilmalta.org/files/uploads/misc/PART%201%20%20Preface%20and%20Creative%20Economy%20Report%20\(8\).pdf](https://www.artscouncilmalta.org/files/uploads/misc/PART%201%20%20Preface%20and%20Creative%20Economy%20Report%20(8).pdf)

Table 2: Registered full-time employment for November 2019 by economic sector and self-employed

Source : Jobsplus

Nace	Nace Description	Economic Sector		
		Private Sector	Public Sector	Self-Employed
58	Publishing activities	908	0	63
59	Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities	440	0	113
60	Programming and broadcasting activities	157	108	5
90	Creative, arts and entertainment activities	617	188	414
91	Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities	107	343	21

Although it is very common for artists to hold multiple jobs, even in sectors outside the cultural and creative industries, NCP 2021 acknowledges that instances of irregular working conditions, unpaid work and precarious employment need to be addressed together with the overall support framework that improves the status of the artist and the cultural worker. It is for this reason that public investment in the arts, the media and heritage, including grants and public commissions must address such concerns, providing a relative measure of production and output that sustains the conditions of professionals working in the field.

In improving the economic status of the professionals working in the arts, media, and heritage, Malta’s cultural ecology must address both cultural professionals who are full-time equivalent economic operators generating income that is mainly derived from artistic practice and others whose economic activity is derived from non-artistic sectors but who still produce economic activity through their work in the arts, the media and heritage.

Educational services and professional training in arts and culture require attention since they have an impact on the professionalisation of the sectors.

Whereas in comparison to other EU nations, (Eurostat 2018) Malta registers the third highest cultural employment in the EU, it also registers one of the lowest percentage of persons with tertiary education in cultural employment and is one of the countries with the largest gender disparities in full-time cultural employment. Malta registers an above EU average in cultural employment (5.2% of all employment) and of young people aged 15 to 29 in cultural employment, with a share of 24%.

50% of all artists and writers in Malta registered in full time employment are self-employed, compared to the 12% of total employed in Malta registered as self-employed. This data highlights increased employment over the years, the propensity for self-employment status in sectors like the arts, gender disparity and a lower than EU average level of educational attainment.

In fulfilling the objectives of this policy, NCP 2021 acknowledges the importance of the ratification of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Paris, 20 October 2005) and calls for immediate action to ensure an active implementation status with effective reporting mechanisms.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Reflecting upon the principles of cultural rights, NCP 2021 affirms and protects:

- the freedom of the press as the fourth pillar of democracy;
- the right of artists to freedom of expression;
- the right of associations representing artists and related professions to be, wherever relevant, recognised in law and to promote the professional and socio-economic interests of their members;
- the right of associations representing artists and related professions to participate in public cultural governance and platforms of constituted bodies; and,
- the right of artists to have access to platforms in which they may express their views on their status and on any other questions concerning them.

Through NCP 2021, direction on the status of the artists is being provided throughout the policy document for the implementation of measures related to training, employment, income and tax conditions, mobility and freedom of expression. The policy also recognises the right of artists to be organised in professional organisations that can represent and defend the interests of their members.

SETTING UP A NATIONAL EMERGENCY CULTURAL FUND

NCP 2021 calls for the setting up a National Emergency Cultural Fund for forms of compensation, as an insurance for the cultural and creative sectors funded through various income sources from Public Cultural Organisations and Agencies – e.g. annual savings, a percentage from ticket income etc. This can help in preparing for other future crises.

LOAN PROVISION AND GAURANTEE FACILITIES

Access to finance remains one of the main hurdles for the growth of creative enterprises. This policy will continue to support creative and cultural businesses and employees through strengthened loan provision such as low-interest credit with preferential support to people active in the CCS and guarantee schemes, income support, and flexible mechanisms, reducing economic and administrative burdens.

INCOME AVERAGING MECHANISM

As outlined in the Government's 2017 electoral programme, an income averaging mechanism will be introduced for artists, enabling them to average profits from the sale of works of art for 3 years. This measure is being introduced to even out the fluctuating income streams of practicing artists.

REDUCED RATE OF 7.5% INCOME TAX FOR ARTISTS

In order to incentivise more artists to engage professionally in the arts, a reduced rate of 7.5%, as announced in the 2017 electoral programme, will be introduced for artists with economic activity in the sector.

VAT RATE ON ARTS AND CULTURE

In 2008 payment of VAT on the renting of space for artistic and cultural activities, as well as on entrance tickets for museums, art exhibitions, concerts and theatres was set at 5%. In addition, all training in the arts shall be exempt from VAT, as long as this will be provided by organisations which are accredited in the Register for Accreditation in the Training of the Arts. As from 1 January 2019, the VAT rate on e-books was reduced to 5%, thereby aligning it to the VAT rate on books on physical media.

NCP 2021 calls for a review of the current VAT mechanisms to ensure that electronic music events are not disregarded as music events. It also calls for VAT on cinema attendances to be considered at the same rate of a cultural event, at par with other EU countries.

QUOTA FOR HOME-GROWN MUSIC ON BROADCAST RADIO

Music created in Malta has over the years demonstrated levels of excellence often reaching international recognition across various genres. However, data reveals that only a small percentage of music aired on radio in Malta originates from Malta. In order to provide both listeners and artists with increased exposure of home-grown music a minimum quota of 15% will be set for national radio stations as part of their public service obligation. This will include songs with Maltese lyrics and any music instrumental or otherwise, in any other language, composed, written or performed by a citizen or resident of Malta. Private radio stations which operate on a national level and licensed by the Broadcasting Authority, should include as well a quota of home-grown music of 15%.

ROYALTIES FOR ARTISTS

Intellectual property rights universally enjoyed by artists prevent unauthorised exploitation of their creations and provide them with a right to seek compensation for their work. Royalties payable to artists either through mechanisms of public-lending or collective management organisations, remain a fundamental policy principle and international legal obligation for financial compensation to artists. The implementation of the Copyright Directive 2019 will deliver the effective flow of royalties from online platforms to creators.

Malta has recognised the importance of incentivising income derived from royalties. In January 2010 a tax exemption on qualifying royalties on patents was introduced and extended to copyright in 2012. This measure ensures that royalties, and similar income such as advances, derived from patents in respect of inventions and copyrights, even where derived in the course of a trade or business, are exempt from income tax. NCP 2021 reaffirms the importance of this measure which extends protection to literary and artistic works in the widest possible sense for the benefit of all artists earning any income through royalties.

Information about intellectual property rights, relevant legislation such as the Malta Copyright Act and EU directives and related mechanisms on royalties and digital technologies, especially for artists, remains sparse and irregular. NCP 2021 calls on the Comptroller of Intellectual Property, Arts Council Malta, the National Book Council, Public Broadcasting Services and collecting societies to join forces in designing and implementing a regular promotional and training programme for artists, publishers and producers on copyright and related matters. This programme should also include an extensive sensitisation programme aimed at children and young people, the general public and public entities, specifically on anti-piracy for audio-visual content.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSITARY

NCP 2021 proposes the setting up of a copyright depositary. This initiative will provide a holder of a copyright work with the means of depositing the work with a local authority not only for posterity purposes but also to provide such copyright holders with a source of evidence of the ownership of the work.

NON-AGRICULTURAL GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS

The authenticity of Maltese artisanal products remains a major concern in efforts to protect genuine products, to safeguard their value and heritage and to encourage the transfer of traditional knowledge. In order to address this challenge, the Comptroller for Intellectual Property office set up a GI register for non-food products in crafts and artisanal works. A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used to indicate that a product has a specific geographical origin and possesses a certain reputation or qualities due to that place of origin. This will give artisans the possibility of registering their craft or artisanal product according to defined standards and quality marks as a GI would render a form of certification that a product carrying this mark can be classified as an authentic product made in Malta.

SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING MALTESE ARTISANAL FOOD PRODUCTS

NCP 2021 will safeguard and promote Maltese artisanal food products and celebrate their cultural value through agrarian festivals such as L-Imnarja and other local festivals. Traditional food will be given priority through curated events and supported through this policy's commitments on intangible heritage.

NCP 2021 will also promote the inclusion of Maltese artisanal food products as a requirement and priority in the procurement process and licensing of public events at both national and local level.

BASIC INCOME DURING SABBATICAL FOR ARTISTIC RESEARCH

Research and innovation are the lifeline for the advancement of the arts in Malta. Artists working professionally in the sector may find it financially challenging to engage exclusively in artistic research for a significant period of time without compromising their income and financial commitments. NCP 2021 firmly believes in the importance of artistic research and the need for artists to renew and reflect on their craft and practice. A policy measure, managed by Arts Council Malta, will be introduced through NCP 2021 to support practicing artists pursue a sabbatical of up to one year with a basic income, pro-rata of employment status and number of projects created, and provided as a subsidy to support the artist during the period of the sabbatical.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NCP 2021 acknowledges the importance of the Professional Development Grant by Arts Council Malta to support the continuous professional development of Maltese or Malta-based artists and cultural operators seeking to engage in short term professional training to improve their skills and advance their specialisation. Through increased investment in the programme and further training and professional development opportunities, artists will continue to foster excellence in the arts and advance their knowledge and capabilities.

The Malta Arts Scholarship scheme will also remain a flagship initiative to support individuals who are exceptionally talented in the promotion of professional performance specialisation in the arts. NCP 2021 recommends that the budget allocated for these scholarships is increased substantially, considering the fact that after BREXIT, fees for courses in the UK, where most of Maltese opt to go and study, are likely to be increased for non-UK residents.

This policy calls for synergies between the Ministries for Education and that for Culture to ensure that overlapping interests are streamlined, thus securing joint policies and programmes for professional development and better disbursement of public funds.

PUBLIC CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS AS INVESTORS IN THE ARTS AND ARTISTS

Public Cultural Organisations and other public cultural entities have a public remit to champion and advance the arts and serve as investors in arts and artists. This policy reaffirms the commitment of Public Cultural Organisations to guarantee and safeguard freedom of expression for all artists engaged in temporary or permanent contracts. NCP 2021 calls on Public Cultural Organisations and other public cultural entities to commit to fair and equitable contractual agreements for all artists and creative professionals engaged in any commissioned, programmed, produced or co-produced project. This policy measure includes the provision of professional fees and a favourable working environment, timely payments and sufficient health and safety protection.

BOOSTING QUALITY IN TELEVISION BROADCASTING

A 2019 report by the Broadcasting Authority recognises the importance of quality in local television. The report provides a qualitative analysis of Maltese television, focusing on content, programming, scheduling, technical and visual quality and other features that impact quality transmission. Having considered the recommendations of the report, NCP 2021 proposes a series of policy measures aimed at boosting quality in broadcasting.

Due consideration will be given to amend the Broadcasting Act to establish National Minimum Criteria for television broadcasting. These criteria will be set as requirements for all licensed broadcasters and monitored by the Broadcasting Authority to ensure that all licensed stations reach such criteria prior to the renewal of the licence.

NCP 2021 acknowledges the contribution of KulturaTV as a funding programme that supports the development of cultural and creative content on private broadcasting stations in order to enhance the quality of television programming in Malta. Such programmes merit further investment to ensure that audio visual productions by independent audio-visual companies who often lack access to private funding, have sufficient resources to reach high-quality content, especially when targeting difficult productions, opportunities in new technologies such as artificial intelligence, works for young audiences, international distribution and co-productions. This programme should in due time be extended to content on online media broadcasting

The Broadcasting Authority will set up a Broadcasting Academy to provide, in collaboration with educational institutions, accredited and specialised technical programmes that address capacity building in the sector and continuous professional development.

The public broadcaster will continue to play an important role as commissioning agent for audio-visual content. Such content, especially for drama, is often produced or co-produced by small independent audio-visual companies with limited resources and timeframes. In order to mitigate this challenge, NCP 2021 calls for the public broadcaster to issue programme statements of intent with realistic timeframes and conditions that reflect industry standards.

Also, it is being recommended that the Public Broadcaster should not restrict its programming structures scrupulously governed by its Programme Statement of Intent regime, but opens up to a policy that includes direct commissioning of programmes to individual content providers or Production Houses, especially in the case of specialised programme genres like material for children.

In addition, in order to improve the presence of culture and the arts in public broadcasting, NCP 2021 calls for the introduction of a culture editor with the responsibility of securing diverse and quality programming about culture and the arts, on both TVM stations.

The proposed changes within this policy will also need to be reflected in an updated public service obligation policy for public broadcasting.

ESTABLISH THE INSTITUTE OF THE MOVING IMAGE

Digitalisation is fundamentally changing production processes and the distribution of the traditional film and television content. Fast fibre optic networks and 5G are enabling ever more flexible and mobile consumption of media content. These are being joined by new, intelligent recommendation functionalities based on artificial intelligence and analytics to address consumers in a targeted way.

NCP 2021 recommends the setting up of an Institute of the Moving Image to :

- Serve as hub to support moving image makers to be free to experiment and innovate for the future of the medium;
- Undertake periodic research of production services and production infrastructure in Malta in order to identify priorities for future investment and growth by the private sector. This will be done in order to keep pace with competition.
- Create and sustain an education programme for the classroom as young people are the most intensive users of moving image. This programme will be developed with the educational professionals to support teachers in the classroom to map together education, learning and skills development in moving image making;
- Encourage people to build a lifelong relationship with film, to help build audiences for a broader range of films across all platforms;

- Boost the choice of films available to audiences as it is narrower than it should be; and
- Preserve our film and television cultural heritage for future generations.

SUPPORT AND PROTECT INDEPENDENT MEDIA

NCP 2021 affirms that the press is the fourth pillar of democracy and reiterates the importance of a free and independent media to safeguard this principle. Both the publishing and media sectors have been negatively impacted in recent years due to imbalances in the advertising market and the global pandemic threatened even further the media's survival. Allowing market forces to be the exclusive determining factor for the future of the independent media is a risk that will affect the broader journalistic landscape in Malta.

NCP 2021 calls for a broader discussion with the independent media to establish a permanent and independent structure of financing and longer-term support mechanisms.

ENDOWMENT FOR ARTISTS

Whereas Malta's social security system provides artists with all the social benefits that can be enjoyed by all citizens, certain circumstances due to health or economic difficulties may alter the living conditions of a practicing artist. The COVID-19 global pandemic has also exposed the financial difficulties artists and other cultural professionals may face during turbulent times. Although the COVID-19 wage supplement by Government served as a lifeline for artists, this policy must secure a mechanism that safeguards the livelihood of cultural and creative workers should similar circumstances arise in the future.

As NCP 2021 affirms the principles of respect and honour for artists, it equally acknowledges the need to develop a support mechanism that improves the living conditions and sustains the artistic contributions of exceptional artists living under difficult circumstances. NCP 2021 proposes that through the legislative framework of the Creativity Trust Fund set up in 2013, an endowment fund is generated through voluntary donations and contributions by both private and public donors.

As the trustees will be responsible for the expert evaluation of each request on a case-by-case basis, guaranteeing transparency in the allocation of funds, they will also encourage the generation of funds.

ARTIST-LED ORGANISATIONS AND PLATFORMS

The cultural and creative sectors in Malta have made significant steps to address sectoral or societal issues with several civil society groups, NGOs, foundations and associations being formed within the current framework for the establishment of legal persons. However, gaps remain on at least two levels.

The cultural and creative sector remains deeply fragmented and lacking in terms of collective representation. The local, regional and global opportunities that arise from having a dynamic structured and independent sector should be a motivation to address this lacuna, however internal 'cultural' impediments for such synergistic approaches need to be addressed and appropriate solutions explored. Government has an interest in ensuring that a sectoral representation framework is established and sustained to address these opportunities. The benefits of a cohesive engagement with key issues by a self-governing sector include an enhanced ability to participate in international exchange and collaborations, multicultural dialogue within a strengthened independent cultural sector, trade and export. This approach would also enhance the sector's ability to address employment rights of workers, the professional status and qualifications framework for operators, as well as other related legal matters affecting the work of voluntary and nonvoluntary players in the cultural and creative field.

The introduction of the creative industries platforms by Arts Council Malta led to the establishment of sector specific platforms by artists and creative practitioners, committed to address industry needs through advocacy, networking and capacity building. As participatory governance registers increased importance within the realm of cultural policy making, these platforms together with new platforms will become more active partners in strategies and policies for the sector.

NCP 2021 is committed to ensure that artist-led organisations and platforms are empowered to be change makers, active partners in cultural governance and equipped with the necessary management and leadership skills to participate and lead.

NCP 2021 reaffirms the importance of increased investment in the Creative Industries Platform programme and will support the establishment of a sector-led creative industry alliance that strengthens the advocacy and leadership role of industry and artist-led organisations and platforms with the ultimate aim of fulfilling national competences in the management and implementation of areas outlined in this policy.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE





The legal framework for the creation and operation of social enterprises is of utmost relevance and importance to the cultural and creative sector. Organisations are still required to make a choice between profit-seeking objectives on the one hand, and voluntary non-profit objectives on the other. Providing space for social enterprise to emerge as a force in the social and cultural sphere should enable several existing and new entities to bring together their insights into addressing social and cultural needs with an organisational setup that allows for entrepreneurship and innovation.

THE MOBILITY OF ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS

NCP 2021 reiterates the policy principle of Malta's 2012 Creative Economy Strategy 'to position Malta as an attractive, contemporary and stimulating creative hub within the Mediterranean region, with strong emphasis on exchange and access to international markets'.

More artists and cultural professionals from Malta and those living in Malta, are expanding their international networks and increasing their mobility and the mobility of their works of art. The Cultural Export Fund has from its inception in 2015 invested €730,000 in grants for touring, showcasing, networking and translations.

NCP 2021 envisions the development of new and the expansion of existing programmes and initiatives that:

-  Improve the mobility of artists and cultural professionals in Malta, to and from, with particular attention to mobility across Southern Europe and Northern Africa as a two-way mobility priority; through showcasing, co-production and artist residencies, implemented through specific mobility funding mechanisms and programmes ;
-  Support festivals to serve as active platforms for both incoming and outgoing mobility;
-  Increase national participation in industry fairs, expos and festivals, in collaboration with industry;
-  Increase investment in the cultural export fund.

REDUCING BUREAUCRACY TO PRODUCE EVENTS

In 2018, the amendments to the Maintenance of Good order at Places of Entertainments Regulations were introduced to include the possibility of hosting outdoor events in unlicensed venues. With these amendments, it is no longer necessary for organisers to pay a bank guarantee in outdoor venues covering 750 square metres or less. In cases where the venue covers more than 750 square metres, the bank guarantee has been reduced to €5,000.

Whereas these regulations sought to address bureaucratic procedures that hold producers back from organising events in unlicensed venues, the implementation of such regulations require further attention to ensure that more artist-friendly procedures are introduced.

NCP 2021 calls for relevant legislation on noise levels to safeguard producers, attendees and neighbouring communities. In addition, this policy calls for further reduction of bureaucratic procedures for permits required to produce outdoor events, with centralized, simplified and online processing that reflects the specificity, immediacy and scale of events, without prejudice to the type of event being held.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR ARTISTS

Rewarding excellent and outstanding artistic work on a national level, gives artists and the cultural sector recognition for their contribution and value to the Nation. The National Order of Merit is the highest level of recognition by the State that often includes names of citizens with distinguished careers in culture and the arts. In recent years, national awards for arts and culture have increased at both sectoral and institutional levels. NCP 2021 affirms the importance of the yearly Il-Premju għall-Arti established in 2017 and its positioning as a high-profile national event awarding excellence in the field of culture and the arts, while encouraging more professionalism and distinction within the sector. Increased visibility and recognition for outstanding achievements in specific sectors are provided through the yearly Premju Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb for authors, publishers and illustrators, the Premju Ġieħ l-Artiġjanat Malti for artisans and the Malta Architect Awards.

Awards programmes by private and civil society initiatives, in the fields of music, architecture, heritage, design and fashion also contribute to the national recognition of artists and the cultural sector. NCP 2021 supports existing programmes and encourages further initiatives that continue to celebrate levels of excellence, innovation and success thus elevating further the public profile of arts and culture.

SECTORAL STRATEGIES

NCP 2021 aims to provide a national policy framework for the development of the cultural and creative sector. In order to ensure that the policy is effective for all sectors, it calls for the respective entities with a legal remit to address one or more sectors within the cultural and creative sector to design, update and implement sectoral strategies. These should address the principles outlined in this policy and reflect the specificities of the sector. This should also be done in synergy with different institutions and implemented in collaboration with Arts Council Malta since as a national institution ACM holds the legal remit of safeguarding and promoting all cultural and creative sectors.

NATIONAL YEAR FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

NCP 2021 calls for a national programme designated on a yearly basis to one or more of the sub sectors in the cultural and creative sectors. The year dedicated to one of the sectors in arts and culture will be an opportunity to shine a national spotlight on the sector, increase visibility amongst the public, improve the status of the sector and of the practitioners operating in the field through work in policy and research and serve as a platform that celebrates the sector.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Ratify the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Paris, 20 October 2005)
- 2 Protect and promote the right of artists and other creative and heritage professionals.
- 3 Introduce an income averaging mechanism enabling artists to average profits from the sale of works of art for 3 years.
- 4 Incentivise more artists to engage professionally in the arts with a reduced income tax rate of 7.5% for cultural events
- 5 Implement a minimum quota of 15% of exposure of home-grown music for radio stations. This will include songs with Maltese lyrics and any music written or performed by a citizen or resident of Malta.
- 6 Implement a regular promotional and training programme for artists on copyright and related matters.
- 7 Set up a copyright depositary to provide a holder of a copyright work with the means of depositing the work with a local authority for prosperity purposes and as a source of evidence of the ownership of the work.
- 8 Set up a register for Geographic Indications for non-food products in crafts and artisanal works.

- 9 Safeguard and promote Maltese artisanal food products through agrarian festivals.
- 10 Introduce a basic income to support practicing artists pursuing a sabbatical of up to one year.
- 11 Increased investment in continuous professional development opportunities for artists to continue fostering excellence in the arts and advance their knowledge and capabilities.
- 12 Public Cultural Organisations affirm their commitment to fair and equitable contractual agreements for all artists, creative and heritage professionals engaged in any commissioned, programmed, produced or co-produced project.
- 13 Amend the Broadcasting Act to establish National Minimum Criteria for television broadcasting.
- 14 Support further audio visual productions by independent audio-visual companies who often lack access to private funding to reach high-quality content, especially when targeting difficult works, opportunities in new technologies such as artificial intelligence, works for young audiences, international distribution and co-productions.
- 15 Set up a Broadcasting Academy to provide, in collaboration with educational institutions, accredited and specialised technical programmes in broadcasting.
- 16 Restructure calls for programme statements of intent for public broadcasting to reflect industry standards.
- 17 Revise the public service obligation policy for public broadcasting to reflect the principles of this policy.
- 18 Introduce the role of a culture editor within public broadcasting.
- 19 Establish the Institute for the Moving Image
- 20 Increase funding for arts, culture and heritage scholarships.
- 21 Establish a permanent and independent structure of financing and longer-term support mechanisms for independent media.
- 22 Establish an endowment for artists by providing the Creativity Trust Fund with a mandate to develop a support mechanism that improves the living conditions and sustains the artistic contributions of exceptional artists living under difficult circumstances.
- 23 Support the establishment of a sector-led cultural and creative industry alliance that strengthens the advocacy and leadership role of artist-led organisations and platforms with the ultimate aim of fulfilling national competences in the management and implementation of areas outlined in this policy.
- 24 Increase investment in programmes and initiatives that encourage the mobility of artists, works of arts, cultural and heritage professionals.
- 25 Draft legislation on noise levels to safeguard producers, attendees and neighbouring communities.
- 26 Reduce bureaucratic procedures for permits required to produce outdoor events, with centralized, simplified and online processing that reflects the specificity, immediacy and scale of events.
- 27 Reward excellent and outstanding artistic work on a national level through high profile awards programmes.
- 28 Establish the National Year for Arts and Culture, focusing on one sector per year.
- 29 Ensure that sectoral strategies are created to ensure that gaps in the sectors are addressed and a level-playing field between different sectors is secured.

CHAPTER 4

IMPROVING ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

Žigužajg Arts festival for children



National Cultural Policy 2021 recognises that education in arts and culture is fundamental to build a society that develops its creative potential as part of the wellbeing of citizens. The policy reaffirms the principle that access to cultural education is a cultural right that is to be enjoyed by all. Malta's Cultural Policy will ensure that this right is respected through the necessary infrastructure and the development of an educational system that embeds cultural education in formal, informal and non-formal learning. An investment in cultural education provides citizens with knowledge and skills to exercise their right to freedom of expression, to access and participate in culture, to develop a sense of aesthetics and to develop critical thinking. Creative skills and participation in arts and culture are key components of a holistic education that must start from early childhood.

The NCP 2021 seeks to improve pedagogical systems that integrate the arts and creativity in the development of skills that are needed for thought, attuned senses, expression, communication and well-being. As a priority area of a culture-rights based Policy, the NCP 2021 recognises the pivotal roles for promoting creative sensory experiences and art-related modes of expression in every child's development.

It is critical that key stakeholders in education view creativity, culture and the arts as pathways to viable careers. Identifying, encouraging and fostering creativity is vital. It is also pertinent to recognise that creativity flourishes in collaborative and creative circles with a strong social dimension. More importantly, given the trends and changes in career boundaries, the creative pedagogies, essentially, teaching for creativity and creative learning that sustain education for the are fast becoming a necessary skills set for every student as more and more future jobs will involve creative application, digital communication skills and creative entrepreneurship. These are very much an integral part of the range of 21st century skills students will need to acquire as active learners.

This Policy is driven by a number of international and national documents as well as sociological studies, acting as a guiding-frame for the formation of its action plan.

It draws from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to participate and have access to cultural, artistic and other recreational activities. The UNESCO 'Road Map for Arts Education' affirms that "Culture and the arts are essential components of a comprehensive education leading to the full development of the individual. Therefore, arts education is a universal human right, for all learners, including those who are often excluded from education (UNESCO 2006, p.3)²⁷.

The recognition of arts education as a universal human right and the well proven impact of art education during the formative years, call for further policy actions that provide more opportunities for children and young people to engage in creativity, through formal and informal structures, by building on the capacity of educational provisions in the arts and culture. In addition, the Policy calls for measures to ensure that teachers, artists, cultural practitioners and public cultural institutions are supported to deliver the cultural policy's ambition to provide a level of excellence in artistic and cultural education. This Policy regards creative pedagogy as part of the new skill set for students needed to engage as full citizens in society.

This Cultural Policy acknowledges the initiatives that have been taken in recent years to improve arts and cultural education in Malta. In 2017 the Malta Visual and Performing Arts School (MVPA) was established to offer young Secondary School students another choice in their educational journey. As a national school, the MVPA offers five art forms as the primary focus of study: art, dance, drama, media and music. This new educational institution gives young artists the opportunity to further enhance their artistic skills without renouncing their proficiency in other academic subjects. The MVPA will enter into its new phase of development as it will soon be part of the Mikiel Anton Vassalli College.

²⁷ Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Human Rights, 1990, Article 49, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

This College was established in 2018 with a specific focus to improve and coordinate the visual and performing arts education in Malta and Gozo. Its vision is for these specialised schools to gain the status of an academic cluster with the focus on the quality of teaching and learning in the visual and performing arts. The School of Music, School of Art and School of Drama and Dance offer a wide variety of specialised courses from beginner to higher diploma level.

These schools have built their own home-grown courses, which are accredited by NCHFE from MQF Level 1 to MQF Level 5. The next step is to set up the Malta Academy for the Arts which shall be a centre of specialisation in visual and performing arts education. The principles adhered to fulfil its mission are listed in Legal Notice 410/2012.

Maltese higher education institutions have taken a leading role in enhancing the academic portfolio of programmes for arts and culture. The Faculty of Education within the University of Malta has been leading higher education programmes in arts education since 1984. The Faculty, now through the Department of Arts, Open Communities and Adult Education provides graduate and post-graduate programmes and research in museum education, art education, music education, drama education, dance education and social practice arts and critical education. As one of the largest faculties at the University of Malta, the Faculty of Arts and its sixteen departments remains a major asset for academia in the arts and culture in Malta. The Faculty of Arts offers as well degrees in Archaeology, History and History of Art. In 2012 the University of Malta established the School of Performing Arts to bring together the disciplines of Dance Studies, Music Studies and Theatre Studies, and to provide a sound base for the development of new programmes of study together with more specialized fields of research. In addition, a new faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences was established in 2011 to offer programmes in media and communications, digital arts and library information and archive sciences amongst other subjects.

Graduate programmes in conservation and cultural heritage management within the Faculty for the Built Environment has also been created as an interdisciplinary course for training in cultural heritage resource management. In 2013, the Institute of Digital Games was set up for research and education in game design, game analysis and game technology. The multidisciplinary team at the Institute are the crossovers between the arts, media and technology, promoting the STEAM approach of integrating the arts with science across the curriculum.

A new institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture has also been set up within the University of Malta. In addition, a diploma in Maltese literature and postgraduate Film Studies within the Faculty of Arts and studies in Intangible Cultural Heritage within the Department of Anthropology have also been introduced in recent years. The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has also made significant contributions, including vocational programmes in heritage masonry skills.

Improving artistic and cultural education requires ongoing collaboration and consultation with all educational stakeholders at the various levels of the educational instruction, in order to push towards obtaining the objectives of this policy. A deficiency in any level of the educational system will have a detrimental impact on the effective change required to ensure a unified vision and direction across all streams of education within the arts and culture, from primary education to postgraduate research.

NCP 2021 also acknowledges the important role of the public and private sector in the provision of arts education in Malta. The Schools of Art, Music, Drama and Dance and also the Gozo VPA, within the Mikiel Anton Vassalli College are important stakeholders in the provision of arts education and provide a leadership role in the provision of arts education. These four MAVC specialised schools offer tuition to more than 2500 students from 6 years of age to adults. These four schools also employ a total of 170 educators (39 full time and 131 part-time), each specialised in their own art form. However, the role of the private sector is crucial for the diversification of arts education in Malta and Gozo.

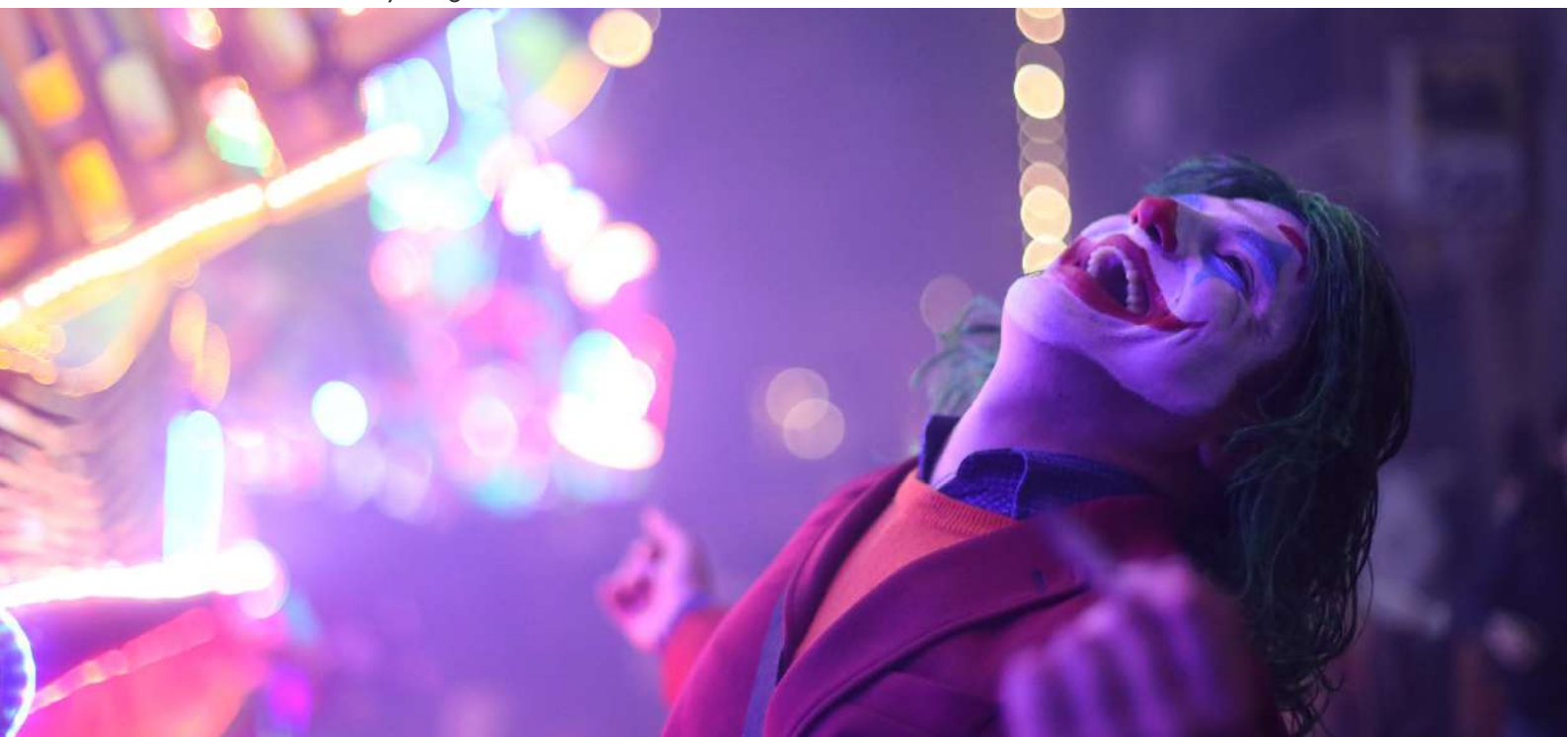
Statistics published by the National Statistics Office in 2014 indicate that about 10,000 students, with the majority of them under 17 years of age, received a form of instruction in drama, dance or music from 188 schools teaching performing arts. These schools also provided employment to 400 full-time and part-time employees. In order to ensure that the arts education sector continues to excel and delivers optimal standards, a process of regularisation is required to secure licensing, quality assurance and accreditation across the private sector.

As Malta's leading vocational education and training institution, the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has developed new courses, at diploma and degree levels, within the Institute for the Creative Arts, specialising in various subjects across the arts. The provision of diploma, advanced diploma and higher diploma programmes in Masonry Heritage are fundamental to ensure continuity in knowledge and skills related to the conservation and restoration of buildings and monuments where the main construction material is the local limestone.

This Policy also recognises the contribution of band clubs in local communities, providing complementary music lessons to children across Malta and Gozo. Local music societies are important stakeholders in this policy to provide access to music education in Malta, including loaning musical instruments to a significant number of children and young adults.

The Diploma in Wind Band Studies designed to equip practising musicians involved in wind bands, as well as other musicians interested in this musical genre is also an important collaborative model that could serve as a blueprint for specialised arts education programmes.

In line with the current initiatives, the key objectives of this Policy focus on strengthening formal and informal educational provisions in arts and culture, improving collaborations between educational and cultural institutions and promoting artistic excellence. Specifically, this Policy recognizes the right for children to have access to cultural sites and experience self-formation through the interpretation of heritage. It asserts further collaboration in the strengthening of existing schemes with entities in the creative sector. In particular, National Cultural Policy 2021 will continue providing free access to most national heritage sites and museums for all primary and secondary school students in Malta and Gozo through the Heritage Malta Passport. It will also continue sustaining the Culture Pass Programme, offering access to primary and secondary school children with a minimum of one artistic production a year, produced by creative professionals and presented through a curated programme. This is proving to be a successful initiative, with over 40,000 students attending an artistic production during the scholastic year 2019-2020.



POLICY OBJECTIVES

In order to improve access to and participation in artistic and cultural education, the objectives of the National Cultural Policy 2021 in artistic and cultural education are to:

- Improving the provision of artistic and cultural education in compulsory education and promoting an interdisciplinary approach in school curricula.
- Supporting the inclusion of culture, in all its diverse expressions, as a curricular subject in its own right, from the teaching of history and performing arts to the teaching of design and crafts, but also as a pillar of STEAM and as cross-curricular subject that intersects across the wider educational framework.
- Strengthening partnerships between schools, artists, cultural practitioners and cultural institutions.
- Supporting the training and professional development of teachers, artists and cultural practitioners to attain the highest quality artistic and cultural education.
- Strengthening links between artistic and cultural education and industry.
- Promoting lifelong learning opportunities in artistic and cultural education.
- Developing and strengthening the specialised arts education offered at the MAVC schools, as well as other institutions that offer higher education in the visual and performing arts.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION

The National Minimum Curriculum is aimed at providing exposure to cultural education through artistic activities in the visual and performing arts. In primary schools, as stated in the National Curriculum Framework document (2012)²⁸, 5% of the teaching and learning time is allocated to Visual and Performing Arts subjects.

This translates into 80 minutes per week. In middle schools, 40 minutes per week are allocated to Music and another 40 minutes to Art. The school decides, within the parameter of this document, on the time allocation for lessons in the visual and performing arts.

In secondary schools, only students who choose a subject in art or music as optional subjects have access to a subject in arts education.

NCP 2021 is committed to provide universal access to arts education to all children and young people in Malta and Gozo.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Schools are important stakeholders to promote creativity and cultural engagement among children and young people. This can be achieved through formal, informal and non-formal learning. This Policy proposes the establishment of a network of teachers that serve as Creative Arts Coordinators across all Colleges in Malta and Gozo to support the creative development of a school, its students and teaching staff. A Creative Arts Coordinator, in each school shall provide educational expertise and act as a 'cultural mediator' in the classroom for the training of students and support to other teachers. Through a participatory approach, creative arts coordinators shall promote creative wellbeing in a school. In this way students will not learn how to 'consume' cultural goods but how to reflectively understand and engage with culture and the arts through critical thinking and sensory literacy. Creative Arts Coordinators shall focus on an interdisciplinary approach by equipping and supporting classroom teachers with the expertise and skills to incorporate creative techniques during the learning process of various school subjects, not only within the subjects of music, art, drama and media. Creative Arts Coordinators shall work on the needs of students and the specific requirements of the school to develop creative thinking skills and creative expression and to inspire a creativity-enabling education. Through this collaboration, teachers shall be supported and encouraged further to transform the learning experience into a more creative and innovative journey. In this regard, the teaching of art subjects shall also increase in frequency to ensure that all students receive the minimum requirement established by the national curriculum.

²⁸ A National Curriculum Framework for All, Ministry of Education and Employment, 2012, <https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Resources/The-NCF/Pages/default.aspx>

Teachers serving as Creative Art Coordinators may also draw on the expertise of arts practitioners, cultural heritage experts and creative professionals to support the implementation of the holistic programme they design for their schools based on learning outcomes, pedagogical approaches and overseeing the students' development through assessment for learning.

This policy also acknowledges the important contribution of Arts Education professionals which are currently embedded within a peripatetic system. The vision of this policy is to shift the peripatetic structure to an integrated system that allows arts education professionals to teach arts subjects on a more permanent basis within the professional teaching complement of a school, with appropriate resources and infrastructure to work effectively.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

There is a noteworthy gap in arts education in secondary schools with no arts subjects offered to students who opt out of art or music as optional subjects. In 2017, only 343 out of 2050²⁹ students chose art or music as an optional subject. Thus, only 17% of students continued to receive formal arts education in Secondary schools in Malta and Gozo. In middle and secondary schools, the presence of a stronger staff complement of arts teachers is required, particularly to provide training in media and performing arts studies. The introduction of drama and dance as optional subjects, with their own curriculum, shall also be considered as part of an arts education strategy requested by this Policy. Arts teachers shall be supported to reinvigorate the approach to creative subjects in art, music, theatre and performance, literature and media studies. This policy is required particularly to enhance intellectual and artistic curiosity for all students. Furthermore, teachers shall be encouraged to participate in the multidisciplinary approach of teaching their subjects in relation to Art Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths, to shift from the traditional STEM cluster to STEAM. Thus, this approach aims at integrating the arts across the broader curriculum.

In order to guarantee a basic arts education for all, a quota of a minimum of 60 hours of artistic education per academic year, half of which must be participatory, shall be in place in State Middle and Secondary schools, Independent and Church schools.

This quota guarantees arts engagement for students through the provision of access to creative experiences in taught and participatory ways, including workshops, participation in performances and visits to cultural sites.

This collaborative programme will be created between Colleges, Creative Arts Coordinators, Public Cultural Organisations and Heritage Malta.

This Policy reaffirms the provision of specialised educational services by the Malta Visual and Performing Arts (MVPA) set-up in September 2017. This school specialises in one art form, between Art, Music, Drama, Media Literacy and Dance. It gives the opportunity for students to enhance their artistic potential by receiving training in their artistic field as well as academic subjects. In order to increase interdepartmental collaboration between culture and education outlined in this policy, Public Cultural Organisations and the MVPA will jointly support the development of the School in both

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

This Policy acknowledges the role of post-secondary educational institutions in providing cultural access and engagement to their students through various cultural events and arts festivals. To support a more sustainable and longer-term cultural programme, public funding programmes linked to education and the participation of young people shall also be made available in post-secondary education institutions. In addition, subjects in the arts, languages, history and design will continue to be offered at Intermediate and Advanced levels with an overall objective to increase student intake as part of an education strategy that seeks to improve the profile of educational and professional opportunities in the cultural and creative sectors.

²⁹ Data provided by the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes, Department for Curriculum, Lifelong Learning and Employability.

However, such improvements must reflect contemporary multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary practice and research methodologies.

NCP 2021 reiterates the call by arts education experts for MATSEC curricula in both established and new subjects relevant to the cultural and creative sectors, to be updated frequently with more emphasis given to the portfolio and practice-based research rather than rote learning and prescribed tasks.

This review will also consider the implementation of new and open-ended curricula that reflect contemporary practices in the arts and critical thinking. Both the practice and theory components of the Advanced level curriculum should be revised to reflect contemporary issues that impact our lives.

The process of syllabus and curriculum design should be held in collaboration with professional educators, creative practitioners, students and industry.

This will provide a stronger sense of qualitative research and open contemporary discourse within a fluid curriculum required for contemporary needs. In addition, the use of periodic assessments over timed exams should be considered as part of this review.

The diagram below provides a schematic overview of the proposed educational services in cultural education envisaged by the National Cultural Policy 2021 :

Education Level	Services in Cultural Education
Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Arts Coordinators as ‘cultural mediators’ in schools. • Professional development of Primary teachers to incorporate creative pedagogy. • Leverage the Heritage Passport and the Culture Pass to complement an inclusive cultural and artistic education.
Middle and Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Arts Coordinators as ‘cultural mediators’ in schools. • A guaranteed minimum of 60 hours of arts education for all students per scholastic year. • Leverage the Heritage Passport and the Culture Pass to complement an inclusive cultural and artistic education. • Specialised training through the Malta Visual and Performing Arts School. • SEC subjects in the performing and visual arts, languages, history, design and media.
Post-Secondary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming of cultural and artistic initiatives. • Intermediate and Advanced Level in the performing and visual arts, languages, history, design and media.
Tertiary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma, Degree and Post-graduate programmes in the Cultural, Creative and Heritage Sectors at MCAST and the University of Malta. • Higher Diploma (MQF Level 5) by MAVC specialised schools.
Faculty of Education Institute for Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programmes for teachers and creative arts coordinators.
Extracurricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A culture passport for cultural extracurricular activities to children living in low income households. • A national accreditation system for the teaching of arts and heritage subjects.
Specialised Educations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mikiel Anton Vassalli College (Malta School of Music, Malta School of Art, Malta School of Drama and Dance, Gozo VPA).

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOLS, ARTISTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

This Policy acknowledges the work of Public Cultural Organisations (PCOs) and Heritage Malta in the field of education. The development of an education network of all PCOs and Heritage Malta with schools and creative coordinators will be established to ensure that all entities have a regular and ongoing education programme with schools. This will also include the possibility for specific PCOs to partner with specific schools and colleges to implement long-term initiatives, projects and initiatives outlined in this policy.

The fees for extracurricular cultural activities are one reason for limiting access of some children, especially those living in low income households and/or materially deprived households. In 2017³⁰, the material deprivation rate stood at 8.0%, where households with severe material deprivation rate stood at 3.3%. A total of 13.3% of the population stated that they cannot afford regular participation in leisure activities such as sports or attending a concert. This culture of deprivation is often transferred to children in these households and limit their accessibility to various extracurricular activities. In order to mitigate this challenge in accessibility, this Policy proposes the implementation of a culture passport, targeted to all low income and materially deprived households, to be used for full access to arts events and training in the arts, from any registered body providing arts education programmes within the public and/or private sector.

RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ARTS EDUCATION

There shall be more effective use of new technologies in the teaching of cultural education to children and young people. Schools shall continue to be supported to improve their infrastructure for the arts, ensuring that they facilitate the learning process of children with different abilities. In order to fulfil this policy objective, this policy acknowledges the need to invest in the improvement of facilities and infrastructure for the Art, Music, Drama and Dance Schools in Malta and Gozo.

Through a dedicated fund, this policy is committed to continue to invest in cultural facilities in schools with the objective of transforming schools into cultural centres for communities with resources available for community groups, NGOs and artists. In particular, this Policy recognises the need to provide more resources to the MAVC Specialised schools (Art, Music, Drama and Dance) to fully support the strengthened role outlined in this policy as part of its national remit to deliver arts education at a higher, academy level, thus providing a level of excellence in the arts educational pathway.

TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This Policy endorses and supports the continuation of course-development and institution consolidation programmes to ensure that the training of professional cultural workers meets the demands and developments of the cultural and creative sectors. Of particular attention is the need to develop specialised programmes in the field of arts and cultural management, cultural policy and cultural leadership. In addition, this policy seeks to support further development in academic and practice-led programmes that focus on innovation, interdisciplinarity and industry application.

This Policy reaffirms the government's commitment to sustain The Malta Arts Scholarships Scheme, within the Ministry for Education, for providing further opportunities in the expressive arts.

Further financial support is needed to address the capacity building of the culture/creative sector. Financial support shall be offered to talented children, under the age of 16, who are accepted into prestigious schools abroad and whose needs cannot be met by any local organisation or any local tutorship.

Additionally, building on the VAT initiative by the Ministry of Finance, to offer grants of a maximum of €465.87 for the purchase of musical instruments, this Policy seeks to expand this grant further to increase the maximum threshold and broaden the definition of musical instruments.

³⁰ SILC 2017: Provisional Estimates of Social Deprivation and Housing Problems, National Statistics Office, 2018, https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/View_by_Unit/Unit_C1/Living_Conditions_and_Culture_Statistics/Documents/2018/News2018_059.pdf

PUBLIC CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS, HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS AND CULTURAL EDUCATION

The role of PCOs and heritage institutions like Heritage Malta is central to the provision of a holistic cultural education. Public Cultural Organisations and heritage institutions shall be encouraged to set up action programmes in a 'voluntary buddy system' with colleges and schools in collaboration with the respective Education Officers and relevant departments within the Ministry for Education. This partnership programme with arts institutions and museums shall facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge to inspire and stimulate creative and intellectual interaction with heritage and artistic work. Public cultural institutions will be encouraged to work long-term with a college or school to address the creative aspirations of students and teachers, develop audiences and provide vocational support in career development.

This collaboration shall promote organisation-led projects with schools with an emphasis on the importance of working with and for children and young people. Such collaborations will also facilitate the mobility of cultural professionals in designing projects tailor-made for students with the intention to increase the engagement of students, promote access and guarantee their cultural rights. This shall also contribute towards developing new audiences and increasing participation. It also provides institutions with an opportunity to increase the interactivity of venues and sites and improve their educational resources.

The policy acknowledges that the relevant pedagogical, technical and administrative support systems with PCOs and Heritage Malta need to be strengthened to facilitate this collaboration.

CONNECTING CULTURAL EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY

One way to strengthen further the link between artistic and cultural education with the industry is to support apprenticeship schemes. This Policy supports the development of apprenticeship schemes in traditional arts, heritage and other areas in arts and culture, including skills and techniques related to occupational arts, including storytelling, dance, music, film, television and culinary traditions. These traditional arts and their contemporary application will not only provide new entrepreneurial opportunities in the creative industries but will also provide invaluable opportunities for traditional knowledge transfer.

This Policy also stresses on the requirement for further Media Literacy Education which reinforces skills for learners of all ages. Media Literacy Education is essential for the development of informed, reflective and engaged students. It affirms that people become critical thinkers and use their own individual skills, beliefs and experiences to contrast their own meanings from media messages.

Students studying professionally in arts and culture shall be supported to engage in industry-led apprenticeships - an ideal practice-based approach towards learning skills through supervised training. The apprenticeship scheme shall bridge the gap between classroom training in arts and culture and the workplace within the industry. Professional artists and artisans shall be incentivised to support and mentor apprentices. Specific attention shall be given for apprenticeships in the traditional arts, especially those in danger of extinction and skills linked to intangible cultural heritage.

LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

This Policy promotes the provision of continuous access to cultural education and appreciation for all age groups and communities in society, both through formal and informal structures. As outlined in the National Lifelong Strategy 2020, 'lifelong learning is a key instrument for employability but above all for social inclusion and democratic participation, personal development and well-being. People need to be given fair opportunities to discover and nurture their talents. Equality of opportunity is also an economic necessity for potential to be maximised. We need to achieve a socially mobile society that is open to advancement and receptive to enhanced learning opportunities'³¹. Culture and the arts are key partners to reach the education targets of participation of adults between 25 and 64.

More than 150 courses are offered by the Directorate for Lifelong Learning and MAVC Schools in creative expression and in visual and performing arts. As part of Regional Cultural Strategies, regions and Local Councils will continue to be supported to deliver lifelong learning opportunities in arts and culture to all citizens. In addition, publicly funded museums and arts organisations will be integrated in programmes that provide lifelong learning opportunities in culture and the arts.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Develop a comprehensive arts education strategy by the Ministries responsible for Education and Culture and relevant institutions, to address universal access to arts education and the actions outlined in this policy.
- 2 Introduce a quota of a minimum of 60 hours of artistic and cultural education per academic year, for all students in Middle and Secondary schools, having a mixed programme of formal and informal teaching complementing the learning holistic experience. Allocate resources for Post-Secondary institutions for the organization of cultural and artistic initiatives.

- 3 Upgrade the operational framework of the MAVC specialised schools for Art, Music, Drama and Dance to offer further professional training that reflects international trends in industry application cooperation with Public Cultural Organisations.
- 4 Establish a culture passport for all low-income and materially deprived households in Malta and Gozo, to secure access to arts events, arts education and to buy equipment/ accessories for arts education.
- 5 Extend the Malta Arts Scholarship Scheme to cater for those children under 16 years of age who are accepted in prestigious international schools specialising in one or more areas of the cultural and creative sectors.
- 6 Increase the value of the grant for the purchase of a musical instrument and expand to all forms of musical instruments.
- 7 Allocate resources for infrastructural works, renovation and upgrading of cultural infrastructure within schools to serve as cultural formation centres, that can also be utilized as artist spaces and lifelong learning resources.
- 8 Set-up cultural and creative programmes tailor-made for school children and young people, specifically designed in partnership between Public Cultural Organisations, Heritage Malta and schools in Malta and Gozo. This initiative shall give priority to opening access to all students to participate and learn, in an interactive manner, through culture and the arts.
- 9 Establish an accreditation system to recognise and register cultural and creative practitioners providing an education service
- 10 Shift the status of Arts Education professionals from peripatetic to integrated members of staff within schools.

³¹ Malta National Life-long Learning Strategy 2020, Ministry for Education and Employment. <https://education.gov.mt/en/Documents/Malta%20National%20Lifelong%20Learning%20Strategy%202020.pdf>

- 11 Establish a network of teachers in their role as Creative Arts Coordinators , through a pilot-programme, to work as 'cultural mediators', and promote an interdisciplinary approach in Primary schools in Malta and Gozo. To implement this, both the academic and administrative structures shall be supported in their capacity building needs.
- 12 Develop new MATSEC subjects in the cultural and creative sectors and update the curricula of existing ones to reflect contemporary practices and critical thinking.
- 13 Develop Media Literacy Education for all ages of school children as essential for the development of informed, reflective and engaged students.
- 14 Develop an apprenticeship scheme with industry specialising in the arts, culture and heritage, bridging classroom teaching with the workplace.
- 15 Support Regional and Local Councils to continue delivering lifelong learning opportunities in arts and culture reflecting the specific needs and aspirations of the community.

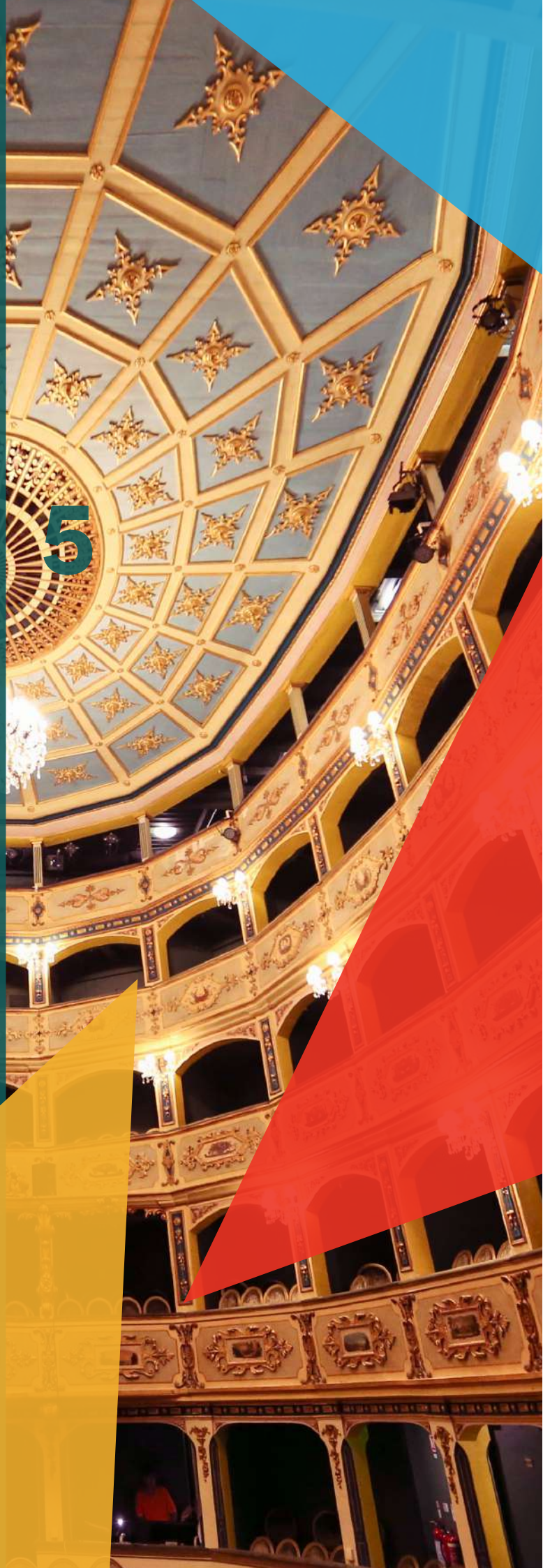
Mużika Mużika – Maltese Song Festival
Photo: Elisa Von Brockdorff



CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPING CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Manoel Theatre: a national gem



Urban and social changes in Malta in the past few decades, and especially in the last few years, have brought to the surface a number of issues that are directly affecting the liveability of our urban spaces. These challenges have a plurality of sources and causes, and are influenced by changes happening on the social, cultural, infrastructural, economical, and governance levels. The contribution that cultural infrastructure provides to the wider urban environment and to the quality of life of residents and visitors can be a major contributing factor in enhancing social cohesion and in driving urban development centred around values and aspirations shared by the wider community. There is an increasing awareness on an international level of the benefits that can accrue to the wellbeing of the community when cultural and creative activity engages with place-bound societies, be this in city, rural, regional or even national or transnational levels. However, a better understanding of the dynamics of these interdependencies is needed, and policy-driven initiatives that strategically bring together cultural infrastructure, cultural and creative activity, and place-bound societies are still being developed³². This policy proposes to open a national discussion on these contributions, and articulates a series of actions that cumulatively aspire towards such a synthesis.

NCP 2021 adopts the concept of Baukultur as identified in the 2018 Davos Declaration as its policy principles on cultural infrastructure and for all matters relevant to the role of culture in the built environment. 'Baukultur refers to both detailed construction methods and largescale transformations and developments, embracing traditional and local building skills as well as innovative techniques'. As outlined in the declaration 'we urgently need a new, adaptive approach to shaping our built environment; one that is rooted in culture, actively builds social cohesion, ensures environmental sustainability, and contributes to the health and well-being of all. This is high-quality Baukultur'.

Whilst acknowledging that building is an act of culture this cultural shift cannot restrict itself to the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage.

Whereas preservation is a central tenet in the development of sustainable practice we must also enable the 'making of the heritage of tomorrow' and, in doing so, address the far-reaching scope of Baukultur. Recognising building as an act of culture means that one recognises the complexity of architecture as a discipline which transcends the sphere of the technical and which, now more than ever, needs to focus on its more intangible qualities – including environmental, social, political, economic and cultural aspects – to be able to offer tangible solutions.

NCP 2021 acknowledges the societal and economic changes that have taken place during the recent past and views public investment in cultural infrastructure as an enabling mechanism for social cohesion, empowerment of communities and a platform-building exercise that serves the needs of the ever-evolving population. In this manner, cultural infrastructure, fortified by dynamic communities of place and of practice, can serve as a vehicle for social innovation and as a driver for inclusive and holistic local, regional and national development. In this process – which when led by purely market-driven forces leads to speculative and often socially detrimental impacts – policy has a role to ensure that cultural operators, be they public cultural organisations or independent practitioners, contribute to the development of their communities. Until now, such initiatives have taken place sporadically with more or less effective outcomes and benefits due to the lack of sustained investment or strategic cohesion. Policy can make a difference in directing competencies, synergising policy efforts from various policy areas, and harness resources from public institutions and other stakeholders, and direct action towards the needs, with a framework of pre-identified priorities and ongoing evaluation of the actions' effectiveness in creating a meaningful impact on the lives of residents and citizens.

³² Throughout this chapter reference is made to the analysis and recommendations included in the 2018 study published by the European Commission The role of public policies in developing entrepreneurial and innovation potential of the cultural and creative sectors - Report of THE OMC (Open Method of Coordination) working group of Member States' experts. Online access: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5d33c8a7-2e56-11e8-b5fe-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

At the same time, cultural infrastructure has the potential to serve as hubs of cultural and creative activity generated by public and independent operators, with strong community-embedded interests and with sufficient versatility to respond to evolving needs and conditions on the ground.

The National Cultural Policy 2011 addressed infrastructure in a distributed manner within its various priority areas, identifying various measures that require investment both from a governance perspective as well as from a physical infrastructure perspective. On the governance level, major legislative changes have been implemented in this regard.

In terms of physical infrastructure, measures referring to a number of areas, namely: enhanced educational, heritage, library and archive infrastructure, including their improved accessibility; the creation of dedicated arts and creative practice spaces; and dedicated resources – including infrastructure – for literary organisations and literature-related activity.

Capital expenditure in the cultural and creative sectors from national and EU funds has led to unprecedented investment in cultural infrastructure.

Total recurrent and capital expenditure in EURO on the cultural and creative sectors (2012-2021) including EU funding:

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Heritage	10,564,920	10,945,868	12,415,000	14,731,000	21,135,000	26,240,000	27,933,000	35,036,000	39,049,000	39,384,000
Arts	6,229,000	6,316,000	8,429,000	10,460,000	12,595,000	15,882,000	17,439,000	20,940,000	25,586,000	27,195,000
Media	8,094,000	8,398,000	8,273,000	9,098,000	14,561,000	15,426,000	15,066,000	17,866,000	19,996,000	22,426,000
Interdisciplinary	1,258,000	1,467,000	2,807,000	3,432,000	4,273,000	6,049,000	9,537,000	11,195,000	5,765,000	6,265,000
TOTAL Capital Expenditure	26,145,920	27,126,868	31,924,000	37,721,000	52,564,000	63,597,000	69,975,000	85,037,000	90,396,000	95,270,000



One of the events which took place during Notte Bianca
Photo: Jason Borg

Major cultural investments since the last Cultural Policy have been made in four main facilities. The lacuna in modern and contemporary art is being addressed through two of these major initiatives, consisting of the relocation and repositioning of the Museum of Fine Arts at the Auberge d'Italie (MUŻA) and the initial phase of the new Malta International Contemporary Arts Space (MICAS) at the Ospizio in Floriana. Apart from the genre-specific need that these projects address, their approach towards community-engagement and the integration of the narratives they are developing within the wider discourse on identity, representation and nation-building within a participatory and evolving society are a clear indication on how new social realities are moulding the new roles such facilities have in a contemporary context. The Malta Carnival Experience project is another initiative addressing a core dimension of popular culture, with construction and interpretation facilities that give value to carnival related practices. The provision of spaces for music practice, production and performance is also being addressed through Festivals Malta's infrastructural hub project. Finally, the creation of the Valletta Design Cluster spearheaded by the Valletta Cultural Agency addresses a lacuna identified in the Creative Economy Strategy in the area of provision of shared resources and support with a view to empowering early stage and small-scale cultural and creative practitioners through a dedicated support platform. The latter project is also strongly rooted in a participatory, co-creative understanding of urban generation, giving value to community in defining, shaping and directing public space and resources, bringing together creative practice, enterprise and positive social impact.

For most of the above-mentioned projects, the European Capital of Culture has served as a critical contributor and supporter not just during the actual year of celebrations but throughout the process from 2012 until the closure of the Valletta 2018 Foundation in 2019. The direct institutional legacy of this initiative through the establishment of the Valletta Cultural Agency is an exemplary case of sustained support for the cultural sector, with the latter agency having a mandate to build on the work of the Foundation including through a community-focused cultural programme.

Beyond the projects mentioned above, the Foundation has also been instrumental in seeing a whole slate of infrastructural investments in cultural infrastructure during its lifetime, and this has been documented in the Valletta 2018 Investment Survey published on the launch of the Valletta Cultural Agency in March 2019.³³ When taken in the light of other Valletta 2018 commissioned studies, and in particular the research carried out on accessibility and inclusion and on the spatial impacts of the European Capital of Culture in Valletta, these studies provide a rich set of findings that highlight the complexity of the interaction between culture-driven development and the wider socio-economic environment. The creation of new public spaces, including squares and open areas that have been pedestrianised and freed from parking pressures, as well as participative design and implementation of cultural infrastructure are examples of public investment directed for the public good. On the other hand, pressures on the quality of life of residents, including impacts on the affordability of property, pressures from commercial interests eroding residential stock and encroaching on public space, and other indirect but equally significant impacts on the quality of life of residents and city users. This policy stresses the need to better understand these dynamics and to implement projects with a strong social and cultural sensitivity to place-bound communities.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

In order to transform the potential that cultural infrastructure offers for an equitable and accessible source of wellbeing for all, the objectives of the National Cultural Policy 2021 in the area of cultural infrastructure are to:

- Leverage the potential of culture as a platform for climate action.
- Address the longstanding infrastructural lacunae in the arts through sustainable means.
- Enhance Malta's offer of publicly run cultural venues by transforming them into hubs for social and cultural engagement generating positive impacts on the lives of residents and visitors.

³³ <https://valletta2018.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EPD-Valletta-Investment-Survey.pdf>

- Empower non-governmental operators through the optimal use of underutilised resources, with an emphasis on local and regional cultural development
- Develop creative clusters and provide access to enabling technologies, resources, skills and finance to support cultural organisations and operators, including small-scale and new entrants, to grow and develop within a healthy and holistic ecosystem.
- Involve stakeholders and creators in the cultural and creative sectors for innovative place-bound development

CULTURE FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Climate change is the foremost global challenge and NCP 2021 acknowledges the contribution arts and culture can make to tackle climate change and translate it into action.

Not only are artists and the wider cultural community critical in advocating for change and shaping new ways of being, doing and thinking but their individual and collective actions are now even more crucial to address environmental sustainability.

In December 2015, 195 countries signed a landmark agreement at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Paris, committing to limit global temperature rise to below 2°C against pre-industrial levels. 171 countries, including Malta, have now ratified this agreement, setting individual national emissions reductions goals to help reach this target.

According to a special Eurobarometer survey on climate change published in September 2019, at 92% of the population, the Maltese are the most concerned Europeans when it comes to defining the issue of climate change as a “very serious” problem.

NCP 2021 calls for the immediate development of a Culture for Climate Action strategy. This strategy will consider:

- 1 supporting PCOs and heritage institutions, artists and arts organisations in measures towards greening the cultural sector: providing tools, resources, and support, including expertise, financial mechanisms, infrastructural investments and sharing of good practices, to reduce carbon emissions and other negative environmental impacts by the cultural and creative sectors;
- 2 supporting artists and cultural actors in international initiatives tackling issues relating to climate change to develop an informed critical perspective locally, while encouraging collaborations and increasing Maltese design and artistic sectors’ visibility internationally;
- 3 integrating environmental sustainability as a requirement in the selection criteria of public funding programmes, including the declaration of how the expected negative impacts on the environment are going to be mitigated and/or compensated;
- 4 leveraging existing and new public funding programmes and initiatives to position the arts and culture as laboratories to test and develop new approaches that recognise the unique skill set that creative professionals have in devising new solutions to tackle climate change and contribute to environmental sustainability;
- 5 actions to reduce negative impacts and threats to tangible and intangible cultural heritage arising from climate change;
- 6 developing policy guidelines for sustainable energy measures and green initiatives in historic settings, such as purposely designed PV panels that may be placed sensitively on roofs in UCAs, or other green initiatives in order to make properties more energy efficient while respecting the values of the historic environment.

NCP 2021 sees that a Commission is set up to ensure that by 2025, all feasts celebrated in Malta reduce waste by at least 50%. Furthermore, all food and beverages served during feasts and outdoor festivities, are to be served in biodegradable containers and each concession shall provide separation of waste at source.

ART IN PUBLIC SPACES

As an expression of the community's social and cultural identity, art in public spaces activates spaces, improves sense of belonging and gives meaning to places. Public art encourages daily community engagement and activates creativity and innovation whilst fostering knowledge, learning and awareness.

In 2015, the Ministry of Infrastructure together with the Ministry for Culture launched the first regular public call for public art projects. Through this initiative a new wave of contemporary public art works are being integrated in public spaces across Malta and Gozo.

This policy will continue to endorse a public art policy to bridge the gaps between artists and communities, to enhance collaboration between various stakeholders whilst making artistic, creative and cultural expression accessible to the wider community.

In order to sustain the continuity and development of the art in public spaces, NCP 2021 calls for the provision of an art in public spaces management plan outlining the proper management and promotion of art in public spaces in Malta and Gozo, including curatorial responsibilities, overall upkeep and conservation. The management plan will also address any relevant legislation, planning policies and addresses measures in which Public Art can be integrated in small to large scale, private and public developments.

PUBLIC SPACES ART FUND

As an expression of the community's social and cultural identity, art in public spaces activates spaces, improves a sense of belonging and enhances the aesthetics of the built environment. Public art encourages daily community engagement and activates creativity and innovation whilst fostering knowledge, learning and awareness.

The Public Spaces Art Fund is an initiative to animate a new wave of contemporary public art works and their integration into public spaces across Malta and Gozo. The aim of the Fund is to promote artistic excellence and public engagement. Its objective is to support the combination of public art and the development of public spaces whilst enriching community dynamics, creating a distinctive sense of public identity and enhancing the visual and aesthetic quality of specific locations.

The Fund will also increase the awareness of public art and promote opportunities to further develop public art, with a particular focus on: the involvement of artists in the design and development of public spaces by facilitating collaboration between artists, planners, architects, landscape architects, and urban designers whenever possible in the total design process; the development of a public art legacy that integrates art into the urban design fabric of Malta in order to create high quality public spaces through the integration of art, urban design and architecture, and the growth in inspiration of artworks which are accessible to the public either visually or physically.

This Fund will continue to instrumentalise a public art policy to bridge the gaps between artists and communities, to enhance collaboration between various stakeholders whilst making artistic, creative and cultural expression accessible to the wider community.

The Public Space Arts Fund is jointly financed by the Planning Authority through money earned from high-rise permit fees, and the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects. The Fund is administered by Arts Council Malta and Spazju Kreattiv.

CREATIVE CLUSTERS NETWORK

NCP 2021 reaffirms the importance of creative clusters as physical and virtual spaces for creativity, research, innovation, entrepreneurship and collaboration to flourish. The emergence of new creative clusters in design, music and crafts, together with other clusters in inter-industry innovation provide a diverse ecology to enhance inter-industry partnerships. In order to sustain this shift towards clustering policies in the areas of culture, trade, digital technology and innovation, NCP 2021 recommends the development of a creative clusters network that delivers intercluster cooperation and strategic work that fosters a new creative business culture that provides an improved route for growth.

CONCERT HALL

NCP 2021 sees the importance of developing a concert hall that will serve as a house for the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and a hub for music documentation, development and performance in Malta.

The Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, currently employing around 70 full-time salaried staff is currently operating from a converted Church as a rehearsal space. It has no adequate rehearsal spaces for single, and group instruments as well as for the full orchestra, and has no permanent concert venue. Current rehearsal spaces and concert venues are inadequate for the needs of the MPO due to poor acoustics or limited physical space to host the full complement of musicians.

Whilst ensuring that the concert hall and all spaces serve the immediate requirements of the orchestra, the venue will target carbon neutral status and due consideration will be given to the refitting of an existing building. In addition, as outlined in this policy, the project will ensure that the principles of community engagement, artistic excellence and industry development in its potential as a music cluster, will be prioritised in the project.

MULTIPURPOSE THEATRE

NCP 2021 is reaffirming the need for a contemporary multipurpose theatre designed with the ability to change configuration and to adjust the room acoustics for the needs of each performance type. The theatre sector has long expressed the need for appropriate performing arts spaces that reflect current production requirements. Whereas, the objective of Teatru Malta as a theatre organisation without walls has renewed an interest in the rehabilitation and reuse of local theatre spaces, the need for professional theatre infrastructure remains unchanged. In addition, ŻfinMalta as Malta's National Dance Company, still has no adequate place to be housed in or to perform in.

NCP 2021 calls for the development of a multipurpose theatre that addresses the needs of the performing arts sector but also engages in contemporary interdisciplinary practice including science and digital technology. Similar to the policy direction for the development of the concert hall, the theatre should serve as a cluster for the performing arts (including rehearsals for opera and other theatre productions) with the provision of studio spaces, stage design and construction studios that support community engagement, artistic excellence and the development of the independent performing arts sector in both amateur and professional scenes. The venue will also target carbon neutral status and due consideration will be given to the refitting of an existing building or cluster of buildings.

NCP 2021 also envisages ongoing infrastructural upgrading of existing public theatres that improve production capacities and audience experiences, respecting their historical fabric and contemporary needs, including those of residents within their immediate neighbourhoods.

STUDIO SPACES

Over the years, artists from across different art forms have lamented the lack of affordable rehearsal spaces and studios to practice, prepare and research creative ideas. This lacuna is exacerbated by increased rental prices for temporary or permanent spaces. The creation of the Valletta Design Cluster was the latest development for creative clusters in Malta, followed by the new cluster development for Carnival float builders and another for music. NCP 2021 calls for the creation of new clusters for both the performance and visual arts to ensure that artists can operate within affordable spaces that also facilitate further collaboration and co-creation.

NCP 2021 will also support measures for rent allowances, exemption, or reduced rent for the use of publicly subsidised local, regional, national spaces for cultural organisations and individual artists provided activities are open to the public. This can also include the participation of Regional and Local Councils.

ART GALLERIES

Notwithstanding significant growth in recent years, the limited number of art galleries in Malta leaves a gap in the visual arts sector with a direct impact on the art market. These spaces give relevance, support and create a marketplace for artists, including price elevation, investment guarantees and promotion. This policy not only acknowledges the importance and value of art galleries but calls for new support schemes for existing galleries and to encourage new spaces.

REHABILITATING LOCAL THEATRES

Following the identification of 72 theatres in Malta in a national survey, *Spazji Teatrali – A Catalogue of Theatres in Malta and Gozo* was launched in 2017. The study evaluated the state of theatre buildings in Malta and Gozo and outlined the features of the theatres listed as well as the potential use of these spaces to accommodate performances, rehearsals and workshops by resident and non-residents performers and arts organisations.

NCP 2021 encourages the continuation of public investment in local theatres managed by cultural NGOs in their efforts to rehabilitate, restore and make improvements in such spaces leading them to becoming more functional and more professional. A model of public-private partnership to invest in the upgrading of these theatres should also be considered.

NCP 2021 notes in particular the rapid rate of loss of historic cinema spaces in recent decades, and encourages the preservation, sensitive rehabilitation and appropriate use of the surviving examples.

DIGITAL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

NCP 2021 acknowledges that new forms of cultural engagement have been more evident during the global pandemic. However, the necessary digital infrastructure is still required to ensure that cultural content emerging from Malta becomes more digitally accessible. This policy seeks to facilitate a collectively sourced and publicly supported online platform for all forms of artistic and cultural live performances, eBook libraries, museum virtual tours and talks, as well as offering opportunities to support artists and projects through donation, subscription and pay per view models. It will also consider licensing cultural content from the creators on behalf of the public, both as a support mechanism for creative businesses and as a support for households.

OUTCOMES

-  1 Adopt the concept of Baukultur as identified in the 2018 Davos Declaration as policy principles on cultural infrastructure and for all matters relevant to the role of culture in the built environment.
-  2 Sustain efforts for the completion of major national cultural infrastructure projects MICAS, the Malta Carnival Experience, the Festivals Malta Hub, , including community-building efforts linked to these projects, to ensure their integration in the wider cultural and creative ecology.
-  3 Acknowledge the role of culture in tackling climate change and develop a Culture for Climate Action strategy.
-  4 Develop the Public Space Art Fund. The objective of this Fund is to support the combination of public art and the development of public spaces whilst enriching community dynamics, creating a distinctive sense of public identity and enhancing the visual and aesthetic quality of specific locations.
-  5 Implement a national project to develop a concert hall that will serve as a home for the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and a hub for music documentation, development and performance in Malta.
-  6 Implement a national project to develop a multi-functional performing arts space that clusters performing arts related activities that are currently either lacking or underserved through existing infrastructure.
-  7 Develop new clusters for both the performance and visual arts to ensure that artists can operate within affordable spaces that also facilitate further collaboration and co-creation.
-  8 Continue with the infrastructural upgrading of existing public theatres to improve production capacities and audience experiences, respecting their historical fabric and contemporary needs, including those of residents within their immediate neighbourhoods.
-  9 Invest in the rehabilitation of local theatres managed by cultural NGOs.
-  10 Develop new support schemes for existing galleries and encourage the establishment of new gallery spaces.
-  11 Develop training programmes for the sector, addressing both public and non-governmental players, to integrate emerging technologies as transversal empowerment tools for wellbeing, applied to the sector's physical and organisational infrastructure.
-  12 Monitor and evaluate the impact of investment and development of cultural infrastructure on the wellbeing of society on two broad levels. This includes the interlinkages between cultural activity and the wider urban context as well as the assessment of cross-sectoral cultural impacts spanning social and economic dimensions.
-  13 Promote the preservation and compatible reuse of surviving village cinemas and local theatres.
-  14 Facilitate a collectively sourced and publicly supported online platform for all forms of artistic and cultural live performances, cultural activity and heritage experiences

CHAPTER 6

PROTECTING AND SAFEGUARDING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Valletta, capital of Malta: world heritage



Cultural Heritage has been recognised as one of Malta's vital assets at least since the nineteenth century. Laws and regulations to protect the country's cultural heritage resources have been evolving for over a century.

The (2002) Cultural Heritage Act recognises the fact that '...cultural heritage is an asset of irreplaceable spiritual, cultural, social and economic value, and its protection and promotion are indispensable for a balanced and complete life', and lays down the principle that 'every citizen... has the duty of protecting the cultural heritage as well as the right to benefit from this cultural heritage through learning and enjoyment.' These twin principles, that is the right of citizens to experience and enjoy their cultural heritage (see also Chapter 2 of NCP 2021), and the duty to protect that heritage for future generations, follow the vision and mission of this policy.

Since the launch of Malta's first National Cultural Policy in 2011, a number of significant strides have been achieved in the cultural heritage sector. These developments range from legal reform to the consolidation of heritage management structures, most notably Heritage Malta and the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, with the support of a progressive increase in public investment in the sector.

In June 2019, following a lengthy period of consultation with the sector, the Cultural Heritage Act was amended by Act XIX of 2019. Significant amendments include the updating of the institutional framework, and the establishment of a framework to regulate the profession of conservator-restorer. While the 2002 Act enshrined the protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage in Malta's territorial waters and its contiguous zone, the 2019 amendments spell out this protection in much greater detail.

The Restoration Directorate has continued to develop and consolidate its immense body of expertise in historic building conservation, and to undertake and deliver a wide range of restoration, rehabilitation and conservation projects across the spectrum of publicly owned heritage buildings, including numerous prominent sites of national importance, such as fortifications, palaces, churches, and monuments.

The Directorate has also built an impressive track record of successfully managed and delivered projects funded through the co-financing mechanisms of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Some of their more recent projects the Malta International Contemporary Art Space (MICAS) in Floriana, the rehabilitation of the Old Abattoir into the Valletta Design Cluster, and the rehabilitation of the Notarial Archives.

A series of major national sites and monuments managed by Heritage Malta have been extensively restored. Fort Saint Elmo and Fort Saint Angelo have been made accessible to visitors on a daily basis for the first time, after major restoration projects co-funded through the European Structural Funds programme for Malta. Other sites, including Saint Paul's Catacombs, the Ġgantija Temples, the Fal Saflieni Hypogeum and the Inquisitor's Palace have undergone extensive and meticulous works to improve the quality of the visitor experience.

The Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, meanwhile, has forged ahead with the development of the National Inventory of Cultural Heritage, publishing inventory cards for over 2,400 sites and buildings, which may be viewed online³⁴. The case-load of planning applications vetted by the Superintendence increased exponentially over the past decade³⁵. Between 2018 and 2019, a significant number of additional professional staff was recruited to meet this challenge.

The role of NGOs and civil society in the safeguarding of cultural heritage has continued to grow and to receive greater recognition, in fulfilment of the first National Cultural Policy's objective of encouraging greater participation by civil society in a people-centred approach. In 2014, a civil society network in the Grand Harbour region launched a Local Communities Charter for the Safeguarding of Open Spaces around Malta's Grand Harbour³⁶. In 2018, a network of over twenty NGOs and other bodies, concerned about the loss of cultural heritage and cultural landscapes, launched a joint declaration called Our Legacy³⁷, with a series of practical recommendations.

³⁴ www.culturalheritage.gov.mt

³⁵ State of the Heritage Report 2014. Superintendence of Cultural Heritage. Available at: <https://culture.gov.mt/en/culturalheritage/Documents/form/SHR2014Final.pdf>

³⁶ www.grandharbourcharter.net/charter.html

³⁷ https://kamratolperitii.org/wp-content/uploads/Declaration_EN-print-format.pdf

NCP 2021 envisage that new physical infrastructure is not developed as a result of additional take-up rural areas. This should be accommodated within existing built-up and committed areas away from environmentally sensitive sites. Furthermore, NCP 2021 recommends that the design of physical infrastructure, as well as monuments and other artistic installations, should fully respect the surrounding context, without adverse environmental impacts and intrusion into the landscape.

Establishing a Design Review Panel within the Environment and Resource Authority (ERA) will oversee this recommendation.

An important milestone that was achieved in 2017 was the signing of the UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, the implementation of which is now being spearheaded by the Directorate of Culture. The first task for intangible heritage was to create a National Inventory Board of intangible assets proposed by cultural NGOs, interest groups and members of the community. Then, a number of elements of Malta's cultural heritage will be proposed for nomination to the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage, paving the way for their protection and worldwide recognition.

Meanwhile the National Archives of Malta, in collaboration with the University of Malta, has continued to promote the archiving of the country's oral histories through its flagship Memorja, the national memory project.

The tertiary education sector has also risen to the challenge of offering a professional formation for future workers in the field. A series of new programmes have been launched, including Masters programmes in Museum Education, Tourism and Culture, Conservation of Decorative Architectural Surfaces, and Cultural Heritage Management, that are being offered at the University of Malta.

At the same time as all these successes, the rapidly evolving global as well as national scene has brought about many new challenges for the cultural heritage sector, some of which were not fully foreseen in the 2011 National Cultural Policy.

The unprecedented building boom witnessed in recent years has intensified the pressure on the cultural landscape, and has made its stewardship more challenging, and more urgent, than ever before. The global phenomenon of over-tourism on heritage destinations has started being felt in Malta too, and if not carefully managed, may become a threat to this sector of the tourism industry. Meanwhile, migration is reshaping Malta's population to make it more cosmopolitan and multicultural than ever before, with the attendant challenges and opportunities. The stewardship of and engagement with cultural heritage is central to these challenges.

The approach of the National Cultural Policy 2021 to these challenges is informed by the evolving international framework of charters and conventions. Some of the more recent and more salient developments in this regard may be referred to here. In its 37th session (27th February to 23rd March 2018), the Human Rights Council of the United Nations adopted the resolution on 'Cultural Rights and the Protection of Cultural Heritage' in which it "calls upon all States to respect, promote and protect the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, including the ability to access and enjoy cultural heritage"³⁸.

The European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, launched in May 2018, and the "Berlin Call to Action" of 13 of June 2018, has called for an action plan that should be coherent with the Council of Europe Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro 2005). The Faro Convention lays down some key principles which are immensely relevant for the National Cultural Policy 2021, such as the principle that 'every person has a right to engage with the cultural heritage of their choice... as an aspect of the right... to participate in cultural life enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)'

In 2018, the European Ministers of Culture launched the Davos Declaration³⁹, which lays down guiding principles for the way forward for a culture of building that truly improves people's quality of life. In November 2018, the scope of the Urban Agenda for the European Union was extended to include Culture and Cultural Heritage, reflecting some of the same concerns and goals as the Davos Declaration.

³⁸ A/HRC/37/L.30, Clause 1

³⁹ <https://davosdeclaration2018.ch/>

NCP 2021 calls for the design of a Cultural Heritage Policy that is drafted and adopted after public consultation.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

In fulfilling this international policy framework on a national and European level, National Cultural Policy 2021 shall address the challenges of cultural heritage through the following key objectives:

- Establishing the principle that access to and engagement with cultural heritage is not a luxury but a fundamental right of every person, and an essential contributor to the wellbeing and quality of life of present and future generations.
- Ensuring that all sectors and all levels of government respect and promote the safeguarding of cultural heritage and cultural landscapes, for the benefit of present as well as future generations, and ensuring that short-term profit is never allowed to take precedence over this long-term public good.
- Promoting sustainable and creative engagement with cultural heritage resources to reap benefits in the fields of education, sustainable tourism, health and wellbeing, social inclusion and intercultural understanding.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

The pressures created on Malta's UNESCO World Heritage Sites by development proposals, including land-use and certain planning decisions, and the impacts of these pressures on the values associated with these sites need to be better understood and quantified. There is a pressing need to understand whether the implementation of existing planning policies are prioritising or jeopardising the World Heritage Status (WHS) of these sites. Such an assessment will be conducted in line with the ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage⁴⁰.

Definition of the buffer zones should be revised so that instead of being flat circles/ovals on a map, they are cones that extend upwards and outwards from the outermost edge of the monument. In this manner, the development closest to the monument is lowest in height, gradually increasing (to the permitted scheme height) as one moves away from the monument. The cone should be a 'minimum', that is the compensation currently permitted in stepped development would not only apply in this case, since the cone line would define the absolute maximum development envelope.

NCP 2021 recalls that in 2020, Planning Authority defined 50m buffer zones around Grade 1 and Grade 2 scheduled sites. These compliment the 100m buffer zones around the major archaeological sites already defined.

NCP 2021 calls for a better understanding of:

- the impact on the landscape setting of UNESCO WHS values of existing building encroachment, engineered excavations (particularly rock-cutting) and building height policies;
- the impact of the resultant increase in urban density (volume of development and increase in demography, traffic, infrastructure and pollution) on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of UNESCO WHS;
- existing development strategies/policies and building activity within the UNESCO WHS buffer zones, and whether this is within the limit of acceptable change the difference between 'needs' (hospitals/old people's homes) and 'wants' (additional development for accommodation and commercial outlets).

NCP 2021 further calls for:

- Adequate measures to protect World Heritage Outstanding Universal Values (OUVs) through legislation, buffer zones and regulation.
- A review of the development planning process in order to create and implement policies which support and implement Malta's World Heritage aspirations and obligations.

⁴⁰ ICOMOS, 2011

VALLETTA (UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE)

NCP 2021 calls for a heritage impact assessment to determine whether change in Valletta has altered its cultural significance since its date of inscription as a WHS (1980). The study shall also include but not be limited to impacts by: development pressures, transportation, changing uses of historical buildings and spaces, commercial activity, restoration, rehabilitation and regeneration works, and their effect on the present Valletta community, particularly long-time residents of Valletta.

NCP 2021 calls for further restoration of historical buildings, including the internal fabric, and the authenticity of materials, techniques, and spaces to be given due prominence to ensure the survival of authentic built heritage for future generations and preserve the outstanding universal value of Valletta. This in compliance with the principles outlined in the Venice Charter⁴¹, the Nara document on Authenticity (ICOMOS, 1994) and the Burra Charter⁴².

NCP 2021 calls for action to ensure the removal of clutter to ease pedestrian flow, improve visual quality of the historic environment and visual permeability of views (monuments) and vistas (long-distance). Particular attention shall be given to the management of exterior signage (appropriate location, proportions, colours, design and material), shop frontages, air-conditioning units; exterior furniture including tables and chairs, fixed structures and enclosures, as well as services and other amenities situated at roof level.

NCP 2021 recognises that buildings with heritage value can lend themselves to different uses. NCP calls upon all arms of Government to seek the right balance between commercial initiatives and developments which deliver a public good, such as public health, civic pride and citizens' well-being, so as to establish a healthy cultural ecology.

The re-establishment of an entity to coordinate and manage this world heritage city is of paramount importance, particularly since a void seems to have been created after V18 ended.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES (TENTATIVE LIST)

Irrespective of whether the candidate sites are eventually inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site or not, NCP 2021 recognizes that the sites identified for inscription have undeniable high national importance. Failure to be formally inscribed as a UNESCO WHS does not diminish the values ascribed to a site during the process leading to possible inscription. Sites are to remain highly regarded as national treasures, albeit not being ascribed Outstanding Universal Value.

The UNESCO World Heritage Applications Steering Committee set up between the Ministry for Culture and the University of Malta shall promote and advance the inclusion of new candidate properties from Maltese islands on the UNESCO WHS.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Malta was among the first of 47 countries to sign the European Landscape Convention (Florence, 2000) on 20 October 2000. It is now only one of two countries that signed the European Landscape Convention but has not yet ratified it. NCP 2021 sets the completion of this process as an urgent priority.

NCP 2021 also calls for the prioritisation of the signing and/or ratification of other international conventions and agreements relating to cultural heritage. NCP 2021 reiterates that, while the process of signing and/or ratification of international conventions is ongoing, the principles enshrined within them should continue to be implemented by the State and streamlined in all relevant policies.

NCP 2021 also calls for the allocation of appropriate resources to the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, to enable it to fulfil its commitments to pursue the signature and ratification of these instruments and to follow up on their implementation.

⁴¹ ICOMOS, 1964

⁴² ICOMOS, 2013

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION ON HERITAGE SCIENCE RESEARCH

An important initiative in the field of cultural heritage conservation is establishing Malta as an active partner in the European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science (E-RIHS) network, which aims 'to deliver integrated access to expertise, data and technologies through a standardized approach, and to integrate world-leading European facilities into an organisation with a clear identity and a strong cohesive role within the global heritage science community' (E-RIHS Mission Statement).

As a result of close collaboration between entities across the country's entire heritage sector, including Government and non-Governmental entities, together with the Department of Conservation and Built Heritage of the University of Malta and various other UoM Departments. Malta will be a founding member of E-RIHS when it is set up in 2022.

TRADITIONAL STREETSCAPES AND VILLAGE CORES

NCP 2021 calls for more community stewardship in regions to protect the traditional streetscape context and way of life, and for active support by every level of government to generate, maintain and respect a sense of place.

NCP 2021 calls for studies to be commissioned in order to:

- understand the interactions between village traditions and local communities, determine the role of the building stock within a traditional village context and how these are viewed by the community, and how those communities are changing.
- Capital investment should be directed towards village cores. The main focus should be on conservation, maintenance and restoration works, and safeguarding of sense of place (as defined in the Burra Charter, 2013).

NCP 2021 calls for creative solutions to reduce the pressures of traffic and parking shortages within village cores, with particular emphasis on improving existing parking shortages for residents.

QUALITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Successive building booms since Malta's Independence have had an effect on the cultural landscapes of Malta. It is universally acknowledged that the low quality of the design of many of the buildings that form the built environment, and that are still being built today, is having a negative impact on the quality of life of the citizen, and has deprived contemporary society of beautiful urban environments and liveable spaces and community friendly open spaces. Ugly buildings and the brutal destruction of pleasant places and open spaces have detrimental impacts on public spaces and streetscapes which are in effect a public good and a common good.

NCP 2021 calls for a framework for ensuring high quality design and aesthetically pleasing buildings and places to be established in a transparent manner to serve the general public.

NCP 2021 further calls for the establishment of a Standing Committee made up of heritage practitioners, heritage NGOs and representatives of the building industry to foster dialogue on the challenges of achieving a more sustainable and high-quality built environment. Greater emphasis should be attached on re-use rather than demolition.

NATIONAL INVENTORY, GIS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSETS

NCP 2021 calls for more dedicated resources to be invested within the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage as regulator of cultural heritage for the compilation of a National Inventory of Cultural Heritage, as envisioned in the Cultural Heritage Act.

The National Inventory is not a mere depository of information but needs to be actively managed by a team of professionals dedicated to its upkeep. The Inventory also requires investment in the presentation of the national inventory and the mapping of associated values and risks, in geo-spatial technology.

As part of this data-capture, government agencies shall collaborate fully to provide a list of data already in their possession, in order to encourage data-sharing, promote synergy and avoid duplication.

In addition, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage shall consolidate the fragmented data on cultural heritage dispersed in various agencies into a coherent database, to improve efficiency in providing advice in planning consultation, and for other purposes. This process will be implemented with continued investment in information technology, including artificial intelligence, to improve digitisation accessibility and preservation.

The Inventory should be multi-dimensional covering the various aspects of cultural heritage defined and listed in the definition clauses of the Cultural Heritage Act. While collections and monuments (archaeological and built) are usually represented in inventories, other significant elements of cultural heritage are still poorly represented, such as cultural landscapes, skylines, deposits, geological formations, streetscapes, roofscapes, street environments, historic centre environments, traditional urban settings, and intangible aspects.

NCP calls for the Inventory to have at least three central elements:

- 1 a list of items with relevant inventory data and meta-data.
- 2 a risk assessment of all items, audited and reviewed as necessary, in order for the state to examine and take appropriate measures when inventoried items are deemed to be at risk; Risk assessments shall be undertaken at organisational level as well as site/object level, followed by the corresponding risk management plans.
- 3 a defined set of values comprising historic, cultural, religious, identity, etc as well as monetary value. These values will inform items (i) and (ii)

NCP 2021 calls for appropriate review and integration of the relevant legislation in order to ensure that the items on the inventory are afforded adequate and operational protection. Protection of items on the Inventory should take precedence over planning decisions and other considerations. The Inventory shall have the force of law.

NCP 2021 calls for funding of the Inventory to be allocated under a special budget line item.

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Generating awareness, interest and participation in traditional crafts, customs, methods and techniques that define Maltese cultural identity, intangible cultural heritage is an important part of our legacy from the past, what we live with today and what we should pass on to future generations.

It is an irreplaceable point of reference of our identity. NCP 2021 calls for the identification and documentation of “traditional ways of doing things” before the transfer of knowledge to younger generations is discontinued.

Sustainable intangible cultural heritage management is dependent on communities embracing the value of such heritage. To succeed, communities must take the lead and fully comprehend the responsibility to preserve the knowledge gained from past generations and transmit them to future ones. This can only be achieved by active citizenship. Local Councils and Regional Councils should be in the vanguard to empower their communities to take pride of the traditions, activities and practices which characterize their locality and way of life.



UNESCO inscribed il-Firra Maltija on the list for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in December, 2020
Photo: Kevin Sciberras

After the Parliament unanimously approved in 2017 the 2003 UNESCO Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Culture Directorate was assigned the role to support the communities by ethnographic research, fiscal incentives to propagate the traditions, activities and practices and raising the profile of the elements to national and where possible to international awareness.

A unit within the Culture Directorate should be formally set up to continue to populate the National Inventory and promote the inscription of elements of intangible cultural heritage on the UNESCO safeguarding list. When an element is inscribed on this list, it is expected that measures are taken at national level to safeguard it and report periodically to UNESCO on safeguarding initiatives.

In order to achieve this, professional researchers need to be trained. In order to achieve this, courses on intangible cultural heritage need to be developed at tertiary level and so that trained practitioners engage with communities on the safeguarding of elements on both the National Inventory and on the humanity list of UNESCO.

Furthermore, through collaboration with local councils and NGOs, these practitioners shall embark on a vast lifelong learning programme in the communities of Malta and Gozo to:

- involve them actively in the management of the elements,
- encourage non-formal means of transmitting knowledge through all forms of media,
- be active in raising awareness of any dangers threatening the elements as early as possible, and
- help such communities to develop skills and competences to safeguard.

Moreover, it shall be the task of these practitioners to prepare the necessary research to help the Culture Directorate seek the necessary state funding for the safeguarding of Malta's intangible cultural heritage.

UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

The 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage has over the last decade become a central instrument of activities directed at Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH) the world over. Technological advances throughout the 20th century have extended human access to all parts of the seabed, stressing the need to implement protective measures and mitigate the unregulated recovery and exploitation of UCH. The intention was to set up a contemporary international agenda that provides a consistent national standard, presented in 35 Articles and the 36 Rules laid out in the Annex to the Convention. The aim is to ensure that all activities directed at UCH, in any maritime zone, are in accordance to the rules laid out in the Annex, and thus, conform to a universal scientific standard.

In Malta, the first documented underwater archaeological discoveries can be traced to the 1950s. The following decades brought with them a rising number of dive schools and clubs, reflecting the rise in popularity of recreational SCUBA.

The vulnerability of UCH became progressively more evident, as well as the need for a controlled monitoring of submerged heritage sites. However, it would be decades before this was actioned. The recognition of this responsibility towards the proper protection and management of UCH was formally introduced in 2019 with Act No. XIX. This addition, for the first time, ensured that all cultural remains over 50-years-old and located on the territorial seabed of Malta was granted the same level of protection as terrestrial sites. In recognition of this responsibility towards the valorisation and protection of UCH, the Underwater Cultural Heritage Unit (UCHU) was set up within Heritage Malta. The UCHU's main responsibilities are the protection, valorisation and management of submerged heritage sites.

The 2019 amendments to Malta's heritage legislation and the establishment of the UCHU has ensured that the island's policy framework reflects the principles laid out in the Convention. This is echoed in how Malta defines UCH and in how the State has chosen to protect, valorise and manage its UCH.

Therefore, it is the intention of Malta to base its long-term UCH management approach on these principles, as reflected in Article 22(1) of the Convention, which conditions that 'State Parties shall establish competent authorities with the aim of providing for the establishment, maintenance and updating of an inventory of underwater cultural heritage, the effective protection, conservation, presentation and management of underwater cultural heritage, as well as research and education'.

Currently there are 18 sites managed by the UCHU, with more to be added in the coming months and years.

The said amendments entrusts the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage to protect UCH as part of its regulatory functions. Section VII of the Cultural Heritage Act makes reference to the powers and duties of SCH.

NCP 2021 calls for more investment in UCH and the following initiatives are supported and implemented:

- 1 The systematic mapping of the seabed around the Maltese Islands.
- 2 The recording of Malta's UCH.
- 3 The recognition and promotion of UCH as sites of natural importance.
- 4 The inclusion of UCH is a national research strategy.
- 5 The development of UCH as a tourist attraction.
- 6 The development of UCH as an educational tool through various media.

TRADITIONAL MALTESE FESTAS

An essential element of our cultural heritage is the traditional Maltese Festa which is celebrated in all localities in Malta and Gozo. The Maltese and Gozitan Festas have several elements which distinguish them from those held abroad; there are even elements which distinguish them from those held in Malta and those in Gozo; even more, elements which distinguish them from one town to another.

NCP 2021 reaffirms the commitment to support this uniqueness in the traditional Maltese Festas.

Festas bring together communities because they involve the participation of a long list of diverse practitioners. The list includes committee members of band clubs, decoration groups, fireworks manufacturers, the clergy, musicians, craft persons, bell-ringers and publishers to name a few.

Although Festas still enjoy the support of the communities at large, they are facing a number of challenges amongst them:

- a. lower birth rate and hence less active participation;
- b. demographics and different living expectations;
- c. technology which is promoting more individualism and hinders socialisation;
- d. increased costs;
- e. competition by big commercial events organised contemporarily;
- f. threats of eviction to societies, such as band clubs, from leased premises, and
- g. less persons who are ready to do voluntary work.

NCP 2021 affirms the full support to the Traditional Maltese Festas and through the Culture Directorate shall seek to discuss with all stakeholders how the Ministry for Culture shall safeguard it. The same support shall also be extended to the traditional Good Friday processions and other religious feasts.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Develop a separate Cultural Heritage Policy.
- 2 Ratify with urgency the Council of Europe, European Landscape Convention (Florence 2000), signed by Malta in 2000.
- 3 Sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro 2005).
- 4 Sign and ratify the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (Hague Convention 1954), and the First (1954) and Second (1999) Protocols to the Convention.
- 5 Sign and ratify the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO 1970).
- 6 Sign and ratify the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (UNIDROIT 1995).
- 7 Sign and Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (2017).
- 8 Conduct a review of national legislation, in order to identify any amendments that may be required to reflect the terms and objectives of the UN Resolution on 'Cultural Rights and the Protection of Cultural Heritage' (2018).
- 9 Revise the national planning policy framework to incorporate tangible and effective measures to create more holistic integration of environment, heritage and planning policies and processes in order to provide more effective protection for non-renewable heritage resources.
- 10 As prescribed by the Cultural Heritage Act, launch a single, integrated Public Inventory of Cultural Assets that are scheduled or identified for scheduling, or worthy of scheduling shall be maintained under the Cultural Heritage Act, and shall be binding on planning decisions. The inventory shall also identify values and significance, risks and vulnerabilities, and protection requirements, through an appropriate risk assessment framework
- 11 Strengthen the protection of traditional skylines of historic towns and villages through more effective policies that shall form part of the development planning framework, including the revision of permissible building heights as designated in the Local Plans in order to ensure that these do not further compromise these skyline views.
- 12 Greater emphasis on re-use of buildings rather than demolition.
- 13 Implement measures to ensure the right balance on sites of heritage value between commercial initiatives and developments which deliver a public good, such as public health, education, civic pride and citizens' wellbeing, so as to establish a healthy cultural ecology.
- 14 Implement measures to foster and support greater community stewardship at the local level for traditional village cores and UCAs.
- 15 Propose creative solutions to reduce the pressures of traffic and parking shortages within village cores, particularly for residents, without negatively impacting the historic environment.

- 16 Update with urgency draft Management Plans for Malta's three existing inscriptions on the World Heritage List and submit for public consultation. As part of this exercise, a heritage impact assessment is required to examine developments on and around these sites since their inscription.
- 17 Formally incorporate the safeguarding of World Heritage Sites, and sites on the Tentative List for WH Inscription, and their setting in the existing development planning framework through expressly designed policies in the forthcoming review of planning development plans and policies.
- 18 Formally declare a Buffer Zone for the World Heritage City of Valletta to better safeguard the setting of the city, with appropriate regulatory policies.
- 19 Given that developers already fund archaeological investigations, monitoring and documentation guided by the 'polluter pays' principle and the Precautionary Principle, more funds should be allocated to the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage to ensure a timely publication of a summary scientific record, as well as the full publication and recording of the findings, as required by the European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992), to which Malta is a party.
- 20 Improve and extend the use of ICT in cultural management and in the dissemination of knowledge, including the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, through synergies with IT stakeholders
- 21 Commission a study to assess the risks and impacts of over tourism to heritage destinations in Malta, and to establish meaningful limits of acceptable change and carrying capacity.
- 22 Review and update Malta's Tentative List for World Heritage Inscription with a view to identify new nominations for inscriptions.
- 23 All forms of public funding, through international, national or local programmes, will be conditional on a mandatory review of project proposals to ensure that there is no negative impact on cultural heritage or the wider cultural landscape, and to favour project proposals that have a positive impact.
- 24 Establish a public Heritage Property Fund to acquire, restore and redevelop key properties which have strategic cultural significance for their perpetual conservation, or otherwise to be put to communal or societal use.
- 25 Compensate property owners through a scheme directly managed by public bodies where increased heritage protection measures may require new restrictions on allowable building heights.
- 26 Strengthen further Public bodies in the Cultural Heritage sector, primarily the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage with the necessary tools and resources to safeguard cultural heritage in an effective and sustainable manner.

- 27/ Establish a Standing Committee made up of heritage practitioners, heritage NGOs and representatives of the building industry to foster dialogue on the challenges of achieving a more sustainable and high-quality built environment.
- 28/ Strengthen the organisational infrastructure and resources for managing World Heritage Sites and addressing World Heritage issues.
- 29/ Introduce a specific funding programme for cultural heritage NGOs and local government to address capital expenditures related to restoration and interpretation.
- 30/ Engage more human resources to work on the objectives of the 2003 Convention, to raise awareness on the National Inventory and promote the inscription of elements of intangible cultural heritage on the UNESCO safeguarding lists.
- 31/ Develop courses at tertiary level on intangible cultural heritage so that trained practitioners engage with communities on the safeguarding of elements on both the National Inventory and on the humanity list of UNESCO.
- 32/ Support Regional Councils and Local Councils and cultural NGOs in developing and implementing programmes that empower citizens and interest groups to value, sustain and celebrate intangible cultural heritage.

- 33/ Encourage closer collaboration between agencies, museums and institutions across the Maltese heritage sector and their international counterparts, to benefit from the sharing of expertise, knowledge and equipment in heritage science research, especially in view of Malta's participation in E-RIHS - the European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science.
- 34/ Increase investment in underwater cultural heritage so that a number of important initiatives are implemented.
- 35/ Safeguard the traditional Maltese festa and the traditional Good Friday processions.

Restoration works on St. John's Almonier Bastions, Margherita Lines, Cospicua. Works carried out by the Restoration Directorate.



CHAPTER 7

PROMOTING A CULTURALLY DISTINCTIVE GOZO



Etnika – Cultural event in Gozo
Photo: Directorate for Cultural Heritage

The island of Gozo has a distinctive character and a unique heritage which transcend its peripherality. Its distinctiveness has been a central element within the national cultural and economic development as Gozo has the potential to reinforce the national dimension through its regional identity. Gozo's identity is also an integral part of the national culture and hence, of Malta's National Cultural Policy. NCP 2021 shall aim to protect, promote and safeguard Gozo's cultural identity and address new challenges which have emerged due to the rapidly evolving factors which transformed Gozo's cultural landscape.

Gozitan artists are constrained by a number of challenges which pertain to the island's inherent characteristics, particularly its smallness and double insularity, which impacts their professional status and development. Some artists, especially artisans, attempt to strike the right balance between conserving their craft and meeting the demands and expectations of contemporaneity.

These measures are necessary to acquire tangible outcomes and responsibilities which need to be pursued in order to continue to safeguard and enhance the unique cultural and natural characteristics that render the island region of Gozo so desirable to inhabit and visit, whilst concurrently foster a distinctive policy that bridges the natural and cultural environment with contemporary practice.

Late in 2019, a new Directorate, the Cultural Heritage Directorate, was established within the Ministry for Gozo with the responsibility for Cultural Heritage and Culture. This Directorate shall be responsible for the implementation of the policy measures designed specifically for Gozo and will secure collaborations with other Ministries, PCOs and cultural NGOs. The Cultural Heritage Directorate shall liaise with the Superintendence as the regulator of cultural heritage.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

NCP 2021 shall aim to:

- Position Gozo as a distinctive cultural region in both cultural heritage and contemporary culture.
- Establish a restoration intervention programme for cultural heritage sites at risk.
- Ensure the successful completion of work at cultural heritage sites already being restored.
- Empower cultural communities in Gozo to act as catalyst in Gozo's cultural development and to develop further their capacity as contributors to local, social and cultural wellbeing.
- Promote sustainable cultural tourism.
- Encourage more young people to engage and participate in Gozo's culture, including professional activity.

CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Cultural activities in Gozo are led by numerous public and private cultural entities including the Cultural Heritage Directorate, numerous NGOs and small village communities which aim to preserve the identity of local citizens, most often through voluntary activities. Traditional events are usually held by various village communities while new emerging communities are nowadays increasing the diversity of community-led cultural participation.

The 2016 cultural participation survey reveals that compared to other districts, Gozo registered the highest percentage (19%) of individuals volunteering with an arts, cultural or heritage organisation. This is significantly higher than the overall 10% registered across Malta and Gozo.

This trend is also manifested in statistics on memberships of band clubs. While the number of band club committee members in Malta decreased by around 27% between 2010 and 2014, those in Gozo registered an increase of 3%. Cultural events organised by local councils are also popular in Gozo.

In 2016, the Ministry for Gozo and Arts Council Malta launched the “Gozo Cultural Support Programme”. Through this initiative, a total of €230,000 were allocated on an annual basis to support the Victoria International Arts Festival, the Gaulitana Festival, and the opera productions held in the two main opera theatres in Victoria.

In 2018 the Ministry for Gozo launched the ‘The Ministry for Gozo Non-Governmental Organisations Assistance Scheme’ designed to provide support and facilitate the realisation of small initiative on the island of Gozo by voluntary organisations. This scheme aims to enhance the social, cultural, economic and ecological fabric of the Gozitan society while promoting and encouraging a culture of volunteering and participation among Gozitans. It also aims to stimulate cooperation between Gozitan voluntary groups through collaborative initiatives.

In 2019 the Ministry for Gozo launched the Gozo Cultural Events Fund. This is a fund for community-led creative and artistic activities in Gozo. It provides the opportunity for development of artistic projects led by the community for the community, while celebrating cultural diversity. The fund looks to invest in projects which encourage active cultural participation, promote local talent and boost the community’s creative expression or appreciation of its identity.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The island of Gozo is rich in historical, religious and cultural assets. Several Gozitan NGOs seek to safeguard, promote and protect such assets. In the past, the Ministry for Gozo has entrusted Wirt Għawdex with the restoration and management of a number of historic places including the World War II shelters, and the Lower Battery within the Gozo Citadel; the restoration of the façade of the old Gozo Hospital which presently houses the Ministry for Gozo and the restoration of a number of niches and monuments around the island of Gozo⁴³.

Moreover, the Cittadella Master Plan has seen a complete restoration of Gozo’s Citadel to preserve its cultural and historic significance and increase its value for tourists. Recently the Ministry for Gozo has successfully restored Xewkija Windmill and Gordan Lighthouse in Għasri.

Some of these cultural investments have been supported also through the effective utilisation of EU funding opportunities. This Policy will continue to support the status of Cittadella as a listed asset in the Tentative list of Malta in order to qualify for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

However, a number of important cultural heritage sites in Gozo and Comino require close and immediate attention. A sustained restoration intervention programme will be developed to limit the risk that such sites would be lost to current and future generations. The Ministry for Gozo will continue implementing the Restoration Fund so as to preserve and restore local heritage sites and monuments and improve accessibility to such cultural sites.

National cultural heritage projects in Gozo prioritised in this policy include the completion of the Gozo Museum and the restoration of Calypso’s Cave at Xagħra, the Aqueducts on the road to Ta’ Pinu, and Għar Għerduf in Kerċem. The Gozo Museum will include innovative and digital presentation of Gozo and the evolution of the Gozitan lifestyle. The restoration of Calypso’s Cave will be complemented with the creation of a historical and cultural activity programme which would include virtual and augmented reality within the context of Homer’s Ulysses.

Education and access to knowledge of Gozo’s cultural assets are also pivotal in ensuring that cultural heritage retains its value and distinctiveness among future generations. To ensure that such promotion is achieved, cultural management, interpretation and programming should be raised to the highest standards, based on the professional input of expert knowledge. Through this policy, the Cultural Heritage Directorate will be committed to improve the awareness and appreciation of Gozo’s traditional and historical heritage amongst Gozitan communities and visitors. This policy commits to ensure that the sites are used widely and effectively as a resource for learning in all sectors and in all phases of education and training.

⁴³Daniel Borg, [2017] “The development of cultural heritage in Gozo, and its potential as a tourism niche”, International Journal of Tourism Cities, Vol. 3 Issue: 2, pp.184-195

SUPPORTING RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

In 2018 the Ministry for Gozo launched the Dwejra Opportunity Fund, which is a direct incentive from Government for crowd funding opportunities and private donations so that Government can double the investment, expenditure on restoration and upkeep of natural and cultural heritage in Gozo. This fund will also finance research on natural sites and historic places. The amount placed in the Fund, which is also tax deductible, will be matched by the Government at the end of each financial year. Investment related to the preservation of cultural heritage sites remain necessary to improve Gozo's offering which directly contribute to the island's identity and economic growth.

SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL TOURISM

Cultural heritage is a key contributor towards the tourism sector in Gozo. In 2018, 55.1% of inbound tourists visited Gozo. 47.2% of total inbound tourists visited Gozo on a day trip whilst 7.9% spent one night or more. 44% of tourists visiting Gozo chose history and culture as the main motivation for visiting. On the other hand, 91% visited Victoria and 47% Xagħra/ Ġgantija. Whereas 68.8% visited historical buildings and 44.2% visited archaeological sites attending local festivals, feasts and local produce sites are less popular among visitors.

Engagement in Cultural Activities	
66.8%	Visit historical buildings
60.6%	Visit churches
44.2%	Visit archaeological sites
32%	Visit museums
22.7%	Attend local festivals
18.1%	Visit arts/crafts sites
13.5%	Visit local produce sites
12.4%	Attend religious feasts

Source: MTA

Events such as Christmas in Gozo, Easter in Gozo, Gozo Alive and Opera in Gozo are becoming a distinct attraction for visitors to the Island and every effort should be made to sustain these events and develop new audiences. This policy will ensure that diverse programmes offered during these events attract a local and international audience, serve as platforms for local cultural activity and contribute to Gozo's positioning as an all-year round destination.

NCP 2021 acknowledges the importance of sustainable cultural tourism practices that integrate the management of cultural heritage, arts events and tourism activities in collaboration with local communities to create positive spillovers to achieve social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits for all stakeholders.

At the same time, it is important that the carrying capacity of the natural resources found in Gozo should be assessed and monitored ensuring these are not exceeded, especially in the summer months when tourist numbers reach their peak. Such large numbers of tourists put pressure on natural resources which leads to negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems, which ultimately deducts from Gozo's attractive qualities.



Traditional Music in Blankas Garden, Gozo
Photo: Directorate for Cultural Heritage

INNOVATION IN CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRACTICES

In order to sustain the growth of the cultural sector, innovative and creative practices have to be undertaken such that people's history and values, cultural identity, activities and the architecture they inhabit are recognised and conserved for current and future generations.

There is furthermore a strong potential for culture to serve as a driver of economic growth in Gozo and for the retention and attraction of younger skilled and talented people. Promising activities in this regard include film production, based on the natural and man-made heritage and amenities on the island. Music is another key area for cultural development, as Gozo boasts of key international networks in this area, and of a number of talented individuals which can turn this vision into reality.

In addition, Gozo's idyllic natural environment and culture continues to inspire numerous artists during visits and residency programmes. Following the success of the artist-in-residency programme established in Gozo in recent years, NCP 2021 will continue supporting the development of this programme to promote Gozo as an island for artists-in residence.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Gozo regularly hosts a variety of activities and performances with the participation of international artists, including opera productions presented by two local musical societies. Aurora and Astra Opera Houses have presented numerous world-class performers who perform alongside local performers. The Victoria International Arts Festival and Gaultitana Festival of Music are two examples of leading yearly festivals organised by cultural NGOs featuring a diverse programme of events in several genres and styles with the participation by international artists.

Despite Gozo's small population, it also serves as a home for numerous international artists. International artists and cultural professionals residing in Gozo are important stakeholders in the development of an international cooperation strategy for Gozo.

In order to further raise Gozo's cultural profile on an international level, professional high-profile arts events including annual festivals and biennials will be supported and developed. Due consideration will be given to specific areas such as visual arts, film and literature. Such programmes will be entrusted to cultural NGOs in collaboration with national and international partners, prioritising international cooperation and artistic excellence.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Active youth participation in cultural events is recognised as a cultural right in an equitable society that provides for active citizenship, critical thinking and empowerment. There are several cultural youth communities in Gozo particularly carnival groups and other communities responsible for the decoration of churches and streets, fireworks and other activities related to the village feast, who come together for a yearly celebration. However, these groups are typically not active over the entire span of the year. These cultural youth communities in Gozo are limited in cultural scope, depth and involvement along the calendar.

Gozitan youths encounter some hindrances while living on the island of Gozo. The lack of job opportunities in a number of sectors is causing an inevitable braindrain on the island. Several youths are settling in Malta, away from their families to be in the vicinity of their place of work. There are also a number of youths who commute daily to work in Malta while residing in Gozo.

NCP 2021 calls for long-term synergy between cultural and youth organisations and youth workers. In cooperation with the 'Gozo Youth Services' and other youth agencies, assistance and support should be continuously provided to enhance cultural communities and invest in mechanisms to encourage valorisation of culture and cultural heritage, cultural participation and creative entrepreneurship.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Continue sustaining the Restoration Fund so as to preserve and restore local heritage sites and monuments and improve accessibility to such cultural sites.
- 2 Restore the Aqueducts and Għar Għerduf catacombs.
- 3 Ensure the successful completion of the Gozo Museum.
- 4 Sustain the Cittadella management plan and pursue its potential listing.
- 5 Improve the awareness and appreciation of Gozo's traditional and historical heritage amongst Gozitan communities and visitors.
- 6 Encourage further partnerships actions between cultural communities by providing financial aid where two or more cultural communities come together with the aim of organising sustainable cultural projects.
- 7 Integrate sustainable cultural tourism practices in Gozo's tourism policy.
- 8 Support the development of Gozo as an island for artists-in residence.
- 9 Ensure that relevant public funding programmes for culture and the arts provide additional incentives that support cultural projects in Gozo and the mobility of artists and works of art from and to Gozo.
- 10 Support the development of professional high-profile international arts events including annual festivals and biennials.
- 11 Develop long-term synergy between cultural and youth organisations and youth workers to support more young people in Gozo in pursuing voluntary and professional work.
- 12 All the comprehensive objectives presented throughout NCP 2021 are also duly applied to Gozo.



Maltese Feast
Photo Robert Inguanez

CHAPTER 8

ADVANCING INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

MUŻA: ESIF funds were utilised for the restoration of the building and convert it in a national community museum – Photo Heritage Malta

Since gaining independence in 1964, Malta has been an active partner in cultural relations, committed to promoting cultural diversity and to safeguarding its shared and fundamental European values. In 1965, Malta joined UNESCO, in 1966, the Country signed and ratified the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe and in 1967, the first bilateral agreement on cultural and education cooperation was signed with the Republic of Italy.

In recent years, Malta pursued an active role in developing an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and in fostering intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region. In 2016, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs together with Anna Lindh Foundation, in partnership with the main regional institutions working for dialogue in the Mediterranean, hosted the MED FORUM. The main aim of the Forum was 'to reaffirm the centrality of intercultural dialogue in the face of unprecedented regional challenges, also following the call of the EU Foreign Affairs chief on the 20th anniversary of the Euro-Med Partnership for "collective action"⁴⁴. In 2017, the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union, organised a forum for EU Member States' Culture and Foreign Affairs Ministries as well as key cultural stakeholders, to engage in a debate on a strategic approach to international cultural relations which may serve to provide impetus and added-value to EU and Member States' action in this field, against a backdrop of new technologies, security challenges and migratory patterns. Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations were also adopted under the Maltese Presidency⁴⁵.

Malta's contribution to the global dimension of cultural policies was marked in 2017 when Arts Council Malta and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies, hosted in Malta the 7th World Summit on Arts and Culture on the theme of Cultural Leadership in the 21st Century.

Policy developments from the 2011 National Cultural Policy include the establishment of a cultural export fund, a dedicated focal point on internationalisation within Arts Council Malta, the membership of Arts Council Malta in the European Union National Institutes for Cultural network (EUNIC) and the creation of the Cultural Diplomacy Fund within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Cultural relations between countries should aspire towards the intrinsic value of culture with a focus on genuine reciprocity and mutual understanding. Culture is more than just an instrumental tool for international relations that can foster trade. It is a unique way in which people are empowered to come together, to share and to empathise. This is even more pertinent at a time when global challenges threatening cultural rights are resurfacing in the rise of extremism. Belonging is not limited exclusively to ties with one's native country or community but to a broader world view that transforms differences into opportunities for shared knowledge and co-creation. An attack on culture is an attack on our humanity. Ultimately, an attack on another culture is an attack on our own culture, because no culture can exist without 'the other.' Cultural theorist Stuart Hall observes that 'cultural diversity is the name we give to a certain kind of 'learning'. Learning through culture and the arts works by indirection. It is the slow, mutual, dialogic unfolding of reciprocal understanding' (Hall, 2008)⁴⁶. Hall's insights on cultural diversity and 'the other' are reference points to 'make sense' of Malta's 'shifting sands' that are being created by our new experiences of immigration, globalisation and problematised 'identities'.

NCP 2021 subscribes to the call for a more open approach in cultural relations through an open dialogue with multiple stakeholders that engages and mobilises citizens, artists and cultural professionals, civil society, cultural institutes and public institutions. By building bridges between communities and empowering multiple voices to serve as agents of change, we can become more open to 'the radical project of learning to live with difference, to the emerging possibilities of a diverse, pluri-centred cultural world'.

⁴⁴ MED FORUM 2016 OUTCOMES: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (p1:2016)

⁴⁵ OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 38.

⁴⁶ Stuart Hall in Laudation speech after having received the 2008 ECF Princess Margriet Award for Culture, Brussels (2008).

POLICY OBJECTIVES

In a policy framework for cultural relations, National Cultural Policy 2021, envisions the development of existing initiatives and establishes new policy actions that reflect contemporary policy discourse on national, European and international levels. NCP 2021 embraces the Council of the European Union's conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action.⁴⁷ It acknowledges that cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are an integral part of the values of the European Union and play an important role in promotion of human rights, tolerance, and non-discrimination across the world.

In pursuing this objective on a national and European level, National Cultural Policy 2021 shall address the role of culture in external relations by:

- Converging the two policy domains of culture and foreign affairs to ensure that a coherent policy framework is in place to enable the required synergies;
- Implementing an internationalization strategy for the establishment of representative offices abroad, with the purpose of strengthening Malta's participation with clusters of EU National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC)
- Participating actively in bilateral and multilateral programmes that provide effective tools to facilitate this process.

ARTS COUNCIL MALTA REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES ABROAD

Arts Council Malta is mandated by Government to provide overall direction and action in the field of cultural relations through an institutional framework that fosters international and intercultural relations between people through arts and culture.

This will be achieved in a coordinated approach by ACM with the Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs and 'on the ground' programmes and initiatives in strategic cities led by the representatives of Arts Council Malta abroad.

⁴⁷ Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action (2019)

Each representative office will work closely with respective diplomatic missions; however they will operate at arm's length and with operational and programming budgets from the Ministry responsible for Culture.

NCP 2021 calls for a strategic plan on the roll-out programme to establish official representative offices in major cities. Other representations may be considered following a review of the implementation programme and impact of the missions. This policy also endorses the accreditation by Arts Council Malta for Maltese diplomatic missions to represent ACM in EUNIC clusters abroad.

EUNIC CLUSTER IN MALTA

In order to strengthen cooperation between Malta and other EUNIC members, this policy supports the creation of a EUNIC cluster in Malta. This cluster will bring together EUNIC members present in Malta, EUNIC representatives with Malta as part of their geographic remit and foreign diplomatic missions that will be accredited by EUNIC to represent them in the cluster.

This initiative will also contribute to the European Union cultural diplomacy efforts in neighbouring regions with the EUNIC cluster in Malta serving as an important partner for cultural cooperation within the Mediterranean region across Southern Europe and Northern Africa.



Tisbit – Cultural event in Gozo
Photo: Directorate for Cultural Heritage

THE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY FUND

Established in 2012, the Cultural Diplomacy Fund under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has supported Malta's diplomatic missions in the presentation of 55 cultural projects over a 5-year period with an investment of €825,000.

The increased funding in recent years demonstrates the commitment to strengthen the role of cultural diplomacy. NCP 2021 will strengthen this increased investment and will consolidate cultural diplomacy initiatives in a strategic manner to ensure that bilateral and multilateral cultural projects reflect principles to build bridges between Malta and other countries, as well as to enhance relations on the people-to-people level.

Strategic actions will address:

- 1 The delivery of a cultural diplomacy framework that provides diplomatic missions with the overall objectives in cultural diplomacy;
- 2 Capacity building to support missions in the delivery of cultural projects;
- 3 Showcasing of projects that support missions in the selection of excellent and contemporary artistic work;
- 4 Improved timeframes to ensure longer-term planning and project implementation;
- 5 Establishing synergising forces with the Ministry for Culture to bolster the finances necessary to strengthen the role of cultural diplomacy;

CULTURE IN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Malta's Official Development Assistance (ODA) policy has been active since 2007. The current ODA policy reflects the universal goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As outlined by UNESCO, the role of culture is recognised through a majority of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including those focusing on quality education, sustainable cities, the environment, economic growth, peaceful and inclusive societies, and gender equality amongst others.

This policy encourages the integration of the cultural and creative sectors as enablers of development assistance and as contributors to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This policy on culture in development assistance will also be integrated in the internationalisation objectives and funding programmes managed by Arts Council Malta.

BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Malta has 34 bilateral cultural agreements in culture, however insufficient resources have rarely enabled appropriate implementation of such agreements. In order to leverage the diplomatic efforts of the Parties, a dedicated fund will be created to support the strategic implementation of programmes and initiatives that emerge from such agreements with priority to the Euro-Mediterranean region. The policy guidelines for this fund will address:

- 1 The principle of reciprocity and people-to-people exchange;
- 2 Cultural co-operation, co-production and co-creation;
- 3 Added-value to existing programmes and initiatives in bilateral and multilateral capacities;
- 4 The cross-over between policies in culture and foreign affairs.

INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

As reiterated in other chapters of this policy, effective implementation of this policy requires further alignment to international conventions and obligations.

In addition to the ratification of these important international conventions, NCP 2021 calls on the respective national authorities to establish a permanent monitoring mechanism that respects the monitoring and evaluation requirements of such conventions.

CULTURAL AMBASSADORS

This policy shall build on the cultural ambassador scheme launched in NCP 2011, to ensure that artists and cultural professionals honoured with the title, provide complementary action to the delivery of international cultural relations as outlined in this policy.

INTERNATIONALISATION OF PUBLIC CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS AND HERITAGE INSTITUTIONS

In recent years Public Cultural Organisations have demonstrated their capacity to reach international audiences through international projects and touring. Whereas internationalisation has been set as a guiding principle for organisations like MICAS and ŻfinMalta, other PCOs like the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra have been actively pursuing yearly international tours to critical acclaim. Other PCOs, such as Teatru Manoel, Spazju Kreattiv, Teatru Malta and Festivals Malta are attracting internationally renowned artists to form part of their programme of events. Heritage Malta has also increased its portfolio of international exhibitions and projects in partnership with prestigious international heritage institutions. In order to sustain this momentum and encourage further internationalisation initiatives, NCP 2021 proposes the allocation of specific funds for international projects, co-productions and touring by PCOs and heritage institutions and set internationalisation as a strategic priority within the implementation of this policy. It will also support capacity building initiatives that improve international production capacities and increase access to international markets and platforms.



This funding will also serve to leverage participation in international programmes and initiatives of UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union such as Creative Europe and Europeana.

THE MALTESE DIASPORA

Maltese citizens living abroad are important to Malta's cultural and creative development and provide a significant contribution to the promotion of the diversity of Maltese culture abroad. NCP 2021 acknowledges the role of the Council for Maltese Living Abroad and guarantees that Maltese artists living abroad are able to fully participate in the competitive public funding programmes offered to resident artists in Malta.

NCP 2021 recommends a strategic inter-ministerial drive (Foreign Affairs, Culture and Education) to rescue the Maltese language from a sure natural death among the Diaspora communities. To achieve this, resources will be leveraged to address the teaching of Maltese – language and literature – to third and fourth generation migrants living abroad.

In order to encourage further participation of the Maltese diaspora in Malta's cultural development, NCP 2021 envisions two policy support measures:

-  Continued support for the teaching of the Maltese language to communities, both Maltese and non-Maltese, interested in attaining oral and written, linguistic competences in the language, and provide support for the teaching of the cultural aspects that constitute basic markers of our national ethos, including our tangible and intangible heritage.
-  Support the co-creation of artistic and cultural projects that connect intergenerational communities with Malta, the Maltese and residents of Malta.

INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

The active participation of Maltese artists and arts organisations in international co-productions is still relatively low, with numerous barriers identified as limiting potential engagement. NCP 2021 envisions a substantial increase of Maltese partners in European and other international projects and calls on Arts Council Malta to establish international partnership and co-production targets to attain these policy goals. In order to mitigate these challenges, NCP 2021 calls for:

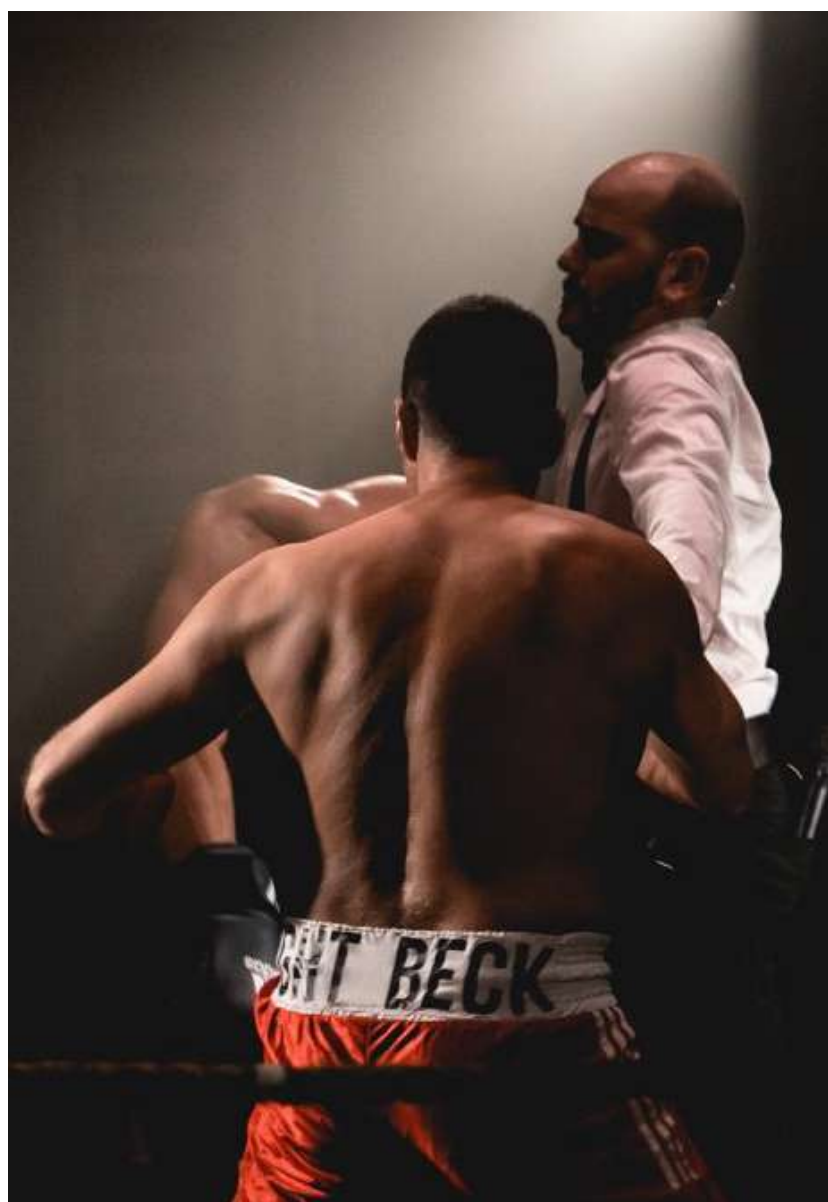
- 1 Improvement in the management and dissemination initiatives of the Creative Europe desk and Media Desk.
- 2 Capacity building initiatives for the cultural and creative sectors to improve the knowledge base and skillset to develop and manage international co-productions.
- 3 An increase in international networking opportunities that connects Maltese artists and arts organizations to their international counterparts.
- 4 The establishment of a guarantee facility to secure the co-funding required for international co-productions.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Improve the synergies between the Ministries responsible for Culture and Foreign Affairs through the creation of a joint work plan that reflects the EU strategic approach to international cultural relations.
- 2 Strengthen the Cultural Diplomacy Fund to support Malta's diplomatic representations abroad develop cultural projects that reflect the principles of this policy.
- 3 Call upon Arts Council Malta to implement an internationalisation strategy for the establishment of representative offices abroad, with the purpose of strengthening Malta's participation within EUNIC clusters.
- 4 Establish a dedicated funding programme co-managed by the Ministries responsible for Culture and Foreign Affairs for the implementation of bilateral and multilateral cultural agreements.
- 5 Support the development of a EUNIC cluster in Malta.
- 6 Continue with the active participation in key international cultural fora, notably the Council of Europe and UNESCO.
- 7 Ratify important relevant Conventions of the Council of Europe and UNESCO to address the international obligations that reflect the principles of this policy.
- 8 Establish a national contact point within the Ministry responsible for Culture for the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression and participate in the monitoring framework of the Convention.
- 9 Integrate culture in Development Assistance Policy.

- 10 Formalise the cultural ambassadors programme to provide complementary action in the delivery of international cultural relations.
- 11 Invest in further internationalisation initiatives of Public Cultural Organisations and heritage institutions to improve international production capacities and increase access to international markets and platforms.
- 12 Encourage further participation of the Maltese diaspora in Malta's cultural development through language training and co-production.
- 13 Improve the mobility of artists in Malta, to and from, southern Europe and Northern Africa as a two-way mobility priority; through showcasing, co-production and artist residencies.
- 14 Support festivals to serve as active platforms for both incoming and outgoing mobility.
- 15 Improve the management and dissemination capacity of the Creative Europe and Media desk in Malta.
- 16 Improve the knowledge base and skill set through capacity building initiatives, to develop and manage international co-productions.
- 17 Increase international networking opportunities that connects Maltese artists and arts organizations to their international counterparts.
- 18 Launch a guarantee facility that secures the co-funding required for international co-productions.

Raymond "Fight" Beck: a Teatru Malta production



CONCLUSION

The eight priorities identified in NCP 2021 and their envisaged outcomes aim at ushering a new era of cultural development in Malta. Through tangible actions in legislation, funding, research, strategy development, capacity building and infrastructure, this policy presents a framework built on evidence, consultation and expertise. NCP 2021 is an opportunity to transform a collective, bold and ambitious vision for Malta into a creative future that is open, resilient, regenerative and sustainable. By embracing the digital transformation and supporting new models of creation, production and distribution, this policy is not only responding to the immediate needs of the sector, but it acknowledges the need for ongoing review to ensure that Malta's cultural policy remains relevant and effective.

Embedded within principles of cultural rights, this policy serves as the guardian of culture to ensure that everyone living in Malta can access, participate and enjoy the diversity of culture and creative expression. It reiterates the outstanding value of our tangible and intangible heritage and calls for its protection against elements that threaten it. It acknowledges the intrinsic value of culture and understands that culture has the power to transform society. This policy calls upon all relevant authorities and stakeholders to serve as its custodian and as brokers of creativity for current and future generations.

Through this policy, Government is committing to invest further in culture because it firmly believes in its duty to defend culture as a fundamental human right. It believes in the essential role of artists and cultural practitioners within a democracy and society. It acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard and protect cultural heritage yet with a vision to shape our identity for the future. It understands that an investment in culture impacts the wellbeing of society and engaging with the international community contributes to leverage the role of culture in sustainable development.

Culture is our beacon of hope in times of global uncertainty and unprecedented challenges. By investing and committing to culture, this policy aspires to unleash creativity that opens access to all its citizens, thus enhancing their wellbeing and sustaining the cultural and creative sectors.

