

Strategy 2030



ARTS
COUNCIL
MALTA

Commissioned by
Arts Council Malta

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STRATEGY

2030

**Strategy
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Forewords

Malta has chosen to place culture and the arts at the centre of its long-term national development. Strategy 2030 translates this direction into practical policy.

Without the stability offered by public trust, artists and organisations struggle to plan ahead or sustain their work. Conversely, long-term support gives talent time to mature, allowing organisations to grow and helping creative industries to compete on the international stage.

The new strategy unfolds within the context that culture doesn't operate within a single framework. Creative thinking enriches classrooms and strengthens education. Artistic experimentation often feeds innovation. Environmental awareness and digital technology intersect regularly with cultural activity, as does community development. Reflecting the ethos of Vision 2050, Strategy 2030 encourages closer coordination across different parts of Government, so these links can be allowed to contribute to wider national ambitions.

This new strategy provides our direction for the years ahead. One of the challenges we face is how quickly cultural sectors evolve, mostly because technologies change and audiences'

preferences shift rapidly. But public policy must remain steady, while leaving room for new ideas to emerge. Strategy 2030 identifies priorities for investment, governance and participation, yet still leaves space for experimentation and growth.

The future of this work rests with all those who sustain Malta's cultural life.

From artists to cultural managers, educators, volunteers, private partners and audiences, these all contribute to the strength of the sector. They are the ones who continue to shape Malta's cultural landscape, defining its character while building a sustainable creative future. Strategy 2030 builds on that foundation and looks ahead with confidence.



Dr Owen Bonnici
Minister for Culture, Lands
and Local Government

Strategy 2030 marks an important step in the continued evolution of Arts Council Malta and in the development of Malta's cultural and creative sectors. Building on the progress achieved through previous strategic cycles, this framework reflects years of strengthened governance, expanded support mechanisms and a growing commitment to the sustainable development of the sector.

Over the past years, Arts Council Malta has worked to strengthen its analytical capacity, deepen engagement with stakeholders and refine its funding and support frameworks. These efforts have enabled the Council to respond more effectively to the realities and needs of artists, cultural practitioners and organisations, while ensuring that public investment in culture remains transparent, responsible and impactful.

At the centre of this strategy lies a simple but essential understanding that artistic passion and professionalisation must work hand in hand.

Passion is the driving force behind creativity and artistic expression, while professional structures provide the conditions necessary for excellence, sustainability and growth.

Strategy 2030 recognises these two elements as complementary and mutually reinforcing, forming the foundation for a resilient and forward-looking cultural ecosystem.

The strategic framework is built around three key pillars: professional development, cultural rights and internationalisation. These pillars guide the Council's priorities and are translated into a series of concrete actions designed to strengthen the sector in practical and measurable ways.

The strategy then sets out 55 strategic actions that reflect both the needs identified through research and consultation and the opportunities that lie ahead for Malta's cultural and creative sectors.

This strategy also reflects the Council's continued development as a research-informed and consultative policy leader. Through dialogue with practitioners, organisations, educators and partners, Arts Council Malta remains committed to shaping policies that

are evidence-based, inclusive and responsive to the evolving realities of the cultural landscape.

A key element of this vision is the strengthening of Malta's international cultural presence. Through sustained international engagement, mobility opportunities and strategic partnerships, Strategy 2030 seeks to position Maltese artists and cultural organisations within wider global cultural networks, enabling them to connect, collaborate and grow beyond national borders.

At the same time, the strategy continues to prioritise fair and sustainable conditions for cultural practitioners. In this regard, recent fiscal developments, including the extension of eligible economic activities under updated NACE classifications linked to the reduced tax rate scheme for artistic activities, represent an important step in recognising the diversity of creative professions and supporting more sustainable professional pathways within the sector.

Strategy 2030 consolidates these foundations while positioning the Council to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges. It reinforces a culture of care, professionalism and ethical responsibility across the sector, while reaffirming the essential role that arts and culture play in shaping well-being, strengthening communities and contributing to Malta's identity and international cultural presence.

As we look towards the coming years, this strategy provides a clear direction for collective action. It invites artists, cultural organisations, policymakers and the wider community to work together in strengthening a resilient, inclusive and forward-looking cultural ecosystem for Malta.



Dr Luke Dalli
Executive Chairman,
Arts Council Malta

Strategy 2030 is not simply another document for the archives. It sets a shared direction for shaping the future of Malta's arts and creative sectors at a pivotal moment in the country's cultural landscape.

In recent years, Maltese artists and organisations have increasingly presented their work internationally while continuing to nurture vibrant artistic activity at home. From independent initiatives to national platforms, renewed confidence is shaping contemporary expression and increasingly informing how we understand identity, well-being and our collective future.

As a small island nation with a rich heritage and dynamic creative ecosystem, Malta occupies a distinctive place within the Euro-Mediterranean landscape. Practitioners are engaging more actively with international audiences, networks and collaborations while remaining deeply rooted in the communities and traditions that frame our cultural fabric. This dialogue between local experience and global exchange continues to enrich the sector, expanding opportunities and market reach for creative work.

Against this backdrop, Strategy 2030 recognises the passion and commitment that communities across Malta and Gozo invest in artistic activity. Many initiatives begin at grassroots level, sustained by voluntary effort, curiosity and a strong sense of belonging. Passion and professionalism are not opposing forces. They often develop in parallel and, at their best, become closely intertwined. By strengthening policy foundations and encouraging sound practices, the strategy seeks to create conditions in which creative dedication can support viable professional pathways, fostering trust, excellence and enabling work of lasting impact.

In a period marked by evolving geopolitical realities, the arts also play a key role beyond creative production. For Malta, situated at the crossroads of the Euro-Mediterranean region, artistic exchange offers opportunities for dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation. Culture and the arts can act as bridges between societies and catalysts for diplomatic engagement and positive change.

At the centre of Arts Council Malta's vision stand three pillars that guide the strategy's direction and ambition: professional development, cultural rights and internationalisation. These pillars recognise the need to support sustainable careers, affirm participation in the arts as a fundamental part of civic and social life, and strengthen Malta's presence within international networks. They also emphasise safeguarding human rights within artistic practice, including freedom of expression and the right to participate fully in cultural life.

Strategy 2030 is implemented through four strategic areas underpinning its priorities and actions. Fair practices promote transparency, equitable remuneration and stable working conditions. Communities and inclusion ensure participation reflects the diversity of Maltese society and remains accessible across regions and demographics. Well-being underscores the role of artistic engagement in strengthening social connection, creativity and quality of life. International exchange expands opportunities for mobility and collaboration while reinforcing Malta's engagement beyond its shores.

These priorities are supported by organisational enablers that strengthen Arts Council Malta's role through public investment, development and support, advocacy, research and collaboration. Through this approach, the strategy translates its vision into 55 action points, supported by clear roadmaps, monitoring mechanisms and regular public reporting to ensure progress, visibility and shared accountability.

Ultimately, policy alone cannot sustain artistic practice. At the heart of this vision are the lived experiences of artists, organisations and communities whose imagination and commitment bring creative work to life. Strategy 2030 acknowledges these realities and seeks to strengthen the conditions through which Malta's arts and creative sectors can shape the present while laying the foundations for the future.



Daniel Azzopardi
Director of Strategy,
Arts Council Malta

Our Vision

Valorising passion.
Strengthening profession.

Our Mission

We maximise Malta's cultural and creative sectors by nurturing creativity, supporting sustainable careers and championing the essential role of arts and culture in individual and collective well-being.

Rooted in Malta's cultural realities and shaped by an international outlook, we foster continuous skills development, meaningful exchanges, and a resilient and inclusive creative ecosystem that widens participation and ensures equitable access to arts and culture for all.

Executive Summary

Strategy 2030 is an action-oriented framework that establishes a clear vision, strategic direction and priority intervention areas for Arts Council Malta (ACM) over the 2026–2030 period. This strategy is a dynamic and practical guide for strengthening Malta’s cultural and creative industries (CCIs). It is intended to function both as a guiding policy document and as a catalyst for coordinated, cross-sector collaboration among key stakeholders.

ACM’s Strategy 2030 is situated within both national and international contexts, aligning with relevant United Nations, European Union and national policies and strategic frameworks, while also reflecting the socio-economic and cultural realities of contemporary Malta. The framework builds on the previous strategic cycle and is also informed by targeted research into socio-economic conditions, cultural infrastructure and the evaluation of funding programmes.

The strategy-building methodology was participatory in nature, engaging a broad range of stakeholders to ensure their voices were meaningfully incorporated. This process sought to capture diverse perspectives on the most pressing challenges, existing strengths, development needs and required changes. Together, these approaches provide both a structural profile of the current cultural

landscape and deeper insight into the agency, experiences and needs of cultural practitioners.

Building on research, three strategic pillars have been identified: professional development, cultural rights and internationalisation.

These pillars serve as the foundation for **55 strategic actions**, designed to guide implementation throughout the strategy period. The actions provide a clear operational framework for the implementation phase, including the establishment of measurable key performance indicators (KPIs). This process shall be complemented by ongoing consultation throughout the strategy’s lifespan, ensuring continuous alignment with emerging developments and sectoral shifts.

As part of the strategy, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is positioned as enabling infrastructure that strengthens institutional capacity, with a clear focus on administrative optimisation and upskilling. By reducing bureaucratic burdens, AI enables practitioners to concentrate on core creative and strategic work, while enhancing digital, data and organisational competencies. Grounded in clear ethical governance standards, this approach integrates AI within existing governance and operational frameworks.

In doing so, it supports the development of a more resilient, efficient and skilled cultural ecosystem that reinforces, rather than diminishes, creative practice.

Artists, creative practitioners, cultural organisations, policy-makers, educators and funders are encouraged to use this document as a groundwork for informed decision-making and collective action. This participatory approach shall help ensure that the cultural and creative industries and sectors continue to thrive, inspire and contribute meaningfully to a more inclusive, resilient and creative society.

Our Role as Arts Council Malta

ACM is the national development and investment body for the CCIs. Its primary objectives are to promote, empower, fund and assist Malta's CCIs. Act 15 of 2015 establishes the legal personality of the Council. The Act outlines ACM's role to strengthen and advance Malta's cultural and creative sectors, both on a national and international level, through various forms of artistic expression and to broaden public access to arts and culture. A summary of the functions of ACM, as defined in Act 15 of 2015, is provided below.

Functions of Arts Council Malta

As per the Arts Council Malta Act, the functions of ACM are:

1 Represent the interests of the cultural and creative sectors and provide guidance to the Government on the development of a cultural policy, in addition to resource coordination across both central and local Government to strengthen cross-sector collaboration. Furthermore, ACM supports the negotiation and signing of bilateral, multilateral or international treaties, conventions, or agreements and the implementation of action plans aimed at fulfilling the objectives set by the Government or the Council.

2 Support the cultural and creative sectors by acting as a central point of contact for sector-related services, providing tailored support

through programmes and initiatives and hosting international and European offices. Furthermore, ACM oversees the Malta Cultural Institute, aimed at promoting Malta's creative and cultural identity abroad, while implementing conventions and collaborating with public bodies, organisations and individuals. The Council encourages awareness of intellectual property rights, oversees the management of land, buildings and services used by the sectors, maintains registers based on the various sectors and their respective stakeholders and manages the age-classification system for the sector.

3 Develop and implement strategies that professionalise the sector, enhance market access at both national and international levels and promote Malta as a central hub for cultural and creative activity. Moreover, ACM facilitates strategies that strengthen industry representation, increase public participation in cultural events, develop specific sub-sectors deemed necessary for the development of the sectors, promote excellence and innovation particularly through the use of digital technologies, and enhance the role of the sectors in education and in nurturing citizenship, creativity and innovation.

4 Serve as a national research point for the cultural and creative sectors by conducting and sharing research, managing statistics and databases relevant to its functions and partnering with key national organisations on both domestic and international research projects.

5 Support the sectors through investment by managing incentives that are sourced from national or international funds, distributing funds that are donated or entrusted to the Council and supporting organisations listed in the second and third schedules to effectively carry out their roles aligned with the National Cultural Policy. Furthermore, ACM monitors the strategies and financial records of these organisations and provides funds allocated by the Government to cover the management, administrative and operational needs of the entities listed in the second and third schedules.

Guiding Principles

1

Advance the cultural and creative sectors through excellence in skills development, fairness in practice and sustainable career pathways.

2

Valorise artistic passion and nurture talent by creating the conditions in which creativity can flourish.

3

Shape a culture that is inclusive, equitable and centred on individual and collective well-being.

4

Foster dynamic collaborations across civil society, private enterprises and public institutions to strengthen shared responsibility for cultural growth.

5

Position Malta as an active and confident participant in global cultural dialogue through meaningful international engagement and exchange.

Stakeholders

A national strategy for the CCIs depends upon a thorough understanding of its ecosystem. To design and implement Strategy 2030 successfully, ACM prioritises strong links with the stakeholders of the national cultural and creative ecosystem, together with international players.

As part of this strategic process, we will focus on strengthening synergies with, and among, the following ten stakeholder groups, ensuring their insights and concerns inform the development of our actions.



A national strategy depends upon a thorough understanding of its ecosystem.

Ministry for Culture, Lands and Local Government

The Ministry responsible for culture oversees the delivery of the National Cultural Policy, together with various local and international programmes and conventions. As ACM is one of the principal bodies entrusted with its execution, sustained collaboration with the Ministry is vital, while the arm's length principle remains firmly in place to ensure equal footing and independence.

This partnership constitutes an integral part of the wider public governance framework. It reflects the Council's commitment to broadening access and encouraging active community participation through strategic action. At the same time, we engage with additional public authorities. Although cultural policy in the areas of the arts and national heritage has traditionally fallen within this Ministry's remit, related fields such as crafts, publishing, libraries, archives and arts education have frequently been overseen by other departments.

We further integrate the evolving dimensions of the creative economy and cultural policy, particularly those intersecting with STEM disciplines (Science,



Leanne Ellul
Author

Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). Recognising the growing shift toward STEAM, where the arts are embedded within STEM frameworks, our approach prioritises cross-sector collaboration, fostering innovation at the intersection of creativity, technology and scientific inquiry.

Ministries with an Interest in Arts and Culture

To increase policy cooperation for the cultural and creative sectors across different ministries, ACM brokers collaborations with ministries at a cross-sectoral level.

Together with the Culture Directorate within the Ministry responsible for culture, ACM will continue to bring together policy units from different ministries that directly and indirectly impact Malta's cultural and creative sectors. Using this approach, we will nurture and implement strategic alliances based on the notion of culture as a pillar for sustainable development, therefore enabling active contribution from all representative parties. Our shared National Cultural Policy objective aims to reduce policy fragmentation in the sectors empowered to propose, develop and implement measures that strive for sustainable development. Sectors such as education,

the environment, urban planning, tourism, human rights, social justice, disability, healthcare, STEAM disciplines, economic policy and employment shall be represented through inter-ministerial cooperation.

Public Cultural Organisations (PCOs)

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

ACM is entrusted by law to monitor and review PCOs' strategies, financial estimates and reports. In this role, we will continue leading Malta's network of PCOs to increase inter-PCO collaboration and share resources and expertise. In addition, PCOs will be guaranteed independence in artistic programming, reflecting our principles of diversity and freedom of cultural expression.

Each PCO focuses on supporting and strengthening the development and performance or display, as well as engagement and impact, both national and international, of a wide range of cultural expressions. They consist of:

- Festivals Malta
- Fondazzjoni Kreattività, consisting of:
 - » Spazju Kreattiv, Malta's National Centre for Creativity
 - » ŽiguŽajg International Arts Festival for Children and Young People
- Malta International Contemporary Art Space (MICAS)
- Malta Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO)
- Mediterranean Conference Centre (MCC)
- National Agency for the Performing Arts (NAPA), consisting of:
 - » Kor Malta
 - » Teatru Malta
 - » Žfin Malta
- Pjazza Teatru Rjal (PTR)
- De Valette Chamber Orchestra
- Jesuits Church Foundation
- Teatru Manoel
- Valletta Cultural Agency (VCA), including the Valletta Design Cluster (VDC)

Public Entities with an Interest in Arts and Culture

ACM nurtures its holistic approach by collaborating and cooperating with public entities that have a cultural remit under the Ministry responsible for culture, as well as other ministries. Accordingly, we have worked, and intend to continue working, with entities such as the Office of the President of Malta, Malta Enterprise, Malta Film Commission, Local Government Division, the Economic Policy Department, Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA), Directorate for Digital Literacy and Transversal Skills, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), National Statistics Office (NSO), Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST), Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ilsien Malti, National Book Council (NBC), The Restoration and Preservation Department, Malta Crafts Foundation (MCF), National Skills Council (NSC), Malta Tourism Authority (MTA), Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), Mikiel Anton Vassalli College and the Malta Visual and Performing Arts School (MVPA), among others.



Chakib Zidi
Artist & Choreographer

Cultural and Creative Practitioners and Organisations

This group encompasses every artistic and creative individual and organisation active in the cultural and creative spheres across the public, private and voluntary sectors in Malta, including sectoral representative organisations advocating for the professional and socio-economic interests and rights of cultural and creative practitioners and organisations.

According to the ACM Act, their activities are identified as “a set of culturally significant, knowledge-based activities, born of creativity and cultural capital, that encompass the cycles of creation, production, distribution and preservation of cultural and creative goods and services, and which have the potential to generate cultural and social development, economic growth and employment.”

Our work centres on this stakeholder group, which has a major impact on the forms of support, investment, advocacy and research we undertake when implementing our strategy. We want this group to be part of our decision-making, while also being directly supported through our funding programmes, brokerage services, research, development initiatives and knowledge-exchange opportunities.

Communities

Malta and Gozo's social and cultural life is enriched by diverse artistic expressions shaped by different identities, traditions and lived experiences. Our public engagement approach is based on a firm commitment to cultural rights and cultural democracy, recognising communities not only as audiences but as active contributors and co-creators of cultural life. We seek to ensure that everyone can see themselves, their stories and their realities reflected in artistic and cultural activity, while enabling equitable access, meaningful participation and creative empowerment for all. By sustaining, strengthening and giving space to cultural diversity in all its forms, we foster social cohesion, innovation and sustainable community development through deep engagement and cross-sectoral collaboration.

Non-Governmental Collaborations

ACM engages with voluntary organisations, associations and civil society experts operating beyond the cultural sector, to ensure that its strategies remain responsive to community realities and sector needs. These cooperations support capacity-building, participatory processes, programme co-design and the integration of inclusive practices. By working closely with non-governmental partners, ACM strengthens community relevance, broadens representation and reinforces a participatory approach to arts and cultural development that is embedded within wider societal contexts.

Academic Partnerships

ACM collaborates with academics and academic institutions to strengthen research, policy development and evidence-based practice within the cultural and creative sectors. These partnerships support focused research, independent evaluation, data analysis and strategic insight that informs decision-making and long-term planning. Through interdisciplinary exchange and knowledge sharing, academic partners contribute critical reflection, innovation and intellectual depth to the development and assessment of our programmes and initiatives.

Private Sector Cooperations

Through public procurement processes and strategic cooperation, ACM engages business advisors, independent foundations, social investors and specialised service providers to strengthen long-term sustainability and growth across the cultural and creative sectors. Such collaborations support strategic development, organisational capacity-building, funding diversification and the design of innovative financial mechanisms. They promote alternative approaches to cultural investment, including sponsorship, foundation support, social investment and blended finance models aligned with European good practice. In so doing, ACM expands its resource base, reinforces institutional

resilience and contributes to measurable social impact, social cohesion and sustainable cultural innovation within the broader creative ecosystem.

International Partners and Networks

This stakeholder group includes associations, agencies and multi-stakeholder networks operating on a wider European and/or international scale and with a remit in the cultural and creative sectors. ACM is a member of key international networks and organisations, such as IFACCA (International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies), EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture), Eurimages, IETM (International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts), ENCACT (European Network on Cultural Management and Policy), the Association for the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends, European Alliance of Academies, Sound Diplomacy and the Salzburg Global, among others.

Looking ahead, we intend to further increase our representation in the coming years to promote our strategic goals, with a focus on the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond. We are also developing international partnerships with reputable and sustainable cultural leaders to enhance our operational capacity in developing methods and initiatives that support Malta's cultural and creative sectors.

Background & Context

Strategy 2030 builds on the foundations and insights of Strategy 2025 to reinforce Malta's ongoing commitment to strong and sustainable CCIs. It aligns with present key national frameworks, including the National Cultural Policy 2021, the Charter for the Status of the Artist and Malta Vision 2050.

Looking ahead, the strategy anchors its vision in both local and global realities, drawing inspiration from the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the vision of UNESCO's MONDIACULT 2025, to ensure that culture remains a driver of social well-being, economic resilience and professional growth.



Strategy 2030 integrates guiding principles to align Malta's cultural and creative sectors with European priorities.

The focus on sustainable development, professionalisation and cultural rights within Malta's cultural and creative sectors is a strategic and forward-looking approach for building a resilient, high-quality and internationally competitive cultural ecosystem. It ensures that Malta's artists, cultural operators and creative practitioners have access to structured learning opportunities, fair working conditions and institutional support, enabling them to operate on both local and global scales.

Alignment with National and European Goals

Strategy 2030 is a response to the country's long-term cultural and economic ambitions, as articulated in local policy documents:

The National Cultural Policy (2021) identifies capacity-building, skills development and fair cultural labour as central priorities, while addressing existing gaps in the Maltese context, such as those related to fragmented career pathways in the arts and the tendency of precarious employment and low remuneration. In addition, more effort is placed on developing the sectors through increasing

training and continuous professional development, as well as better institutional coordination among the education, culture and economy sectors. By addressing these issues, Malta can ensure that cultural work is treated as a viable profession, not merely a passion project or voluntary pursuit.

The Charter for the Status of the Artist (2024)

is a critical document in this strategy design, providing the ethical and legal foundation for fair and sustainable cultural labour. The Charter promotes fair practices in remuneration and taxation, working conditions and access to resources, while ensuring that intellectual property rights are respected and protected. The Charter reinforces the principle that artists are entitled to the same dignity, rights and social protections as professionals in other sectors. By embedding these standards within the Strategy 2030 framework and fostering collaborative efforts, Malta can nurture a creative ecosystem built on equity, transparency and accountability, ultimately empowering artists to sustain their practice without exploitation or instability.

Malta Vision 2050 emphasises the transition towards a knowledge-based and sustainable economy. Professionalising the cultural and creative sectors contributes directly to this vision by enhancing the skillbase, encouraging innovation and supporting creative entrepreneurship. It fosters a workforce that can adapt to digital transformation, environmental sustainability and global market demands, ensuring that the arts are positioned not at the margins, but at the core of future national growth.

Positioning for the Bidding of the Next European Capital of Culture: As Victoria 2031 prepares its bid for the title of European Capital of Culture (ECOC), Strategy 2030 prioritises the professionalisation of the cultural and creative sectors as a strategic imperative. Emphasis is placed on Gozo as a distinct regional ecosystem, recognising its cultural specificity, scale and community-based dynamics. Strengthening institutional capacity, fostering regional talent development and enhancing sustainable cultural infrastructure in Gozo are positioned as foundational pillars to ensure that the bid reflects not only national ambition, but also strong regional leadership and long-term cultural resilience beyond 2031.

Promoting Sustainability and Equity: In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the focus of the strategy supports the goal of providing decent work and economic growth. Strategy 2030 supports sustainable cultural careers by promoting fair pay, inclusivity and equal access to opportunities, ensuring that talent determines success. It also fosters intergenerational continuity, equipping young artists and creative entrepreneurs with the tools and networks needed to thrive.



Dorian Mallia
Founder & Artistic Director,
Moveo Dance Company

Regional Cultural Strategies 2022-2027: Strategy 2030 acknowledges both the similarities and distinctions among Malta's six regions in the planned actions for the professionalisation of the cultural and creative sectors. In this context, the Regional Cultural Strategies 2022–2027 serve as a framework. These strategies aimed to strengthen the cultural and creative sectors by fostering regional identities and empowering local communities. Building on this approach, dedicated research and analysis to develop a new set of strategies will extend to 2032, which will also include the planning and preparatory work for ECOC Victoria 2031.

The Culture Compass for Europe (2025) provides a renewed framework for cultural policy, serving as a key reference point for ACM's Strategy 2030. It seeks to harness the full potential of culture by promoting Europe's rich cultural assets, while tackling the core challenges facing the cultural and creative sectors. These include restrictions on artistic freedom, the precarious working conditions of artists, unequal access to cultural participation and the transformative impact of emerging technologies such as AI.

The Culture Compass sets out four strategic directions that align closely with Malta's cultural vision:

- 1** Upholding European values and cultural rights as the foundation of a democratic and inclusive cultural ecosystem.
- 2** Empowering artists and cultural professionals, ensuring fair conditions and sustainable careers.
- 3** Leveraging culture and heritage to strengthen Europe's competitiveness, resilience and social cohesion.
- 4** Advancing international cultural relations and partnerships, positioning culture as a bridge for dialogue and collaboration.

Strategy 2030 integrates these guiding principles to align Malta's cultural and creative sectors with European priorities, ensuring that cultural policy not only sustains artistic excellence and social well-being, but also contributes to Europe's broader vision for innovation, solidarity and shared identity.

Together, these priorities provide the ethical and operational foundation for Strategy 2030, ensuring that professionalisation, sustainability and cultural rights do not solely address capacity and efficiency, but also cultivate excellence, equity, participation and shared cultural growth. These principles extend beyond tangible resources to strengthen the sectors' soft infrastructure, referring to the networks, skills, relationships and systems of knowledge that sustain creativity and collaboration.

Within Strategy 2030, soft infrastructure is recognised as the foundation upon which the cultural and creative ecosystem grows and professionalises. Unlike physical infrastructure, such as theatres, museums or studios, soft infrastructure encompasses the intangible systems that enable the sectors to function effectively and sustainably. These include knowledge networks, digital platforms, institutional relationships, training opportunities, governance models, mentorship systems and the shared values that connect individuals and organisations across the sectors.

Soft infrastructure is also a key enabler of innovation, resilience and inclusion. By reinforcing networks of support and exchange, it allows artists and cultural workers to adapt to rapid technological and social change, including the integration of digital tools and AI into artistic practice.



Ruben Zahra
Composer

Valorising Passion. Strengthening Profession.

Strategy 2030 sets out ACM's renewed long-term vision, building on the foundations of Strategy 2020 and Strategy 2025, while responding to Malta's rapidly evolving cultural, social and demographic landscape. It reaffirms the essential role of the CCIs not only as economic drivers, but as key contributors to individual and collective well-being and national identity.

Central to this strategy is the principle that artistic passion and professional development are distinctly important, while being profoundly and reciprocally interconnected.

We posit that the professionalisation of artistic practice is inherently infused with passion. That genuine passion, in turn, drives and shapes professional standards and outcomes.

We recognise the intrinsic value of all creative expressions, acknowledging that while not every creative pursuit leads to a formal career path, its cultural and personal worth remains undeniable. Simultaneously, for those who pursue artistic professions, the provision of fair and sustainable working conditions is paramount.

This strategic direction is strongly substantiated by recent economic data. The cultural economy has experienced substantial growth, with individuals in paid cultural and creative activities more than doubling, surging from 19,555 in 2019 to 41,726 in 2023. Furthermore, 31.5% of the employed population now dedicates a portion of their paid working time to cultural and creative work¹. The strategy is also informed and shaped by evidence-based research and feedback from stakeholders and ACM staff, which identifies key strengths and gaps in ACM's operations.

The strategy is structured around three intersecting pillars: Professional Development, Cultural Rights and Internationalisation. Instead of using a unit-based administrative model, Strategy 2030 adopts a thematic approach that aligns the entire Council around its functions.

This framework encourages collaboration, reduces organisational silos and ensures that programmes and policies are shaped by long-term purpose rather than internal boundaries. By enabling transversal work across teams, the strategy strengthens coherence,

¹ Cultural and Creative Practice Survey, 2024

promotes innovation and supports more effective responses to complex cultural challenges.

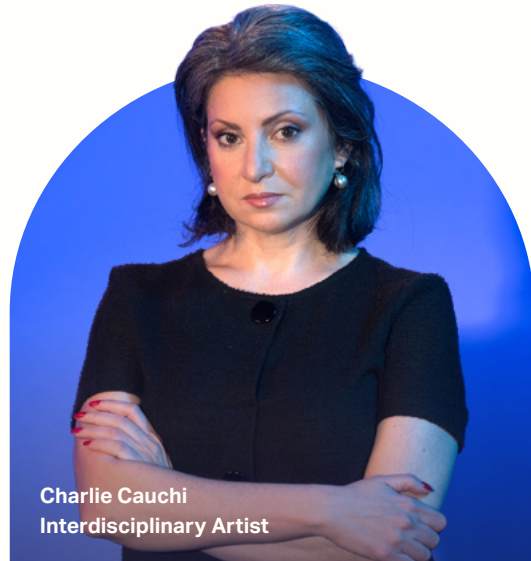
This strategy's three core pillars guide its overall direction and practical implementation. Five cross-cutting functions (Public Investment, Development and Support, Advocacy, Research and Collaboration) operate across all strategic areas rather than within separate domains. These functions support and reinforce the four strategic areas: Fair Practices, Community and Inclusion, Well-being and International Exchange. Together, they address sector-wide needs, from improving conditions and skills to expanding participation and well-being.

Complementing this model is a series of organisational enablers underpinning the strategy's actions. These are aimed at strengthening the foundations of Arts Council Malta, both in terms of expertise and infrastructure, ensuring that the organisation is well positioned to support the sector and deliver the established targets.

Strategy 2030 is designed with Malta's, and global, geopolitical realities in mind. Aligned with European policy, particularly the Culture Compass for Europe, the strategy places strong emphasis on the nurturing of equitable and inclusive environments, while ensuring fair and sustainable working conditions for cultural professionals. As stipulated in the National Policy and established through the Charter for the Status of the Artist, it promotes dignified labour practices, including fair remuneration, contractual stability, safe and inclusive workspaces and recognition of professional status.

Continuous skills development, across all career stages from emerging to established practitioners, is a key component. Strategy 2030 also addresses the vulnerabilities faced by young and emerging artists, acknowledging that precarity, short-term contracts and irregular income mirror broader European trends, where nearly one-third of cultural workers are self-employed². In response, the strategy aims to strengthen resilience, social protection and sustainable pathways into the sector.

The strategy also reflects on the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted cultural life yet accelerated digital innovation. Strategy 2030 seeks to sustain these gains, fostering reconnection,



Charlie Cauchi
Interdisciplinary Artist

accessibility and new forms of digital participation. In this context, a major forward-looking element is the strategy's approach to AI. Recognising AI as both a technological and cultural force, the strategy commits to promoting an ethical, human-centred integration of AI within the CCIs. AI can support new artistic practices, enhance cultural management, widen participation and improve audience understanding. Yet the strategy also emphasises the need for robust ethical and legal safeguards to protect intellectual property, authorship and cultural diversity, ensuring that AI augments rather than replaces human creativity.

Overall, Strategy 2030 provides a comprehensive roadmap for a cultural ecosystem that values passion, supports professionalisation, protects cultural rights and positions Malta as an active, responsible contributor to the European cultural landscape.

² Eurostat: Culture Statistics - Cultural Employment, 2023

Strategy 2030

VALORISING PASSION. STRENGTHENING PROFESSION.



The background is a dark blue field filled with various abstract geometric shapes. In the top left, there is a white-outlined circle partially overlapping a green semi-circle. To the right, an orange semi-circle overlaps a blue semi-circle. A large blue rounded rectangle is positioned behind the main text. Below the text, there is a pink semi-circle overlapping a white-outlined semi-circle. To the right of that, a blue semi-circle overlaps a light blue semi-circle. At the bottom center, there is a red semi-circle.

Functions

Public Investment

The Public Investment pillar of Strategy 2025 set out to direct structured public investment towards sustainable cultural and artistic practices, while widening fair access to funds and strengthening the conditions for cultural work. Over 2022–2025, ACM made substantial progress on these priorities. The funding portfolio expanded both in

breadth and volume: the number of schemes grew year on year while total disbursements rose from roughly €3–3.8 million in 2022–2023 to over €4.5 million in 2024 and exceeding €6.5 million in 2025. Several hundred initiatives were supported annually, with a consistently strong success rate recorded in terms of implementation and the achievement of awarded projects' established aims and deliverables.

This upscaling translated Strategy 2025's commitment to increased and improved public investment into tangible support for artists, organisations and communities. It was also recognised internally, with staff rating public investment as one of the two most effective strategic areas.



Angela Bettoni
Artist with Down Syndrome

“ ACM seeks to empower creatives by fostering conditions that enable sustainable professional careers...

Table 1. Key Public Funding Portfolio Outputs (2022–2025)³

Year	Number of Funding Schemes	Eligible Applications Received	Projects Supported (Grants Awarded)	Total ACM Investment (EUR)
2022	18	619	387	> €3,810,311
2023	19	569	267	> €3,000,000
2024	22	672	377	> €4,500,000
2025	21	766	464	> €6,590,807

Key Achievements

New schemes such as the Micro Grant (targeted at individuals with no recent funding history), Access Support (to fund accessibility measures and inclusive practices) and the Apprenticeship Scheme (supporting placements, including in emerging fields) lowered barriers for first-time and under-represented applicants and invested in capacity and professional development. Structural and multi-annual support was maintained and cautiously expanded: the Investment in Cultural Organisations (ICO) Malta programme, amounting to €550,000, provided multi-year stability to key players, while the ICO Gozo scheme and theatre capacity-building initiatives signalled a more strategic use of funds to strengthen organisational ecosystems instead of solely one-off projects. These developments show a clear alignment between Strategy 2025's intentions and outputs: more tailored tools, better coverage of differing needs in the cultural field and an emerging mix of project and structural funding.

The upgrade and full rollout of the online Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system across the grant lifecycle significantly improved user experience, transparency and internal efficiency. Calls were

increasingly standardised, with clearer guidelines and criteria. In some cases, such as in Arts Support, two-stage and partially anonymised assessment was introduced to strengthen impartiality and focus on artistic merit. Mentoring and monitoring practices were also enhanced: each funded project was assigned an ACM officer or mentor and beneficiaries received guidance on reporting and dissemination. These measures respond directly to Strategy 2025's call for constructive monitoring and assistance and for minimal but purposeful bureaucracy. They also laid the groundwork for improved data collection and evaluation of public investment.

Funding Schemes and Financial Support

ACM's public funding portfolio grew and evolved significantly under Strategy 2025. The Council maintained and expanded its funding programmes, increasing both the number of schemes and total investment over the period. As shown in Table 1,

³ ACM Annual Reports, 2022–2025

ACM managed 18 distinct funding schemes in 2022, 19 schemes in 2023 and 22 schemes in 2024 – aiming to address an array of needs in Malta’s cultural and creative sectors. The number of grant calls and applications also rose, with 672 eligible applications in 2024, up from 569 in 2023 and over one-third of applications supported each year. In 2025, a record total of 766 eligible applications were submitted across 33 calls.

Direct public investment disbursed by ACM exceeded €4.5 million in 2024, compared to around €3–3.8 million annually in 2022–2023. These figures indicate a steady increase in public arts funding, reflecting both higher Government allocations and ACM’s efforts to broaden its funding reach. Notably, even in 2022 (when many COVID-19 recovery schemes were winding down), ACM supported 387 projects or applications with €3.81 million, demonstrating a high success rate (62%) for applicants that year. By 2024, funded projects numbered 377 (from 672 requests), pointing to healthy demand and significant sector support. This was further reinforced in 2025, with 464 successful applications. This upscaling of funding represents a significant achievement for Strategy 2025’s public investment goals, ensuring more cultural practitioners can access financial backing. Internally, staff recognised this expansion, with one team member highlighting the “increased accessibility of funding applications through the Arts Council’s CRM system,” noting it improved the evaluation process, project monitoring and overall efficiency. The upgrade of the online grant management CRM system streamlined workflows, improved data management and project coordination, fulfilled Strategy 2025 Action 6 and was widely recognised as a major process improvement that made funding more user-friendly and transparent.

By 2025, outcomes included a more inclusive funding ecosystem with targeted grants and support, increased visibility of cultural rights through campaigns and symposiums and the first steps toward integrating the arts into social well-being initiatives. These achievements closely align with Strategy 2025’s objectives, highlighting this pillar as an area of significant progress. Future efforts should focus on embedding these practices across the system, such as ensuring all cultural institutions adopt accessibility standards and fostering regular community co-creation

projects in every locality, to fully realise the transformative potential envisioned in the strategy.



Giovanni Costantino
Actor

Together with funding volume, ACM diversified its investment instruments and improved accessibility. Several new schemes introduced during 2022–2025 directly addressed Strategy 2025 actions to fill gaps and encourage first-time applicants. For example, in 2023 ACM launched the Micro Grant – a small grant for capacity-building (equipment, materials, space, services) – exclusively for individuals who had not received funding in recent years. This lowered barriers to entry and reached 36 emerging artists in its first year. Another inclusivity measure was the Access Support mechanism (piloted in 2023), which provides supplementary funding for projects to adopt “the highest standards of good practice combining equity with quality,”⁴ such as accessibility services, sign language interpretation, relaxed performances or multi-sensory exhibits. This initiative, rooted in the Right to Culture, invested in making funded artistic projects more accessible and inclusive.

By 2024, ACM also introduced an Apprenticeship Scheme to support 10 apprentices working on a full-

⁴ Cultural and Creative Practice Survey, 2024

time basis with cultural and creative organisations' programmes. This illustrated ACM's responsive public investment approach, targeting both sustainability (through capacity-building and professional development) and diversity (by widening access to funding). Internal survey respondents acknowledged such achievements: The Apprenticeship Scheme and other capacity-building programmes were explicitly cited as significant outcomes. Moreover, ACM's work on the Charter for the Status of the Artist, integrating fair remuneration standards into funding criteria, was noted as a key deliverable in this pillar, although a formal national adoption of the status of the artist framework remains to be seen.

Key Gaps

The Council will continue investing in diverse programmes that strengthen the cultural sector, while ensuring greater coherence and flexibility to respond to its evolving needs. Strengthened governance, more consistent evaluation and increased transparency and accountability across the funding process remain essential.

In this framework, reinforcing the Screen Support Scheme through stronger accountability, administration and visibility remains vital for the continued growth of the domestic film industry and for increasing the visibility of Maltese audiovisual works both locally and internationally.

Ongoing dialogue with stakeholders will continue to inform investment models and mechanisms, placing artists' well-being and cultural rights at the centre of decision-making. Clearer communication and more accessible, technologically streamlined application systems, including the option to submit in the Maltese language, will further enhance accessibility and equity. Reducing fragmented investment routes and developing innovative, sustainable support models will help build long-term resilience across the sector.

Across all areas of its work, ACM is committed to ensuring that public investment in culture is distributed equitably, transparently and effectively. This includes refining decision-making processes, enhancing accountability and embedding consistent evaluation mechanisms that support fair access

to opportunities, while promoting inclusion and diversity throughout the cultural ecosystem.

Equally, ACM seeks to empower creatives by fostering conditions that enable sustainable professional careers, artistic experimentation and professional development, alongside more participatory and responsive funding models. Special emphasis will be given to nurturing emerging creative and cultural practitioners through providing pathways that support their growth and integration into the sector. By prioritising clearer communication, stakeholder dialogue and more accessible systems, the Council aims to deepen public engagement with the arts and reinforce culture as a shared societal resource that benefits both creators and communities.

Development & Support

Development and Support were among ACM's key functions under the remit of the Education and Development Unit within Strategy 2025. This area aimed to strengthen arts education at all levels, promote continuous professional development and position creativity as a core competency across society. Its objectives included collaboration between cultural operators and educational institutions.

“Efforts will intensify to identify and develop educational pathways that address gaps and foster greater professional success.

Between 2022 and 2025, ACM made tangible progress in agenda-setting, pilot initiatives and capacity-building. The Education and Development portfolio focused on expanding and strengthening opportunities for education and training in the CCIs. This was done through collaboration agreements with public entities and educational institutions such as Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, MCAST, Fondazzjoni Kreattività, Culture Directorate, National Book Council, Ġ.F. Abela Junior College, National Skills Council and Malta Society of Arts.

ACM also collaborates with the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR), the National Students' Well-being Services and several schools, to cultivate an appreciation for the arts as well as to inform students, educators and policy-makers on the CCIs.

All these efforts align with the Education and Development strategic priorities outlined in Strategy 2025, namely investment in developing pedagogical practices, promoting wider arts appreciation, strengthening collaboration across the education and cultural sectors and conducting research on the evolution of career pathways in the arts.

Key Achievements

Between 2022 and 2025, ACM significantly strengthened its role in arts education and professional development through expanded programmes, research and cross-sector collaboration. In formal education, ACM deepened partnerships with schools through the Culture Pass, which was relaunched post-pandemic and expanded in 2025 to provide fully accessible artistic experiences for all students. The Arts in Schools scheme also brought artists directly into classrooms through creative projects and residencies. A major milestone was the publication of *A Review of Arts Education in Malta up to School-Leaving Age*, a comprehensive study that highlighted gaps in provision and proposed around 50 recommendations. This research played a key role in national discussions pertaining to the shift from STEM to STEAM education, which embeds the arts within STEM frameworks.

To support artists' career development, ACM enhanced its Training and Development Support Scheme and introduced the Sabbatical for Artistic Research Grant in 2023, alongside continued support for early-stage research. The 2024 ArtWorks campaign promoted the arts as a viable career path and strengthened ACM's collaboration with the Education Ministry. These efforts contributed to consultations on establishing a National Academy for Performing and Visual Arts, culminating in the *2025 Shaping the Future: National Arts Education Conference*, which brought together all key stakeholders and provided valuable insights into the current educational landscape, as well as the needs and priorities for the sector moving forward.

Key Gaps

Despite notable progress, the Education and Development pillar only partially met the systemic ambitions outlined in Strategy 2025. In formal education, the strategy advocated for deeper integration of arts and creativity into curricula, assessment systems and teacher training, supported by stable cross-ministerial governance. While ACM strengthened relationships with education authorities, hosted conferences and supported

various pilots, a permanent joint governance structure, such as a standing committee with shared indicators, has not yet materialised. Reforms to arts education remain fragmented, with no clear roadmap or direct attribution to Strategy 2025, meaning system-level outcomes are still at an early stage and reliant on future policy follow-through.



Jason Zerafa
Writer & Director

For practitioners, although learning opportunities expanded, the talent-development pipeline remains fragmented. Offers such as the Training and Development Support Scheme (TDSS) continue to provide structured opportunities for both adults and young people through specialised strands supporting training, masterclasses, residencies and other learning experiences. Residencies, apprenticeships and artistic research schemes operate as individual programmes, rather than a coherent pathway from early interest to professional practice.

Through the new strategy, efforts will intensify to research and explore opportunities with key stakeholders to identify and develop educational pathways that address gaps and foster greater professional success, while advocating for the vital role of arts and culture within the educational landscape.

Research

The Research and Evaluation pillar was conceived in Strategy 2025 as a transversal enabler, intended to move ACM and the wider ecosystem away from intuition-driven decision-making towards an evidence-based, learning culture. Its objectives were to develop a comprehensive knowledge base on Malta's CCIs, support evidence-based policy and funding design, and embed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in ACM's operations and in the implementation of Strategy 2025 itself.

“ACM will prioritise the development of a robust, evidence-based research framework.”

Between 2022–2025, ACM made visible progress on these fronts: key building blocks were placed, research activity increased significantly and evaluative thinking became normalised across strategic areas. However, several core ambitions, such as a fully consolidated indicator framework, systematic outcome measurement on cultural rights and participation and a more structured 'plan–do–review–adjust' cycle – were only partially realised, largely due to capacity constraints and the inherent complexity of system-wide measurement.

Key Achievements

The same period saw a marked expansion in both the volume and the strategic use of research. ACM commissioned and/or co-produced several flagship studies that directly supported Strategy 2025 priorities, including the Cultural and Creative Practice Survey (CCPS) 2024 in collaboration with the National Statistics Office, sector-specific reviews (such as for film and screen, music and the night-time economy) and the comprehensive Arts Education study that underpins the Education and Development pillar. Preparatory work for an updated national Cultural Participation Survey was advanced, so that post-

pandemic participation patterns and inequalities could be measured with updated data. Internally, ACM invested in upgrading its CRM and data systems, so that grant applications, awards and project reports could be tracked in more granular and comparable ways.

During 2025, ACM published a detailed analysis of outcomes from the *State of the Arts – Malta National Symposium* and explicitly used these findings to inform the closing phase of Strategy 2025 and the design of the new strategic framework. Work on mapping cultural assets and refining cultural statistics was consolidated, including the participatory regional mapping and accessibility mapping in collaboration with the CRPD, which feed simultaneously into Public Investment, Development and Support and Research.

Monitoring and evaluation of funding schemes were strengthened through the CRM platform and standardised reporting templates, enabling ACM to track project outputs and selected outcomes more consistently across schemes. Research and analysis were also integral to the consultations and actions undertaken with various key stakeholders, including Malta Enterprise, Trade Malta, the Malta Crafts Foundation and Malta Entertainment Industry and Arts Association (MEIA). ACM also maintained an active presence in international knowledge networks (Compendium, IFACCA and Creative Unite), contributing Maltese data and perspectives and importing comparative insights into its own strategy work.

Taken together, these developments represent a significant step towards the strategy's goal of positioning ACM as a knowledge-rich cultural policy agency, rather than one related to funding alone.

Key Gaps

From a strategic management perspective, the primary gap is not regarding activity, but the lack of a comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluation. To inform policy and scheme redesign, Strategy 2025 anticipated the need for defined indicators, regular publication of surveys and dashboards and formal feedback channels.

By 2025, this framework remained incomplete: there was no concise public dashboard tracking outcomes such as participation, equity, accessibility or artist working conditions and several important studies arrived too late to influence policy within the current strategy cycle. Key areas, especially cultural rights and equity, still lack robust baseline data, making progress difficult to assess.

Enablers included leadership support for a learning culture, useful cross-team collaboration, strong external partnerships and improved internal systems such as the CRM. However, barriers persist. Staff capacity is stretched, limiting time for reflection and analysis, while data-handling skills are unevenly distributed. External constraints also hinder data collection, particularly from small cultural organisations and in areas influenced by wider social factors beyond ACM's control.

Looking ahead to Strategy 2030, ACM will prioritise the development of a robust, evidence-based research framework to strengthen decision-making and guide sustainable sectoral growth. This framework will integrate strategic operations with insights from public and private stakeholders, leveraging advanced digital technologies and responsible AI to identify gaps, monitor outcomes and enhance arts and cultural outputs. Building on the knowledge and systems established under Strategy 2025, ACM will consolidate data collection, monitoring and evaluation processes, ensuring that policy, funding and development initiatives are informed, targeted and capable of supporting a resilient, innovative and sustainable cultural ecosystem.

Advocacy

Over the past years, ACM has intensified its advocacy to strengthen the professional development of artists and cultural practitioners, positioning arts and culture as a strategic priority within Malta's ecosystem. Through targeted campaigns, stakeholder engagement and national consultations, ACM has promoted the value of creative careers, advanced dialogue with educational authorities and reinforced the sector's contribution to societal well-being and sustainability.

These efforts have expanded public awareness, strengthened networks between policy-makers and practitioners and established ACM as a key driver in shaping long-term cultural strategy, fostering an environment where arts and culture can thrive.

Key Achievements

Advocacy was advanced through ACM's work on professional development for artists and cultural workers. In 2023, ACM introduced the Sabbatical for Artistic Research Grant, allowing practitioners to dedicate focused time to research and experimentation, while the Artistic Research and Development Scheme supported earlier-stage inquiry.

These initiatives aligned with Strategy 2025's framing of artistic development as both an education interest and a sectoral priority, reinforcing ACM's role in advocating for long-term investment in cultural skills.

The 2024 ArtWorks campaign further expanded ACM's advocacy reach. Launched mid-2024, it aimed to promote the arts as a viable career path and highlight the importance of arts education. By using media visibility and success stories, the campaign directly addressed Action 9 (communicating the impacts of arts education) and challenged persistent public perceptions that creative careers are less secure than more conventional paths. Crucially, ArtWorks served as a springboard for building communication channels with the MEYR, including Education Officers, Heads of Schools and senior officials – stakeholders who, previously, had been less engaged with ACM's arts education efforts. While Strategy 2025 did not itself deliver a systemic overhaul of arts education, these strengthened links significantly enhanced ACM's advocacy capacity.

Building on this momentum, ACM coordinated a national seminar in 2024 named *Mapping the Sector: Towards the Formation of the Academy of the Performing and Visual Arts*, organised in collaboration with the MEYR. Informed by the ArtWorks campaign,

the seminar convened stakeholders to discuss the future of arts education in Malta through the lens of a potential national arts academy. This formed part of a broader research and consultation process, commissioned jointly by ACM and the Ministry, to develop an action plan for establishing such an academy. Although Strategy 2025 never explicitly mentions the academy, its objectives closely align with this direction. The proposal itself stems primarily from a pre-2024 Government commitment, reflected in the electoral manifesto and the National Education Strategy 2024–2030. Nonetheless, ACM's sustained advocacy work positioned it as a key contributor to shaping this emerging national policy.

Moreover, ACM has actively advocated on the adoption of green practices, including the integration of sustainability criteria within funding programmes, the encouragement of environmentally responsible production methods and awareness-raising initiatives targeting cultural practitioners and organisations. These actions align with national sustainability strategies as well as international and European policy frameworks, ensuring that local cultural practice contributes meaningfully to broader environmental objectives, while remaining consistent with sector-specific standards and obligations.

Additionally, the bi-annual symposium organised by ACM brought together key stakeholders to reflect on the state, development and future direction of Malta's cultural and creative sectors. The discussions placed particular emphasis on policy, investment mechanisms and professional practice and contributed directly to informing future strategic planning and sectoral development.

“ACM intends to more explicitly position the arts as a strategic diplomatic instrument...”

Key Gaps

Although the Charter for the Status of the Artist has been consistently integrated into ACM's discourse and funding criteria, a major advocacy gap remains: the broader legal framework governing artists' working conditions, such as social security provisions and contractual standards, has yet to be meaningfully reformed. This gap is not unexpected, as such structural changes require long-term, coordinated action across multiple ministries and extend well beyond ACM's direct mandate. Nonetheless, it highlights an area where national-level policy-making has not kept pace with the sector's articulated needs.

In a period defined by climate crises, shifting geopolitical dynamics, rapid technological change and growing cyber vulnerabilities, ACM positions advocacy at the core of Strategy 2030. The Council frames the cultural and creative sectors not only as generators of artistic and economic value, but as vital contributors to democratic life, environmental responsibility and collective well-being in both digital and physical environments. ACM's advocacy prioritises fair practices, rights-based approaches to creative work and the need to address persistent precarity across the sector, including emerging challenges related to AI, data governance and cybersecurity. It also advances culture as a public good by broadening access, participation and inclusion, while reinforcing the intrinsic connections between the arts, mental health and social well-being.

Looking ahead, ACM intends to more explicitly position the arts as a strategic diplomatic instrument – fostering dialogue, convergence and mutual understanding across geopolitical and digital boundaries, while strengthening advocacy for the arts as essential to a resilient, secure and interconnected society.

Collaboration

Between 2022 and 2025, ACM advanced structured inter-ministerial and sectoral collaboration, strengthening links between cultural operators, educational institutions and economic and social policy actors. Initiatives such as Culture Pass, Arts in Schools and pilot projects with Parks Malta and the Malta Crafts Foundation enhanced access, professional development and public engagement, while addressing entrepreneurship and CCLs.

“ACM will prioritise strategic partnerships, capacity-building and advocacy to embed sustainable talent development and creative enterprise across the sector.

Despite these gains, systemic challenges remain, including coherent arts education pathways, robust working conditions and formalised cross-sector coordination.



John Barbara
Chairperson, Għaqda Armar tal-Ġilju

Key Achievements

A central strategic function of this strategy is to enable sustained, structured inter-ministerial collaboration between the cultural, educational, economic and social policy spheres. Key communication channels established within the sector were through the Sectoral Representative Working Group (SRWG), which encompasses key stakeholders involved in the implementation of established strategic action points and the formulation of new policy measures. Between 2022 and 2025, ACM advanced this agenda through visible achievements in agenda-setting, pilot initiatives and capacity-building efforts. However, despite these gains, deeper systemic shifts within the formal education system and the establishment of a clearly defined, coherent talent pathway, remained only partially realised.

In formal education, ACM catalysed further collaboration with schools, particularly through the Culture Pass (with the Culture Directorate) and Arts in Schools schemes. After disruptions related to the pandemic, Culture Pass was relaunched for the 2023/2024 scholastic year and then consolidated in 2025, offering curated artistic experiences for students across all levels and removing financial and logistical barriers to participation. Arts in Schools supported collaborations between schools and artists, encouraging creative projects and residencies that brought artistic practice directly into classrooms.

Strategic partnerships were also pivotal in advancing the entrepreneurship agenda. Collaboration with Parks Malta on the development of an art space at Ta' Qali National Park led to a new multi-purpose venue for creative work, public engagement and market-testing, while work with the Malta Crafts Foundation (MCF) focused on professionalisation and visibility for artisans, linking craft practice to design, tourism and digital promotion.

Key Gaps

Many of the desired outcomes, ranging from coherent arts education pathways to robust working conditions for artists, sit at the intersection of multiple Government portfolios and therefore cannot be achieved by ACM alone. While ACM successfully advanced research, advocacy and pilot initiatives, these efforts highlighted the structural reality that long-term systemic change requires ministries to work in alignment, share priorities, co-develop solutions and coordinate closely with PCOs for effective communication and implementation.

A further challenge, particularly in relation to the MCF, reflects a global issue: there is limited expertise and data to navigate the complexities of crafts, design and related fields – traditional, physical and digital – within global markets, including on issues such as counterfeit products, copyright and quality tourism.

Impacting institutional infrastructure and governance, Strategy 2025 envisaged closer alignment between ACM and economic-development actors (Malta Enterprise, business incubators, innovation agencies) around CCIs. While there are promising contacts, including work on sector strategies such as music and the night-time economy and informal collaboration with economic agencies, there is no stable joint structure or division of labour for CCIs, comparable to emerging arrangements in education or regional development.

As we progress, ACM will prioritise strategic partnerships, capacity-building and advocacy to embed sustainable talent development and creative enterprise across the sector. This will include deepening collaboration with public institutions, educational bodies, industry stakeholders and private investors to support the development of expertise, innovation and professional pathways, as well as to strengthen opportunities for investment, co-creation and market access. By fostering these cross-sector alliances, ACM aims to reinforce governance, showcase Maltese arts and enhance their visibility, and position the cultural and creative sectors as key drivers of cultural, social and economic impact both locally and internationally.

The background is a dark blue color. It features several abstract geometric shapes: a large orange circle in the top left, a green circle overlapping its bottom left, a blue circle in the top right, a pink circle overlapping a red circle in the center, a teal circle in the bottom left, and a blue circle in the bottom right. Some shapes are partially cut off by the edges of the frame. The text 'Strategic Areas' is centered in white, bold font.

Strategic Areas

Fair Practices

Fair Practices are the cornerstone of this strategy. The Creative Entrepreneurship area of Strategy 2025 was conceived as the bridge between artistic practice and sustainable livelihoods, aiming to build “an empowered, skilled, resilient and collaborative artistic community” with an entrepreneurial mindset. Between 2022–2025, ACM made visible progress in skills development, platform-building and policy framing, but the period also exposed clear gaps in ecosystem design, governance and measurement that must be addressed in this strategy cycle.

“ This strategy emphasises the process not merely as an end-product, but as a reflective, developmental undertaking...”

This strategy emphasises the process not merely as an end-product, but as a reflective, developmental undertaking, informed by critical thinking and grounded in principles of democratic resilience, well-being, competitive cohesion and cultural innovation.



Matthew Sultana
Head of Productions, Aurora Opera House

By drawing on interdisciplinary and community-oriented approaches, the strategy seeks to foster inclusive and equitable pathways for creation and production, ensuring that culture and the arts can thrive, while nurturing a dynamic, process-oriented and interconnected artistic ecosystem.

Key Achievements

ACM made substantial progress in strengthening creative entrepreneurship through a wide range of capacity-building initiatives. Early in the strategy period, ACM launched the CASE Malta Programme and the Apprenticeship Scheme, offering structured training and hands-on learning both highlighted by staff as key achievements. These were supported by ACMlab sessions and webinars on business development, digital skills, international funding and intellectual property, as well as the *State of the Arts* symposium, which introduced discussions and pitching sessions on socially driven entrepreneurship and innovation. Together, these efforts helped shift the sector from a project-based mindset to a more professional and enterprise-oriented culture.

By 2025, this work had grown in scale and ambition. The upgraded CASE Malta Programme, delivered with In Place of War and certified by the University of Manchester, provided formal training in fundraising, business planning, impact measurement and community engagement. Multi-annual Investment in Cultural Organisations schemes reinforced stable employment and artist platforms, while new media and music schemes recognised these fields as creative labour markets.

ACM also advanced strategic partnerships, including new art spaces at Ta' Qali and professionalisation efforts with the Malta Crafts Foundation. It embedded the Charter for the Status of the Artist into funding criteria, strengthening working conditions and supporting sustainable creative business models.

The establishment of the Domestic Film Development and Strategy Unit was specifically intended to support the domestic film sector. This was complemented by the introduction of the Screen Support Scheme, as well as the forthcoming international branch

linked to Malta's Eurimages membership and the country's participation in the Berlinale. Beyond their international scope, these initiatives also fall within the framework's strategic actions on fair practices, particularly regarding professional standards, sustainability and equitable working conditions within the sector.

Key Gaps

When assessed against the full ambition of Strategy 2025, Creative Entrepreneurship in terms of fair practices shows progress, but also important gaps. ACM delivered substantial training, mentoring and seed-funding initiatives, yet these remain in isolation rather than forming a coherent entrepreneurial pathway. There is no clear 'ladder' guiding practitioners from early exploration (micro-grants, CASE) through incubation (hubs, structured business support) to scale-up and export. This fragmentation weakens the goal of building a supportive environment across the full life cycle of a creative enterprise, leaving artists uncertain about how programmes and schemes interconnect.

Measurement and evidence form another weak point. Although Strategy 2025 frames entrepreneurship in terms of sustainable careers, income growth and business resilience, initiatives from 2022–2025 mainly track project counts, training participants and audiences. In the absence of indicators on business survival, revenue diversification or export performance, it is difficult to assess whether the pillar is improving the economic realities of creatives or primarily strengthening soft skills.

Community & Inclusion

The Diversity and Communities pillar placed cultural rights, inclusion and community participation at the core of Strategy 2025. Its overarching objective was to enable arts and culture to reach people more deeply in all aspects of life and to nurture a diverse cultural ecology valued by the communities it serves. Between 2022–2025, ACM made notable progress on these priorities. The compiling and publication of the *Right to Culture* resource pack in 2022, sustained through staff focus groups and study visits, helped to make cultural rights discourse more mainstream.

“At an operational level, ACM introduced a range of instruments that translated its principles into concrete and accessible opportunities.”

In 2023, ACM launched its first Right to Culture thematic call, focusing on social engagement and the embedding of good practices by artists, cultural and creative practitioners and wider communities, to facilitate the realisation of cultural rights. This thematic focus prioritised initiatives addressing barriers to participation, social justice, intergenerational dialogue and environmental responsibility. Building on this momentum, 2025 saw the official launch of an intensive national awareness campaign on the Right to Culture and a second thematic call under the Arts Support Scheme (following the first call in 2024).

Together with sustained support for The President's Award for Creativity and other community-focused initiatives and programmes, these measures translated cultural rights into clear and practical action, reaffirming ACM's commitment to care as a strategic lens.

Key Achievements

At an operational level, ACM introduced a range of instruments that translated its principles into concrete and accessible opportunities. Specific Access Support, launched in 2023, allowed

applicants to finance essential accessibility measures such as sign language interpretation and relaxed performances, helping remove financial barriers to inclusive cultural practice. The President's Award for Creativity continued to provide dedicated support for community-based projects working with vulnerable groups, reinforcing a long-term commitment built on the values of equity, diversity, inclusiveness and sustainability. Over time, diversity and well-being considerations were woven into the core design of funding calls rather than treated as supplementary elements, ensuring that inclusion became a standard expectation across programmes. Internally, staff received accessibility training to strengthen their ability to design, assess and support proposals through an equity-driven lens, embedding inclusion as a core part of the Council's operations.



Sam Vassallo
Artist & Journalist

ACM convened conversations on arts and well-being and in 2025, launched the Culture and Health collaborative Platform Fund for the Maltese Islands, supporting projects in healthcare (including mental health) settings.

These developments laid the groundwork for a Prescribe Arts model and positioned culture more firmly within well-being policy. The collaboration framework required to develop a structured national programme is currently underway.

Community cultural development and territorial outreach saw noteworthy progress. ACM supported the creation and early implementation of Regional Cultural Strategies across all six regions, convening regional councils for joint planning and expanding region-focused funding such as the ICO Gozo scheme. The 2024 Regional Cultural Cooperation Programme enabled councils, artists and voluntary organisations to commission multi-event programmes aligned with regional priorities and grounded in the Right to Culture framework and the Charter for the Status of the Artist, embedding fair conditions of work and rights-based principles in local practice. Within this process, there were both shared and varied strategic priorities, which needed to be clearly distinguished to ensure clarity and targeted action.

Regional cultural development deepened further in 2025 through a Participatory Geographic Information Systems (PGIS) project involving all regional councils, mapping cultural assets through community-led processes and building a shared evidence base for future policy and investment.

In parallel, ACM broadened its support for intangible cultural heritage and everyday cultural practices. The Artistic Heritage Scheme and the 2025 Financial Assistance Scheme for Local Parishes provided substantial investment in feast associations, band clubs, fireworks, decorations and parish activities, affirming festa culture as part of the national arts ecosystem and elevating community-led traditions alongside more established art forms, such as theatre, music and visual arts.

These efforts ensured that policy, funding and capacity-building initiatives reflect the full diversity of cultural expression across Malta and Gozo.

Key Gaps

A gap analysis shows that, while the Diversity and Communities pillar made strong progress, several of its most ambitious goals were only partially achieved by 2025.

The primary gap relates to the formal adoption of cultural rights into binding legal or constitutional frameworks. Although ACM advanced research and advocacy, legal entrenchment of cultural rights lies outside its full control and remains contingent on sustained, cross-ministerial political commitment.

Mainstreaming cultural rights across the wider public cultural system represents a second gap. While ACM's own funding schemes embed rights and inclusion, there is limited evidence that PCOs and publicly funded organisations apply consistent rights-based governance standards or accessibility baselines. Implementation remains uneven and data on inclusion beyond ACM is sparse.

Regional cultural development, although advanced through established strategies, RCCP and regional schemes, remains project driven. Regional cultural officers are not yet part of a stable, fully resourced structure that supports the development of specialised skills and a clear understanding of their roles. Data systems such as PGIS and shared territorial mapping remain incomplete. Staff also report role ambiguity with regional and local authorities and limited capacity. Cross-sectoral cultural work, linking culture to health, education and social policy, has generated promising pilots, but has not yet evolved into national programmes or joint governance models.

Meanwhile, measurement of cultural-rights outcomes remains underdeveloped. ACM lacks a consolidated indicator framework to track accessibility, participation gaps or distribution of cultural opportunities. Despite progress in tools and awareness, this strategy pillar must now transition from foundational efforts to full consolidation through the development of clearer, more systematic approaches to measuring cultural-rights outcomes, with a view to consolidating an indicator framework to track accessibility, participation gaps and the distribution of cultural opportunities.

Well-being

Well-being was a key priority within Arts Council Malta's Strategy 2025, recognising arts and culture as essential to quality of life and resilience. Central to this approach is the well-being of creatives, with a focus on fostering sustainable practice models that move away from precarity towards more stable, organised and resilient cultural enterprises. Artistic practice contributes meaningfully to mental, emotional and social well-being, both for practitioners and communities, while complementing health and community care approaches.

“ACM was instrumental in advancing the conversation around arts and well-being through convening sector-wide discussions...”

Key Achievements

ACM was instrumental in advancing the conversation around arts and well-being through convening sector-wide discussions that brought together cultural practitioners, health practitioners and policy-makers.

In 2025, this work culminated in the launch of the Culture and Health collaborative Platform Fund, supporting cultural projects delivered across the healthcare system, including community care and mental health settings. These initiatives helped demonstrate the tangible value of artistic practice in improving well-being outcomes and fostering more holistic approaches to care.

While a fully comprehensive national programme is still under development, these developments laid important groundwork for the future introduction of a Prescribe Arts model. More broadly, they marked a shift, positioning culture not only as a social or creative good but as an integral component of well-being policy. As such, they opened new pathways for cross-sector collaboration and long-term, systemic impact that promotes more sustainable practice models.

Key Gaps

To ensure the successful integration of culture and health, the strategy will address present challenges. These include the need to establish a dedicated, cross-sectoral task force (covering healthcare, culture, academia and public policy) for sustained coordination; to design and support arts-based well-being programmes in collaboration with health institutions and NGOs; and to share knowledge through active participation in European and global platforms in line with EU-level strategies.

Research is also required to promote the development of an Arts on Prescription programme, conduct documented impact assessments measuring improvements in well-being and patient experience, publish regular reports on best practices, and reassess Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with educational bodies to define new synergies and fill educational pathway gaps.

In terms of advocacy, key efforts include negotiating new agreements that promote integrated arts-and-health approaches and integrating research findings into long-term planning for sustainable investment in cultural infrastructure, both in terms of professional expertise and the availability of services and resources. Finally, a critical gap in public investment will be addressed by ensuring the provision of stable and sustainable investment streams dedicated specifically to the implementation of arts, culture, health and well-being projects and initiatives.



Tyrone Grima
Theatre Practitioner

International Exchange

The Internationalisation pillar of Strategy 2025 sought to move beyond occasional showcases abroad towards a more structured, long-term, international cultural presence for Malta. Between 2022–2025, ACM made visible progress on several of its core objectives, expanding mobility schemes, securing high-profile representation at major international platforms, deepening participation in European and global networks and, by 2025, creating a dedicated International Cultural Relations Directorate.

Key Achievements

Throughout 2022–2025, ACM significantly strengthened Malta's international cultural presence. Budgets for the International Cultural Exchanges (ICE) and International Participation Schemes (IPS) grew, meeting rising demand and supporting dozens of outbound projects each year. Maltese artists increasingly presented work at international festivals, residencies and showcases. Flagship successes included Malta's participation in major biennales: the Venice Biennale pavilion and the Malta Pavilion at the London Design Biennale, where Malta won a gold medal in 2025. These achievements demonstrated

how strategic investment in representation can enhance Malta's global visibility and validate its creative excellence.

ACM also became an active contributor to European and global cultural policy. It engaged in networks such as EUNIC and IFACCA, hosted the Compendium conference in Valletta and took part in international platforms including UNESCO's MONDIACULT 2025. In 2025, this work was structurally reinforced through the establishment of the International Cultural Relations Directorate, tasked with coordinating Malta's international cultural relations and developing EU-funded and multi-country collaborations.

Internationalisation was also integrated into sectoral tools. The Screen Support Scheme was relaunched with an expanded budget and a new internationalisation strand, while existing schemes continued to support mobility and collaboration. EU-funded initiatives, including the Culture and Health collaborative Platform Fund and the Global Connect Open Call, linked international work with broader priorities such as well-being, sustainability and cultural rights.



Nikolai Azzopardi
Theatre Producer

ACM further elevated Malta's presence by coordinating the EUNIC focal points meeting in 2022 and hosting international delegations, including the European Alliance of Academies in 2025. Staff survey results confirm that internationalisation was widely seen as one of Strategy 2025's strongest-delivered pillars, demonstrating clear results in artist mobility, Malta's visibility abroad and meaningful strategic partnerships. Staff also noted emerging conversations around long-term cultural export infrastructure, such as proposals for an Arts and Culture Export Office. However, they also highlighted challenges, including limited communications capacity and occasional diversion of internationalisation staff toward local events, which constrained the full impact of outward-facing work.

“ Output evidence is robust: increased funding for schemes, tours, residencies and exchanges, acclaimed national pavilions...

Key Gaps

A comparison of Strategy 2025's objectives with results shows that the Internationalisation pillar performed strongly in delivering mobility and showcasing opportunities but was less successful in building a fully coherent international cultural ecosystem.

Output evidence is robust: increased funding for mobility schemes, numerous tours, residencies and exchanges, acclaimed national pavilions, involvement in European networks and the establishment of the International Cultural Relations Directorate in 2025. However, documentation of longer-term outcomes is comparatively scarce. There is limited data on whether ACM-funded international projects lead to repeat invitations, co-productions, distribution deals, agency representation or sustained institutional partnerships. Outcome tracking remains mostly anecdotal and project-specific, making it difficult to assess whether short-term visibility is translating into long-term career development or cultural export growth.

While Strategy 2025 aimed to broaden participation, beneficiaries largely remain highly professionalised artists and organisations with existing networks. There is little reporting on participation by disabled artists, migrant-background artists, community groups or Maltese-language practitioners, nor on efforts to reduce barriers such as visa constraints or cash-flow challenges. Internally, although the new directorate and clearer investment instruments mark progress, staff still report role ambiguity, overstretching and unclear division of responsibilities between ACM, PCOs, the Culture Directorate and diplomatic missions.

Learning, evaluation and measurement systems remain underdeveloped. ACM lacks consolidated indicators to track geographic reach, equity, partnership resilience or income diversification. Without such data, internationalisation risks remaining opportunistic rather than strategically guided. It is also important to note that much of the effort and resources dedicated to internationalisation have, thus far, focused on visual arts and certain performing arts, with more support required for other disciplines or for general entrepreneurial development among local creative operators. Moreover, the lack of actions

supporting business missions for all sectors or similar initiatives must also be addressed.

Amid these developments, there are evident strengths in growing expertise, expanding networks and high-profile successes. In parallel, there is a clear need for capacity-building and strategic organisational upgrades to better nurture the sector-enhancing skills and opportunities that can be leveraged through EU funding and cross-pillar integration. Such measures would support development and entrepreneurial growth beyond Malta and Gozo, while mitigating international uncertainty and sustaining excellence in required expertise and envisaged cultural showcases.

Building on this foundation, this strand will, moving forward, seek to further enhance Malta's cultural work with a strengthened focus on the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond. Through proactive cultural diplomacy, it will pursue strategic partnerships that foster collaborative creation, professional upskilling and knowledge exchange, while promoting sustainable cultural practices.

The Directorate will also prioritise strengthened networking across cultural and creative sectors and the international showcasing of Maltese artists and cultural initiatives, ensuring that Malta's cultural presence is not only more visible, but more connected, resilient and impactful on the international stage.



Cliff Zammit Stevens
Tenor

The background is a dark navy blue. It features several abstract geometric shapes: a light teal circle in the top left, a blue circle overlapping it, a pink circle overlapping a green circle in the top right, a large orange rounded rectangle on the left side, and a red circle in the bottom right. There are also white outlines of shapes: a square with a semi-circle on top in the top right, and a square with a semi-circle on top in the bottom right.

Strategic Actions

Fair Practices

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
01 Collaboration	Work closely with sector stakeholders to develop and coordinate partnerships, collaborations and joint initiatives that facilitate the strategy implementation and achievement of objectives.	Organise sessions for cooperation and collaboration with various stakeholders within the cultural and creative sectors.
02 Advocacy	Integrate and disseminate the Charter of the Status of the Artist principles with partners and stakeholders.	Advise the central Government, by communicating through the Ministry for Culture, Lands and Local Government, to enshrine principles of the Charter of the Status of the Artist.
03 Collaboration	Establish partnerships with technology-focused entities to strengthen institutional capacity, support administrative optimisation and facilitate upskilling in digital and data competencies, under clear ethical governance frameworks.	Establish partnerships with MITA and MDIA, while aligning with Malta National AI Strategy to develop a programme that strengthens institutional capacity, incentivises responsible adoption and supports practitioners and organisations in maximising the strategic and ethical use of digital technologies.
04 Collaboration	Work with key stakeholders in education and enterprise on professional development, particularly in the areas of upskilling and business development. Not only through targeted investment but also through the strategic mapping and organisation of training and networking opportunities.	Develop and coordinate a structured programme of targeted funding, co-designed training and facilitated networking initiatives aligned with identified upskilling and business development needs.

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
05 Advocacy	Improve fiscal arrangements for creatives to enhance professional sustainability.	Aim to inform and advocate for improved terms of fiscal measures for cultural operators, namely the VAT exemption threshold of €35,000, the 150% tax deduction on donations to culture by private businesses, the reduced 7.5% tax rate on the first €50,000 of net profit and retirement and pension schemes.
06 Research	Research AI's impact on the cultural sector to maximise opportunities, mitigate risks and promote transparent policies and training for cultural operators.	Collaborate with national and international partners to establish ethical standards for AI use in the cultural sector, including in the ethical and legal safeguards to protect intellectual property and authorship.
07 Research	Conduct research into the development of a defined green policy framework for the arts and culture sectors, aimed at enhancing knowledge, building capacity and supporting effective implementation.	Research, develop and implement a green policy standard, aligned with EU environmental policy and cultural sustainability strategies to improve awareness and good practices.
08 Public Investment	Streamline and simplify funding processes to make them more accessible and less resource intensive.	Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all investment programmes and strategic initiatives.
09 Advocacy	Raise awareness of alternative investment models that support sustainable growth, including enhanced incentives for private businesses willing to invest in the sector, as well as increased engagement and participation from the wider public.	Increase advocacy for philanthropic and wider private investment in the creative and cultural sectors, drawing on lessons learnt from previous initiatives. Incentivise private investment and recognise strong public-private partnerships, while continuing to advocate for higher engagement from the wider public.
10 Advocacy	Aligned with the Charter for the Status of the Artist in ACM processes, advocate on wider legal reforms on artists' working conditions in collaboration with sectors' representatives.	Work with sector stakeholders and local Government to explore the alignment of practices with the Status of the Artist Charter.

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
11 Development and Support	Contribute actively to the STEAM Task Force to support the integration of the arts as a core educational pillar.	Build on what has been done in this regard to contribute to STEAM Task Force and promote cross-ministerial collaboration.
12 Research	Continue to support research on Cultural Participation and Creative Practice. Maintain research into international trends and patterns related to cultural policy, in collaboration with the Compendium for Cultural Policies and Trends.	Continue research on audience development, as well as further research in the Compendium for Cultural Policies and Trends.
13 Research	Obtain continuous feedback from artists to maintain an open line of communication and ensure clarity on sector trends and areas in need of improvement.	Gather constant feedback from artists on perceived fairness and support within the sector, using surveys and consultations with key stakeholders, including initiatives such as the Sectoral Working Group.
14 Research	Review and explore new collaborative opportunities with educational bodies to define new synergies, shared targets and fill gaps in educational pathways.	Continue supporting activities in schools and educational institutions.
15 Research	Create a longitudinal research stream to map the 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure and evaluate the economic impact of CCIs on Malta and Gozo.	Track key economic indicators, such as employment, GDP contribution and investment flows, alongside cultural production and participation metrics.
16 Research	Conduct a comprehensive skills gap analysis across the filmmaking value chain and establish and maintain an official national film database documenting Malta's past and future film productions, co-productions and industry companies.	Focus on domestic film production to create a database of film production in Malta, and increase fair practices by conducting a skills gap analysis across the filmmaking value chain.

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
<p>17 Research</p>	<p>Conduct research on the skills, education and training gaps.</p>	<p>Support training and educational initiatives on topics identified through the research. Conduct focused studies on topics including digital transformation, arts education, international mobility and career sustainability, to address gaps in local data related to professional development within CCI. The aim is to support long-term sectoral resilience and capacity-building. This also includes further research on the feasibility of having a Visual and Performing Arts Academy.</p>
<p>18 Development and Support</p>	<p>Develop a talent and enterprise register to strengthen professional visibility and networking.</p>	<p>Work on the development of a registry and informed database.</p>
<p>19 Research</p>	<p>Conduct regular research and compile data collation on sectoral trends, audience development and economic impact to support strategic planning.</p>	<p>Strengthen existing research approaches and develop new ones to expand knowledge of the creative and cultural sectors, with particular focus on new practices, audience engagement and economic outcomes.</p>
<p>20 Research</p>	<p>Conduct research into fair practices for practitioners and the use of space for artistic performances.</p>	<p>Conduct a comprehensive review of Malta's cultural infrastructure, including facilities, administrative frameworks, legislative context and institutional support systems. Identify barriers and bottlenecks limiting access to existing local and regional infrastructure for creative practitioners.</p>

Community & Inclusion

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
21 Research	Conduct research to identify barriers and promote evidence-based, sector-wide inclusive and accessibility practices.	Following a profiling research exercise, create an action plan to inform sector-wide accessibility practices.
22 Collaboration	Engage with regional community leaders to identify collaborative opportunities that support effective and sustainable implementation of regional cultural strategies, with particular attention to the planning and preparation for ECoC Victoria 2031.	Based on the published Regional Cultural Strategies, foster collaboration with communities through local and regional councils. In the process, review and update the strategies to reflect emerging region-specific needs and funding priorities and host consultations to support local artistic initiatives within a diverse and inclusive community environment.
23 Collaboration	Engage with creative professionals and community volunteers.	Engage with creative professionals and community volunteers, to strengthen the strategy's mission of bridging passion and profession through knowledge-sharing and collaborative initiatives.
24 Research	Promote research and investment in intangible cultural heritage.	Together with key stakeholders, identify, from the available data on intangible cultural heritage, the areas that require the most attention in terms of inclusive practices. Work with key players to address these gaps through new research initiatives and programmes that raise awareness and safeguard these practices.
25 Development and Support	Ensure ACM online interfaces are available and accessible in the Maltese language.	Develop and strengthen ACM online interfaces to support and promote the Maltese language.

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
26 Development and Support	Address cultural rights, diversity and territorial cohesion by launching a PGIS project.	Launch and maintain the PGIS project and digital platform to map and preserve Malta's cultural assets, while empowering marginalised groups to gain recognition within the regional cultural ecology.
27 Development and Support	Support community-led initiatives, including parish events, festivals, feasts and local artistic practices, integrating them into the national arts ecosystem. Empower creative practices that reflect the cultural diversity of communities across different localities to receive adequate recognition, attention and integration.	Develop and implement initiatives to boost investment in identifying, supporting and nurturing talent within local communities, ensuring that creative potential is recognised, valued and integrated into broader cultural programmes, while reflecting the synergy between traditional and contemporary cultural experiences and highlighting the diversity present in localities today.
28 Public Investment	Invest in community-led cultural initiatives that safeguard local traditions while supporting emerging and diverse cultural expressions, strengthening participation and representation at grassroots level.	Continue developing initiatives that safeguard and empower local community projects, supporting both traditional practices and emerging, diverse, cultural and ethnic realities, to strengthen social cohesion and cultural continuity.
29 Public Investment	Develop targeted funding pathways for underrepresented groups, reducing structural barriers to access and fostering inclusive cultural engagement across different communities and social realities.	Simplify funding support mechanisms by improving access to existing schemes and introducing clearer, more proportionate application and reporting processes to reduce administrative burden and enhance accessibility.
30 Development and Support	Develop strategies and pilot initiatives to provide adequate access to spaces for arts practice, performance, training and audience engagement.	Explore initiatives to support increased investment in and access to spaces for performances.
31 Development and Support	Develop an incubator for creative enterprise.	Explore, through research and pilot projects, new sector-support mechanisms, including a cultural incubation programme, innovative financing models and the establishment of the ACM Film Hub.

Well-being

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
32 Collaboration	Establish a dedicated cross-sectoral task force composed of representatives from the healthcare, culture, academic and public policy sectors, as well as practitioners working at the intersection between arts and health to ensure sustained coordination, strategic alignment and long-term collaboration.	Organise strategic cross-sectoral initiatives to enable a culture and health approach to well-being. Further develop the ongoing groundwork done in this field. Collaborate with health institutions, NGOs and practitioners to design and support arts-based well-being programmes and cultural literacy initiatives.
33 Research	Promote the development of a Prescribe Arts programme through collaboration with arts and non-arts organisations.	Conduct further research, both locally and internationally, to explore best practices on the application of arts on prescription programmes.
34 Collaboration	Collaborate with global platforms on culture and health to advance strategy targets and support implementation.	Build further collaboration by actively participating in European and global platforms, exchanges and partnerships. Continue aligning with European-level strategies, while expanding networks, sharing knowledge and contributing to EU-wide initiatives.
35 Advocacy	Negotiate new agreements within the sector and beyond, which promote integrated culture and health outcomes.	Work with public and private sectors to advocate for the importance of synergies between culture and health and their positive impact on social well-being within and beyond the creative arts sector.
36 Public Investment	Ensure the provision of stable and sustainable funding streams dedicated to the implementation of culture and health initiatives, to support the development and implementation of arts and health projects and initiatives.	Leverage alternative funding sources for the implementation of culture and health projects promoting a culture of care.

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
37 Research	Documented impact assessments measuring improvements in well-being, social inclusion and clients' experience through arts interventions.	Develop research on impact assessments of arts interventions and publish regular reports and/or case studies highlighting best practices and outcomes from culture and health collaborations.
38 Advocacy	Integrate findings into long-term planning for sustainable investment in soft and hard cultural infrastructure.	Build on recommended research into cultural infrastructure, focusing on the use of space and fair practices, to advocate for the social value of suitable facilities.

International Exchange

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
39 Advocacy	Establish strategic cultural representatives within Europe and beyond to promote cultural diplomacy, global access and visibility.	Appoint International Cultural Representatives in key regions, starting with the UK and the US, to promote global access, visibility and strategic cultural diplomacy. Each mission will align with ACM's strategy and report annually on impact, positioning Malta as an active contributor to policy discussions in Europe and beyond.
40 Development and Support	Provide support to present works at key continental festivals.	Provide targeted support for Maltese creatives to engage in major international festivals, including training, capacity-building, networking and showcasing opportunities.
41 Public Investment	Further develop public investment into international participation.	Enhance support for internationalisation by expanding existing funding schemes, while exploring new modes of investment for international platforms and opportunities.
42 Collaboration	Showcase and promote Maltese artistic excellence.	Curate national talent showcases for key international expos, highlighting Malta's artistic and cultural excellence, promoting sustainable practices, professional networking and public engagement abroad.

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
43 Collaboration	Promote further collaboration in global networks. Expand Malta's presence in global and regional cultural networks, increase mobility opportunities for creatives and showcase Maltese work abroad.	Continue participation in global networks and establish new memberships. Develop reciprocal partnerships and residencies with arts and cultural centres in Europe and other strategic regions.
44 Collaboration	Foster cross-sector collaboration with tourism agents and operators.	Leverage strategic cross-sectoral partnerships to promote Malta as a hub of cultural and artistic excellence within the Euro-Mediterranean region.
45 Development and Support	Provide continuous support of mobility programmes for artists.	Provide streamlined mobility support and funding for Maltese creatives to participate in international opportunities, ensuring fair and accessible processes.

Operational Enablers

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
46 Public Investment	Conduct ongoing assessment on the effectiveness of all funding programmes and strategic initiatives, including future consideration of new modes of investment that incorporate an arts emergency fund in times of crisis.	Conduct evaluation studies to focus on added value outcomes, sectoral relevance, and alignment with ACM's principles of cultural rights and equity in different scenarios.
47 Development and Support	Streamline internal procedures and digital infrastructure.	Prioritise organisational development by streamlining procedures, enhancing data collection, digital assets and aligning staffing and budgets with strategic priorities.
48 Development and Support	Work on the development of the ACM AI and Cybersecurity Policy.	Develop and implement the ACM AI and Cybersecurity Policy to ensure ethical, transparent and innovative use of AI across the cultural and creative sectors and within ACM's internal processes.
49 Development and Support	Support the development and implementation of strategic objectives.	Invest in a broader pool of external experts, not limited solely to the creative sector, to support the development and implementation of strategic objectives.
50 Development and Support	Develop communication to ensure streamlined information.	Further invest in a framework that ensures the effective relay of information and more streamlined, accessible channels for stakeholders to get in touch and stay informed about all initiatives.

Action No. Strategic Area	Action	Supporting Activities
51 Advocacy	Aligned with the Premju għall-Arti, launch an ACM Quality Mark Programme that recognises and certifies cultural operators demonstrating excellence in social, economic, artistic, innovative and research-driven practices.	Building on the work carried out through the Premju għall-Arti in celebrating good practice and excellence, undertake research and an impact assessment on the implementation of the ACM Quality Mark Programme, focusing on its role in empowering and recognising exceptional work. This should be followed by advocacy for the programme among relevant stakeholders.
52 Development and Support	Address skills and capacity gaps within ACM staff, while also promoting their overall well-being.	Provide targeted developmental support services informed by sector data and research. This support includes training, mentorship and resources that address identified skills and capacity gaps for ACM staff, enhancing their expertise, professional development opportunities and general well-being.
53 Public Investment	Leverage funding to research and implement AI solutions that streamline and improve funding processes.	Allocate funding to advance AI-driven streamlining of investment processes, integrating AI systems, including an AI assistant, to simplify applications, automate compliance checks and enhance overall user experience.
54 Development and Support	Strengthen the governance and administration of established and newly considered funding schemes.	Offer support for the production, distribution and peer-review of projects financed through all schemes.
55 Development and Support	Implement the latest digital tools to improve access to available content and resources.	Implement modern digital tools and CRM systems to streamline processes, enhance data management and improve overall service efficiency. This includes the digitisation of ACM's historical records to establish a searchable online archive that preserves institutional memory and cultural heritage.



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