MALTA COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY

Annual Plan 2025

MCA Reference: **MCA/O/25-5513**

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1   Introduction

This document sets out the Malta Communications Authority's (MCA) Annual Plan for 2025. It sets out the priority work-streams and related individual tasks that the MCA will be conducting during 2025. The Annual Plan is reflective of the MCA's Strategy Update covering the period 2025 - 2027.[1]

1.1 Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives

The mission of the MCA is:

'To promote and safeguard a communications environment that is conductive to investment, innovation, economic growth and social well-being'

Our mission defines what we do and why we do it. For the MCA to achieve its mission, the following are the identified strategic objectives emerging from the latest Strategy Update for the period:

1.	Promoting a competitive electronic communications sector that delivers efficient investment, innovation and choice.
2.	Ensuring that electronic communications undertakings provide transparent, high-quality services to all users.
3.	Maintaining open, safe and secure electronic communications.
4.	Maximising the potential of radio spectrum.
5.	Supervising the provision of digital services.
6.	Promoting a competitive postal sector that delivers efficient investment, innovation and choice.
7.	Ensuring that postal undertakings provide transparent, high-quality services to all users.
8.	Contributing to the development and implementation of sector policy.
9.	Conducting relevant research, exploring and developing emergent policy areas.
10.	Maximising operational excellence to ensure regulatory effectiveness and relevance.

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[1] Link to MCA's Strategy Update 2025 - 2027

1.2 Legal Framework

The MCA's mission, mandate and functions derive from the Malta Communications Authority Act, Cap 418. The MCA is responsible for:

- The regulation of electronic communications networks and services, radiocommunications equipment and the management of the radio spectrum and numbering resource as defined in the Electronic Communications (Regulation) Act, Cap 399.

- The regulation of postal services as determined by the Postal Services Act, Cap 254.

- Ensuring compliance with the Electronic Commerce Act, Cap 426.[2]

- Improving the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies.[3]

The MCA is also responsible for ensuring compliance with the following EU regulations:

- Regulation (EU) 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the Internal Market (referred to as the 'eIDAS Regulation') in relation to the supervision of trust service providers established in Malta.[4]

- Regulation (EU) 2015/2120 laying down measures concerning open internet access (referred to as the 'Open Internet Regulation').

- Regulation (EU) 2017/1128 on cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market (referred to as the 'Cross-border Portability Regulation').

- Regulation (EU) 2018/302 on addressing unjustified geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment within the internal market (referred to as the 'Geo-blocking Regulation').

- Regulation (EU) 2018/644 on cross-border parcel delivery services.

- Regulation (EU) 2022/612 on roaming on public mobile communications networks within the European Union.

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[2] The MCA is required to ensure the proper functioning of the e-Commerce sector as provided for by the Electronic Commerce Act which follows Directive (EU) 2000/31/EC on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market ('Directive on Electronic Commerce').

[3] Accessibility of the Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies Regulations, S.L. 418.03.

[4] The MCA assumes the role of a supervisory Authority responsible to supervise trust service providers established in Malta as reflected in the Electronic Commerce Act.

- Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 on a single market for digital services[5] [referred to as the 'Digital Services Act (DSA)'].

In 2025, the MCA is expected to take on additional responsibilities within the digital ecosystem. These include supervising the European digital identity wallets established in Malta (European Digital Identity Framework[6]), overseeing the seamless switching of data processing services (European Data Act[7]), and ensuring compliance with cybersecurity risk management measures for providers of public electronic communications networks, providers of publicly available electronic communications services, trust service providers, and postal operators (European Network and Information Systems Directive[8]). These new responsibilities will bring the MCA into new sectors with new stakeholders, both in Malta and across Europe. This evolution presents a strategic opportunity for the MCA to strengthen its regulatory role in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

1.3 Governance of the Organisation

The MCA is an independent national regulatory authority (NRA) headed by a Board, which is responsible for the overall direction of the MCA and for the delivery of its mandate. The Board is comprised of six members and the Chairman. It approves the MCA's strategy and business plan as well as its annual budget, and among others, maintains oversight of the Authority's progress. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the execution of the Authority's day-to-day functions. He is supported by a management team, heading the respective functional areas of the MCA.

1.4 Accountability Framework

The MCA is accountable to the Minister responsible for Communications for the preparation and presentation of its financial estimates for approval, following an annual consultation by the responsible Minister with the Minister responsible for Finance. The MCA presents its Annual Report on its operations for the preceding year to the Minister responsible for the MCA and the Minister responsible for Finance. The MCA is also held to account by the sectors it regulates and by the public on whose behalf it regulates. On a yearly basis the MCA publishes its Strategy Update, Annual Plan and its Annual Report on its website.

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[5] Under the Digital Services (Designation and Enforcement) Order, 2024, the MCA is designated as the Digital Services Coordinator (DSC) tasked with overseeing all aspects of the Digital Services Act (DSA). This includes managing the implementation of the DSA within Malta and serving as the rapporteur to the EU.

[6] EUDI Framework, 2024/1183

[7] EU Data Act Regulation, 2023/2854

[8] EU NIS 2 Directive, 2022/2555

1.5 Measuring Performance

Progress towards the attainment of the MCA's strategic objectives is measured by a series of related activities. In this respect, and on an ongoing basis, the MCA:

- carries out market reviews providing an overview of the trends in the sectors under its mandate;

- conducts performance measurement and monitoring in line with the key performance indicators (KPIs) identified in the MCA's strategy update;

- regularly monitors the achievement of its objectives and work programme, identifies any shortfalls and takes the necessary steps to remedy them; and

- provides input to the Board on the progress achieved in the delivery its work programme.

1.6 Communication and Engagement

The MCA is committed to engaging with various stakeholders, including citizens, consumers, authorised entities, government departments and other regulators, constituted bodies, the business community, the EU, and various other international bodies. The MCA also promotes collaboration and coordination with the various national entities that contribute to the development of the sectors it regulates. A variety of communication channels, such as its website and social media channels, are used to effectively build greater awareness of the MCA's activities, its roles and responsibilities, its various initiatives and on general trends in the sectors it regulates. In the context of regulatory decision-making, stakeholders have the opportunity to provide the MCA with feedback and express opinions on developing regulatory measures and proposed regulatory decisions through an established consultation process.

1.7 Work Programme

Section 2 sets out the MCA's programme of work planned to be carried out during the 2025. The objectives of the work programme are aligned with the MCA's Strategy Update 2025 - 2027.

2 Programme of Work and Priorities

What follows is an overview of the MCA's programme of work for 2025. The MCA's projects and ongoing tasks will all be targeted towards the achievement of the identified strategic objectives.

2.1 Strategic Objectives - Projects and Ongoing tasks

Strategic Objective 1 - Promoting a competitive electronic communications sector that delivers efficient investment, innovation and choice.

Overview

The MCA plays a key role in ensuring that consumers and businesses benefit from greater choice, competitive pricing, high-quality and safe electronic communications services. Local operators continue investing in very high-capacity networks (VHCNs) - fixed, mobile and wireless - reflecting the sector's dynamic growth. Beyond meeting rising traffic demands, the focus is on developing greener, more resilient and higher-quality networks capable of supporting emerging needs. The MCA remains committed to promoting and safeguarding sustainable competition and creating a favourable climate for increased investment in VHCNs. The MCA will also continue working with industry stakeholders to ensure that Malta's vital electronic communications networks are safe, secure and resilient.[9]

Safeguarding an effective and sustainable competitive environment

The MCA's regulatory function is underpinned by *ex-ante* powers set out in the European Electronic Communications Code (the 'EECC'). In line with the European Commission's Guidelines on market analysis and the assessment of Significant Market Power (SMP), the MCA reviews electronic communications markets to determine whether they are, or are likely to become, effectively competitive. If not, the MCA imposes appropriate pro-competitive obligations as necessary, including those relating to access, pricing, non-discrimination, and transparency. If the MCA concludes that regulation is no longer justified, it removes the retail or wholesale regulation.

The MCA works towards deregulating markets where possible and levy economic regulation on markets only where there is strong and persistent evidence that competition is not working to benefit users. In the absence of *ex-ante* regulation, the MCA acts in the best interests of consumers to ensure fair treatment and reliable and resilient electronic communications networks that consumers can trust.

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[9] Strategic Objective 3: Maintaining open, safe and secure electronic communications.

In 2024, the MCA initiated a new market analysis of the wholesale fixed broadband access market in Malta in response to the European Commission's veto of its proposed market regulation. Early in 2025 the MCA will consult stakeholders on the findings of this analysis. The MCA will assess whether to continue enforcing access obligations between operators, as has been the practice to date, or if market conditions have evolved sufficiently to allow competition to thrive without regulatory intervention.

The MCA will continue to engage with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) and the European Commission (EC) on the next iteration of the EC's Recommendation on relevant markets susceptible to *ex ante* regulation as well as the review of the EECC.

Facilitating sharing of physical infrastructure for the roll-out of VHCNs

Outside the SMP framework, the MCA has a role in facilitating the sharing of physical infrastructure (e.g., access to poles and ducts) for the purposes of providing electronic communications services by ensuring that there are the lowest possible barriers to use such infrastructure, thus speeding up the deployment of both fixed and wireless high-speed broadband networks. The sharing of physical infrastructure also has a positive impact on the environment as it prevents energy-wasteful infrastructure works and urban disruption. The MCA facilitates the deployment of VHCNs by providing the necessary support and guidance to sector players and other institutional players.

Managing information as the means to promote competition

The MCA collects data from the electronic communications networks and service providers and publishes quarterly market data and retail price movements. The MCA also collects data required for the geographical mapping of the availability of broadband networks and services across Malta.[10] The data collected is vital in supporting the MCA's regulatory decisions that serve to promote and safeguard competition. The information collected is also a valuable tool in empowering end-users to make informed choices.[11] This activity is supplemented by public and business perception surveys. The results of these surveys serve as an additional input to the shaping of regulatory decisions and indicate how consumers' preferences, behaviours and perceptions of electronic communications services are changing over time. In 2025, the MCA will commence a new round of consumer and business perception surveys across all electronic communications markets.

Managing the compliance framework

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[10] Strategic Objective 3: Maintaining open, safe and secure electronic communications.

[11] Strategic Objective 2: Ensuring that electronic communications undertakings provide transparent, high-quality services to all users.

The efficient management of national radio spectrum[12] and numbering resources facilitate competition, enhances connectivity, and promotes efficient investment. Radio spectrum is a scarce resource having a diverse range of uses and end-users. It is an essential input in the supply of wireless electronic communications networks and services as most electronic communications networks, even fixed networks, contain at least some wireless segments. Likewise, access to numbers is essential to the functioning of electronic communications markets. The MCA ensures that there is always an adequate supply of numbers to support the demands of existing and new customers and service providers. The MCA ensures that all end-users who so request can retain their number(s) independently of the undertaking providing the service.

Effective competition depends not just on supply-side considerations relating to the ease of entry to markets or on the availability of spectrum and numbering resources. Effective competition also depends on demand-side factors, such as the ability and willingness of customers to switch easily in response to a better deal in the marketplace, whether switching to another supplier or switching to another offer or bundle provided by their existing supplier. While price is a key consideration, customers also seek the best quality at their chosen price point. Monitoring and publishing quality levels protects consumer welfare and fosters fair, dynamic competition. The MCA's objective to protect and inform consumers so that they can choose and use electronic communications services with confidence is discussed under Strategic Objective 2.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 1	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Market analysis of the Wholesale Fixed Access Market	– Public consultation – Notification of the 'Draft Measure' to the EC – Report on Consultation / Decision
Consumer Perception Surveys *(Fixed Broadband, Mobile Telephony, TV, Fixed Telephony, Bundled services)*	– Design surveys – Fieldwork – Analysis of survey findings and publication
Business Perception Survey *(Mobile Telephony, Fixed Telephony, Business connectivity, Broadband)*	– Design survey – Fieldwork – Analysis of survey findings and publication (2026)
Informing stakeholders on key data and trends	– Publication of quarterly data report sheets – Publication of bi-annual market reviews – Publication of a quarterly pricing bulletin

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[12] Strategic Objective 4: Maximising the potential of radio spectrum.

Strategic Objective 2 - Ensuring that electronic communications undertakings provide transparent, high-quality services to all users

Overview

The MCA remains committed to empowering consumers by providing clear information on their rights and supporting them in making informed decisions about electronic communications services. The MCA ensures that end-users can easily access the information they need, shop confidently, switch providers effortlessly, and receive fair treatment. Additionally, the MCA ensures that all end-users have access to an adequate broadband internet access service and voice communications service at a fixed location.

Enhancing quality in the provision of publicly available electronic communications services via effective monitoring

Early in 2025 the MCA will consult on measuring and publishing quality of service (QoS) information for publicly available electronic communications services (i.e., providers of internet access services and publicly available interpersonal communications services). Providers will be required to offer comprehensive, comparable and up-to-date QoS data to help users make informed comparisons alongside price and tariff information. The MCA will also launch a mobile QoS benchmarking initiative to evaluate and compare the performance of Malta's mobile networks. Additionally, the MCA will conduct an assessment of end-user satisfaction with electronic communication services, gathering insights directly from user experiences. This feedback loop will ensure that consumer needs and expectations are addressed effectively, further driving market competitiveness and service quality.

Enhancing the MCA's compliance monitoring vis-à-vis consumer protection

Beyond being aware of the service that they are actually receiving, end-users of electronic communications services have a right to protection with respect to subscriber contracts. Contracts are an important tool for end-users of electronic communications services to ensure transparency of information and legal certainty. The MCA continues to work with operators as they implement enhanced consumer protection measures relating to contracts and contract information.

The proliferation of affordable technology has fuelled a rise in scams, such as Caller Line Identification (CLI) spoofing and vishing, which often target the most vulnerable. In 2024, the MCA issued its decision on measures to combat these scams, introducing a framework to identify and block potential scam calls on international network interfaces. The MCA will continue to work closely with the electronic communications sector, the government, and other regulatory bodies to make scams harder to perpetrate. Additionally, the MCA will persist in empowering consumers to protect themselves by raising awareness and providing better information, helping individuals recognise and respond to fraudulent activities more effectively.

Ensuring universal access to communications services for social and economic participation in society

The MCA ensures consumers have access to an available adequate broadband internet access service and to voice communications services, including the underlying connection, at a fixed location. In 2025 the MCA will evaluate GO's claim for funding the net-cost incurred in the provision of the Universal Service Obligation (USO) for the years 2020 and 2021. Additionally, the MCA will continue to monitor any issues related to the availability of voice communications services and an adequate broadband internet access service. The MCA will also continue supporting and developing access to affordable universal electronic communications services by vulnerable users, together with other Government entities.

Improving consumer access to information

Consumer awareness on fixed and mobile products and services - The MCA via its online service comparison portal, *Telecosts*, promotes transparency by providing consumers with the necessary tools to ensure that they are aware of alternative suppliers and services so that they can easily compare information on prices, service characteristics and quality. The MCA, via its website, consumer guides and the use of social media, continuously updates information available to consumers on how to get the best from electronic communications services. The MCA also monitors and reports on pricing trends in fixed and mobile services, ensuring transparency and enabling informed decisions.

Operator contracts - The MCA monitors the contractual obligations of all electronic communications operators to ensure that they are in line with the rules reflected in legislation. The MCA ensures that such contracts provide clear and relevant information helping users to take informed and correct decisions when acquiring electronic communications services (both as standalone and as a bundle). The MCA ensures that consumers are provided with pre-contractual information relating to contract duration, any switching charges, compensation and refund arrangements for delay or abuse of switching, information on how to switch, and details of any early termination fees. The MCA monitors obligations placed on industry, including those related best tariff advice relating to their services at the end of the end-user's contractual commitment.

Termination of contracts and switching providers - The MCA monitors inter-operator porting and switching processes, and the extent to which they promote good consumer and competition outcomes. In addition, the MCA monitors the cancellation and termination arrangements of electronic communications service providers (after or during the initial commitment period), and the impact these have on consumers' ability to exit their service contract quickly, conveniently and without error.

Mobile roaming rules - The MCA monitors compliance with the roaming rules including through consumer complaints and engages with stakeholders if compliance concerns arise, and where appropriate takes enforcement action.

Ensuring consumer rights and customer service - The MCA ensures that electronic communications service providers uphold the rights of their customers and deliver acceptable levels of customer service. It also ensures that consumers have effective redress mechanisms, including access to timely query and complaints handling processes. The MCA handles and resolves complaints it receives from customers of service providers. To identify areas of concern, the MCA conducts regular mystery shopping exercises and takes necessary regulatory actions to address any identified issues.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 2	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
QoS framework for providers of publicly available electronic communications services	– Public consultation – Report on consultation / Decision – Publication of first set of QoS parameters (2026)
Mobile QoS Benchmarking	– Conduct first mobile QoS benchmarking exercise – Publish findings – Conduct 2nd mobile QoS benchmarking exercise (2026)
Study on Quality of Experience	– Survey design – Fieldwork – Analysis and publication of survey findings – Identify areas where additional consumer education may be necessary
Minimising harm from ECS-based scams	– Monitoring blocking measures – Ongoing interaction with stakeholders – Ongoing awareness campaigns
Review of claim for funding the net cost incurred to provide the USO	– Assessment of funding claim for the years 2020 and 2021 – Public consultation – Decision on funding claim and source of funding
Roaming management and monitoring	– Ongoing monitoring – Compilation of statistics regarding roaming – Feedback to any reports / public consultations issued by BEREC and the EC
Management of the Service Comparison Portal - *Telecosts*	– Maintaining *Telecosts* - electronic communications services / packages (including prices and quality of service) – Ongoing promotion of the availability of *Telecosts*
Compliance, enforcement, and investigations	– Ensure that operators adhere with obligations – Biannual report on complaints and enquires – Enforcement actions and related monitoring activities

Strategic Objective 3 - Maintaining open, safe and secure electronic communications

Overview

The MCA works closely with industry to ensure that Malta's critical electronic communications networks and services remain open, secure, resilient, and capable of meeting evolving demands. Access, resilience and cybersecurity are pivotal in fostering trust and confidence among consumers and businesses in their use of electronic communications services. Moreover, electronic communications networks and services serve as the foundation of the wider digital economy, driving innovation and economic growth.

Monitoring the security, safety, integrity, resilience and availability of publicly available fixed and mobile electronic communications networks and services

Providers of publicly available electronic communications networks and services are required to manage the integrity and security of their networks and services. They are also required to take appropriate measures to manage risks to the security of such network or services. Such a risk-based approach should lead operators to prevent, resist, mitigate and recover from threats to security and resilience of networks and services they provide.

In 2023 the MCA initiated a consultation exercise on minimum-security guidelines and reporting obligations. However, a final decision on operator measures to safeguard network integrity and security has been deferred due to the ongoing transposition of the European NIS 2 Directive. The MCA is expected to retain its current mandate over providers of publicly available electronic communications networks and services. A conclusive decision on safeguarding network integrity and security measures is anticipated in the second half of 2025, following the incorporation of the NIS 2 Directive into national legislation. The MCA will focus on enhancing cybersecurity and resilience by actively engaging with entities in the sectors covered by the NIS 2 directive. Using its regulatory powers, the MCA will assess compliance with both the NIS 2 Directive and the CER Directive once they are transposed into national law. Entities are required to have appropriate risk-based security measures and procedures in place to manage cybersecurity and resilience risk. The MCA will supervise those entities by monitoring and assessing risks to their cybersecurity and resilience, and we will act quickly to require them to take action where appropriate.

The MCA will continue to work with the EC and ENISA[13] to implement mitigating measures to address 5G cybersecurity risks. The MCA will embark on a 5G risk assessment identifying any associated risks and mitigation measures accordingly. The EC has set out three key objectives for cybersecurity of 5G networks: the exchange of information and best practices on strategic measures related to suppliers; continuous knowledge building and cooperation with stakeholders; and

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[13] The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA).

promoting supply chain resilience. The MCA will continue to provide support to the European Institutions (European Commission, NIS Cooperation Group[14] and ENISA) to help them achieve the objectives on cybersecurity of 5G networks.

The MCA ensures that operators implement appropriate measures to maintain the integrity and security of their networks and services, in accordance with the technical guidelines established by ENISA. Additionally, the MCA mandates the reporting of network failure incidents that exceed a certain threshold. It then investigates these incidents to determine their cause, evaluate the adequacy of the operator's response, and assess the actions taken to mitigate the risk of recurrence. Annually, the MCA reports any significant incidents to ENISA, along with the actions taken. The MCA collaborates closely with the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment (MHSE), the Critical Infrastructure Protection Directorate (CIPD), the Information and Data Protection Commission (IDPC), Malta Security Services (MSS), and the police on cyber-security matters.

Mapping broadband services as an information tool relative to broadband network capabilities

The MCA will continue with the exercise on the mapping of information on each fixed and mobile broadband network and related services across Malta and Gozo. Such an exercise is intended to, among others, enable consumers to be able to check operator coverage and availability of fixed and wireless broadband infrastructures, information on the operators, service and technology availability, available bandwidths and quality of public electronic communications networks and services. The geographical survey of the coverage of electronic communications networks capable of broadband services, should eventually go beyond the primary objectives mentioned above and help identify bottlenecks at the infrastructure level. The mapping of broadband networks also serves to assist the MCA in ensuring that both physical and spectrum related infrastructure is effective, robust, resilient, and future proof.

Continued oversight of net neutrality practices

The MCA is responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the net neutrality rules and providing guidance on how broadband and mobile providers should follow them. The principle of net neutrality is that internet users - not their broadband or mobile provider - have control over what they do online. Net neutrality has played a critical role in allowing people to access the content and services they want, and content and app owners to reach customers online. The MCA will continue ensure compliance by the operators with net neutrality principles, taking utmost account of BEREC[15] guidelines, in order to safeguard equal and non-discriminatory treatment of traffic in the provision of

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[14] The Network and Information Systems Cooperation Group was established by the NIS Directive to ensure cooperation and information exchange among Member States. The NIS Cooperation Group is composed of representatives of the EU Member States, the EC and ENISA.

[15] The Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC).

internet access services and related end-user rights. The MCA will publish its annual report regarding its monitoring and findings. In 2025 the MCA plans to consult on a review the traffic management practices by the respective Internet Access Service (IAS) providers. The MCA will assess how the IAS providers share information about any traffic management policies which are deployed on their networks, and whether the traffic management practices in question comply with the requirements of the Open Internet Regulation.

Participating in the EU and global Internet Governance Fora

The EU and global Internet Governance fora serve to bring people together from various stakeholder groups as equals, in discussions on public policy issues relating to the Internet. Increasing pressure on the stability of the internet as an open, free, global, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet, may necessitate more active participation and contribution in the coming years. The MCA contributes to the EU and global Internet Governance fora dealing with matters relating to data governance; safety, security, stability, and resilience; and digital inclusion. The MCA provides policy advice to Government on matters related to Internet Governance. In particular, the MCA represents Malta in the High-Level Group on Internet Governance (HLIG) which is an expert group comprising of experts from EU Member States with a view to ensure coordination at European level and share expertise on internet governance related issues. The MCA also represents Malta on the ICANN[16] Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) which constitutes the voice of Governments and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) in ICANN's multistakeholder structure.

Ensuring continued monitoring and respect of EMF thresholds

The MCA will continue its routine monitoring of electronic magnetic field (EMF) emissions with a view to ensuring that levels of electromagnetic radiation do not exceed the levels established by the International Commission of non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which are also endorsed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the EC. In addition, the MCA will maintain ongoing liaison with the department responsible for environmental health on EMF related issues and will continue with its EMF auditing programme. The MCA regularly publishes a report on the nationwide EMF measurements emanating from all radio transmitting apparatus operating during the interval of the measurement activity, including transmissions from mobile base stations, radio and TV broadcast, private mobile radio (PMR) and radars, amongst other sources.

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[16] Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 3	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Electronic communications networks and services security and integrity guidelines	– Consultation on cybersecurity regulatory guidelines to reflect obligations set in the NIS 2 Directive – Support providers of electronic communications networks and services with the implementation of cybersecurity measures
Notification requirements related to security and integrity of networks	– Monitor operator reports on integrity and security incidents – Report on severe incidents to ENISA and the action taken
Net Neutrality - Compliance and Reporting	– Monitoring product/service offers – Annual report on the MCA's activities – Public consultation on traffic management policies
Internet Governance Fora	– Participation and contribution to the EU and global Internet Governance Fora
EMF emissions - monitoring compliance	– Audit of EMF measurements (fixed monitoring and drive testing) – Publication of results – Information and education campaigns

Strategic Objective 4 - Maximising the potential of radio spectrum

Overview

The radio spectrum is a finite resource crucial to deliver a wide range of wireless applications benefiting different users. The MCA is responsible for ensuring the efficient use of the radio spectrum identified in the National Radio Frequency Plan.[17] The MCA manages Malta's radio spectrum with the objective to drive efficiency and support innovation, ensuring that this essential and finite resource is used effectively. The MCA also monitors radio spectrum usage in Malta, including the enforcement of authorisation conditions.

Ensuring spectrum resources are available to support innovation

The operators use radio spectrum holdings in the 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2.1 GHz, 2.6 GHz, and 3.6 GHz bands to deliver their wireless electronic communications services. While spectrum in all three 5G pioneer bands was made available in 2021, spectrum in the 700 MHz and 26 GHz bands remains unassigned, due to the lack of market demand, stemming from the sufficient radio spectrum already assigned and used, the small size of Malta's territory and the size of the market.

The rights of use of radio spectrum in the 2 GHz band will expire in August 2025. The rights of use of radio spectrum in the 900 MHz / 1800 MHz bands will expire in August 2026. The goal is to develop a unified licensing framework that aligns the expiration dates of these licences with those of other spectrum licenses, such as those for the 800 MHz and 2.6 GHz bands, which are valid until 2033. The MCA will further develop the licensing framework of the 26 GHz band, and other relevant bands allocated for 5G, to facilitate their use for new applications and use cases.

Rationalising mobile spectrum usage for efficiency and environmental purposes

As newer fixed and wireless electronic communications networks get rolled out, older technologies diminish in their use and importance in the sector, leading to migration and eventual retirement. The rollout of 5G, with multiple mobile networks by each mobile operator (2G, 3G, 4G and 5G networks), raises questions of efficiency, manageability and environmental implications. Migrating from legacy networks to more energy-efficient technologies is the next step to improve the environmental impact of Malta's electronic communications networks. The MCA will seek to understand the strategies of mobile network operators regarding the future of 2G and 3G in favour of newer and more efficient technologies, which also have better green credentials. The MCA will also seek to understand the operators' plans for the deployment of new 4G and 5G voice communications services - VoLTE (Voice over Long-Term Evolution) and VoNR (also referred to as Voice over 5G or Vo5G) - and 5G standalone networks (SA). 5G SA reflects a pure end-to-end 5G network that can also deliver

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[17] The MCA regularly reviews the National Frequency Plan (NFP) to reflect changes to the allocation of spectrum taking into account European and International regulations.

improvements such as ultra-low latency times (fast), better upload speeds, network slicing[18] capabilities, better support for Internet of Things (IoT) devices, increased reliability, and security. Consultations with operators will continue in 2025 with a view to switch-off the legacy networks and improve the sustainability of the sector more broadly, for example by including environmental objectives in spectrum reassignment decisions. While operators bear responsibility for this migration, it will require extensive consultation and planning to ensure a smooth transition that protects competition and vulnerable end-users.

Ensuring efficient and effective use of spectrum and associated radiocommunications equipment

The MCA will continue to enhance the radiocommunications equipment licensing regime and will examine the scope for applying further general authorisations where appropriate. The MCA will finalise a review of the licensing regime for: PMSE (Programme-making and special events) service links, Private Mobile Radio (PMR) services and for aeronautical radio services. The MCA will also finalise a review of the current licensing regime for fixed links (specifically in the case of fixed links using spectrum above 40 GHz) in order to promote the utilisation of extremely high frequency bands and at the same time facilitate base-station backhauling for the deployment of 5G networks. The MCA monitors the radio spectrum and take all necessary action to prevent harmful interference and to mitigate it when it occurs. The MCA will continue to enhance the effectiveness of its radio spectrum monitoring system.

Management of scarce resources used by space systems and for the provision of satellite communications services

The MCA is responsible for the management of scarce resources used by space systems and for the provision of satellite communications services. The MCA also authorises non-geostationary (GSO) satellite system providers providing broadband connectivity. The MCA will continue to encourage satellite operators to register space resources with the ITU through Malta in line with the satellite filing framework. In 2025 the MCA will finalise a review of the satellite filing framework. In addition, the MCA will embark on an exercise to ensure that new satellite resources (i.e., radio spectrum and satellite slots) are duly registered in Malta's name under the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regulations.

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[18] Network slicing allows for multiple virtual network slices across the same physical network. Each slice is isolated from other network traffic to give dedicated performance, with the features of the slice tailored to the use case requirements.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 4	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Review of 900 / 1800 MHz radio spectrum bands to enable 5G technologies	– Revision of various national instruments concerning the harmonised 900 / 1800 MHz bands – Issue amended grants of rights of use of radio spectrum in the 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands – Notification of implementation of EC Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/173 on the harmonisation of the 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands for terrestrial systems capable of providing electronic communications services
Licensing framework for various wireless broadband spectrum bands (900 MHz, 1800 MHz, and 2 GHz bands)	– Public consultation on the proposed national spectrum management framework – Publish decision establishing the spectrum management framework for the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and the paired 2 GHz bands. – Implementation of any actions stemming out from the spectrum management framework
Facilitating mobile technology migration towards VoLTE and 5G Standalone (SA)	– Engage in discussions with all stakeholders – Implement supporting measures, as necessary, towards the successful implementation of a voice migration roadmap
Licensing framework for the 26 GHz band for private networks	– Public consultation on the licensing framework – Response to consultation / Decision
Review of licensing framework for radio spectrum bands operating above 40 GHz	– Public consultation on the licensing framework – Response to Consultation / Decision – Information document to guide potential users of radio links operating above 40 GHz
Review satellite filing system	– Review of the procedures concerning satellite filing procedures – Publish satellite filing procedures on MCA's website

Strategic Objective 5 – Supervising the provision of digital services

Overview

The MCA is responsible for supervising the provision of relevant digital services. The regulation of digital services is addressed through a mix of regulatory oversight and stakeholder awareness. The MCA also targets web accessibility as a means of digital inclusion.

Ensuring compliance with the Electronic Commerce Act and the European Digital Services Act (DSA)

Electronic Commerce Act - The MCA will continue to maintain regulatory oversight on the activities of the local information society service providers in order to ensure that locally established websites adhere to the essential requirements of the Electronic Commerce Act, relating mostly to ensuring that the local information society service providers display specific information to facilitate consumer redress.

European Digital Services Act (DSA) - The DSA has been successfully implemented into Maltese law by virtue of the Digital Services (Designation and Enforcement) Order, which came into force in March 2024. The Order designates the MCA as the Digital Services Coordinator (DSC). As the DSC, the MCA is responsible to ensure that online intermediaries and online platforms established in Malta play by the rules stipulated in the DSA.

To achieve a coordinated and effective response to the DSA, the MCA has established Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with key national stakeholders, including the Malta Police Force, the Information and Data Protection Commissioner (IDPC), the Commissioner for Children, and the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA). These MoUs formalise collaborative processes for joint investigations and enforcement, reinforcing a multi-stakeholder framework to address the DSA's requirements.

In 2024 the MCA certified an out-of-court dispute settlement provider authorised to settle disputes between providers of online platforms and the recipients of their services throughout the EU.

The MCA also participates in, and contributes to, the main DSA activities of the EC and the European Board for Digital Services (EBDS). With these partnerships and protocols in place, the MCA is well-equipped to fulfil its responsibilities under the DSA, ensuring a robust regulatory response both nationally and as part of the broader European effort.

Organising stakeholder fora, commissioning of surveys on usage and perceptions of digital services, implementing targeted information campaigns on various digital services

The MCA will continue to raise awareness on the uptake of digital services. In particular, the MCA will continue to:

- Provide online guides aimed at businesses that sell goods and/or services online and those that intend to set up their own online business.[19]

- Enhance trust in digital services, including by providing a high level of consumer protection and transparency of digital services.

- Assess the adoption of digital services by local businesses and consumers via the findings of business and consumer surveys.

- Raise awareness, in collaboration with other interested stakeholders, on digital services such as accessibility of Public Sector websites and mobile applications, in order to maximise usage.

- Contribute to fora targeting the uptake of eCommerce amongst SMEs.

Maintaining regulatory oversight on relevant activities

The new European Digital Identity (EUDI) Regulation[20] establishes a comprehensive framework for a European Digital Identity, building on the 2014 Regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions (eIDAS Regulation). A key component of this Regulation is the requirement for Member States to offer at least one European Digital Identity Wallet to their citizens. In Malta, the MCA, already responsible for overseeing digital trust services, has now been entrusted with supervisory responsibilities for digital wallets, further solidifying its role in advancing secure digital ecosystems.

Besides its role of supervisory body, the MCA participates in the task force set up to oversee the implementation of a European Digital Identity Wallet in Malta. In addition to the MCA, the task force also includes representatives from the Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects (MEEP), Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA), Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA), Malta Business Registry (MBR) and Identità. In 2025 the MCA will develop the organisational capacity required to supervise providers of European Digital Identity Wallets established in Malta.

The MCA monitors the Geo-blocking Regulation on addressing unjustified online sales discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment within the internal market. The MCA monitors adherence to the Cross-border Portability Regulation of online content services. Cross-border portability enables consumers to fully use their portable online content services (films, sports events, music services, e-books, video games, etc) travelling within the EU in the same way they access them at home.

Monitoring public websites and mobile applications accessibility

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[19] https://digitalservices.mca.org.mt/

[20] Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 establishing the European Digital Identity Framework.

The MCA continues to enhance the accessibility of public sector websites and mobile applications, working with the Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility (FITA) to ensure these platforms are inclusive for people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. To promote digital inclusivity, the MCA raises awareness about the benefits and accessibility of these electronic platforms, encouraging greater use. The MCA also participates in the EC's Web Accessibility Directive Expert Group (WADEX), which facilitates the exchange of best practices and tools for monitoring and reporting on web accessibility across the EU.

The European Accessibility Act (EAA) transposed into local regulations (S.L. 627.03), will take effect in June 2025. Covering a wide range of products and services in the Technology, Media, and Telecom (TMT) sector, the EAA aims to improve accessibility for disadvantaged groups. To leverage synergies with its role in public sector web accessibility, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the CRPD is being finalised to provide technical expertise on accessibility for electronic communications and information society services.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 5	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Digital Services Act – Compliance and Enforcement	– Complaint handling, monitoring, enforcement, and reporting procedures – Awareness campaign
Digital Services Act - Outreach	– Education initiatives across all policy verticals – Publications and media
EUDI Regulation - Promotion and Monitoring	– Monitoring and supervision of qualified trust service providers – Contribute and participate in FESA meetings
Web Accessibility Directive - Monitoring	– Monitoring of public sector websites and mobile apps with the support of FITA – Reporting on the outcome of the monitoring activity – Awareness campaign in relation to digital accessibility by the public
End-user perceptions of Digital Services	– Compile survey – Fieldwork – Analysis of findings – Publish and disseminate survey findings
eCommerce monitoring of essential requirements	– Ongoing monitoring of local eCommerce websites

Strategic Objective 6 - Promoting a competitive postal sector that delivers efficient investment, innovation and choice.

Overview

The MCA safeguards sustainable competition in the provision of postal services, subject to ensuring the availability of a universal postal service. The MCA uses appropriate regulatory intervention, in the universal postal service area, in case of actual or potential competition problems.

Analysing competition dynamics in specific postal markets

The MCA will continue to monitor the application of the *ex-ante* remedies (such as the approval of tariffs) imposed on MaltaPost in those postal service markets, within the universal service area, where it has SMP. MaltaPost does not hold SMP in the market for domestic parcel mail, given the strong indirect competitive constraints posed by express postal operators on the pricing behaviour of MaltaPost in a deregulated environment. In 2025, the MCA will finalise a review the postal markets to assess whether MaltaPost continues to hold SMP in any of the relevant markets falling within the universal postal service area. The aim being to ensure that market review decisions remain relevant and that remedies reflect any changes in the markets. Should the universal service provider (USP) no longer hold SMP in any of the relevant markets the MCA will, among others, withdraw *ex-ante* price control regulation (i.e., remove the need for the approval of tariffs).

Continuing enhancements to MaltaPost economic regulation model

MaltaPost's regulatory accounts are critical information for the MCA to be able to assess how the universal postal service is performing financially, for assessing universal postal services' prices for compliance with tariff requirements of the Postal Services Act, and other regulatory requirements. MaltaPost's regulatory accounts also contribute to the MCA's cost modelling work of MaltaPost's postal network. The MCA ensures accurate cost allocations between the universal postal services and other services so that the universal postal service is not cross-subsidising services outside the scope of the universal postal services. The MCA will continue to enhance its economic regulation model and the established 'Automated Price Adjustment Mechanism' used to monitor tariffs and price changes.

Managing the postal compliance framework

The MCA will continue to ensure compliance of both licensed operators providing services within the universal postal service area and operators subject to a general authorisation providing only services that fall outside the scope of the universal postal service. The MCA will ensure that operators that offer services that fall within the scope of the universal postal service are appropriately licensed to carry out such activities. This is particularly important for safeguarding the provision of the universal postal service.

Monitoring performance via collection and analysis of data

Knowledge about developments in the postal sector is key to ensure that: it continues to benefit all users, both consumers and businesses; all understand the changes facing the sector; and that the MCA can properly perform its regulatory duties and obligations. The MCA will continue to collect relevant, accurate and timely information on the postal market in an efficient and effective manner and include this in published biannual market reviews. This activity is supplemented by periodic public and business perception surveys. The results of these surveys serve as an additional source of information in support of regulatory decisions, as well as an indication of the extent to which the postal sector is meeting the reasonable needs of users in light of changes in the market, in particular the growth in online shopping and continued decline in the traditional letters markets. In 2025 the MCA will commence a new round of postal perception surveys.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 6	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Review of postal markets within the universal postal service area	– Public consultation – Response to consultation / Decision
Automated Price Adjustment Mechanism for the universal postal service	– Review of the Automated Price Adjustment Mechanism model
Regulatory financial reporting by MaltaPost	– Ensure MaltaPost's compliance with the regulatory financial reporting requirements – Review MaltaPost's regulatory accounts and update MCA's price control model – Communicate and follow-up points of the annual review with MaltaPost as required – Monitoring of MaltaPost's financial performance regarding the universal postal service
Compliance, enforcement, and investigations	– Monitoring and enforcement of operators licensed to provide services within and outside the scope of the universal postal service – Monitoring and enforcement of operators subject to a general authorisation providing only services outside the scope of the universal postal service
Postal consumer perception surveys	– Review of survey questions – Fieldwork – Analysis of survey findings and publication – Publication of survey findings
Informing stakeholders on key data and trends in the postal sector	– Publication of quarterly data report sheets – Publication of bi-annual market reviews

Strategic Objective 7 - Ensuring that postal undertakings provide transparent, high-quality services to all users.

Overview

The MCA ensures that postal undertakings provide transparent and high-quality services to all users. In particular, the MCA ensures a high level of protection for postal service users in their dealings with postal service providers. The MCA also seeks to ensure that there is a universal postal service that meets the reasonable needs of postal service users. The universal postal service ensures the provision of postal services to all people in Malta, at an affordable price and to a sufficient level of quality.

Determining the ongoing feasibility of existing universal postal service obligations to reflect users' present-day needs

The sustainability of a universal postal service is a challenge, driven by digitalization, reducing traditional letter mail volumes, and increased competition in e-commerce deliveries. In 2024, the MCA published a decision on the revision of MaltaPost's QoS performance targets for the universal postal service. The revised QoS performance targets aim to ensure a satisfactory level of service for users while promoting the financial sustainability of the universal postal service. In addition, an 'Automated Price Adjustment Mechanism' came into effect in September 2024. This tariff mechanism has the objective of supporting continued service provision of universal postal services in an efficient manner. The mechanism establishes price caps in line with the principle of cost orientation.

Managing the compliance framework, with focus on quality-of-service provision

The MCA ensures postal service users are informed about the services they are purchasing, how to file complaints, and the steps to take if unresolved. It keeps the public updated on postal market developments and trends, empowering users with accurate, relevant information to help them choose services that meet their needs. The MCA engages with postal providers to ensure clear, accessible information, particularly regarding the universal postal service, and monitors MaltaPost's annual QoS performance against set targets. The MCA will continue to oversee compliance with quality standards, including mail security, complaints handling, and performance monitoring, and may direct corrective action if the universal service provider fails to meet required service levels. The MCA ensures that all postal service providers have in place measures covering customer complaints and redress. The MCA also performs a consumer dispute resolution role for both senders and receivers of post.

Ongoing management of the EU regulation on cross-border parcel delivery

The EU Regulation on cross-border parcel delivery services aims to increase the level of transparency of certain single-piece tariffs and enhance regulatory oversight of the parcel delivery market; and ensure that citizens and small businesses have access to reasonably priced cross-

border parcel delivery services. The MCA will continue to gather information from parcel (including small packets) delivery service providers about their services and the public list of tariffs applicable for single-piece postal items. Information on the services and public tariffs of all EU Member States are published by the EC on a dedicated website. The MCA will continue to assess whether MaltaPost's cross-border parcel tariffs are 'unreasonably high' and pass that assessment to the EC. The MCA publishes a non-confidential version of the assessment on its website.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 7	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Ensuring the sustainability of the universal postal service / USO	– Ongoing discussions with relevant stakeholders
Implementing the EU Cross-border parcel Regulation	– Cross-border parcel tariffs forwarded to the EC for publication – Assessment of cross-border parcel tariffs – Annual Report to the EC – Publication of non-confidential assessment report
Monitoring QoS performance of the USO	– Monitoring of QoS performance of the universal postal service (routing times and the reliability and regularity of mail) – Audit of QoS measurements – Ensure publication of QoS performance
Monitoring of the USP's activities and other service providers	– Monitoring of mail integrity, postal service schemes, QoS and complaints handling
Compliance, enforcement, and investigations	– Biannual report on the complaints and enquires received by the MCA – Enforcement actions and related monitoring activities

Strategic Objective 8 - Contributing to the development and implementation of sector policy

Overview

The MCA's strategic and business objectives are influenced by decisions made at national, European, and international level. At a national level, the MCA works with stakeholders so that it can be more effective in pursuing its objectives. Beyond the national level the MCA contributes and participates in various EU and other international fora to ensure that any future policies benefit Malta. The MCA also leverages its expertise in the sectors on which it has oversight in providing policy advice to Government.

Provision of input to EU-driven policy proposals

Regulation (EU) 2024/1309 on measures to reduce the cost of deploying gigabit electronic communications networks (Gigabit Infrastructure Act) - The GIA entered into force in May 2024. The GIA, designed to reduce the cost of deploying gigabit electronic communications networks, replaces the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive (BCRD). The BCRD provisions remain in force, until the respective GIA provisions enter into force, i.e., until 12 November 2025. The MCA is contributing to the development of BEREC guidance, on fair and reasonable terms for access to in-building physical infrastructure and coordination of civil works. The MCA is also contributing to the EC's guidance on the application of Article 3 (Access to existing physical infrastructure) of the GIA. The MCA will collaborate closely with the Ministry for the Economy, Enterprise and Strategic Projects (MEEP), Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works (MTIP) and other relevant Ministries to ensure the effective implementation of the GIA.

Directive (EU) 2022/2555 on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union (NIS 2 Directive) - The transposition of the NIS2 Directive falls under the responsibility of the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment (MHSE). The security provisions for trust service providers found in the eIDAS Regulation and the security provisions found in the EECC have been replaced by those in the NIS2 Directive. The MCA is expected to be designated as the competent authority responsible for cybersecurity and for the supervisory tasks of the NIS 2 Directive in relation to the following essential and important entities: providers of public electronic communications networks, providers of publicly available electronic communications services, trust service providers and postal services. In addition, the MCA may be assigned additional responsibilities in the area of digital infrastructures.

Directive (EU) 2022/2557 on the resilience of critical entities (CER) - aims at enhancing the resilience and ability of organisations that are considered critical to provide services, such as public electronic communications services and trust services. The CER emphasises on resilience and business continuity whilst the NIS 2 emphasises on cybersecurity measures. The MCA is expected to be designated as the competent authority responsible for the resilience of relevant critical entities.

Regulation (EU) 2023/2854 (Data Act) - The EU Data Act is designed to enhance the EU's data economy and foster a competitive data market by making data (in particular industrial data) more accessible and usable, encouraging data-driven innovation and increasing data availability. The EU Data Act also contains new rules that grant customers the freedom to switch between various cloud and edge data-processing services. The MCA is expected to be designated as the competent authority for the application and enforcement of switching between data processing services.

A new European Digital Networks Act (DNA) - The EC has committed to reviewing the operation of the EECC by the end of 2025. The EC is preparing the Digital Networks Act (DNA) which will include a review of the EECC. Based on the MCA's deep understanding of electronic communications markets, the MCA will provide technical and policy advice to Government, and through BEREC and the EC on the development of the DNA.

A new European Postal Services Directive (PSD) - The EC "Forward-looking study on the postal sector" published in November 2024 suggests that the PSD is in need of a revision to ensure that the legal framework continues to be relevant and effective. The PSD has fulfilled its objectives but there is a need to update it so that the postal sector can continue to be relevant for the European economy and citizens, can contribute to strengthening of the EU internal market and the overall competitiveness of the EU. The MCA will contribute to the ERGP regarding any requests from the EC for technical assistance, support and advice in the process of reviewing the regulatory framework applicable to the postal sector. The MCA will also provide technical and policy advice to Government on the development of a new PSD. The timing for a possible revision of the PSD is however uncertain.

Space-related topics - The MCA represents the Government on various European for a that focus on space communications. These include the Horizontal Configuration of the European Union Space Programme Committee, Galileo, EGNOS, the working group on GNSS Evolution, the Task Force on EU GNSS Interference, the EU governmental satellite communications (GOVSATCOM), and the Administrative Board of the European Union Agency for the Space Programme.

Interacting at various EU-related bodies and major non-EU bodies

Active participation on EU and international fora will remain high, in view of the need to consistently put forward Malta's position, particularly in areas which are of relevance to the domestic environment. The MCA's international obligations entail active participation in the following EU organisations:

- BEREC which ensures independent, consistent, high-quality application of the European regulatory framework for electronic communications markets for the benefit of Europe and its citizens. In 2025, BEREC will continue to support the further implementation of the EECC at national level and will continue to take stock and track the national implementation status throughout the EU. BEREC will also consider to what extent the electronic communications framework is enabling the achievement of the EECC's objectives and whether the framework's provisions are effective to achieving that end. The EC is due to publish its first review of the

functioning of the EECC by the end of 2025. BEREC will also publish an opinion about the functioning of the Roaming Regulation, an opinion on Intra-EU communications, an opinion on the review of EC's Recommendation on relevant markets susceptible to ex-ante regulation and an Opinion on the review of Universal Services

- The Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) which provides high-level strategic advice on spectrum policies to the EC.

- The Communications Committee (COCOM), which assists the EC in carrying out its executive powers under the regulatory framework for electronic communications.

- The Radio Spectrum Committee (RSCOM), responsible for the development of implementing decisions with respect to technical measures that ensure harmonised conditions across Europe for the availability and efficient use of radio spectrum.

- The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) in relation to cybersecurity and network security regulation.

- ERGP responsible for advising and assisting the EC in consolidating the internal market for postal services and ensuring the consistent application of the European postal regulatory framework for postal services. The ERGP work programme for 2025 follows up the work initiated in previous years and considers the medium- and long -term challenges and developments of the postal sector, such as the necessary review of the regulatory framework, the Green Deal, digitalization, the changes in consumers' needs (in particular due to electronic substitution) and e-commerce.

- The European Commission's Postal Directive Committee (PDC) which serves as a scrutiny body for the application of postal legislation and for the improvement of quality of service, notably the establishment of quality standards for intra-EU cross-border services.

- The Expert group on electronic commerce which advises the EC on issues relating to electronic commerce and related services.

- The European Board for Digital Services (EBDS)[21] composed of the Member States' Digital Services Coordinators and chaired by the EC.

- The European Submarine Cable Infrastructure Expert Group (SCIEWG) tasked to enhance the security and resilience of submarine cable infrastructures. This group aims to provide expert advice, facilitate information exchange between Member States and the Commission,

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[21] https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/dsa-board

and support the coordination of efforts in line with the Commission's Recommendation on Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures.

The MCA will also continue to represent Malta in international fora:

- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) regarding preparation for participation in the ITU Plenipotentiary Conferences, the ITU World Radiocommunication Conferences.

- The ITU's Advisory Body on Submarine Cable Resilience, with the aim of promoting dialogue and collaboration on potential ways and means to improve the resilience of this vital infrastructure that powers global communications and the digital economy.

- The Universal Postal Union (UPU). The UPU's mission is to stimulate the lasting development of efficient and accessible universal postal services of quality in order to facilitate communication between the inhabitants of the world. The next Universal Postal Congress will be held in Dubai between the 6th and 20th September 2025.

- The European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT), the International Regulators' Group (IRG) and other related workgroups.

- The European Committee for Postal Regulation (CERP).

- The European Mediterranean Regulators Group (EMERG), which acts as a forum for regular discussions and exchanges of information on issues relating to electronic communications.

The MCA will actively contribute to pan-European initiatives in relation to:

- The EC's review of wholesale voice call termination rates and of wholesale mobile roaming rates.

- The harmonisation of additional spectrum for next generation of wireless broadband services (including 5G and future developments of 6G technologies).

- The EU Digital Decade Policy Programme (DDPP) 2030. Leading up to 2030, EU Member States, in collaboration with the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the Commission, will shape their digital policies to achieve targets in these four areas: improve citizens' basic and advanced digital skills; improve the take-up of new technologies in EU businesses, such as artificial intelligence, data and cloud; further advance the EU's connectivity, computing and data infrastructure; and make public services and administration available online. The EC plans to review the DDPP 2030 targets by 2026 to take stock of technological, economic and societal developments. This will include a review of the goals on gigabit and wireless connectivity.

- The ongoing submission of accurate statistics and information to the EU and other international organisations.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 8	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Review of the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC) / Proposal for a Digital networks Act (DNA)	– Follow developments by the EC on a proposal for the review of the EECC / DNA – Participate in the BEREC and EC discussion on a new Telecoms regulatory framework – Technical and policy advice to Government as required
Review of the EU Postal Services Directive (PSD)	– Follow any developments on a proposal for the review of the PSD – Participate in the ERGP and EC discussion on a new PSD – Technical and policy advice to Government as required
Hosting of BEREC Plenary meeting (2025)	– Hosting of BEREC Plenary meeting in December 2025
UPU Congress 2025	– Assessment of conference proposals – Participation – Follow-up on outcomes
WRC preparation and participation	– Participate in the RSPG subgroup on WRC – Participate in ITU Study Group meetings
EU and International policy and regulatory initiatives	– Ongoing participation and contribution in the following fora and related working groups: - BEREC, RSPG, RSCOM, COCOM, ENISA, ERGP, Postal Directive Committee, EBDS, SCIEWG, CEPT, ITU, CERP, EMERG and the UPU – Provision of statistical and other information to EU and international fora

Strategic Objective 9 - Conducting relevant research, exploring and developing emergent policy areas

Overview

The MCA remains committed to promoting and facilitating development in relevant communications and digital niches. The MCA also, on an ongoing basis, researches and explores emergent policy areas of relevance to its mandate.

Supporting fixed and wireless broadband research and development

The MCA will continue to support fixed, wireless and mobile broadband research and development, through various modes, including its participation in the Broadband Competence Office (BCO). The MCA will also identify funding opportunities in areas of interest, such as 5G SA and 6G, 6G non-terrestrial networks (6G-NTN), direct-to-mobile device satellite connectivity, cybersecurity, cloud and edge technologies, IoTs and Over the Top (OTT) services.

The MCA will continue to make radio spectrum available to enable new and innovative wireless technologies and services (Strategic Objective 4: Maximising the potential of radio spectrum). In support of innovative use of radio spectrum, the MCA operates a test and trial licensing framework for local and foreign entities wishing to carry out tests and trials of wireless systems on a non-commercial basis. Malta's geographic location and population density make it an ideal location for pilot studies on wireless technologies. The availability of high-demand spectrum bands and low license fee permits make it possible for interested parties to test and/or trial radio equipment or any type of wireless technology, on a nationwide basis with minimum investment.

Addressing the implications of the European Green Deal on relevant sectors and the MCA's regulatory mandate

Addressing climate change is a key priority at both European and national levels, with growing focus on the communications sector's role. The importance of managing the digital transition is coupled with the need for a green transition, focused on minimising the negative impact of human activity on the planet. Communications and digital sectors have their part to play, both by minimising their own environmental footprints, and by enabling other sectors to minimise negative environmental impacts through digital connectivity use cases. The communications sector can support decarbonization efforts by enabling emissions reductions across various industries, from remote working to smart agriculture.

The MCA will continue collaborating with industry stakeholders to assess their sustainability practices and environmental impacts. Many operators are already taking significant steps to reduce emissions. The rollout of fibre, which is replacing relatively less energy efficient legacy copper networks, is just one example of a development which will help ensure the sector's environmental sustainability.

The MCA will also explore initiatives to inform consumers, empowering them to make eco-conscious choices that promote environmental sustainability in the sector. Research on the sector's alignment with the Green Deal will continue in 2025, involving data collection and engagement with local operators and international bodies like BEREC, RSPG, and ERGP.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 9	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Research on innovative wireless communication systems	– Follow developments taking place internationally – Identify any regulatory barriers which could affect the introduction of the monitored innovative wireless technologies
Addressing the implications of the European Green Deal	– Follow developments in EU Fora - BEREC, RSPG, ERGP – Continue to engage with local authorities and operators to better understand the role that regulators of electronic communications sector can play in decarbonisation – Consumer information actions to inform consumer choice aimed at driving improvements to the environmental sustainability of the electronic communications sector

Strategic Objective 10 - Maximising operational excellence to ensure regulatory effectiveness and relevance.

The MCA operates within a dynamic and complex landscape, characterised by constant changes, both in terms of the sectors it regulates and the policy context. The MCA strives to be an active and agile organisation, capable of responding to the rapidly changing environment and effectively addressing challenges that affect the MCA's ability to fulfil its mission in a timely manner.

The organisation's ability to deliver on its mission hinges on four key drivers of organisational success: maintaining an informed regulator with a deep sector understanding; fostering proactive stakeholder engagement; adapting to our evolving mandate; and optimizing our people and processes. In addition, regulation is only effective when regulated entities comply with their regulatory obligations.

Compliance and enforcement

In terms of compliance and enforcement, the MCA's statutory functions can be divided into two categories: to ensure that regulated entities comply with their regulatory obligations and to ensure that the radio spectrum is managed in an efficient and effective manner. This includes supporting stakeholders to understand how to comply with their regulatory obligations. The MCA promotes a culture of compliance amongst operators, and we encourage operators to be pro-active in ensuring compliance with their regulatory obligations. In 2025 the MCA will finalise a review of its compliance and enforcement strategy focusing on a culture of compliance, active monitoring of regulatory obligations, targeted enforcement, and effective deterrence.

Performance planning and review

The MCA is committed to maintaining efficient and effective strategic and business planning, along with the monitoring of actual performance against predetermined targets. Performance planning cascades from the strategic and business planning tier to individual staff performance planning programmes. All these components are co-ordinated and regularly reviewed and updated in a process of continuous improvement. The MCA consistently ascertains the validity of its performance by reviewing its activities on an ongoing basis, assessing whether outputs and outcomes are being attained and reviewing its plans accordingly.

Human resources

The MCA is committed to fostering a knowledge-based, well-structured workforce capable of effectively fulfilling its mission and mandate. For the MCA to be an informed regulator, in addition to access to high-quality and reliable data in a timely manner, it must have skilled staff who can undertake analysis to produce high-quality research and insights.

Performance-based activity permeates down to the individual level by means of individual performance assessments, which tie into the achievement of organisational goals. Staff performance measurement is a reflection of the organisation's progress in meeting its strategic objectives.

Staff motivation is considered a key element for the success of the MCA's mission. The MCA is committed to maintaining an environment that brings out the best in the people it employs.

The MCA places high value on the ongoing training of staff in both soft and hard skills and is committed to periodically conduct a structured programme across the entire organisation as the basis for its training schedule. Such structured training is over and above the essential 'on the job' knowledge gathering that takes place on an ongoing basis. The latter includes overseas specialized technical and professional training as well as study visits to and exchanges with fellow NRAs in other EU member states.

Ongoing participation in BEREC and ERGP workgroups has also served its purpose as a highly valued means of investing in expertise. The MCA staff members eventually provide a return by contributing as co-drafters on a number of these workgroups. Various MCA representatives are also being nominated and considered as Co-Chairs of these expert workgroups.

The MCA needs to be in a position where it can compete with other economic players to attract and retain the best and brightest in order to be able to carry out its mandate to maximum effect.

In 2025, the MCA is poised to take on new responsibilities, presenting a strategic opportunity to expand its regulatory role within the digital ecosystem. This evolution supports the MCA's mission to foster a dynamic communications environment that drives investment, innovation, economic growth, and societal well-being. New responsibilities will require MCA to adapt how it regulates, while integrating new skillsets into our existing operations. The MCA will leverage on its existing capabilities to the greatest extent possible, and also by recruiting new people to our organisation.

The MCA will continue to focus on supporting and retaining its existing talent pool as it recruits additional staff to fulfil its Mission and evolving mandate. As new functions are added to its mandate, the MCA will continue to strike an appropriate balance between in-house resources and outsourcing.

Outsourcing of expertise

In those instances where it is feasible to do so, the MCA will outsource requirements for services whenever these involve the need for specific expertise that is not available within the Authority. The MCA will also consider outsourcing where the need for such services is short-term, and mainly serves to address a pressing need. The MCA is committed to dedicating the necessary resources towards the management of contractors, with a view to obtaining the best possible value in services received both in terms of contracted outputs as well as via knowledge transfer.

Organisation

An organisation that operates in a highly dynamic environment needs to have the in-built flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. The MCA retains such flexibility via a matrix mode of operation that cuts across formal organisational boundaries and brings together staff from various units and disciplines together to work on specific assignments.

As new functions are assumed the MCA will dovetail these with its business in as seamless a manner as possible. The MCA mission, strategic and business objectives, organisation structure, policies and procedures will be updated to reflect the new state of affairs.

Resources

For the MCA to function at desired levels and empower its staff members to achieve optimal performance, it needs to ensure that they are adequately equipped to carry out the task. In this respect this organisation is committed to providing the environment that is most conducive to productivity. This commitment is reflected in the provision of adequate premises and ICT resources as well as other logistical support necessary for the successful execution of tasks.

The MCA also deems information management as being a fundamental resource to this organisation and will see to setting up new information systems and processes as necessary, as well as maximising the potential of existing ones. The MCA considers keeping staff updated on developments on an ongoing basis as a fundamental component of its information management activity.

Financial autonomy represents another important pillar in the maintenance of the MCA's status as an independent and effective regulator as well as to achieve desired targets in the case of other mandated non-regulatory activities. The MCA follows principles of good governance, ensuring that it has adequate finances to meet its mandate and that it delivers the best possible service to stakeholders. In so doing this organisation ensures that it is fully accountable for its activities and related incomes and expenditures.

The MCA ensures that financial reporting reflects the various activities carried out and the related sources of funding. The MCA dedicates the necessary resources towards maintaining its accountability framework to the highest standards.

Financial autonomy by itself is not effective in achieving targeted objectives without equal autonomy in personnel recruitment and speed of procurement. Thus, in order to be able to deliver its programme the MCA requires the collaboration and timely input of other institutional players, not only in the area of Finance but also in the case of recruitment and procurement. Such collaboration and input are to be seen in the context of the MCA's independence and accountability, as enshrined in law.

The MCA also considers timely collaboration from other institutional players as a critical input towards successful outcomes, particularly in instances where projects span a number of government

bodies. In the same spirit the MCA is committed to providing timely and quality input to institutional players whenever such is reasonably required.

In 2025 the MCA will upgrade to Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The MCA's current ERP system will no longer be supported beyond 2025 triggering the need to commence with a plan to migrate the current ERP system to an alternative solution the meets our requirements. The upgrade will integrate with the digitization of the radiocommunication licensing function, establishing a synergistic connection between the cutting-edge ERP system and the streamlined licensing processes. The digitisation of the radiocommunications equipment licences will provide better online process for stakeholders and enable the MCA to provide a more efficient licensing service.

Priority Programme of Works 2025 - Strategic Objective 10	
Project / Activity	**Planned Output**
Upgrading MCA's ERP system	– Implementation – Training – Go live on new system (2026)
Digitisation of radiocommunications licences	– Implementation – Training – Go live on new system (2026)
Annual report	– Publication of MCA's Annual Report 2024
Strategy Update and Business plan	– Publication of Strategic Update 2025 - 2027 / Annual Plan 2025 – Strategy Update 2026 - 2028 – Business and Financial Plan 2026 - 2028
Performance management and monitoring	– Quarterly performance management reviews (outputs / outcomes)
Processes and procedures	– Ongoing review of the MCA's business processes and procedures
Staff training	– Ongoing staff training in both soft and hard skills

2.2 Delivery of the Work Programme

The MCA will work to ensure that the priority work streams identified for 2025 are adequately resourced in order to ensure delivery of its planned objectives. Where additional resource requirements arise during the course of the year due to unexpected developments, these priority areas will take precedence over other areas of activity.

The priority work streams and outputs envisaged to be performed during the course of 2025 are shown under each of the above-mentioned strategic objectives. The major outputs listed under each strategic objective represent the MCA's current best view of the priority work streams that will be undertaken during 2025. These are presented to provide as much clarity as possible. There are, however, a number of factors that are beyond the MCA's control which could impinge on the successful delivery of its work programme.

The MCA may have to adjust its plans due to unforeseen external developments (for example in light legislative and regulatory developments, appeals to the MCA's decisions, and disputes between operators). The MCA therefore intends to retain flexibility within the 2025 work programme, to respond to changes and new issues arising during the course of the year.

The MCA will update its plans every quarter and make adjustments to its work programme when necessary to make sure it keeps pace with the rate of market change and any critical issues affecting citizens and consumers at any one time.

3 Financial Projections

The MCA's projected expenditure for 2025 is expected to be as shown in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: MCA's Expenditure Analysis - 2025					
	Staff Costs	**Administrative Expenditure**	**Operational Expenditure**	**Projects Expenditure**	**Total Expenditure**
Electronic Communications	2,131,321	499,079	452,215	385,045	**3,467,660**
Ministerial Activities (Electronic communications)	118,558	20,983	138,915	2,490	**280,946**
Postal Services	225,355	32,486	27,967	122,180	**407,988**
Radio Spectrum Management[22]	277,125	74,538	294,934	51,640	**698,237**
Radiocommunications Equipment Licences	177,625	31,966	3,362	4,980	**217,933**
Digital Services	296,749	49,221	22,745	195,640	**564,355**
Total Expenditure (€)	**3,226,734**	**708,273**	**940,138**	**761,975**	**5,637,120**

[22] Expenditure related to the management and monitoring of the radio spectrum that do not effectively pertain to the rights of use by electronic communications operators.