

National R&I Strategic Plan 2023-2027



The Malta Council for
Science & Technology

2023-2027 R&I Strategic Plan Vision

*“To embed **research and innovation** at the heart of the Maltese economy and society to spur **knowledge-driven** and **value-added** growth with priority to quality of life, resilience and sustainability.”*

Guiding principles:

- In a policy context that is fluid and subject to rapid change, R&I policies require particular flexibility.
- The pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities and challenges, while opening up opportunities for R&I which may prove urgent and compelling in the short-term; medium to long-term R&I priorities persist and are equally important.
- In line with Peer Review recommendations, priority is given to the required changes in implementing structures and mechanisms.

Five Overarching Goals

Goal 1: Strengthening R&I Governance and priority-setting

Goal 2: Local Ecosystem Development

Goal 3: Enhanced Directionality through Missions and Smart Specialisation

Goal 4: Mainstreaming R&I in Public Policy

Goal 5: Strengthening R&I Implementation Structures



Goal 1: Strengthening R&I Governance and priority-setting

- Built on the recommendations made pertaining to Malta's fragmented R&I ecosystem.
- Focuses on reforming said ecosystem to have **more transparency, political ownership and executive action**.
- The goal also focuses on:
 - Increasing knowledge sharing across Government through an informal group of Chief Scientific Officers,
 - Streamlining funding instruments and;
 - Developing R&I priority setting

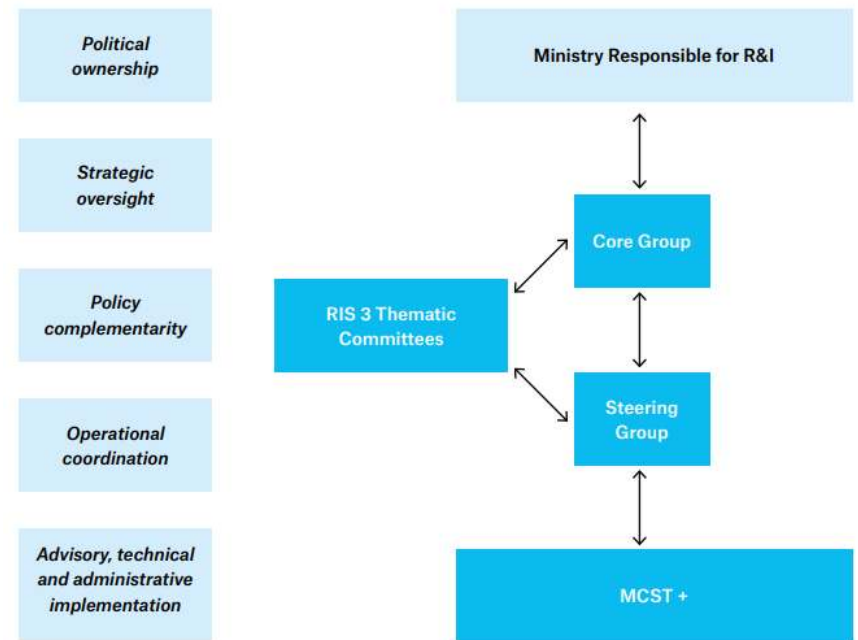


Figure 1. Proposed R&I Governance

Goal 2: Local Ecosystem Development

- Built on the necessity to enhance our local capabilities in order to remain competitive internationally.
- Use of novel tools to augment the ecosystem through both **Supply** and **Demand** factors.
- Embracing a more strategic approach to R&I with respect to internationalisation.

Table 2.3.1: Areas requiring Action – summary table

Sector	Support required
Government and public entities	Increase in R&I activity Increased engagement of PhD holders Increased Science Literacy
General public	Increased science awareness and public engagement through citizen science campaigns
Academia	Support for basic research Increased support for funding of scholarships/fellowships for doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers. Career advice linked to R&I Increased and more structured cooperation with industry
Micro-enterprises and SMEs	Dedicated support for micro-enterprises Support for SME innovation Support for Start-ups Support for non-technological and other types of innovation (marketing, organisational, design, etc.) Entrepreneurship training Networking opportunities
Large Enterprise and FDIs	Improved targeting of factors underpinning the attraction of foreign R&I including an assessment of fiscal incentives, state aid schemes and IP rules. Support for enterprise innovation
Cross-cutting requirements across different sectors	Increased investment and access to R&I infrastructures Strategic internationalisation More widespread open science practices Increased use of procurement as a tool for R&I Strategic use of legislative tools to support innovation ²⁰

Goal 3: Enhanced directionality through “Missions” and RIS3

- The EU PSF Review called for a closer embedding of R&I in the development of the national economic strategy.
- The Strategy responds to this call by advocating the inception of **stronger linkages** between the R&I ecosystem and national priorities.
- These linkages may include the following:
 - A pilot national “Mission” similar to those employed in Horizon Europe.
 - Synergies with the Green and Digital Transition.
 - Alignment with Malta’s ongoing Smart Specialisation Strategy (RIS3)



Goal 4: Mainstreaming R&I in public policy

- Scientifically-informed policy and innovative public measures are also vital in enhancing Malta's economy and the wellbeing of its citizenry.
- The Strategy outlines several actions and recommendations to ensure that **Government is a driver in Malta's R&I Ecosystem**. These include:
 - Innovation-based public procurement
 - Enhancing the presence and role of doctorate holders in Government
 - Augmenting Science Literacy
 - Formalising STEM and entrepreneurial engagement
 - Gender mainstreaming in R&I



Goal 5: Strengthening R&I implementation structures

- The vision of this Strategic Plan can only be met and maintained if the **responsible implementation structures are augmented**.
- The goal focuses on two main recommendations:
 - The creation of a Community or Network of Practice for Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) to facilitate the growth of our capabilities in terms of funding innovative projects.
 - The upgrading of MCST to MCST+ with the strengthened entity being able to take on a more proactive role on R&I across government.



Thank You



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