MALTA COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY

Strategy Update 2026 – 2028

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1   Purpose

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) was established in 2001 and published its first Strategic Plan in 2002, covering the period up to 2005. Since then, the MCA has adopted a rolling approach to strategy development, updating its strategic direction on an annual basis.

This document sets out the MCA's Strategy Update for the period 2026 - 2028, which coincides with a significant milestone: the organisation's 25th anniversary. It outlines the MCA's strategic priorities for the coming years and reflects new developments that are expected to have a significant impact during the plan period.

The strategy update covers the sectors falling within the MCA's regulatory remit, specifically the electronic communications, digital and postal sectors.

The strategic thrusts identified herein constitute the conceptual framework for the activities that are articulated in the Business Plan for the same period.

The content of this Strategy Update is aligned with the MCA's visibility of its mandate as at date of presentation.

2   Contextual Background and Sectoral Outlook

Background

The communications and digital landscape is evolving faster than ever. Social media, cloud and edge computing, high-speed broadband and advanced mobile networks have made the internet ubiquitous and always on. People now work, learn, socialise and stay informed and entertained through a wide range of high-speed, high-quality digital infrastructures that are fundamental to Malta's competitiveness and social well-being.

This transformation brings significant benefits but also introduces new and increasingly complex challenges. The rapid growth of online platforms and digital ecosystems has amplified the importance of online safety. At the same time, there is a growing need to strengthen the resilience and cybersecurity of increasingly virtualised digital infrastructures, ensure trusted and secure digital identity solutions, and promote the responsible and ethical use of digital technologies. Meanwhile, traditional sectors such as postal services continue to evolve, adapting to changing consumer behaviour and the realities of a digital-first society.

These shifts have also highlighted the complementary roles of terrestrial, satellite and submarine connectivity - together with cloud and edge infrastructure - in ensuring uninterrupted service availability and strengthening the resilience of global communications.

The convergence of these technologies, together with the growing importance of secure and trustworthy digital ecosystems, is driving the need for modernised and future-proof regulatory frameworks. To this end, two major European legislative proposals are expected in 2026. The Digital Networks Act (DNA) which will replace the 2018 European Electronic Communications Code (EECC), and the Delivery Act which will replace the current 1997 Postal Services Directive - amended in 2002 and 2008 - and the 2018 Regulation on cross-border parcel deliveries services.

In addition, the European Commission (EC) is reviewing the Digital Decade Policy Programme (DDPP) 2030 to reassess the targets and objectives for digital skills, digital infrastructure, business digitalisation and online public services, in light of the rapidly evolving technological landscape since its adoption in 2022. These targets play a pivotal role in enhancing Europe's competitiveness, resilience and technological sovereignty.

Core responsibilities in respect of electronic communications, radio spectrum, postal services, and trust services remain central to the MCA's mission. In addition, as Malta's Digital Services

Coordinator (DSC),[1] the MCA oversees online platforms and intermediaries to help ensure the safety and legality of content and products online. As the European regulatory framework and the digital ecosystem continue to evolve, the MCA's remit is expanding, positioning the MCA as a central actor in the governance, resilience, and trustworthiness of Malta's digital and communications infrastructure.

New responsibilities have recently been assigned - or are expected to be assigned - to the MCA through various European legislative initiatives, including the Data Act,[2] the second Network and Information Systems (NIS2) Directive,[3] the Critical Entities Resilience (CER) Directive[4] and the European Digital Identity (EUDI) Regulation.[5] The MCA may also be designated as the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) under the European Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA).[6]

These developments significantly broaden the MCA's mandate. They introduce new responsibilities such as facilitating switching between data processing services, enhancing the security and resilience of providers of digital infrastructures and digital providers, and a prominent role in the governance of EUDI Wallets established in Malta.

Integrating these expanded responsibilities requires strengthening the MCA's workforce and enhancing its internal capabilities, supported by targeted investment in people, processes and systems. This will ensure that the MCA continues to deliver effective, high-quality regulatory oversight across an increasingly broad mandate.

Sectoral Outlook

The MCA is entrusted with regulatory and supervisory functions across three key areas: electronic communications, postal (including parcel and e-commerce delivery services), and

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[1] Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 – *the Digital Services Act,* sets out rules for the safe, predictable and trusted online environment. Under the Digital Services (Designation and Enforcement) Order, 2024, the MCA is designated as the DSC for Malta tasked with overseeing all aspects of the Digital Services Act (DSA).

[2] Regulation (EU) 2023/2854 – *the Data Act*, on harmonised rules on fair access to and use of data implemented through the Fair Access to and Use of Data Regulations (implemented through Legal Notice 222 of 2025).

[3] Directive (EU) 2022/2555 – the *NIS2 Directive*, which strengthens the resilience and cybersecurity of networks and information systems across critical sectors (implemented through Legal Notice 71 of 2025).

[4] Directive (EU) 2022/2557 – the *Critical Entities Resilience (CER) Directive*, which enhances the physical and digital resilience of essential service providers.

[5] Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 – the *European Digital Identity (EUDI) Regulation*, establishing the framework for European Digital Identity Wallets.

[6] Regulation (EU) 2024/1309 – the *Gigabit Infrastructure Act* (GIA) - on measures to reduce the cost of deploying gigabit electronic communications networks.

the wider digital ecosystem. The latter area encompasses online platforms, cloud and data services, trust services, digital identity wallets, and other actors in the digital economy for which the MCA is designated as the competent authority. In addition, the MCA oversees activities related to electronic communications, including radio spectrum management and compliance, the professional and recreational use of radiocommunications, and the secure and efficient operation of radiocommunications equipment.

Electronic Communications

High quality, reliable, and secure networks are the backbone of all modern communications and are essential to Malta's wider economic growth. Malta's electronic communications sector continues to demonstrate strong resilience, supported by sustained private investment in advanced fixed and wireless broadband infrastructures.

In recent years, operators have embarked on new investment cycles across both fixed and mobile broadband networks, the benefits of which will extend well into the coming decades. Nationwide very high-capacity fixed broadband networks and 5G coverage position Malta among the leading performers in the EU. Operators remain focused on expanding very high-capacity network (VHCN) deployments, reflecting a mature yet dynamic market with continued potential for further investment, innovation and effective competition.

The MCA's economic regulation function is underpinned by the *ex-ante* framework set out in the EECC. Where the MCA intervenes in a market, it does so with the intent of addressing the anti-competitive exercise of Significant Market Power (SMP) and promoting competition where it is not effective. Where there is evidence of sufficiently effective competition in a relevant market, the MCA deregulates the market and withdraws regulatory obligations.

In 2026, the MCA will publish its final Decision on the wholesale fixed broadband access market in Malta. Current market conditions, characterised by sustained private investment and competitive retail prices, indicate a well-functioning market. As a result, the MCA intends to withdraw all obligations currently imposed on GO Plc since 2013 subject to a 24-month sunset period in order to ensure a smooth transition.

In 2026, the MCA will finalise its market analyses concerning the markets for wholesale call termination on individual public telephone networks provided at a fixed location (fixed call termination market) and wholesale voice call termination on individual mobile networks (mobile call termination market) in Malta. Through these analyses, the MCA will assess whether continued regulatory intervention in these markets remain necessary.

The MCA will establish a robust dispute resolution framework, including the necessary processes and procedures to ensure the effective handling of disputes, should it be designated as the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) under the Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA). In doing so,

the MCA will consider guidelines issued by BEREC[7] on the coordination of civil works and access to in-building infrastructure. The MCA will also consider any guidance issued by the EC to facilitate agreements on access to physical infrastructure between interested parties, once such guidance becomes available.

Radio spectrum is a finite natural resource with multiple competing uses and users. It must therefore be managed effectively and utilised efficiently. The MCA assures stakeholder access to spectrum and mitigates harmful interference through licensing, planning, monitoring, and compliance activities that enable wireless services. Similarly, access to numbering resources is essential for the proper functioning of electronic communications markets. The MCA ensures a sufficient supply of numbers to meet the needs of existing and new customers and service providers, and guarantees that end-users can retain their numbers regardless of their chosen service provider.

In 2026, the MCA will update its licensing framework for the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2100 MHz bands used for wireless electronic communications services, whose rights of use expire in 2026 and 2028. As part of this process, the MCA intends to extend the existing licences to enable a multi-band assignment process in the future. This approach will also encompass unassigned spectrum - such as the 700 MHz and 26 GHz bands - as well as the rights of use of the 800 MHz and 2.6 GHz bands, which expire in 2033.

The MCA is contributing to the discussions on the future of the 2 GHz spectrum band for Mobile Satellite Services (MSS) across Europe after 2027, when the current authorisations expire. This spectrum band represents an opportunity for emerging satellite direct-to-device (D2D) connectivity, which is expected to play an important role in expanding mobile coverage and enhancing service resilience.

The MCA will put in place a framework for private 5G networks and grant authorisations where appropriate, with a focus on ensuring optimal use of spectrum resources. The MCA also operates a light-licensing spectrum management regime supporting the installation and use of Internet of Things (IoT) and Machine-to-Machine (M2M) devices.

The MCA will continue to ensure that operators comply with their radio spectrum obligations, including coverage commitments where applicable, such as in the case of wireless electronic communications networks and the Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) network.

The MCA will continue engaging with the operators concerned with the transition from legacy technologies, such as 2G and 3G, to IP-native 4G and 5G networks. While responsibility for migration lies with the operators themselves, consultation and planning are essential to ensure

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

a smooth transition, protect competition and safeguard end-users, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

The MCA will continue to invest in the upgrading of radio spectrum management processes and monitoring equipment. This ongoing investment enhances the MCA's capabilities to remotely identify and locate harmful interference in licensed frequency spectrum and includes incremental additions to state-of-the-art infrastructure and tools for measuring electromagnetic fields (EMF).

In 2025, the MCA was assigned new responsibilities under the NIS2 Directive, introducing cybersecurity-related obligations for providers of public electronic communications networks and providers of publicly available electronic communications services. In 2026, the MCA is also expected to assume additional responsibilities under the CER Directive, specifically relating to resilience obligations for providers of public electronic communications networks and providers of publicly available electronic communications services. Preparatory work to implement these new responsibilities began in 2025, including the necessary processes and reporting mechanisms. In 2026 the MCA is expected to take on further responsibilities under the NIS2 and CER Directives in respect of the wider digital infrastructure sector.

The MCA will enhance cybersecurity and resilience across the digital infrastructure sector by engaging with entities within scope, ensuring that appropriate and proportionate measures are in place to identify the risks of security compromise and are prepared for future risks. This will involve assessing compliance and requiring corrective measures where necessary. Entities within scope are required to implement and maintain appropriate risk-based security measures to effectively manage cybersecurity and operational resilience.

Malta's resilient digital connectivity depends heavily on submarine cables. The MCA is actively contributing to the European Expert Group established under the Commission Recommendation (EU) 2024/779 on Secure and Resilient Submarine Cable Infrastructures. The resulting *"Cable Security Toolbox",* expected to be delivered by the EC in January 2026, will set out measures to mitigate risks, which the MCA intends to adopt to further enhance the security and resilience of Malta's submarine cable infrastructure.

The MCA will continue to closely monitor the operators' compliance with net neutrality and publish its annual report. To date, there are no major reasons for concern in Malta as far as open Internet access is concerned.

The MCA is committed to ensuring that consumers of electronic communications services are treated fairly, empowered to make informed decisions and protected through effective oversight. The MCA collaborates closely with the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA) under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that strengthens consumer protection in both the electronic communications and digital sectors.

In the last quarter of 2024, the MCA launched a mobile quality of service (QoS) benchmarking programme. The QoS benchmark assessed the quality of voice and data services offered by mobile service providers across Malta and Gozo against internationally recognised standards. Results of the first QoS benchmarking exercise were published in 2025, and another cycle is underway, with new results expected in the first quarter of 2026.

In 2026, the MCA will pilot a QoS benchmarking exercise for fixed broadband technology platforms. In addition, the findings of a customer satisfaction study conducted in 2025 will be published in 2026, providing insights into user experiences and expectations.

In 2025, the MCA established a framework for defining and measuring QoS parameters for providers of Internet Access Services (IAS) and Publicly Available Interpersonal Communications Services (PA-ICS). Starting in January 2026, providers of PA-IAS and voice communications service will commence QoS measurements in accordance with this framework. The first reporting cycle will cover a six-month period (i.e., January to June 2026), with operators publishing their first set of results on their website in September 2026. This measure introduces a uniform and transparent mechanism for monitoring and benchmarking service performance, strengthening consumer visibility of service quality and driving providers to maintain and enhance the reliability and overall quality of their services.

The MCA will maintain efforts to tackle fraudulent calls which disproportionately affect vulnerable consumers. Measures already implemented include the identification and blocking of suspect international scam calls, particularly those using spoofed Maltese numbers. The MCA will continue collaborating with operators, Government, and cross-border regulatory partners, while strengthening public awareness to help consumers recognise and avoid scams.

By reinforcing trust, strengthening infrastructure resilience, promoting effective competition, and protecting end-users, the MCA safeguards a secure, competitive, and consumer-centric electronic communications environment. These efforts underpin Malta's broader digital ambitions and contribute to a robust, future-ready digital economy.

Postal

Global and local trends continue to shape the evolution of the postal sector. Letter mail volumes continue to decline, primarily due to e-substitution and the widespread adoption of digital communication channels. In contrast, the demand for parcel deliveries continues to grow, driven by the expansion of e-commerce.

The competitive landscape for parcel deliveries is evolving, with new entrants and non-traditional postal operators broadening the range of delivery options available to consumers and businesses. As the market evolves, the boundaries of the traditional postal sector are becoming increasingly blurred with adjacent industries such as freight, logistics and transport, facilitating the emergence of multiple new players.

The MCA regulates postal services and the universal postal service in Malta. The universal postal service is a safeguard to ensure that all residents in Malta can receive and send post. The Universal Service Obligation (USO) has been reviewed over the past years to safeguard its viability in view of the decrease in letter mail volumes.

The MCA remains focused on adapting to the sector's changing dynamics, maintaining service quality, supporting efficient market functioning, and ensuring a sustainable, affordable universal postal service that meets evolving customer needs. QoS performance targets regarding the regularity and reliability of the universal postal service will continue to be monitored and measured, alongside the 'Automated Price Adjustment Mechanism' ensuring transparent, fair and efficient tariff management.

In 2026, the MCA will finalise a review of the postal markets to assess whether the universal service provider (USP), MaltaPost, continues to hold SMP in any of the relevant markets falling within the scope of universal postal service. If SMP is no longer present, the MCA may withdraw *ex-ante* price regulation in the relevant market.

E-commerce growth underscores the transformative impact of digitalisation on the postal sector. Increasing volumes of online transactions and digital payments reflect a long-term shift towards convenience, speed and cross-border e-commerce. This shift also increases reliance on digital infrastructure and systems for the management and delivery of postal services, heightening exposure to cybersecurity risks. As a result, the NIS2 Directive recognises the postal sector as an important entity, requiring operators within scope to strengthen their cybersecurity posture and enhance resilience against emerging threats. As part of Malta's transposition of the NIS2 Directive, the MCA has been assigned responsibility for overseeing cybersecurity-related obligations for providers of postal and courier services. The MCA will fulfil this role by engaging with entities within scope, assessing compliance, and requiring corrective measures where necessary to ensure a secure and resilient postal ecosystem.

Digital

The MCA serves as Malta's DSC and lead competent authority for enforcing the DSA. In this role, it ensures that online platforms and intermediary service providers established, or legally represented, in Malta comply with their obligations under the DSA, including ensuring the safety and legality of content and products online.

To support a coordinated and effective approach to the DSA, the MCA has MoUs with key national stakeholders, including the Malta Police Force, the Information and Data Protection Commissioner (IDPC), the Commissioner for Children and the MCCAA. These MoUs formalise collaborative processes for joint investigations and enforcement, reinforcing a multi-stakeholder framework to address the DSA's requirements.

At the EU level, the MCA is an active member of the European Board for Digital Services (EBDS), composed of the Member States' DSC's and chaired by the EC. The EBDS ensures

the consistent application of the DSA and provides strategic guidance on emerging issues, particularly regarding Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Very Large Online Search Engines (VLOSEs). The EC's priorities in enforcing the DSA include the protection of minors, tackling non-compliant eCommerce goods, addressing illegal content and ensuring information integrity during elections. Through these collaborative efforts, the MCA ensures the DSA's effective enforcement, advancing a secure, competitive and fair digital ecosystem in Europe.

The implementation of the Web Accessibility Directive (WAD) has continued to drive notable improvements in the accessibility and usability of public sector websites and mobile applications, supporting more inclusive access to online information and digital public services. The European Accessibility Act[8] (EAA) introduces a broader set of accessibility requirements that extend beyond public sector websites and mobile applications, to the benefit of disadvantaged segments of society. While responsibility for the website-related provisions of the EAA has been assigned by Government to the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the MCA is contributing to an advisory role through a MoU, helping to align approaches and sharing of technical expertise.

The MCA is responsible with overseeing providers of trust services in Malta under the EUDI Regulation (previously eIDAS Regulation). The EUDI Regulation further aims to ensure universal access for people and businesses to secure and trustworthy electronic identification and authentication by means of a personal digital wallet. In line with the EUDI Regulation, all EU Member States are required to offer at least one EUDI Wallet to citizens, residents, and businesses by the end of 2026. The MCA is designated as the competent authority for supervision of EUDI Wallets established in Malta. In addition, the MCA has been entrusted with expanded responsibilities for the governance of EUDI Wallets, acting as the scheme owner and as Malta's National Cyber Certification Authority (NCCA) for this framework.

As mentioned earlier, the MCA is in the process of being assigned new responsibilities under both the NIS2 Directive and the CER Directive. Under the NIS2, the MCA is expected to be designated as the competent authority responsible for supervising all the digital infrastructure sector[9] as well as digital providers.[10] These responsibilities come in addition to the oversight of providers of public electronic communications networks, providers of publicly available electronic communications services and providers of postal and courier services. In addition,

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[8] The European Accessibility Act, has been implemented into Maltese law through the *Accessibility Measures (European Accessibility Act) Regulations* (S.L. 627.03) which came into force on 28 June 2025, introducing a harmonised framework aimed at enhancing the accessibility of products and services for persons with disabilities.

[9] Including, but not limited to, cloud computing service providers, trust service providers, content delivery network providers, and data centre service providers.

[10] Including providers of online marketplaces, providers of online search engines, and providers of social networking services platforms.

under the CER Directive, the MCA is expected to be designated as competent authority responsible for ensuring the resilience of all the digital infrastructure sector.

The MCA has also been entrusted with new duties under the Data Act relating to switching between data processing services, including cloud and edge services. The Data Act's cloud switching provisions are designed to reduce vendor lock-in by making it easier, faster, and more cost-effective for customers to switch cloud providers. Ultimately, these rules aim to foster a more competitive and equitable digital economy by enhancing data portability and lowering the barriers faced by users wishing to move their data either to another provider or to their own on-premises infrastructure.

In view of the MCA's expanded responsibilities arising from multiple European digital regulatory frameworks, the MCA will establish appropriate processes, organisational structures, and resources to ensure the effective supervision and enforcement of obligations across the digital environment.

With respect to eCommerce regulation, the MCA continues to perform market monitoring increasing certainty and transparency to buyers. Market monitoring also enables the MCA to assist information society service providers to comply with respective rules, and where necessary, pursue enforcement procedures.

The MCA has in place MoUs with various local organisations and associations that have an interest in the digital environment. These agreements support sound policy development and public awareness initiatives. Through these MoUs, the MCA is in a position to collaborate with various stakeholders and thus target their respective audiences in a more efficient manner. The MCA also has MoUs with a number of its European counterparts, recognising the need for collaboration and the exchange of best practices, in view that digital markets span beyond national boundaries.

Through strategic oversight, regulatory enforcement and stakeholder collaboration, the MCA fosters a secure, competitive, and trusted digital ecosystem in Malta. By strengthening regulatory frameworks, enhancing public awareness, and deepening stakeholder engagement, the MCA ensures the effective implementation of the various digital regulations. This approach supports Malta's digital transformation, while safeguarding user interests and maintaining public trust in digital infrastructure and services.

Policy Shaping

The MCA contributes to the development, evaluation, and implementation of sectoral policies in the electronic communications, digital and postal sectors.

The digital connectivity landscape is evolving rapidly, driven by the convergence of telecommunications, cloud and edge computing, virtualisation, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). In response, the EC is preparing the Digital Networks Act (DNA) which will include a review of

the EECC. The DNA aims to incentivise integrated connectivity and computing infrastructures and ensure equitable conditions for all service providers. By addressing technological convergence, the new regulatory framework seeks to place Europe at the forefront of digital innovation, infrastructure resilience, and next-generation connectivity. A legislative proposal of the DNA is expected early in 2026. The MCA plays a pivotal role throughout the process, advising Government during the development of the new legislation and implementing any resulting changes to Malta's national regulatory framework.

As a member BEREC the MCA plays an important role in shaping regulatory best practices, including the drafting of opinions, recommendations, guidelines and reports related to the implementation of the EECC and other digital infrastructure regulations. This takes the form of active engagement in the various structures (such as Expert Working Groups, Contact Network and Board of Regulators) tasked with the execution of the BEREC annual Work Programme. This involvement enables the MCA to provide well-informed policy advice to the Government, particularly regarding the broader digital ecosystem.

Preparations for the 2027 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-27) are underway. Together with Government, the MCA is actively contributing to the development of a common European position while safeguarding Malta's national interests. The MCA is committed to ensuring that citizens and consumers can fully benefit from international technological innovation and harmonised equipment ecosystems. Key issues to be addressed at WRC-27 in the electronic communications sector include spectrum requirements for future mobile technologies and the evolution of D2D connectivity, which may utilise spectrum from either terrestrial mobile bands or bands already allocated to the MSS.

The MCA will continue to provide policy advice to Government relative to Space-related topics, especially in relation to technical matters which fall within the MCA's remit. The MCA will continue to represent Malta in the High-Level Group on Internet Governance (HLIG) which is an expert group comprising experts from European member states with a view to ensure coordination at the European level and share expertise on internet governance related issues. The MCA will also continue to represent Malta on the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC) which constitutes the voice of Governments and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) in ICANN's multistakeholder structure.

The postal sector is also undergoing significant transformation. Declining letter mail volumes and the ongoing surge in e-commerce parcel services are reshaping the postal market, while digitalisation is driving new business models and heightened consumer expectations. These developments challenge the sustainability of the USO and call for a reformed European Postal Services Directive to address key issues, such as sustainability of the universal service, consumer protection, a level playing field for operators and climate change objectives.

In 2025, the EC launched a consultation on the forthcoming EU Delivery Act, designed to modernise the regulatory framework for postal and parcel services in light of two decades of change driven by e-commerce, digitalisation and evolving consumer expectations. A legislative proposal is expected by the end of 2026. The MCA plays a key role throughout the process, advising Government during the development of the new legislation and implementing any resulting changes to Malta's national regulatory framework.

The ERGP[11] is tasked with advising and assisting the EC in consolidating the internal market for postal services and ensuring the consistent application of the European postal regulatory framework. As a member of the ERGP, the MCA contributes to the drafting of opinions, recommendations, and guidelines related to the implementation of the EU Postal Services Directive.

In 2026, the MCA will host the ERGP plenary meeting in Malta, bringing together heads and senior officials of NRAs and representatives of the EC to discuss and approve the work carried out by the ERGP Working Groups. The MCA will also hold a joint MCA-ERGP conference marking its 25th anniversary.

Overall, these policy initiatives are known quantities and make for continuity from a strategic perspective. Having said this, the burden of following the relevant proceedings and translating the resultant policies into tangible outcomes, will be substantial. Above all, it necessitates an adequate number of knowledge workers who are both qualified and experienced in the required fields.

Research and Development

The MCA undertakes research to stay ahead of fast-evolving technological and policy developments within the communications and digital ecosystem. This work enables the MCA to anticipate emerging trends, adapt regulation proactively and address how innovation is reshaping services, market dynamics, and end-user rights.

Key areas of focus include the evolution towards 6G technologies, the integration between mobile and satellite communications, network virtualisation, AI and machine learning, and the growing role of cloud and edge computing. The MCA will support AI innovation in the sectors it regulates, by supporting industry to use AI more confidently, safely and effectively. The MCA will also examine how technological innovation is reshaping and transforming the postal sector and influencing future regulatory requirements.

The MCA will continue to make radio spectrum available to enable new and innovative wireless technologies and services. In support of innovative use of radio spectrum, the MCA

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[11] European Regulators Group for Postal Service (ERGP)

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 MCA's involvement in multinational research and development initiatives enhances its exposure to cutting-edge innovations and business developments, particularly within the electronic communications, postal and digital sectors. This engagement not only enriches the MCA's regulatory approach but also but also positions it as a forward-thinking authority capable of navigating the challenges and opportunities of an evolving digital ecosystem.

Whilst the MCA does not carry a specific legal remit pertaining to environmental sustainability issues in the communications and digital sectors, it recognises its potential to contribute to Malta's sustainability goals. The MCA will monitor the positive effects resulting from the deployment of new sustainable technologies such as 5G and fibre. The MCA will also continue to promote sustainable practices in the electronic communications, postal and digital sectors for both consumers and operators.

Next Steps

This contextual and sectoral outlook serves to set the scene for the MCA's strategic direction during the plan period. Prevailing trends largely align with the existing strategic direction established by the MCA for all regulated sectors, while highlighting the need for continued investment in skilled personnel, proactive engagement in technological and policy developments, and responsive regulatory oversight.

3   Key Considerations

The underlying context to the Strategy Update for the period 2026 - 2028, provided in Section 2, effectively translates into a number of underlying key considerations:

- A regulatory environment that facilitates effective and sustainable competition and supports innovation in the Maltese communications market for the benefit of users.

- Sustainable and fair competition drives service quality, enhances consumer choice, promotes innovation, and delivers significant benefits to consumers.

- The MCA will maintain competitive stimuli across the sectors within its remit through the right mix of regulation, information dissemination, and stakeholder facilitation.

- The nature and extent of commercial access agreements between operators is an indicator of competition in the respective markets and thereby influences the extent of regulation.

- Access to physical infrastructure contributes to a competitive environment through efficiencies in network deployment, apart from producing positive environmental impacts and reductions in roads maintenance and urban disruption.

- The MCA will work towards deregulating markets where possible and levy economic regulation on markets where there is strong and persistent evidence that competition is not working to the benefit of users.

- 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.

- Increasing convergence between telecoms, cloud, edge and platform services requires regulatory frameworks that remain coherent, flexible, and forward-looking, particularly in the context of the upcoming Digital Networks Act (DNA).

- AI will increasingly shape network operations, service delivery and regulatory oversight, requiring the MCA to monitor developments and assess potential regulatory implications.

- Increased dependence on the internet, by citizens and businesses alike, raises the stakes for the maintenance of the necessary levels of network and information security, resiliency, and redundancy.

- Everyone everywhere should have access to affordable and high-speed connectivity, with broadband as a universal service contributing to closing the digital divide.

- Initiatives which encourage people to boosting their digital skills is important to ensure people and businesses in Malta can maximise their use of available gigabit internet and digital services.

- Consumers have the right to be treated fairly, to make informed choices that align with their needs, and to be adequately protected.

- Well-informed consumers are more confident and more likely to participate in the digital economy.

- Consumer protection will continue to be addressed through a mix of awareness-raising and regulatory intervention making use of new tools and enforcement powers.

- Protecting consumers from unwanted or intrusive communications, phone-based scams and other emerging trends will be addressed through a mix of awareness-raising and regulatory intervention.

- Monitoring user quality of experience is a valuable indicator of actual quality of service delivered to end-users.

- The MCA ensures that spectrum and numbering resources are managed efficiently to support innovation, investment, and the deployment of emerging digital services.

- Spectrum policy and management serve as a key tool in ensuring lasting efficiency, quality, safety, and environmental awareness in electronic communications service delivery.

- Spectrum policy and management will be tailored to Malta's needs, while aligned with EU and international frameworks.

- Effective management of spectrum and numbering resources facilitates competition, enhances connectivity, and promotes efficient investment.

- The main challenge in a liberalised postal market is ensuring the sustainability and currency of the universal postal service in the face of changing mail dynamics.

- The MCA's expanding digital regulatory functions require deeper oversight, enforcement capability, and stakeholder engagement.

- The MCA will ensure that online platforms and intermediary service providers comply with the DSA, using enhanced investigatory and enforcement tools.

- The MCA will establish and enforce a comprehensive supervisory framework for providers of EUDI Wallets operating in Malta, building on its existing oversight of trust services.

- The MCA will develop, maintain, and oversee the certification scheme for EUDI wallets in Malta, ensuring compliance with the EUDI Regulation and actively fulfilling its responsibilities as the NCCA.

- The MCA will continue to develop the potential of trust services to facilitate any type of electronic transaction between citizens, companies, and public administrations.

- The MCA's evolving responsibilities under the NIS2 and CER Directives requires strengthened oversight of cybersecurity and critical infrastructure resilience across relevant digital sectors.

- The MCA will enhance cybersecurity and resilience within the digital ecosystem by engaging with entities in sectors within scope.

- The regulation of digital services will be addressed through a mix of regulatory oversight, enforcement, and stakeholder awareness.

- Growth in cross-border digital activity requires stronger cooperation with EU bodies, other DSCs, and relevant national authorities to ensure consistent and effective enforcement.

- The MCA will continue to promote compliance by regulated entities with their regulatory obligations and, where necessary, exercise its powers to review, audit, and take enforcement action to address non-compliance and deter further breaches.

- The MCA will continue to promote a culture of compliance amongst operators and encourage operators to be pro-active in ensuring compliance with their regulatory obligations.

- Initiatives to strengthen awareness of rights and obligations on both the supply and demand sides of ever-increasing local e-commerce activity, are one such instance of the need for stakeholder awareness raising.

- The MCA will supplement its monitoring role relative to online accessibility via awareness-raising initiatives, thus contributing to the inclusion of disadvantaged segments of society.

- The digital regulation function will continue to be strengthened in line with new regulatory responsibilities assumed by the MCA.

- The MCA will leverage its expertise in the sectors on which it has oversight, in providing related policy advice to Government.

- Active participation in 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.

- Synergies with fellow institutional players will be continuously fostered and strengthened as necessary, also in light of new responsibilities assumed by the MCA.

- International alignment on regulatory approaches will become increasingly important as digital markets, infrastructure and online platforms transcend national boundaries.

- Digital transformation is a key enabler of the ecological transition, helping all sectors improve their environmental sustainability through greater efficiency, innovation, and data-driven decision-making.

The above considerations collectively shape the MCA's identified strategic axes, strategic objectives and work-programme for the period ahead.

4   Mission and Underlying Principles

The MCA's mission statement is stated hereunder:

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

The MCA's Mission Statement embodies a set of principles, which the MCA holds central to all the activities that it conducts, namely the following:

- The MCA regards all communications sectors - electronic communications, digital and postal - within its legal mandate as equally essential to achieving its mission, recognising these sectors as interdependent components of a cohesive and unified communications and digital ecosystem.

- In striving towards the fulfilment of its mission the MCA identifies key strategic axes, supported by defined strategic objectives, which are periodically reviewed and updated to reflect emerging trends, regulatory developments, and evolving sector priorities.

- The strategic axes and strategic objectives serve to provide the MCA with the necessary direction and focus in effectively fulfilling its mandate and mission.

- The MCA ensures that communications markets operate in the interest of consumers, end-users and society as a whole.

- Through effective and relevant regulation, the MCA facilitates the development of a competitive communications sector in Malta that attracts investment, encourages innovation, supports economic growth, and empowers consumers to choose and use communications services and applications with confidence.

- The MCA's activity serves to contribute to Malta's transition to a knowledge-based society and economy and to the maximisation of social and economic welfare.

- The MCA serves as a focal point for policy shaping, advise and implementation.

- The MCA's decisions are transparent and duly motivated, such as to facilitate informed decision-making by market players, policy makers, and other stakeholders.

To achieve its mission, the MCA needs to retain the necessary freedom to operate, whilst remaining accountable with respect to achieving Government's policy objectives. Thus, the MCA will:

- Continue to maintain the required level of independence enshrined in EU and national law.

- Coordinate closely with Government and other stakeholders in the pursuit of its mandate.

- Measure, monitor and review its performance on an ongoing basis.

- Ensure that it is sufficiently resourced with the right level and mix of expertise and adequately financed to carry out its mission and mandate at optimal levels.

- Continuously adapt its organisational structures, human resources, financing, expertise, and capabilities to align with new and emerging responsibilities.

5 Strategic Axes and Objectives

To deliver on its mandate within a rapidly evolving communications and digital landscape, the MCA has defined a set of strategic axes that frame its priorities, objectives and key actions. These strategic axes represent the core areas where the MCA will focus its efforts over the strategy period to ensure that markets function effectively, users are protected and Malta's communications and digital ecosystem continues to develop in a secure, trusted, and competitive manner.

The MCA's Strategy Update is structured around four strategic axes:

A. **Strategic Axis 1: Connectivity, Competition, and Investment** - Focuses on ensuring the competitive and sustainable development of markets for which the MCA acts as regulator. It aims to stimulate innovation, promote efficient investment, and secure access to high-quality connectivity and communications.

B. **Strategic Axis 2: Consumer Protection and Empowerment** - Focuses on protecting and empowering consumers and users of communications and digital services. It aims to ensure that they have the information needed to choose their service providers appropriately and that their rights are protected. This axis also covers issues related to social inclusion.

C. **Strategic Axis 3: Cybersecurity, Resilience and Trust** - Focuses on strengthening cybersecurity, enhancing the robustness of communications and digital infrastructures, and reinforcing consumer, user and stakeholder trust in the services that rely on them.

D. **Strategic Axis 4: Compliance and Enforcement** - Underpins the preceding three axes, by ensuring that market players comply with their legal obligations. It covers supervisory and enforcement activities, complemented by guidance and engagement to strengthen dialogue with operators and support a culture of compliance.

Building on these strategic axes, the MCA has identified eight strategic objectives to ensure continued alignment with its mission and mandate.

The first five strategic objectives focus on the MCA's core regulatory functions across the electronic communications, digital and postal sectors. Strategic objectives six and seven relate to the MCA's wider role in shaping sector policy and advancing forward-looking research to anticipate emerging trends and future developments. The eighth strategic objective supports all others by strengthening operational excellence, ensuring that the organisation remains effective, efficient and fit for purpose as its mandate continues to evolve.

The MCA's Strategic Objectives are the following:

1. Promoting connectivity, competition, and investment.

2. Empowering and protecting consumers.

3. Manging scare resources such as radio spectrum and numbering.

4. Enhancing cybersecurity and resilience.

5. Overseeing the application of digital regulation.

6. Conducting relevant research, exploring and developing emergent policy areas.

7. Contributing to the development and implementation of sector policy.

8. Maximising operational excellence for regulatory effectiveness and relevance.

Together with the strategic axes, these strategic objectives provide the foundation for all the MCA's initiatives and ensures that it delivers on its mandate effectively, consistently and in line with Malta's evolving digital priorities.

The MCA's activity has a clear multiplier effect across Malta's society and economy. Effective delivery of its programme is therefore a key contributor to national digital competitiveness; consumer welfare and market confidence; investment and innovation in critical infrastructure; and a secure, inclusive, and sustainable digital future for Malta.

Table 1 presents the MCA's strategic axes alongside the corresponding strategic objectives.

Table 2 provides an overview of how these axes and objectives apply across electronic communications, postal and the broader digital environment.

Table 1: Strategic Axes and Objectives:

A. Connectivity, Competition and Investment	B. Consumer Protection and Empowerment	C. Cybersecurity, Resilience and Trust
Competition, innovation and scarce resource management	**Information, protection and social inclusion**	**Reliable and secure environment**
1. Promoting connectivity, competition and investment	2. Empowering and protecting consumers	4. Enhancing cybersecurity and resilience
3. Managing scarce resources such as radio spectrum and numbering		

5. Overseeing the application of digital regulation

D. Compliance and Enforcement

6. Conducting relevant research, exploring and developing emergent policy areas.

7. Contributing to the development and implementation of sector policy.

8. Maximising operational excellence for regulatory efficiency and effectiveness.

Table 2: Strategic Axes and Objectives by Sector

A. Connectivity, Competition, and Investment	B. Consumer Protection and Empowerment	C. Cybersecurity, Resilience and Trust
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS		
1. Promoting connectivity, competition and investment	2. Empowering and protecting consumers	4. Enhancing cybersecurity and resilience
3. Managing scarce resources such as radio spectrum and numbering		
POSTAL		
1. Promoting connectivity, competition and investment	2. Empowering and protecting consumers	4. Enhancing cybersecurity and resilience
DIGITAL		
5. Overseeing the application of digital regulation		

D. Compliance and Enforcement
6. Conducting relevant research, exploring and developing emergent policy areas
7. Contributing to the development and implementation of sector policy
8. Maximising operational excellence for regulatory efficiency and effectiveness

6 Outlook and Key Actions

This section outlines the MCA's key priorities for the period under review, grouped by sector and by strategic objectives, including those relating to policy shaping, research and organisational effectiveness.

6.1 Electronic Communications

<div style="background-color:#7bb07b; padding:10px; color:white;">
Strategic Objective 1 - Promoting connectivity, competition and investment
</div>

Outlook

- Maintaining ideal conditions for a multi-player environment in VHCNs

- Facilitating the development, deployment, and adoption of broadband services across multiple platforms

Key Tasks

- Safeguarding an effective and sustainable competitive environment

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

- Managing information as the means to promote competition

- Managing and enforcing the compliance framework

New Thrusts

- Key thrusts are ongoing with emphasis on:

  - monitoring of electronic communications markets to ensure that competition delivers tangible benefits to end-users

  - maintaining and updating mapping of the reach of broadband networks

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following key performance indicators:

- Movements in number and variety of market players
- Choices and prices of retail offers
- Turnover and profitability movements
- Overall electronic communications sector indicators
- Effectiveness and prevalence of commercial agreements

Strategic Objective 2 - Empowering and protecting consumers

Outlook

- Empowering users to confidently choose, use and benefit from high-quality electronic communications services

Key Tasks

- Enhancing service quality across publicly available electronic communications services through monitoring, benchmarking, and transparency

- Strengthening consumer protection capabilities

- Ensuring universal access to electronic communications services

- Improving access to clear, accurate and comparable information

New Thrusts

- Key thrusts are ongoing, with emphasis on:

  - QoS benchmarking across mobile technology platforms

  - monitoring and supporting measures to mitigate calling line identification spoofing and vishing scams and similar phone-based fraud

  - expanding awareness-raising on how users can protect themselves from phone-based fraud and scams

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following key performance indicators:

- Publicly available information relative to QoS measures
- Stakeholders' perceptions of the overall value and quality
- Stakeholders' perceptions of the regulator
- Percentage of complaints resolved satisfactorily
- User satisfaction scores and trends in consumer confidence and trust

Strategic Objective 3 - Managing scare resources such as radio spectrum and numbering

Outlook

- Ensuring that spectrum and numbering resources support innovation, investment and emerging digital services

Key Tasks

- Facilitating the availability and efficient use of spectrum and numbering resources

- Rationalising mobile spectrum usage for efficiency and environmental purposes

- Ensuring efficient and effective use of spectrum and associated radiocommunications equipment

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

- Ensuring continued monitoring and respect of EMF thresholds

New Thrusts

- Key thrusts are ongoing, with emphasis on:

  - a framework for the reassignment of spectrum bands for wireless communications services whose rights of use expire in 2026 and 2028

  - engaging with operators for the eventual phasing out of legacy technologies, ensuring minimal adverse impact on users

  - contributing to the EU-level decision-making process on the future rights of use of the 2 GHz Mobile Satellite Services (MSS) band, expiring in May 2027

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following key performance indicators:

- Migration towards the phasing out of 2G/3G legacy networks
- Improved mobile broadband speeds and penetration
- Extent of harmonised spectrum availability to market
- Number of ongoing inspections/site visits (interference management, EMF compliance, etc.,)
- Efficiency of number resource utilisation

Strategic Objective 4 - Enhancing cybersecurity and resilience

Outlook

- Enhancing cybersecurity and network resilience in response to evolving threats and increasing dependence on digital infrastructures and services

- Supporting operators and relevant entities in meeting their obligations under EU cybersecurity and resilience frameworks, including NIS2 and CER

Key Tasks

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

- Maintaining ongoing oversight of net neutrality practices

- Participation in EU and global Internet Governance Fora

New Thrusts

- Enhancing sector-wide cybersecurity and resilience oversight through the development of reporting mechanisms, supervisory processes and enforcement tools

- Supervising entities within scope, including monitoring and assessing risks to their cybersecurity and resilience

- Implementing the *EU Cable Security Toolbox* to mitigate risks and enhance submarine cable security

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following key performance indicators:

- Extent of public confidence and trust in the Internet
- Number and nature of security incident reports
- Net Neutrality compliance outcomes
- Levels of compliance with security and incident-reporting obligations
- Extent of stakeholder preparedness (audits, security assessments, and training initiatives)
- Cybersecurity monitoring and reporting processes in place

6.2 Postal

Strategic Objective 1 - Promoting connectivity, competition and investment

Outlook

- Ensuring effective management of the postal competition regulatory framework

- Supporting a sustainable, efficient, and competitive postal market

Key Tasks

- Assessing competition dynamics in postal markets

- Continuing enhancements to MaltaPost's economic regulation model

- Managing the postal compliance framework

- Monitoring market performance through data collection, market analysis, and reporting

New Thrusts

- Key thrusts are ongoing, with emphasis on:

    - the analysis of postal markets to assess whether the USP continues to hold a position of SMP

    - promoting postal innovation and digital transformation

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following key performance indicators:

- Number of postal services providers operating across different markets
- Postal traffic volumes, prices, and other relevant trends
- New and innovative postal service offerings
- Growth of parcel and e-commerce driven services
- USP achieving a reasonable rate of return on capital

Strategic Objective 2 - Empowering and protecting consumers

Outlook

- Supporting continued sustainability and quality of the universal postal service

- Ensuring users can choose and use postal services with confidence

- Ensuring postal providers operate effective complaints and redress mechanisms

Key Tasks

- Managing the compliance framework, with emphasis quality service provision

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

New Thrusts

- Key thrusts are ongoing, with emphasis on:

    - safeguarding a universal postal service, having regard to financial sustainability, efficiency, and responsiveness to user needs

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following performance indicators:

- QoS performance against established targets
- Complaint statistics by USP and the MCA
- Postal volumes, prices, and other relevant market trends
- User satisfaction, including measures of trust and confidence

Strategic Objective 4 - Enhancing cybersecurity and resilience

Outlook

- Enhancing the security, reliability, and trustworthiness of postal and courier services

- Ensuring that end-users benefit from secure, reliable, and high-quality postal and courier services

Key Tasks

- Monitoring the security, safety and integrity, resilience, and availability of postal and courier services

New Thrusts

- Strengthening sector-wide cybersecurity monitoring, including the development of reporting mechanisms, supervisory processes, and enforcement powers

- Supporting operators in the adoption of digital tools and secure systems, particularly those used for parcel tracking, logistics and customer data management

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following key performance indicators:

- Number and nature of cybersecurity incident reports
- Cybersecurity monitoring processes in place
- Extent of stakeholder preparedness (audits, security assessments, and training initiatives)
- Public confidence in the security and reliability of postal and courier services

6.3 Digital

Strategic Objective 5 - Overseeing the application of digital regulation

Outlook

- Continue strengthening regulatory capacity vis-à-vis digital services

- Increasing public awareness, confidence, and accessibility

Key Tasks

- Maintaining regulatory oversight on the application of relevant digital regulation

- Targeted information campaigns on various digital services

- Monitoring public sector websites and mobile applications accessibility

New Thrusts

- Implementing the European digital legislation including the Data Act, EUDI, NIS2 and CER

- Supervising entities within scope, including monitoring and assessing risks to their cybersecurity and resilience

- Developing the organisational capacity needed to supervise providers of European Digital Identity Wallets established in Malta

- Developing maintaining and overseeing the EUDI wallet scheme

- Fulfilling the NCCA role for EUDI wallets in Malta

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following key performance indicators:

- Service provider awareness of their legal obligations
- Public awareness of their rights with respect to e-commerce
- Progress in website accessibility
- Progress in utilisation of trust services

6.4 Policy Shaping

> **Strategic Objective 6 - Conducting relevant research, exploring and developing emergent policy areas**

Outlook

- Exploring emergent policy areas of relevance to the MCA's mandate

- Exploring innovative networks and emerging technologies

Key Tasks

- Supporting technological innovation in fixed and wireless broadband, digital trust services, EUDI wallets and postal services.

- Continue addressing the implications of the European Green Deal on the sectors within the MCA's remit

New Thrusts

- Key thrusts are ongoing with emphasis on:

    - encouraging the electronic communications, digital and postal sectors to integrate environment sustainability into their operations and investment decisions

    - promoting the potential of these sectors to act as enablers of emissions reduction and improved resource efficiency across the wider economy

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following key performance indicators:

- New and innovative services, or improvements on existing services across the digital and postal sectors
- Assessment of Malta's performance in this area vis-à-vis any comparable benchmarks

Strategic Objective 7 - Contributing to the development and implementation of sector policy

Outlook

- Providing policy input to Government on major EU legislative proposals, as well as on national matters.

- Contributing to the work of relevant EU and international bodies

Key Tasks

- Provision of input to EU-driven policy proposals

- Interaction with EU and other related bodies

- Interaction with major non-EU bodies, notably the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU)

- Provision of ongoing policy advice to Government

New Thrusts

- Key thrusts are ongoing, with emphasis on:

    - Supporting Government in the EU-level discussions on the forthcoming policy proposals, notably the Digital Networks Act and the Delivery Act

    - Active participation in BEREC, ERGP, Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) and EBDS

    - Hosting the ERGP plenary meeting in June 2026, together with a joint MCA-ERGP conference

    - Preparing for the ITU WRC in 2027

Key Performance Indicators

The MCA will continue to monitor progress towards this objective via the following performance indicators:

- The MCA an ongoing basis evaluates:
    - the effectiveness of its participation in EU and international fora
    - the quality of its advice to Government on relevant policy matters
    - trust placed in it through tasks assigned to MCA staff within EU and international bodies

6.5 Operational Excellence

Strategic Objective 8 - Maximising operational excellence for regulatory effectiveness and relevance

The MCA is entering a period of significant change, driven by both legislative developments and industry trends that will shape its work throughout the strategy update period. While the MCA already has a substantial mandate to deliver, its new and envisaged responsibilities introduce the need to expand its expertise, technical capabilities and supervisory functions.

Delivering on these new responsibilities must not come at the expense of the MCA's existing functions. Accordingly, the MCA will pursue a measured organisational change that supports expansion while maintaining operational excellence. The MCA will ensure continued resourcing and support for the teams that maintain its existing functions, strategically building additional capacity to meet its expanding remit.

The MCA operates within a dynamic and complex landscape, characterised by constant changes in the sectors it regulates and the overarching policy context. To effectively navigate this landscape, the MCA is committed to being an active and agile organisation and forward-looking regulator, 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 MCA aims to be a model for excellence by effectively managing its resources, maintaining a commitment to transparent and responsive processes that encourage public involvement and decision-making that best serves the public interest, and encouraging a culture of collaboration both internally and across government entities.

The MCA's ability to deliver on its evolving mandate hinges on four key drivers of organisational success: maintaining an informed regulator with a deep understanding of the sectors; fostering proactive stakeholder engagement; adapting to our evolving mandate; and optimising our people and processes. Moreover, 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 obligations; and to ensure that the radio spectrum is managed in an efficient and effective manner. The MCA's enforcement strategy will continue to focus on a culture of compliance, active monitoring of regulatory obligations, targeted enforcement, and effective deterrence. This includes supporting stakeholders to understand how to comply with their regulatory obligations.

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 reviews its performance to assess whether outputs and outcomes are being attained, adjusting its plans where necessary. This cycle of planning, measurement and improvement ensures that the MCA remains responsive, efficient, and effective in achieving its mission.

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 reflects 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 carry out 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 specialised technical and professional training as well as study visits to and exchanges with fellow NRAs in other EU member states.

The MCA ensures that all member of the MCA's workforce and candidates for employment have equal access to opportunities for employment, career growth, training. Ongoing participation in BEREC, ERGP other EU and international fora and workgroups also serve its purpose as a highly valued means of investing in expertise.

The MCA must position itself competitively to attract and retain top talent, enabling it to fulfil its mandate effectively and remain at the forefront of regulatory excellence. The MCA remains committed to nurturing and retaining its current talent pool while strategically recruiting additional expertise to support its mission. As its remit evolves, the MCA will maintain a flexible

approach, balancing in-house capacity with outsourcing to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in addressing its expanded mandate.

In 2026, the MCA will assume new and expanded responsibilities, marking an important milestone in its evolution as a regulator within the broader 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. To meet these challenges, the MCA will ensure that its structures, funding, expertise, and capabilities are fully aligned with its expanded remit.

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 MCA. 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 undertaken, 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 the MCA 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 is committed to maintaining a high level of cybersecurity readiness and presence by providing its staff with a secure digital infrastructure.

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. The MCA ensures that all financial operations are helping control or contain costs, providing high quality customer service, and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the MCA's operations by conducting a programme of continuous review and evaluation.

Financial autonomy by itself is not effective in achieving targeted objectives without equal autonomy in personnel recruitment and speed of procurement. Thus, 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 2026, the MCA will implement a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system integrated with the digitisation of the radiocommunications licensing function. This will streamline administrative processes and improve service delivery for stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement

The MCA operates within a broad and diverse stakeholder ecosystem. While regulated and supervised entities in the electronic communications, postal and digital sectors remain core stakeholders, the MCA also engages with a wide range of public and private actors whose interests are directly or indirectly affected by its decisions. These include Government and public authorities, consumer and business representatives, technology providers, and operators across adjacent or converging markets.

The MCA collaborates closely with a broad range of European institutions and regulatory bodies, including the EC, the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications

(BEREC), the European Regulators Group for Postal Services (ERGP), the Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG), the European Board for Digital Services (EBDS), the Communications Committee (COCOM), the Radio Spectrum Committee (RSCOM), the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA), the NIS Cooperation Group, the Submarine Cable Infrastructure Expert Group, the European Cyber Security Organisation (ECSO), and the Forum of European Supervisory Authorities for Trust Service Providers (FESA).

The MCA also collaborates with other EU national regulatory authorities as well as other European bodies such as the European Committee for Postal Regulation (CERP) and the European Conference of Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT). Beyond Europe, the MCA engages with international organisations including the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the ITU Advisory Board on Submarine Cable Resilience, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and various non-EU regulatory authorities. Many of these entities play a leading role in shaping the regulatory frameworks that guide the MCA's work at national level.

Given this broad spectrum of interests, stakeholders often have different - and at times conflicting - expectations and priorities. As a result, effective engagement is essential to ensure that regulatory outcomes are balanced, evidence-based and aligned with the public interest.

Guided by its organisational values, the MCA is committed to transparent, open, and constructive engagement with stakeholders. The MCA seeks to build trust and confidence by communicating clearly about its work, consulting early and meaningfully, and explaining the reasoning behind its regulatory decisions, except where legal or confidentiality obligations apply. The MCA encourages stakeholder participation to ensure that its actions are targeted, proportionate and effective in a rapidly evolving communications and digital environment.

7 Key Priorities

Progress on 2025 Key Priorities

In line with the key strategic priorities outlined in the MCA's Strategy Update 2025 - 2027,[12] it is encouraging to observe considerable progress across all areas, as indicated below:

MCA Priority: Consult and publish a decision on the regulatory approach for the wholesale fixed broadband access market in Malta.

Progress: A public consultation on the regulatory approach for the wholesale fixed access market in Malta was held between 21 February and 11 April 2025. The findings of the competition assessment indicate that the market is moving towards effective competition and that the regulatory obligations imposed on GO since 2013 are no longer justified. The MCA therefore proposed withdrawing GO's SMP designation subject to a 24-month sunset period. The draft measure was formally notified to the EC on 14 October 2025 in line with the EECC. On 13 November 2025, the EC informed the MCA that it may proceed with the adoption of the draft measure. The MCA intends to publish its final Decision in January 2026.

MCA Priority: *Consult and publish a decision on QoS rules for electronic communications operators, covering internet access services and publicly available interpersonal communications services.*

Progress: On 26 June 2025, the MCA published its Decision establishing QoS measurement parameters for IAS and PA-ICS, following a public consultation held between 21 February and 11 April 2025. Under this Decision, providers of PA-ICS and voice communications services are required to publish comparable, reliable, and up-to-date information on their service quality. The first reporting period runs from January to June 2026, with the initial reports due for publication on the respective providers' websites by 30 September 2026.

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[12] https://www.mca.org.mt/articles/strategy-update-2025-2027

MCA Priority: *Consult and publish a decision on a regulatory framework focused on the cybersecurity of public electronic communications networks, publicly available electronic communications services, and trust services.*

Progress: The MCA's remit is expected to expand to encompass all digital infrastructures, digital providers, and postal services. The MCA will enhance cybersecurity and resilience by engaging with entities in sectors within scope using the powers available to it to assess their compliance with the NIS2 and CER directives, as transposed. To support these new responsibilities the MCA is putting in place the required processes, organisational structures and resources to effectively carry out its expanded supervisory functions.

MCA Priority: *Publish the findings from the benchmarking exercise on the quality of service across the mobile technology platforms.*

Progress: In the last quarter of 2024 the MCA launched a nationwide benchmarking exercise assessing mobile voice and data service quality across Malta and Gozo. Results of the first benchmarking exercise were published in July 2025, providing valuable insights into the performance of local mobile operators. These findings enhance consumer transparency and encourage continual service improvements. A similar benchmarking exercise will commence in the last quarter of 2025.

MCA Priority: *Publish a decision on the re-assignment of the radio spectrum bands used for wireless communications services expiring in 2025 and 2026.*

Progress: The licences for the rights of use of radio spectrum in the 2.1 GHz band were extended for a period of one year, until the 26 August 2026. The MCA has initiated stakeholder engagement on the extension of all licences for wireless broadband services expiring in 2026 and 2028. 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.

MCA Priority: *Continue to engage with operators on migration towards Voice-Over-LTE (VoLTE), paving the way for the phasing out of legacy 2G and 3G networks.*

Progress: The MCA is engaging with mobile operators on their migrating plans towards VoLTE as a prerequisite for the phase-out of 2G and 3G networks. While the migration is the operators' responsibility, extensive consultation and planning are required to ensure a smooth transition, protect competition, and safeguard end-users, including vulnerable ones from harm.

MCA Priority: *Engage with operators on migration towards 5G Standalone (5G SA) networks and Voice over New Radio (VoNR).*

Progress: The MCA continues to work closely with operators on their transition paths toward 5G SA networks and VoNR. These engagements aim to facilitate the evolution of nationwide mobile networks toward more efficient and future-proof architectures. Such a migration will broaden the capabilities of Malta's mobile infrastructure, enabling advanced use cases, improved network resilience, and long-term spectrum efficiency.

MCA Priority: *Continue EMF oversight and monitoring of the implementation of EMF guidelines.*

Progress: The MCA continued with its programme for monitoring electromagnetic fields (EMF) emissions to ensure compliance with ICNIRP limits. Quarterly EMF audit reports are published on the MCA website, covering results and analysis from audits conducted across Malta and Gozo.

MCA Priority: *Monitor and enhance preventive measures to mitigate calling line identification spoofing and vishing scams.*

Progress: In April 2024, the MCA published its decision introducing preventive measures against Caller Line Identification (CLI) spoofing and vishing scams. The framework enables the identification and blocking of fraudulent calls entering Malta via international networks, with specific measures for Maltese numbering ranges. The MCA actively monitors the preventive measures in place.

MCA Priority: *Continue efforts to educate consumers on protecting themselves against electronic communications service scams.*

The MCA continued with its efforts to disseminate information to raise awareness amongst the general public on identifying and avoiding telecom scams and encouraging reporting of such scams.

MCA Priority: *Maintain ongoing supervision, enforcement and monitoring to ensure compliance with the Digital Services Act (DSA).*

Progress: The MCA set up the necessary internal structures, processes, and procedures for the implementation of the DSA. One major milestone was the designation of the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) as a Trusted Flagger focused on the protection of minors. This allows FSWS to directly flag illegal content, ensuring that the platforms respond more quickly and decisively. Another first for Malta, and the EU, was

the MCA's certification of the first out-of-court dispute settlement body under the DSA. The MCA is also actively participating in, and contributing to, the main DSA activities of the EC and the EBDS. Additionally, the MCA has been proactive through various educational initiatives targeting both service providers and relevant authorities.

MCA Priority: *Develop the organisational capacity to supervise providers of European Digital Identity Wallets established in Malta.*

Progress: The MCA commenced with developing its capacity to supervise providers of European Digital Identity Wallets established in Malta, complementing its existing oversight of trust services. The MCA is also in the process of being formally designated as the entity responsible for the EUDI Wallet scheme. The EUDI Wallet scheme reflects the governance framework which these wallets operate, i.e. how wallets are built, issued, managed, and trusted. In parallel, the MCA has been appointed as Malta's National Cyber Certification Authority (NCCA), entrusted with ensuring the security, integrity, and trustworthiness of EUDI Wallets operating in Malta.

MCA Priority: *Promote awareness on digital services including public sector websites and mobile applications accessibility, and trust services.*

Progress: The MCA continued promoting awareness of digital services, trust services, and the accessibility of public sector websites and mobile applications, supporting broader digital inclusion.

MCA Priority: *Continue supporting and developing access to affordable universal electronic communications services by vulnerable users, together with other Government entities.*

Progress: The MCA continued efforts to ensure that vulnerable users maintain access to affordable universal electronic communications services, in close collaboration with other government entities.

MCA Priority: *Continue active engagement with MaltaPost's to monitor and support the long-term sustainability of delivering a Postal Universal Service.*

Progress: The MCA continued to monitor and support the long-term sustainability of the universal postal service. The MCA monitors the QoS to ensure a satisfactory level of service for users while promoting the sustainability of the universal postal service. The MCA's 'Automated Price Adjustment Mechanism' has the objective of supporting continued service provision of universal postal services in an efficient manner. MaltaPost also continued with its 'One Delivery' last-mile service to meet the evolving customer

expectations whilst contributing to the sustainability of the universal postal service through efficiency gains in the delivery of mail. In 2025, Government amended the Postal Services Act, particularly the provisions relating to the postal universal services. The amendment introduced a more flexible mechanism in relation to the listing of universal services and the respective conditions. Before any such change is made to the universal service, and depending on the nature of the proposed change, a public consultation will be carried out with all interested parties.

MCA Priority: *Review of the postal markets to assess whether the Universal Service Provider (USP) continues to hold Significant Market Power (SMP) in any of the relevant markets falling within the universal postal service area.*

Progress: In 2025 the MCA commenced with a review of the postal markets within the scope of the universal postal service to assess whether MaltaPost continues to hold SMP in any of the relevant markets. The review will be finalised in 2026.

MCA Priority: *Participate in the EU-level discussions on the reform of electronic communications and postal regulatory frameworks and provide relevant expert advice to Government on such matters, as necessary.*

Progress: In 2025 the MCA participated in extensive discussions on the future of telecoms regulation through BEREC and the EC. The EC intends to adopt a legislative proposal, referred to as the Digital Networks Act (DNA), which may together with the review of the EECC and the BEREC Regulation allow to simplify and further harmonize and upgrade the current sectoral rules, during the first quarter of 2026. The MCA is also participating in discussions on the future of postal regulation through the ERGP and the EC. The EC intends to adopt a legislative proposal, referred to as the Delivery Act, by the end of 2026. Based on the MCA's deep understanding of the electronic communications and postal markets, the MCA also plays an active role in, upon request, advising the Government.

MCA Priority: *Participate in BEREC and ERGP work programmes including in the drafting of Opinions to the European Commission and the EU institutions.*

Progress: Active engagement and contribution to BEREC and ERGP working groups is essential, as it provides the opportunity to develop and share knowledge on the regulation of the communications sector - including electronic communications, radio spectrum management, postal services, and the broader digital ecosystem. Dedicated teams within the MCA contribute to the development of various opinions, reports and guidelines. Through its participation in such fora the MCA is well positioned provide informed advice

to Government, ensuring that emerging areas of communications and digital regulation yield positive outcomes for Malta.

MCA Priority: *Host the plenary meeting of the BEREC Board of Regulators, BEREC Management Board, and the IRG General Assembly in Malta in December 2025.*

Progress: The MCA successfully hosted the BEREC plenary meeting in December 2025 which served as the final plenary session of 2025.

MCA Priority: *Migrating to a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system and use of business intelligence tools to enhance operational efficiency.*

Progress: The MCA carried out the preparatory work to be in a position to migrate to a new ERP system in 2026, which will include the digitisation of radiocommunications licences and the use of business intelligence tools to enhance operational efficiency.

List of 2026 Key Priorities

As part of its strategic planning exercise the MCA has identified the following priority tasks for 2026, which are aligned with its mission and are essential to achieving its strategic objectives.

•   Publish the MCA's Decision on the regulatory approach for the market for wholesale local access provided at a fixed location.

•   Establish the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) under the Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA), should the MCA be entrusted with this function.

•   Renew licences for the rights of use of spectrum in the 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, and 2.1 GHz bands, which expire in 2026 and 2028.

•   Contribute to the EU decision-making on the future rights of use of the 2 GHz Mobile Satellite Services (MSS) band, expiring in 2027.

•   Promote competition and strengthen user trust in the cloud services market by empowering users to switch between providers.

•   Contribute to the reform of the European Electronic Communications regulatory framework (i.e., the Digital Networks Act) and provide expert advice to Government as required.

- Contribute to the reform of the European Postal regulatory framework (i.e., the Delivery Act) and provide expert advice to Government as required.

- Prepare for the 2027 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-27) to safeguard and advance Malta's national spectrum interests.

- Continue supporting access to affordable electronic communications services for vulnerable users, in close collaboration with other Government entities.

- Continue engaging with MaltaPost to support the long-term sustainability of the Universal Service Obligation (USO).

- Conduct and publish findings of the scheduled quality-of-service (QoS) benchmarking across mobile technology platforms.

- Monitor electromagnetic field (EMF) levels to ensure compliance with limits set by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

- Continue engaging with operators to support the transition from legacy networks to next-generation networks, ensuring minimal adverse impact on users.

- Establish a cybersecurity and resilience oversight function for designated digital infrastructures, digital services, and postal services.

- Enhance cybersecurity and resilience by engaging with entities within scope to assess compliance with the NIS2 and CER directives (as transposed).

- Supervise essential and important entities within scope by monitoring and assessing risks to their cybersecurity and resilience and require them to take action where appropriate.

- Implement the '*EU Cable Security Toolbox'* to mitigate risks and enhance submarine cable security.

- Oversee compliance by online intermediaries and platform providers with the EU Digital Services Act (DSA) with the objective of preventing illegal and harmful activities online.

- Mitigate telecom fraud by promoting preventive measures and user awareness on calling line identification (CLI) spoofing and vishing scams.

- Supervise EU Digital Identity (EUDI) wallet providers established in Malta, in addition to trust services, in line with the EUDI Regulation.

- Develop, maintain, and oversee the certification scheme for EUDI wallets in Malta, and fulfil the role of National Cyber Certification Authority (NCCA) for their certification.

- Implement a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, including the digitalisation of radiocommunications equipment licensing processes.

- Participate actively in relevant EU fora, contributing to the drafting of opinions and positions addressed to the EC and EU institutions.

- Host the European Regulators Group for Postal Services (ERGP) Plenary Meeting in June 2026, together with a joint MCA-ERGP conference aimed at fostering policy dialogue on the future of postal regulation.

- Strengthen collaboration with other authorities regulating the digital ecosystem on matters of shared interest.

- Engage proactively with stakeholders - both across existing responsibilities, and new stakeholders - within the MCA's expanding mandate.

The above tasks are also listed under the individual strategic objectives that they address.

MCA

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