

# National Skills Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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# Annual Report

2024



National  
Skills Council

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# Minister's Foreword

**Hon. Clifton Grima**

Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation



In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, the ability of a country to remain competitive, cohesive, and resilient depends largely on its capacity to equip its people with the right skills, not just for employability but for active citizenship, not just for today, but for the future.

In the face of technological advancement, demographic shifts, climate imperatives, and global economic realignments, amongst other global megatrends, Malta stands firm in its commitment to investing in the one resource that will determine our future prosperity: our people. Skills are no longer a peripheral concern; they are the backbone of the Malta Vision 2050. Skills are increasingly perceived as a new currency, having an intrinsic value, subject to inflation. Investment in upskilling is a requirement because with the skills of today we cannot create the added value made possible by the innovations of tomorrow.

The National Skills Council continues to play a critical role in strengthening a skills ecosystem for a resilient and future-ready Malta. Through its work, the Council ensures that Malta's education and training systems remain responsive, connected to labour market needs, and open to innovation. It also fosters a culture of lifelong learning, one that recognises that learning does not end at the school gate, but continues throughout one's life, in all contexts, be it through formal, non-formal, or informal environments.

I am particularly encouraged by the Council's efforts to bring employers, educators, civil society, and individuals into a shared national dialogue on skills. By building alliances between all stakeholders, the Council is laying the foundation for a more adaptable, productive, and inclusive workforce. As the minister responsible for education, I reaffirm that skills development is high on the Government's agenda. Our commitment is clear: to make Malta a future-ready nation, where everyone is given the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in a changing world.

***The National Skills Council continues to play a critical role in strengthening a skills ecosystem for a resilient and future-ready Malta***

# A Message from the Permanent Secretary

## Mr Matthew Vella

Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation



In an age marked by acceleration and complexity, the ability to anticipate and prepare for multiple possible futures is a cornerstone of responsible public policy, and skills policy design and development is no exception. Strategic foresight is no longer a luxury—it is a necessity.

In the past year, the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation has placed foresight and future-oriented planning at the centre of its work. One of the key milestones was the launch of the Malta Education Foresight Forum—a national platform bringing together thought leaders, policymakers, practitioners, and learners to imagine the education and skills systems of the future. The forum serves as a space not only for reflection, but for co-creation, feeding directly into our policymaking processes.

The National Skills Council has been an essential partner in this effort. Its work not only hinges on present-day realities — it is also informed by horizon scanning, sectoral dialogues, and the anticipation of emerging trends, whether technological, environmental or demographic. This makes the Council an anchor institution in our wider system of educational transformation.

As the National Skills Council proceeds with building a skills intelligence function grounded in an approach which is both quantitative—through assessments of online vacancies and insights from various platforms—as well as qualitative—through structured dialogues with industry focusing on anticipation exercises—we shape our policies on evidence.

In line with this, we have continued to align various initiatives—such as the National Lifelong Learning Strategy, and the Education Strategy 2024–2030—with the work of the Council, creating systemic synergies that will strengthen impact and coherence.

Looking ahead, our objective remains to shape a learning society, one where education is agile, inclusive, and empowering. Through strategic foresight and close collaboration with key institutions, amongst which is the National Skills Council, education and skills policies can become futureproof.

***Looking ahead, our objective remains to shape a learning society, one where education is agile, inclusive, and empowering.***

# Executive Chairman's Introduction

**Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando**

Executive Chairman - National Skills Council



## A YEAR OF GROWTH: STRENGTHENING CAPACITY, DEEPENING IMPACT

Over the past year, the National Skills Council entered a new phase of maturity and strategic relevance. What began as a small, agile entity at the heart of Malta's skills landscape has now grown into a robust organisation, equipped with a wider portfolio, an expanded team, and enhanced capacities.

Over the past twelve months, we have consolidated our internal structures to respond to national needs and sectoral demands. We have launched new initiatives, engaged in deeper policy analysis, most notably in relation to the development of the first National Skills Strategy for Malta, and continued to act as a bridge between the realms of education and employment.

One of the most noteworthy developments this year has been the deepening of our engagement with industry, not only as recipients of skills supply, but as co-creators of learning ecosystems. In this process, we have identified the key role that Human Resource (HR) professionals play, and have pledged our support through the Foundation of Human Resource Development (FHRD), with whom we collaborate. We have set the groundwork and developed a blueprint to better understand local skill shortages by adopting a sectoral approach. This can only be realised through close collaboration with the relevant, multiple stakeholders with whom we share our vision to promote strategies that embed lifelong learning into company cultures. We have created spaces for dialogue and reflection, facilitated exchange of views between educators and practitioners, and actively listened to diverse opinions. Of note, in this respect, are our two flagship annual initiatives, Skillscape and Careerscape, which have quickly earned a place in the busy calendars of seasoned professionals.

*We have created spaces for dialogue and reflection, facilitated exchange of views between educators and practitioners, and actively listened to diverse opinions*



**We remain committed to inclusive dialogue, cross-sectoral partnerships, advanced research, and evidence-informed policymaking**

Our team has grown both in number and in expertise. We are building a strong foundation of professionals who bring diverse perspectives and deep commitment to the Council's mission. This internal growth mirrors the increasing recognition of the Council as a trusted national actor, one that brings evidence, foresight, and collaboration to the centre of Malta's skills agenda.

We remain committed to inclusive dialogue, cross-sectoral partnerships, advanced research, and evidence-informed policymaking. We will continue pushing for the mainstreaming of skills development in every policy domain. Skills is a horizontal theme and, as such, implementing our mission requires a collective effort for maximum impact. Our role is not only to react to changes in the labour market but to help shape the future of work and learning in Malta.

I thank our partners—in government, in industry, in education, and beyond—for their continued trust. And I would like to express my gratitude to our team for their dedication and excellence. The coming year will bring new challenges and opportunities with it, and we stand ready to meet them with purpose and ambition.



**Our role is not only to react to changes in the labour market but to help shape the future of work and learning in Malta**

# Forging our Path

01

## A. OUR ETHOS

The National Skills Council (NSC) is committed to fostering a culture of lifelong and life-wide learning, leading to workforce excellence in Malta. As the driving force behind the National Skills Strategy, the Council collaborates with educators, industry leaders, and policymakers to bridge the gap between education and employment. Our brand is built on evidence-informed decision-making, inclusivity, and forward-thinking strategies to futureproof Malta's workforce and ensure sustainable economic growth.

### VISION

Our vision is to be the leaders for skills development in Malta, fostering a dynamic and resilient workforce that succeeds in an evolving global economy and the changing world of work. By facilitating collaboration between key stakeholders, investing in research, and implementing strategic initiatives, we strive to create a culture of lifelong and life-wide learning that enables people to adapt, succeed, and co-create Malta's future.

### OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

At the National Skills Council, our work is driven by four core principles:

- **Evidence-Informed Decision-Making** – Our strategies are backed by data, expertise, and stakeholder input, ensuring that our initiatives are relevant and impactful.
- **Ethical Development of People** – We are committed to empowering learners of all ages in an ethical and just manner, promoting education as a tool for personal and professional growth.
- **Inclusivity** – We believe that skills development should be accessible to all, without exception, fostering a diverse and just workforce.
- **Shared Responsibility** – The responsibility of shaping education and workforce readiness is shared among government, employers, employees, and individuals. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, we encourage upskilling and reskilling as essential components of career development.

## B. OUR TEAM

Under the chairmanship of Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, in 2024, the National Skills Council continued to grow its team strategically in response to its expanding remit. Having started off operations in 2023 with a team of seven, the Council now boasts a headcount of fifteen, comprising both the technical team and the one focusing on outreach and corporate affairs.

The organisational chart for 2025–2027 reflects a structured approach through two main departments:

- Organisational Culture and Corporate Affairs, led by the Senior Director, covering units such as People and Culture, Communications and Events, and Corporate Services.
- Policy and Technical Affairs, also led by a Senior Director, encompassing Skills Intelligence, EU and International Relations, and Skills Development.

This structure supports focused leadership, strategic delivery, and more agile decision-making across key national and European policy priorities.

## C. OUR CORPORATE CULTURE

Throughout 2024, the National Skills Council has continued to strengthen its brand identity by actively engaging with stakeholders and reinforcing its role as a leader in skills development. The Council organised several meetings, workshops, and conferences to foster dialogue and collaboration between educators, industry, and policymakers. By prioritising research-driven strategies and implementing initiatives that address emerging workforce and career needs, the Council has reinforced its commitment to shaping Malta's skills landscape. Moving forward, the National Skills Council will remain focused in ensuring that Malta's workforce remains competitive, adaptable, and ready for future challenges.

At the National Skills Council, our corporate culture is not something just talked about—it is something experienced, every day. As our team continues to grow, so too does our shared understanding to work together driving the Council's mission forward. In 2024, a set of 10 Workplace Standards that reflect the values we believe make our workplace both high-performing and human-centred were formalised and embedded.

These standards are rooted in our core values of integrity, trust, emotional intelligence, and a growth mindset. They are not lofty ideals—they are everyday actions that shape our communication, collaborations, learning, and supporting one another. From honouring deadlines and taking initiative, to embracing feedback and adapting to change, these standards offer practical guidance for all members of our team.

Whether it's keeping communication respectful and professional, taking ownership of work done, or being proactive in helping a colleague who's struggling, these behaviours cultivate a culture where people feel safe, valued, and motivated. By proudly fostering this environment, both personal commitment and organisational support are fully recognised.



**Figure 1:** The National Skills Council 10 Workplace Standards

Our workplace culture is more than policy—it is a shared mindset that keeps the team grounded in purpose, connected in practice, and united in the pursuit of a better future of work for all.

## D. OUR TECHNICAL WORKPLAN

To achieve our mission and vision, the National Skills Council focuses on four key strategic areas, which constitute the technical workplan:

- **Spearheading Strategic Direction** – Leading national efforts to shape policies and frameworks that support skills development and economic growth.
- **Nurturing Lifelong and Life wide Learning** – Promoting continuous learning opportunities that extend beyond formal education and encompass all aspects of personal and professional development.
- **Anticipating Industry Needs** – Conducting research and engaging with industry leaders to ensure that Malta's workforce is prepared for future challenges and opportunities.
- **Investing in Vocational Education and Training (VET)** – Strengthening VET programmes to provide individuals with practical skills that enhance employability and career progress.

# Catalysing Industry-Education Relations

02

## A. ANTICIPATING INDUSTRY NEEDS

The National Skills Council plays a pivotal role in bridging education and employment, addressing skill imbalances, anticipating future skill needs, and fostering continuous learning. These efforts ensure that Malta's workforce remains adaptable to evolving industry demands.

Throughout 2024, the NSC intensified its skills anticipation initiatives, laying the foundation for its skills anticipation framework that will enhance labour market intelligence. Recognising the need for accurate, real-time insights, the NSC continued discussions on the development of a cutting-edge Labour Market Intelligence tool in collaboration with the Malta Chamber of Commerce. This tool will serve as a key resource for policymakers, educators, and businesses, providing up-to-date employment trends and skills demand to support informed decision-making.

To strengthen its data-driven approach, the NSC formalised memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with key partners. An agreement with LinkedIn will offer deeper insights into the evolving skills landscape. Additionally, the NSC strengthened its collaboration with JobsPlus to align efforts on skills development and workforce planning. This partnership will focus on tackling skills shortages, enhancing training opportunities, and relaunching the Employment Barometer, a critical tool for tracking labour market trends.



**Figure 2:**  
Collaboration with industry  
and social partners

Beyond intelligence gathering, the NSC is actively working to bridge the gap between labour market skills and job requirements while facilitating targeted upskilling programmes. Aligned with Manifesto Measure 206, the NSC issued a tender in 2024 to conduct a feasibility study assessing the expansion of skill cards beyond the hospitality and construction sectors. A skill card is a structured tool used in talent management and workforce development, documenting an individual's skills, qualifications, and competencies. Available in both physical and digital formats, skill cards provide a concise overview of a person's abilities, helping businesses assess strengths, identify areas for growth, and enhance workforce planning. By conducting a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) across different industries based on NACE codes<sup>1</sup>, the study will rank sectors that would benefit most from the introduction of a skill card system.

Work has already commenced, beginning with an extensive literature review to evaluate best practices and potential challenges. The study's findings, expected by end 2025, will provide a strategic roadmap for implementation.

Through these initiatives, the NSC is not only enhancing skills intelligence and foresight but also empowering Malta's workforce with the tools needed to thrive in an evolving labour market. By fostering strong industry-education collaborations, the Council is actively shaping a future-proof economy.

## B. DISCERNING SKILLS, LEARNING, AND DEVELOPMENT GAPS

The NSC remains committed to identifying and addressing skills, learning, and development gaps to ensure a workforce that is adaptable and resilient.

To stay aligned with international workforce trends, the NSC continuously reviews global reports and research from globally renowned organisations, such as the World Economic Forum (WEF), Cedefop, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These insights provide an evidence-informed foundation for discussions with industry stakeholders, policymakers, and education providers on evolving job trends and skills development priorities. The NSC also participates in online webinars and workshops by such organisations, ensuring it remains up to date with international best practices in skills forecasting and development.

As part of its partnership with LinkedIn, the NSC gained access to LinkedIn Talent Insights, allowing for a detailed analysis of Malta's workforce profile. A preliminary assessment of this portal examined the distribution of LinkedIn profiles across sectors, identifying key skills attained per industry and job type. The findings provide valuable input for ensuring that policy initiatives align with real-world labour market needs.

The green and digital transition are central to the NSC's policy work. In line with Manifesto Measure 201 – Upskilling and Reskilling to meet the Green and Digital Transitions, in 2024, the NSC continued work on a comprehensive exercise to identify training gaps in green and digital skills. The green skills analysis, which neared completion in 2024, assesses how existing training courses linked to the green transition of various education and training institutions, both public and private, align with labour

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1 NACE is a four-digit classification providing the framework for collecting and presenting statistical data according to economic activities in the European Community. NACE codes are used to categorise businesses and other organisations based on the type of economic activity they perform, facilitating statistical analysis and comparisons across different sectors and countries within the EU. Link - [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Statistical\\_classification\\_of\\_economic\\_activities\\_in\\_the\\_European\\_Community\\_\(NACE\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Statistical_classification_of_economic_activities_in_the_European_Community_(NACE))

market demands and highlights areas where targeted improvements are needed. A similar structured approach is being applied to digital skills, ensuring that the workforce is adequately prepared for the increasing demands of digital transformation. The aim of this exercise is to identify areas where new courses or programme enhancements are necessary to keep pace with industry developments.

Findings from these assessments will be shared with industry stakeholders, educational institutions, and VET providers, fostering collaborative discussions on workforce readiness and training improvements.

### C. CAREERSCAPE

CareerScape is more than an event; it is one vehicle through which the Council has structured its stakeholder engagement initiatives, aimed at aligning education, industry, and policymaking with the future of work. As Malta experiences robust economic growth, CareerScape offers a timely and necessary forum whereby skills policy, skills intelligence and skills development can be discussed. This initiative's objectives are threefold: to encourage constructive dialogue between industry-education-policy sector by sector, to adopt a future-oriented approach to our discussions by anticipating alternative futures, and to raise awareness on the emerging skills and occupations that will define the decades ahead, thus improving our preparedness for the future.

CareerScape is intended to be an annual initiative which, in 2024, took the shape of two high-level stakeholder workshops, bringing together representatives from 13 different industry sectors. For each of these 13 sectors, a round-table discussion was held, to which industry practitioners, education professionals, and policymakers from that same sector discussed a common theme. This format was repeated for each sector, including: health, long-term care, financial services, digital services, transport, agriculture and fisheries, environment and climate action, hospitality, built environment, manufacturing, creative arts, education and learning, and retail. During each of these sectoral round-table discussions, the theme discussed was emerging careers. This event served as a milestone in the culmination of the European Year of Skills, providing a platform to explore the shifting employment landscape and Malta's role within it.

As an outcome of Careerscape 2024, a national campaign is being designed, this time round, on emerging careers. The campaign will run through to the end of 2025. The campaign will take a fresh and inclusive approach to promoting vocational education and training (VET), with the aim of harnessing parity of esteem between academic and vocational pathways. By redefining perceptions of VET and championing diverse routes to career success, the campaign will support a more agile and resilient workforce.



**Figure 3:** Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando addressing the audience of industry and education practitioners at Careerscape

At its heart, the campaign will focus on four strategic pillars. Firstly, it will highlight diverse learning paths, using multimedia content to showcase the value of both vocational and academic routes. Secondly, it will humanise jobs through storytelling, using digital narratives to build emotional resonance and engagement with audiences. It will also raise awareness on emerging careers, especially in areas shaped by green and digital transitions. Finally, it will address the future of work in Malta by communicating the structural shifts in employment and the vital role that skills development must play in national planning.

By convening cross-sector dialogue and leveraging the power of strategic communications, these initiatives lay the groundwork for a future-ready country.



**Figure 4:** Illustrations summarising part of the discussions at Careerscape

# Spearheading an Evidence-informed Agenda

03

## A. DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL SKILLS STRATEGY

As Malta experiences rapid economic growth, outpacing the EU average, the demand for skilled labour has become more pressing than ever due to persistent labour and skills shortages. An ageing population, coupled with the twin transitions towards digitalisation and climate neutrality, underscores the need for a future-ready workforce. In addressing these challenges, the NSC is leading the development of a National Skills Strategy to ensure Malta's workforce remains competitive, adaptable, and resilient in an evolving economic landscape.

This €750,000 initiative, co-funded by the European Commission through the Technical Support Instrument, is being implemented with the technical expertise of the OECD. The strategy follows a two-pronged approach: a comprehensive National Skills Strategy addressing workforce challenges across all sectors, and a sector-specific Skills Gap Analysis and Action Plan for the maritime industry, developed in partnership with Transport Malta. This pilot initiative will serve as a model for future sector-specific skills assessments.

Recognising that a robust skills strategy requires strong stakeholder engagement, the NSC has brought together key players from government, industry, and academia. In 2024, the NSC established the Advisory Group (AG) and Extended Advisory Group (AG+) Committees, ensuring active participation in shaping the strategy. As part of the project's first mission, the NSC organised a series of meetings with the OECD and the European Commission in September, engaging government representatives and industry stakeholders to raise awareness and initiate discussions on priority topics. A high-level stakeholder kick-off event, attended by approximately 70 participants, marked a significant milestone in this journey. The event featured a virtual address by Hon. Clifton Grima (Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation), and addresses by NSC Executive Chairman, Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Mr Godwin Mifsud, the then Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure, and Public Works, and Sébastien Combeaud, Senior Expert, DG REFORM.

During the event, the OECD presented the project's key objectives, outlining the nine expected outputs of the project, and introducing the priority areas for discussion.

The discussion on priority topics highlighted key skills challenges and opportunities, including the need for better skills forecasting, employer training incentives, and financial support for adult learners. Concerns were raised about brain drain, the influx of lower-skilled foreign workers, and the importance of equity in skills development. Participants emphasised the need to strengthen transversal,



**Figure 5:** National Skills Strategy - kick-off event

entrepreneurial, and research skills while aligning the skills strategy with national priorities. Sector-specific challenges, such as talent migration to higher-paying industries and the underrepresentation of Maltese workers in hospitality, were also noted. Improving government coordination, refining policy priorities, and enhancing schools' role in skills development were identified as crucial for workforce resilience.

For the maritime sector, discussions focused on the need for a skilled workforce to support digitalisation and decarbonisation efforts. Participants stressed the lack of career awareness in schools, calling for curriculum updates, better career guidance, and more internships. The sector also faces competition from industries offering better salaries and work-life balance, highlighting the need to improve talent attraction and retention.

Throughout 2024, the NSC also actively contributed to international discussions on skills development and skills strategies. In November, the NSC participated in the OECD Skills Strategy Peer-Learning Workshop in Paris. The workshop, themed 'Building Stronger Skills through Social Dialogue', provided an opportunity for representatives from 21 countries to exchange best practices on stakeholder engagement in skills policy. The NSC delivered a presentation on Malta's approach to stakeholder collaboration within the National Skills Strategy. Later that month, the NSC also presented key updates on the strategy's progress at the Malta Maritime Forum's Annual Progress Meeting, highlighting the relevance of skills development in the maritime sector.



**Figure 6:** Ruth DeBrincat, Senior Director, Policy and Technical Affairs, delivering a presentation on stakeholder engagement at the OECD Skills Strategies Peer-learning Workshop in Paris



**Figure 7:** Larissa Vella, Manager Economic Analyst, delivering a presentation during the Malta Maritime Forum's Annual Progress Meeting

Towards the end of 2024, the NSC commenced work on Output 2 of the project, marking the next phase of the strategy's development. The National Skills Strategy will serve as a long-term roadmap ensuring that Malta remains competitive and resilient in an evolving economic landscape. Through continued stakeholder collaboration, international expertise, and data-driven policymaking, the NSC remains committed to equipping the workforce with the necessary skills to navigate an ever-changing employment landscape.

## B. ALIGNING WITH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY

The National Skills Council is contributing towards the implementation of the National Education Strategy 2024-2030 through its involvement in three actions linked to two measures.

As part of its active involvement in Measure 2.13 which sets out to improve synergies between the education sector, external and government entities and the industry, the NSC is committed to review the uptake, impact, and long-term outcomes of existing funding opportunities for adults who wish to continue their learning, with the aim of identifying gaps for a more proactive approach (Action 2.13.5). Work on this action started in mid-2024 and is set to be concluded by December 2026. Through 2024, a comprehensive mapping exercise of available financial incentives for adult learning was conducted, also with the support and assistance of the interministerial network, which served as an important baseline research to comprehend the diversity and complexity of the schemes available locally. This work shall be complemented by an in-depth study addressing this action directly, being part of an overall feasibility study evaluating the effectiveness of introducing Individual Learning Accounts in Malta, which shall be commissioned by the NSC in 2025. Additional detail regarding the NSC's work related to the Council Recommendation of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 on Individual Learning Accounts (2022/C 243/03)<sup>2</sup> is outlined in the next section.

Another action linked to Measure 2.13 involves the identification of learning and development gaps whereby the education offer is disconnected from industry needs. The National Skills Council has undertaken an extensive desktop study to assess how green and digital skills are mainstreamed across curricula in training courses accredited MQF levels 4 to 7 to address the horizontal nature of these essential competencies in a green and digital future, as well as in thematic training courses directly linked to green and digital career paths. This local context was also benchmarked to other best practices in European Member States to identify gaps and put forward recommendations on how these can be addressed. The report is expected to be finalized in 2025, and it will serve as the departing point for discussions with industry to refine the recommendations therein.

The National Skills Council also played a central role in implementing measure 3.5.5 of the National Education Strategy 2024–2030, which focuses on outreach and promotion for the national career guidance service. The objective was to offer people in Malta access to comprehensive and informed advice on learning and career opportunities through a nationally coordinated campaign.

This work began with the drafting of the Terms of Reference for the National Career Guidance Network (NCGN). The NSC then led a broad consultation process involving all major career guidance stakeholders, culminating in the official launch of the NCGN on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024. This event brought together key partners including the OECD and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Education, reflecting the importance placed on national coordination and international collaboration.

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2 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627\(03\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32022H0627(03))

As part of this process, the NSC collaborated with the OECD on a Country Note titled 'Teenage Career Development in Malta', based on unpublished PISA 2018 and 2022 data. This report provided a deeper understanding of the career aspirations of 15-year-olds and served as a foundation for policy development and outreach messaging. The note was published to coincide with the NCGN launch, reinforcing the evidence-based approach guiding this work.

In parallel, the NSC began laying the groundwork for continuous professional development (CPD) for career guidance practitioners. The training offer includes three modules focused on green career guidance, emerging careers, and future skills—ensuring that practitioners are equipped to guide learners in line with Malta's evolving labour market needs.

This work reflects the NSC's commitment to making career guidance more visible, proactive, and aligned with the country's future skill demands, while creating a unified platform that brings together guidance professionals under a shared vision.

### C. CONTRIBUTING TO SECTORAL STRATEGIES

Skills serve as a horizontal enabler across multiple national strategic documents, with the NSC actively contributing to the implementation of sectoral strategies such as the Gozo Regional Development (GRDA) Strategy and the realigned AI Strategy and Vision.

In the GRDA Strategy, the NSC has been assigned the responsibility of assessing future labour demand and the skill levels required in the coming years. With Gozo's economic growth increasing demand for workers—many of whom come from abroad—the NSC will bring together education providers and industry representatives to align training with real-world needs and guide policy decisions.<sup>3</sup>

In the realigned AI Strategy and Vision, the NSC is tasked with monitoring international developments regarding job displacement due to AI. The NSC will periodically report on sectors at high risk of disruption, identify mitigation measures, and provide insights to policymaking bodies on emerging challenges. By staying at the forefront of AI-driven labour market changes, the NSC aims to support a resilient and adaptive workforce that can navigate technological advancements effectively.<sup>4</sup>

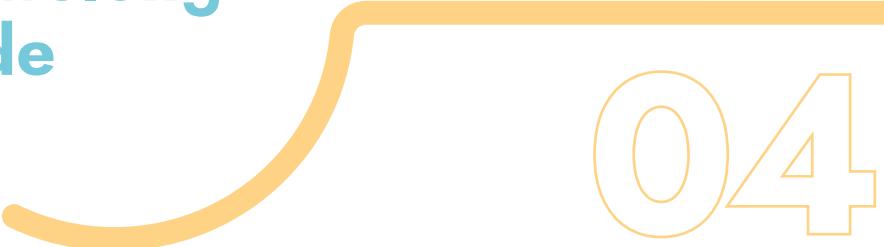
Through these contributions, the NSC acts as an enabler within Malta's skills landscape, reinforcing its commitment to skills intelligence, workforce planning, and ensuring that skills development remains at the heart of national economic and sectoral strategies.

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3 Gozo Regional Development Authority (2023). Gozo Regional Development Strategy 2023. Retrieved from [https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/GRDA\\_RDS-Document\\_A4\\_VH\\_2023\\_Web.pdf](https://grda.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/GRDA_RDS-Document_A4_VH_2023_Web.pdf)

4 Malta Digital Innovation Authority (2024). Malta: The Ultimate AI Launchpad 2030. Retrieved from [https://mdia.gov.mt/app/uploads/2024/08/Malta\\_The\\_Ultimate\\_AI\\_Launchpad\\_2030-1.pdf](https://mdia.gov.mt/app/uploads/2024/08/Malta_The_Ultimate_AI_Launchpad_2030-1.pdf)

# Nurturing Lifelong and Life-wide Learning



04

## A. SETTING UP THE CAREER GUIDANCE NETWORK

The National Career Guidance Network (NCGN) seeks to unite stakeholders in delivering a cohesive and inclusive career guidance service for all age groups in Malta. By aligning career guidance with national strategies, the NCGN will promote lifelong learning, contribute to policy development, and ensure that existing services effectively address the evolving demands of the labour market, including emerging skills in the digital and green sectors. Rather than introducing new services, the NCGN focuses on enhancing impact and fostering collaboration across the existing network of service providers and relevant stakeholders.

In Quarter 3 of 2024, the National Skills Council launched its consultation process with local stakeholders to outline the current career guidance landscape and introduce the NCGN's plans for a holistic career guidance approach. Meetings were held with key organisations, including MCAST, the University of Malta, Junior College, Jobsplus, the Institute for Education, and others, encompassing a range of sectors from STEM to tourism. In quarter 4, additional consultations included the Centre for Labour Studies, the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta, as well as a range of unions, chambers, and educational bodies, including the Foundation for Human Resources Development, the Institute for the Public Service, and the Malta Employers Association.

The NCGN's stakeholder list was then refined to include 23 primary committee members, representing organisations that offer direct career guidance services, such as professional advisors, as well as HR professionals who assist with career development planning and training opportunities, and employers who help bridge the gap between career guidance, education, the world of work, and industry needs. A secondary stakeholder list was also created to involve those with expertise relevant to specific topics.

The NCGN was subsequently officially launched on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024, at an event where the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) presented its report, 'Teenage Career Development in Malta'. Commissioned by the National Skills Council as the first deliverable of the NCGN, this study examines career development among 15-year-olds, using data from the OECD's 2022 PISA findings, marking a key milestone in the NCGN's endeavour to base decisions and policymaking on evidence.

With committee meetings set to begin in 2025, the National Career Guidance Network is paving the way for a more informed, efficient, and inclusive approach to career development in Malta, helping to cultivate a future-ready workforce equipped to navigate the challenges of an evolving economy.



**Figure 8:** Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Executive Chairman of the National Skills Council, at the launch of Malta's National Career Guidance Network



**Figure 9:** Clayton Micallef Grimaud, Senior Director Strategy, People and Culture, delivering a presentation at the launch of Malta's National Career Guidance Network

## B. VALIDATING NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING

Malta has made substantial progress in advancing the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VN FIL), a framework that recognises skills acquired outside traditional educational pathways. This progress is evidenced by the development of National Occupational Standards (NOS) across eight key sectors, including: automotive, construction, healthcare, and hospitality. This framework enables individuals to obtain formal recognition of skills gained through experience and other non-formal channels, directly addressing the growing demand for qualified workers in these sectors.

Malta continues to strengthen its VN FIL framework through strategic re-organisation and enhancing its governance structures. Work on the revision of Subsidiary Legislation S.L 607.02 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning regulations started early in 2024 in a collaborative effort between the NSC and the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). The proposed amendments were subsequently discussed with stakeholders during a consultation meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024, organised and hosted by the MFHEA. Input from stakeholders helped to further shape the amendments being proposed to the VN FIL regulations and provided insights on the implementation of this legislation from a practical perspective. Under the proposed revisions, the NSC will assume policy-making responsibilities, including the development and maintenance of NOSs, which list the competencies required to undertake a specific job and against which any validation process will be measured. The MFHEA will retain regulatory oversight and remain responsible for quality assurance of the validation process, including the introduction of a license for Validation Assessment Centres (VACs), which shall become obligatory as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

The NSC will also establish the Sector Skills Committee (SSC) to oversee the VN FIL process. This committee will coordinate the work of various Sector Skills Units (SSUs) to ensure NOSs remain current, with new standards developed as needed. SSUs, composed of seven to eleven members from education and industry, will be responsible for maintaining the relevance and consistency of NOS, typically reviewing them every three years—though updates may be more frequent in rapidly evolving sectors. Through these coordinated efforts, SSUs will work to reduce skills gaps by enhancing learning opportunities and facilitating skills recognition and certification, ultimately creating more pathways to employment and career advancement.

The revised regulations are expected to come into force in 2025.

## C. MAPPING OUT THE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR UPSKILLING

Developing a skilled and adaptable workforce is a national priority for Malta. In support of this goal, the government, alongside key institutions, has implemented a variety of financial schemes to promote upskilling, reskilling, and lifelong learning. These initiatives address skills imbalances, foster economic growth, and enhance employability.

In the latter half of 2024, the National Skills Council undertook a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify the financial incentives available in Malta for upskilling and reskilling. The mapping aimed to provide a clear and structured overview of national and EU-funded instruments that support individuals and enterprises in investing in skills. The mapping exercise identified multiple public entities responsible for implementing financial incentives that promote skills development. The main players are the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR), Jobsplus, and Malta Enterprise. The European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA) is an important national authority responsible for implementing EU-funded programmes in the fields of education, training, youth, and sport. Through its management of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, EUPA provides financial support for mobility, capacity-building, and lifelong learning projects that benefit individuals, educational institutions, NGOs, and other organisations. These programmes contribute to upskilling and reskilling across sectors by facilitating access to structured learning experiences, cross-border exchanges, and strategic partnerships aimed at enhancing the quality and relevance of education and training in Malta. Other institutions were identified, providing support directly to dedicated groups and in specific areas, such as the Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) and the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector.

Malta Enterprise is a central player in this framework, utilising national funds to administer financial incentives primarily through tax credit schemes that benefit both businesses and individuals. Similarly, MEYR focuses on scholarships and grants aimed at fostering higher education and research, leveraging a combination of European Union and national funding. Employment-focused schemes are primarily managed by Jobsplus, which administers training subsidies and workforce participation incentives beyond providing its own accredited or customised training courses to individuals and companies respectively. These programmes are co-funded by the European Social Fund+, national resources, and the EEA (European Economic Area) and Norway Grants. As indicated above, beyond the cross-cutting financial instruments which cover training in broad thematic areas, there are also managing authorities that support upskilling and reskilling in specific sectors, such as in the digital sphere, culture and the arts. In the area of digital skills, MDIA plays a key role in advancing specialized technology-related competencies. Its flagship Pathfinder Scholarship Scheme supports postgraduate studies in emerging fields such as Artificial Intelligence, Digital Trust, ESG technologies, and Quantum Computing. The scheme aims to equip the Maltese workforce with future-ready skills and enhance national competitiveness in line with global innovation trends. The voluntary and creative sectors are supported through dedicated initiatives. The main incentives are here implemented by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector, the Valletta Cultural Agency, and Arts Council Malta that focus on cultural education and skills development within the creative industries.

Last but not least, the Institute for the Public Services (IPS) implements sponsorship and traineeship schemes specifically dedicated to employees working within the public administration. This is above and beyond its mandate of providing training courses to all government employees. The mapping exercise has clearly demonstrated Malta's strategic focus on workforce development through financial schemes and initiatives that have been established to support upskilling and reskilling efforts. This exercise shall provide the baseline for an ensuing analysis to review the uptake, impact and long-term outcomes of existing funding opportunities for adults who wish to continue their learning, with the aim of identifying and addressing existing gaps.

# Advocating Transversal Skills

05

## A. CRITICAL THINKING – A PILOT PROJECT WITH ST IGNATIUS COLLEGE

In 2024, the National Skills Council and St Ignatius College Prof. Edward de Bono Handaq Middle School launched a two-year collaborative pilot project aimed at developing transversal skills, with a focus on fostering a growth mindset within the school community. The project centres on nurturing critical thinking and emotional intelligence, preparing students for the challenges of an increasingly complex and evolving world.

For the 2024/2025 scholastic year, the pilot project focused on the theme of critical thinking as a core transversal skill. As part of this broader effort, the NSC integrated critical thinking into students' 2024/2025 school diary. These diaries could subsequently be used as tools by students to reflect on, evaluate, and enhance their critical thinking skills.

Complementing this, the NSC also organised a continuing professional development (CPD) session titled *Future Skills and Critical Thinking* for educators at the middle school. The session provided educators with practical tools and strategies to foster critical thinking both in their professional practice and in the classroom. It emphasised the importance of empowering educators to support the development of these vital skills, ensuring that students are equipped to navigate a rapidly changing world.



**Figure 10:** Clayton Micallef Grimaud, Senior Director Organisational Culture & Corporate Affairs, delivering a presentation on 'Critical & Creative Thinking' at St Ignatius College

Further building on this initiative, the NSC, in partnership with the de Bono organisation and under the coordination of the St Ignatius Head of College Network, organised the 2024 *Saving the Maltese Honeybee* critical thinking competition. The competition provided a platform for students across primary, middle, and secondary schools—within the same college—to apply their critical thinking and creativity skills. Participants were tasked with developing innovative solutions to safeguard the endangered Maltese honeybee, using artistic drawings, models, and poems or stories to present their ideas.

The competition culminated in an awards ceremony held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024, which recognised the creative contributions of the students. The initiative not only encouraged ecological awareness but also showcased the students' ability to think critically about pressing global challenges. Through this collaboration, the NSC, St Ignatius College, and the de Bono organisation reaffirmed their commitment to fostering critical thinking and other transversal skills in students.

This holistic approach to education ensures that students are well-equipped to face future challenges with creativity, resilience, and a growth mindset.

## B. EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

As part of the National Skills Council's commitment to developing the skills needed for a sustainable future—particularly in light of the rapidly evolving world of work shaped by the green and digital twin transitions—a new pilot initiative was launched in 2024 to embed sustainability into school leadership and management practices.

The National Skills Council launched the first pilot workshop focusing on sustainable practices, titled 'Embedding Sustainability through School Management', targeting Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members, on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at the STEM & VET Curriculum Hub in Pembroke. The workshop was led by lecturers from the Centre for Environmental Education & Research at the University of Malta.

With the support of the Director General for the Educational Services Department, three colleges were identified: St Nicholas College, St Ignatius College, and St Benedict College. SLT members from state schools were nominated by their respective colleges to attend the training, alongside team members from the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) unit.

The workshop emphasised the crucial role of educators in fostering sustainability within their schools, equipping senior leadership team members with the tools and insights needed to champion sustainability in their schools and communities. By embedding these values into their work and leading by example, they can create lasting impacts beyond the classroom, transferring the knowledge and skills gained through the workshop to other educators, and implementing sustainable practices throughout the school.

The pilot project will be extended into 2025, with four workshops being offered throughout the year. Three of these will target senior leadership team members from state, church, and independent schools, encouraging them to adopt greener, more responsible actions. One workshop will be tailored specifically for HR professionals, aiming to support them in embedding sustainable practices within their respective workplaces.



**Figure 11:** Group discussions amongst senior leadership teams in schools on embedding sustainability in their operations to guide by example

The programme aims to establish a network of sustainability champions within schools, promote whole-school and workplace approaches to environmental education, and support long-term behavioural change across the education sector and local businesses.

### C. READY TO DREAM, LEARN, AND SUCCEED: A NATIONAL SKILLS CAMPAIGN

Launched in August 2024, the *Ready to Dream, Learn, and Succeed* campaign, aimed at highlighting the importance of transversal skills and demonstrate practical ways how to enhance skill development. This campaign was designed to emphasise the importance of continuous learning, upskilling, and career growth in an ever-evolving job market. With a strong, multi-platform presence, this initiative has reached thousands, encouraging them to take proactive steps towards their professional and personal development.

In Malta, employers are increasingly seeking candidates with strong transversal skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. According to CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, the transversal skills on which this campaign focused, are amongst the most requested in job advertisements for 2023.

The 10 skills that this campaign focused on are adaptability, resilience, innovation, analytical thinking, curiosity, empathy, critical thinking, decision making, creativity, and communication.

To ensure the campaign's success and wide-reaching impact, a 360-degree marketing strategy was implemented that leveraged multiple media channels to engage diverse audiences. The campaign was featured on billboards, radio and television adverts, social media, Benna milk cartons, bus shelters, as well as on ferries and newspapers.

Additionally, a unique staff engagement initiative was introduced where employees customised their email signatures with a transversal skill they valued the most from these ten skills mentioned above, linking to further resources on that particular skill. The response to this campaign has been positive, with increased requests for guidance on training programmes, continuous professional development opportunities, and requests for further information on skill development.

The National Skills Council remains committed to fostering a culture where learning and skill development are encouraged. The 'Ready to Dream, Learn, and Succeed' campaign is one of our outreach initiatives which reflects our dedication to empowering individuals and strengthening Malta's future workforce.



**Figure 12:** An AI-generated advert promoting the Ready to Dream, Learn, and Succeed campaign associating an occupation with a skill



**Figure 13:**  
Another advert promoting the importance of transversal skills depicting another skill through an infographic



**The skill to succeed**

**JEFFREY PULLICINO ORLANDO**

**Understanding transversal skills**

Transversal skills are vital in every industry endeavour, but particularly so in most sectors of employment. They are in demand, transferable, and essential in the dynamic and interconnected world we live in today. While technical skills might be specific to certain tasks or industries, transversal skills are versatile and applicable across different contexts and roles.

The NSC's recent campaign has highlighted ten key transversal skills that are critical for Malta's workforce to thrive in the future. These skills include critical thinking, curiosity, communication, creativity, decision-making, empathy, resilience, adaptability, analytical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation. These skills are not just technically proficient but also capable of navigating complex work environments, driving innovation, and leadership.

**Why transversal skills matter**

The importance of universal skills cannot be overstated. Businesses across various sectors consistently report that these skills are just as important, if not more so, than technical skills when it comes to hiring and retaining talent. In today's rapidly evolving global economy, the traditional dichotomy between technical and so-called "soft" skills has increasingly become outdated and irrelevant. The term "soft skills" was used to describe qualities such as the ability to communicate effectively, teamwork, and an aptitude for problem-solving.

The term "soft" implies that such skills are secondary to "hard" technical skills. This perception is incorrect but detrimental to the development of a well-rounded and adaptable workforce.

The National Skills Council (NSC) has embarked on a campaign - "Dream, Learn, and Succeed" - to emphasize the importance of what we refer to as "transversal" rather than soft skills, alongside technical skills. This campaign underscores that these skills are not merely supplementary but are integral to success in any field.

**In a rapidly changing job market, where automation, sustainability and artificial intelligence are transforming industries, transversal skills are what make workers resilient and adaptable."**

**The Malta Independent on Sunday | 25 August 2024**

**The Maltese Dream**

Historically in Malta – as in the case in many other countries – there has been an emphasis on technical skills, particularly in industrial and vocational training. While technical skills are important, the NSC's focus on transversal skills represents a necessary evolution in our approach to the development of our workforce.

Malta's economy is becoming more diverse, with growth in sectors such as digital technologies, hospitality, financial services, and creative industries. For our nation to continue to prosper in these areas, our workforce needs to be equipped not only with the technical skills required now but also with the transversal skills that will enable them to adapt to new roles and challenges as they emerge.

The global pandemic underscored the importance of these skills. As businesses were forced to pivot to remote work and embrace digital technologies, it was those with strong transversal skills – particularly adaptability, communication, and resilience – who were able to navigate these challenges most effectively. As we look to the future, these skills will become increasingly essential.

**Lifelong learning: Building the skills of tomorrow**

To ensure that Malta's workforce is ready for the future, it is imperative that our lifelong learning reflects the importance of both technical and transversal skills. This will involve integrating transversal skills into curricula and training – at all levels. The NSC is committed to working with educators, employers, and policymakers to develop initiatives that foster these skills from an early age. This includes not only formal education but also lifelong learning opportunities that allow individuals to continually develop and refine their transversal skills throughout their careers.

The promising approach is the incorporation of project-based learning and experiential education, allowing all young learners to develop transversal skills in real-world contexts. By working on collaborative projects, for example, learners can hone their teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities while also applying their technical knowledge.

**The role of employers**

Employers also have a crucial role to play in promoting the development of transversal skills. Businesses should recognize the value of these skills within their workforce, invest in training employees who demonstrate strong transversal skills, and provide opportunities for advancement and leadership roles.

Moreover, employers should invest in ongoing learning and development programmes to help employees build and refine their transversal skills. This not only benefits the individual but also enhances the overall productivity and innovation potential of the organization.

**A call to action**

The NSC's "Dream, Learn, and Succeed" campaign is a call to action for all stakeholders – including educators, employers, and policymakers – to prioritize the development of these skills.

By doing so, we can ensure that Malta remains competitive on the global stage, with a workforce that is not only technically proficient but also adaptable, creative, and ready to meet the challenges of the future.

The success of our nation depends on it. In conclusion, as we move forward, let us all commit to fostering a culture that values and prioritizes transversal skills. These are the skills that will define the future of our nation, social inclusion, active citizenship, economic growth, enhance productivity and – ultimately – ensure the long-term success and prosperity of our nation.

*Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Executive Chairman of the National Skills Council*

*Sponsored Content*

**Figure 14:** Photos featuring the campaign in action

## D. THE SKILLS ADVENT CALENDAR

In 2024, the Skills Advent Calendar was introduced. This is an innovative initiative aimed at engaging the public in a meaningful conversation about skills. This campaign not only promoted awareness of the key competencies required in today's and tomorrow's job market, but also reinforced the NSC's role as a leader in skills development.

The Skills Advent Calendar was designed as a countdown to Christmas, with a fresh and engaging approach to learning. Every day from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, a new skill was unveiled, carefully selected based on global research reports such as those from CEDEFOP, the World Economic Forum, and McKinsey. This ensured our campaign was data-driven, not tarnished by any bias and aligned with international labour market trends. The Skills Advent Calendar featured a range of core skills such as data analysis, resilience, problem-solving, digital literacy, and critical thinking, all carefully selected to reflect the evolving needs of the workforce. Case in point, in discussing data analysis, the message highlighted how numbers can be transformed into valuable insights to make informed decisions, while for resilience, on how overcoming challenges can lead to personal growth. Each video carried a consistent and engaging message applicable to all walks of life, proving importance while also ensuring that viewers could easily understand the relevance of these skills and feel encouraged to develop them in their daily lives.

To maximise reach and impact, the campaign was digital. Each day, the NSC released a 15-second video dedicated to a specific skill. These videos were featured on our website, where they remain available as a reference for individuals seeking to enhance their understanding of key competencies.

The Skills Advent Calendar surpassed our expectations in engagement, visibility, and awareness-building. Public perception of this was overwhelmingly positive, dictated by the NSC posts regarding the advent calendar placing within the top five (5) NSC posts which drew the highest rate of engagement on Facebook by over a factor of double the standard rate.

Additionally, a campaign was carried out on the NSC YouTube platform to maximise the reach of the videos. The campaign entailed submitting the videos as advertisements on this platform, which allowed them all to obtain impression digits in the range of 30,000 to 156,000, accumulating in a total of over 370,000 total impressions. All these factors came together resulting in a rise in NSC's social media following and interactions. We further promoted the top five videos on a local national TV station, extending the campaign's reach and reinforcing the importance of these key skills.

The NSC remains committed to building on this momentum, ensuring that skills development remains a national priority and that every individual is equipped for the opportunities and challenges of the future.



The image contains two screenshots of the Facebook Ads Manager interface, showing the performance of different ads for the Skills Advent Calendar.

**Screenshot 1 (Top):** This screenshot shows a list of five ads, each representing a day of the advent calendar. The columns include Ad ID, Ad group, Status, Ad type, Ad name, Ad preview, Avg. Imp., Viewed, Avg. CPM, Total Video, CTR, and Impressions. The ads are:

- 1: Intelligence analysis
- 2: Resilience
- 3: Problem-solving
- 4: Digital literacy
- 5: Critical thinking

**Screenshot 2 (Bottom):** This screenshot shows a list of three ads, each representing a day of the advent calendar. The columns include Ad ID, Ad group, Status, Ad type, Ad name, Ad preview, Avg. Imp., Viewed, Avg. CPM, Total Video, CTR, and Impressions. The ads are:

- Advent Calendar 2024 (Video 1)
- Advent Calendar 2024 (Video 2)
- Advent Calendar 2024 (Video 3)

**Figure 15:** Data showing successful results on social media of our Skills Advent Calendar campaign

# Expanding the Skills Dialogue

06

## A. SKILLSCAPE – OUR FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE

As part of its ongoing commitment to future skills development, the National Skills Council successfully hosted SkillScape Malta 2024, a three-day event held from the 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The event comprised a series of interactive business breakfasts designed to engage stakeholders from government, education, and industry in dialogue about the skills needed to thrive in an evolving world of work.

The first day, *Empowering Gen Z: Aligning Aspirations with Workplace Realities*, focused on understanding and embracing the next generation of workers. Gen Z brings a distinct set of values, expectations, and attitudes to the workplace, often redefining how success is perceived. The workshop brought together industry leaders, public officials, education experts, and young people to explore how workplaces can adapt to better attract, support, and retain Gen Z talent. Themes included the importance of upskilling, professional development, and fostering workplace cultures that align with Gen Z priorities, such as purpose, values, flexibility, and continuous growth.

Day two addressed Technology and Innovation, prompting reflection on Malta's current technology landscape and its future trajectory. Participants explored questions such as: How do we harness the power of AI? How do we stimulate innovation? Would elevating digital skills improve productivity? How are businesses employing emerging technologies? The business breakfast included insightful contributions from local experts who discussed how emerging technologies are being adopted across sectors, the role of continuous learning, and the need for strategic investment in digital competence.

The final day, centred on Creativity in the Workplace, expanded the understanding of creativity beyond the arts. Creativity was explored as a transversal skill vital for problem-solving, adaptability, and innovation. Participants from a wide range of sectors engaged in roundtable discussions about embedding creative practices into the workplace. Key takeaways included the importance of encouraging risk-taking, building diverse teams, and creating flexible, open environments that foster innovation and forward thinking.

SkillScape Malta 2024 concluded with closing remarks from the NSC Executive Chairman Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando and Her Excellency, the President of Malta Myriam Spiteri Debono. The President emphasized that tomorrow's skills ought to be taught as part of a lifelong process that starts from an early school age right up to old age, as an ongoing process of skill enhancing and thought evolvement meant to find solutions to a continuously changing and evolving technological scenario.

The National Skills Council's flagship initiative served as a platform for critical discussion, strategic foresight, and collaborative vision-setting, reinforcing the NSC's role in shaping a future-ready workforce for Malta.

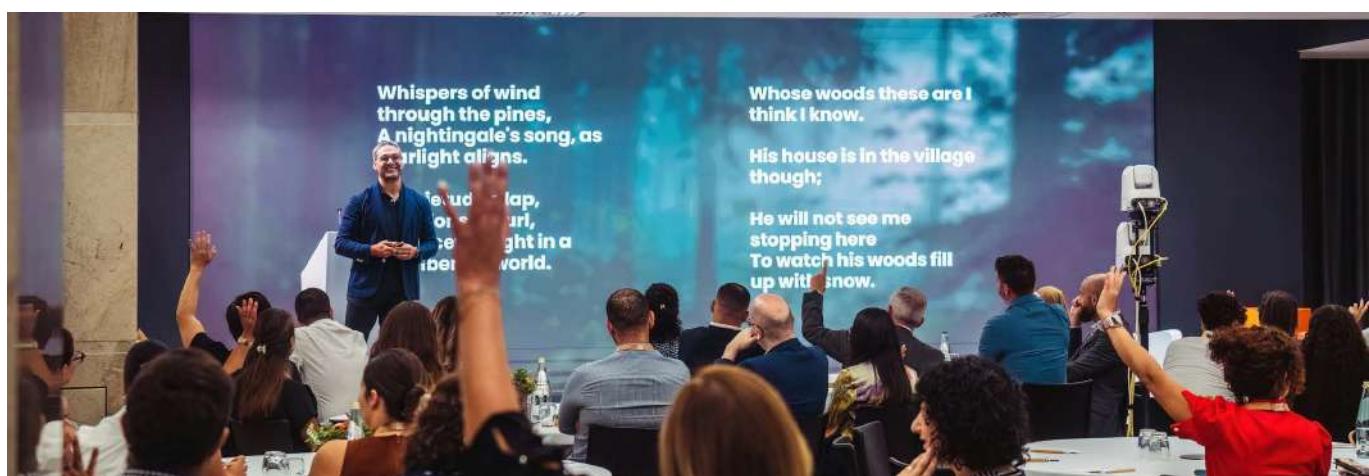


**Figure 16:** Opening and closing remarks during the 3-day Skillsscape discussions carried out by Executive Chairman, Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Permanent Secretary, Mr Matthew Vella, Hon. Clifton Grima, Minister for Education, Sport, Youth and Research and Innovation, and Her Excellency, the President of Malta Myriam Spiteri Debono





Figure 17: Day 1 focused on the Aspirations of Youth at the Workplace





**Figure 18:** Day 2 discussions revolved around technology and productivity at the workplace



**Figure 19:** Day 3, creativity at the workplace was discussed

## B. ENGAGING IN PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The senior management team at the National Skills Council has participated in multiple conferences, workshops, and panel discussions organised by different organisations, which extended an invitation for active contribution. These opportunities are taken to continue fostering a culture of lifelong learning, highlighting the importance of nurturing transversal skills and proactively seek collaborative projects to fulfil the Council's mission.

**2 February 2024:** Addressing Malta's skill gap through education: opportunities and challenges, organised by CAPS (Corporate Affairs Partnering Solutions) – Partnering Solutions at the Valletta Design Cluster. Panel topic: Addressing Malta's skills gap.



**Figure 20:**  
Glorianne Cachia,  
Director - EU  
& International  
Relations,  
contributing at  
Malta's Skills Gap  
organised by CAPS

**3 May 2024:** At the closing conference of the European Year of Skills entitled 'The European Year of Skills – What Comes Next?', organised by DG Employment, within the European Commission, Senior Directors Ruth DeBrincat and Clayton Micallef Grimaud designed and led a workshop which they called 'The Human Edge – leveraging transversal skills in an AI-driven workplace'.



**Figure 21:** Ruth  
DeBrincat and  
Clayton Micallef  
Grimaud, Senior  
Directors, at the  
The European Year  
of Skills – What  
Comes Next?

**9 October 2024:** The Malta Employers' Association organised a national roundtable discussion on 'Adapting our Labour Market to an Ageing Population'. Senior Director Ruth DeBrincat highlighted both the challenges and opportunities in an evolving labour market, pointing out the need to shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset.



**Figure 22:** Ruth DeBrincat, Senior Director, discussing the need to shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset

**17 October 2024:** TECHXPO Malta & StartUp Festival organised by Malta Enterprise at MFCC, Ta' Qali. Panel topic: Addressing the needs of the local ecosystem to drive start-up success.



**Figure 23:**  
Glorianne Cachia,  
Director - EU &  
International Relations,  
at the TECHXPO Malta  
& StartUp Festival

**25 October 2024:** At the Ernst & Young Malta Future Realised event, Senior Director Clayton Micallef Grimaud participated as a panellist discussing the topic 'Cultivating a Resilient Workforce for a Dynamic Employment Landscape'.



**Figure 24:**  
Clayton Micallef  
Grimaud, Senior  
Director, in a panel  
discussion at EY Malta  
Future Realised event

**29 October 2024:** At the Euroguidance Stakeholder Meeting organised by Euroguidance Malta, Senior Director Clayton Micallef Grimaud delivered a presentation raising awareness on skills-first approaches, where he underscored the importance of a balanced blend of knowledge, skills, and attitudes as essential elements of success.



**Figure 25:**  
Clayton Micallef  
Grimaud, Senior  
Director, presenting  
at the Euroguidance  
Stakeholder Meeting

**30 October 2024:** The NSC designed and delivered Continuous Professional Development to educators on transversal skills, focusing on Fostering a Growth Mindset with an emphasis on Critical Thinking Skills. The Executive Chairman, Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando introduced this new initiative of collaboration between the NSC and St. Ignatius College Prof. Edward de Bono Handaq Middle School. He highlighted the importance and impact educators have in learners' lives, and thanked educators for their dedication and commitment to empowering students with essential skills for the future.

This was followed by another event held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024, whereby St Ignatius College hosted an award ceremony to showcase 181 amazing student projects on 'Saving the Maltese Honeybee.' The National Skills Council, St. Ignatius College and Edward de Bono, came up with an initiative to foster critical thinking and creativity among students. This competition encouraged students to tackle the urgent local challenge of protecting the Maltese Honeybee, inspiring them to think outside the box and come up with innovative solutions. NSC Executive Chairman Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando commented that: "This competition is a testament to the transformative power of education, inspiring the next generation to think critically and creatively about the challenges we face."



**Figure 26:** Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Executive Chairperson, with the head and staff at St Ignatius College



**Figure 27:** Clayton Micallef Grimaud, Senior Director, delivering a continuous professional development session to educators on transversal skills

**31 October 2024:** The Chamber of SMEs organised their annual event focusing on 'Exploring Opportunities'. Senior Director Ruth DeBrincat was invited to deliver a presentation on how upskilling enables organisations to remain agile and adaptable, highlighting different learning pathways. This presentation was followed by a panel discussion, with Senior Director Clayton Micallef Grimaud as a panellist. In his intervention, he emphasized how fostering a growth mindset and a nurturing an organisational culture built on learning leads to higher employee retention rates.



**Figure 28:**  
Ruth DeBrincat, Senior Director, delivering a presentation on the need of upskilling in organisations



**Figure 29:**  
Clayton Micallef Grimaud, Senior Director, intervening at the panel discussion focusing on 'Exploring Opportunities'

**29 November 2024:** Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Executive Chairman of the National Skills Council, delivered a keynote speech at the Annual Conference of FinanceMalta, 'The Future of Work and Learning: Navigating Transformation'. Dr Pullicino Orlando highlighted the importance of embracing lifelong learning, fostering innovation, and preparing for the opportunities of tomorrow.



**Figure 30:**  
Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, Executive Chairperson, delivering inspiring keynotes on the evolving landscape of work and education at the FinanceMalta Annual Conference

**4 December 2024:** Business Breakfast organised by EUPA 'From School to Workplace: Europass in Focus'.



**Figure 31:** Glorianne Cachia, Director, intervening at the panel discussion during the Business Breakfast organised by EUPA

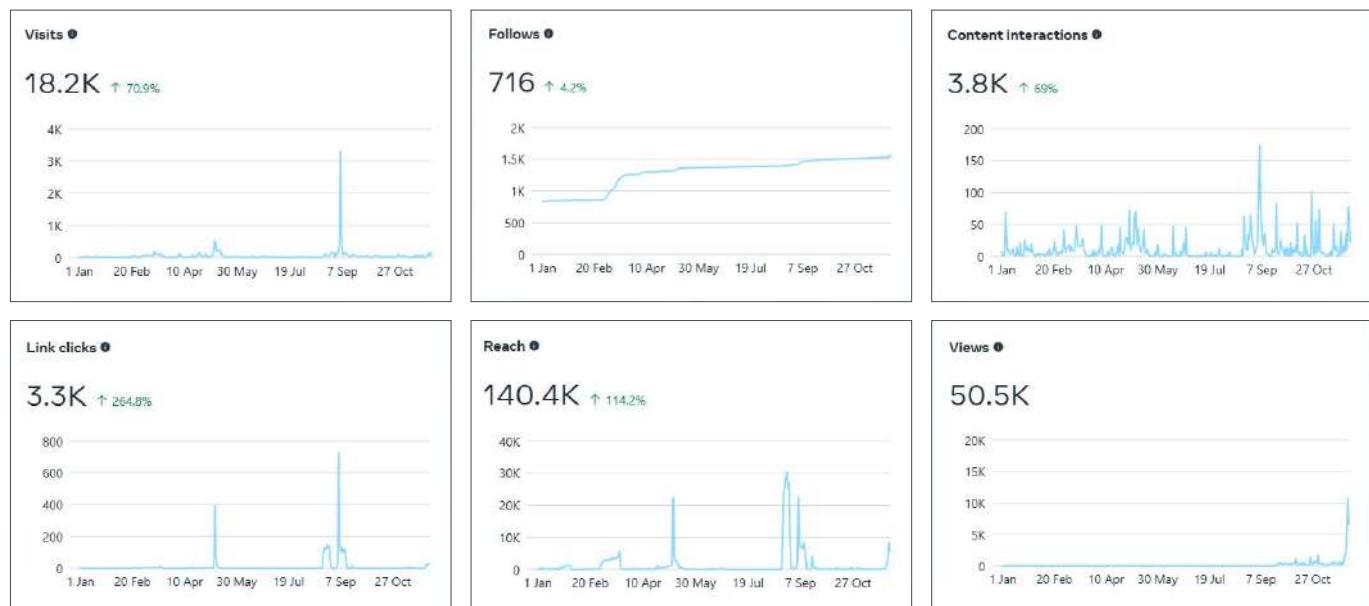
## C. BOOSTING OUR ONLINE MEDIA PRESENCE

In 2024, the National Skills Council prioritised expanding and enhancing our online media presence to strengthen engagement with key audiences, including students, educators, and the general public. By leveraging multiple digital platforms—our official website, Facebook page, and YouTube presence—we ensured greater visibility for NSC's initiatives and increased awareness of skills development opportunities. In addition to our social media efforts, collaborations with local news networks led to further amplify our brand and campaigns. Recognising the importance of reaching a wider audience, strategic partnerships with media outlets that have strong viewership and credibility were made, ensuring that our message resonates with the right demographics.

Throughout 2024, a more strategic approach was adopted to our Facebook content, focusing on visually engaging posts, skill-focused campaigns, and interactive content to spark boost engagement. These efforts paid off, with our views climbing to 50,500, showing that more people are actively consuming our content. Our reach expanded by 114.2%, connecting us with 140.4K users, a clear sign that our audience is growing.

This was not tied to just views as people were actively engaging with our content, with 3,800 interactions, marking a 69% increase. This meant more likes, shares, and comments—indicating that our posts resonated with our audience. More importantly, link clicks shot up by 264.8%, reaching 3,300, proving that our call-to-action strategies successfully encouraged people to visit our website and explore NSC's initiatives. These results reflect the growing impact of our digital presence and how our content strategy is helping us connect with and inspire our audience.

Below are the analytics showcasing the growth and impact of our Facebook presence throughout 2024.



**Throughout 2024, a more strategic approach was adopted to our Facebook content, focusing on visually engaging posts, skill-focused campaigns, and interactive content to spark engagement**

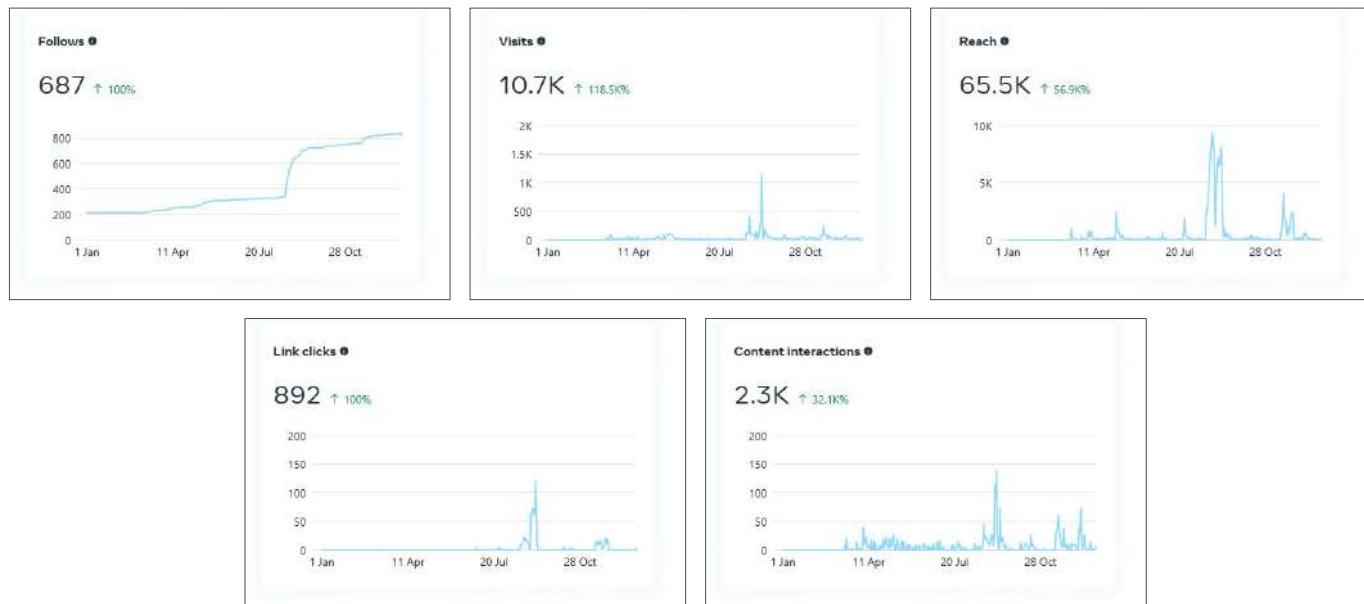
Comparing our 2023 and 2024 analytics, it is clear that our efforts to boost the NSC's online presence have truly paid off, reaching 65,500 people, a 56.9% increase, meaning more individuals are engaging with our content more than ever before. Visits to our page more than doubled, reaching 10,700, showing that additional people are actively looking to learn about what we do.

Interaction with our content also grew significantly, with 2,300 engagements, reflecting how our audience is not just seeing our posts but actually engaging with them. Perhaps most exciting of all is the 100% increase in link clicks, meaning that more people are taking action—visiting our website and exploring what NSC has to offer. Our follower count doubled, proving that our message is resonating and that a solid community is being built around skills development.

The analytics hereunder illustrate the significant growth in our Facebook presence from 2023 to 2024.

Our presence on YouTube was also enhanced through paid advertisements, significantly increasing our reach and engagement. By strategically targeting specific videos—primarily the top five Skills Advent Calendar videos—this ensured our content was seen by a wider audience. This approach resulted in an impressive 213,123 impressions, amplifying the impact of our campaign and reinforcing NSC's role in promoting essential skills for the future workforce.

The Council remains committed to building on this momentum, continuously refining strategies to maximise impact, engagement, and outreach. With a data-driven approach, NSC will continue to empower individuals and organisations with the knowledge and resources needed to navigate the evolving job market successfully.



**Perhaps most exciting of all is the 100% increase in link clicks, meaning that more people are taking action—visiting our website and exploring what NSC has to offer**

## D. THE PUBLIC SERVICE EXPO

The National Skills Council participated in the Public Service Expo 2024, the first-ever edition held from 15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at MFCC, Ta' Qali.

The overarching theme of the Expo was Digital Technologies and Digital Skills. Our stand focused on media literacy, particularly how misinformation and disinformation impact our daily consumption of media in the wake of fake news. Visitors participated in an interactive competition where they were shown several images and had to guess which ones were AI-generated and which were real. Those who correctly identified at least two out of three images received a prize — a set of three wooden puzzles designed to boost critical thinking, shaped like a pyramid, a star, and a cube.

In addition, informational handouts on misinformation and online safety were handed out, featuring crosswords and other interactive activities. The feedback was very positive. Some educators and parents revisited our stand specifically to request more educational content for use in their classrooms or with their kids at home, highlighting the strong demand for such resources.



**Figure 32:** The National Skills Council stand at the Public Service Expo 2024

# Fostering Excellence through International Cooperation

07

## A. THE EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING (CEDEFOP)

Throughout 2024, the National Skills Council (NSC) actively engaged with Cedefop by participating in several key events aimed at enhancing vocational education and training (VET) systems across Europe.

21<sup>st</sup> February 2024, NSC representatives attended the virtual workshop 'Making Learning Progression a Reality: Learners in the spotlight',<sup>5</sup>, which focused on promoting flexible and open education systems to foster lifelong learning and mobility. Subsequently, on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the NSC took part in 'Roadmapping the skills revolution',<sup>6</sup>, where Cedefop introduced its enhanced skills intelligence tool designed to provide comprehensive insights into current and future labour market trends.

October was a particularly busy month for Cedefop and the NSC, with active participation in multiple high-level Cedefop events addressing key challenges in vocational education and training, skills development, and lifelong learning. In mid-October, the NSC received an invitation to contribute to a Cedefop Delphi-style survey, a key component of their 'Foresight study on a future vision for Continuing Skills Development in the next 15-20 years'. This strategic foresight study aims to craft a vision for continuing skills development in the next 15-20 years in Europe, accompanied by alternative scenarios and trajectories of action. The NSC's expertise and experience in the field of continuing skills development was thus solicited to help shape Cedefop's understanding of the intricate relationships between the labour market, societal trends, environmental factors, technological advancements, and learning pathways.

The Delphi-style survey sought to gather respondents' opinions on potential future developments in these areas, as well as their insights into how they may influence the trajectories of action required to achieve a shared vision. The survey was organised around four future scenarios offering alternative views on how different features and conditions relevant to continuing skills development might evolve in the next 15-20 years. The NSC was thus required to provide its views on how these different features and conditions of relevance for continuous skills development are likely to develop under

<sup>5</sup> Making learning progression a reality – Learners in the spotlight: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/making-learning-progression-reality-learners-spotlight>

<sup>6</sup> Road-mapping the skills revolution – Cedefop skills intelligence in action: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/roadmapping-skills-revolution>

each of the four scenarios. The Delphi-type survey considered various possible futures, including less probable ones, with the purpose of the survey focusing on consolidating own assumptions and statements on selected features in the context of a specific scenario. The four scenarios developed are:

1. Technology-driven competition for talent
2. Left alone to ride the tide: Navigating the AI shockwaves on jobs
3. Staying afloat: AI opportunities missed
4. AI unleashed: Dominating the world of work and societies

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024, the Council participated in the event 'Financing Adult Learning: Zooming in on Individual Learning Accounts'<sup>7</sup>, emphasizing the importance of upskilling and reskilling in the context of the green and digital economy. This tied in very well with the NSC's participation in the EC's Mutual Learning Programme on the same subject, providing additional insights through Cedefop's analysis and four country case studies. On 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024, NSC members joined discussions on the 'Implementation of the EU-27+ National Plans for VET'<sup>8</sup>, exploring how European countries are adapting their VET systems to be more agile and inclusive.

Finally, on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024, the NSC attended 'The Changing Landscape of Qualifications and Credentials'<sup>9</sup>, where Cedefop experts presented research on the evolution of qualifications in response to technological advancements and labour market needs.

Beyond the NSC's involvement in Cedefop's organised activities and initiatives, the 102<sup>nd</sup> Management Board meeting took place in Thessaloniki, Greece on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Minutes of both the Management Board and the Executive Board are available online.<sup>10</sup> These engagements underscore the NSC's commitment to collaborating with European partners to advance VET policies and practices, ensuring alignment with broader EU objectives and responsiveness to emerging challenges in the skills landscape.

## B. DGVT AND ACVT – EU WORKING GROUPS ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVT) and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) play a central role in shaping European VET policy by facilitating dialogue between the European Commission and VET stakeholders. Throughout 2024, the NSC actively contributed to these policy discussions, working closely with Malta's main delegates from the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) and participating in key meetings.

2024 saw the conclusion of the European Year of Skills (EYS) on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024, whereby the NSC served as Malta's National Coordinator. During the June ACVT meeting, the European Commission presented an overview of EYS activities and achievements, emphasizing the strong cooperation

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7 Financing adult learning – zooming in on individual learning accounts: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/financing-adult-learning-zooming-individual-learning-accounts>

8 Implementation of the EU-27+ national plans for VET – Interim findings of Cedefop's policy monitoring: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/implementation-eu-27-national-plans-vet>

9 The changing landscape of qualifications and credentials: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/changing-landscape-qualifications-and-credentials>

10 Cedefop Public documents: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/public-documents>

among National Coordinators and the successful engagement of millions of individuals and businesses across Europe. The initiative's impact underscored the importance of continued efforts to promote upskilling and reskilling.

VET teachers and trainers were a major area of discussion. Cedefop's ongoing research highlighted challenges related to shortages in the profession, attributing them to various systemic factors that ultimately impact the quality of VET provision. ACVT discussed potential interventions and confirmed the forthcoming launch of the European VET Teachers Survey, which will gather data across EU Member States to inform policy responses.

The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in VET was also explored, with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre presenting insights on the digital transformation of VET. Experts shared examples of AI-driven innovations, including learner-centred and teacher-led AI applications, as well as institutional AI tools to support training. A Dutch Public Employment Service initiative, Competentnl, was introduced, showcasing how AI can analyse labour market trends, identify skill gaps, and support job seekers through targeted training recommendations. Cedefop also launched an AI foresight study focused on the future of jobs and skills.

In mid-2024, ACVT distributed a questionnaire to Member States to assess the implementation of the Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials. The responses will inform further discussions in 2025, identifying gaps and areas requiring additional support. Additionally, ACVT provided input for the mid-term review of the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027, ensuring that evolving digital learning needs are reflected in future policy developments.

Apart from that, in 2024, the National Skills Council (together with MCAST) also actively contributed to European-level policy dialogue through its participation in both meetings of the Directors-General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVT), convened under the auspices of the Council of the European Union. These high-level gatherings, held in Mechelen (March) under the Belgian Presidency and in Budapest (October) under the Hungarian Presidency, brought together senior VET representatives from across Europe to discuss shared challenges and opportunities in the evolving skills landscape.

The Mechelen meeting placed a strong focus on the digital transformation of vocational education and training, including the integration of artificial intelligence, immersive technologies, and digital learning platforms into VET systems. Discussions highlighted the need to support educators and learners in navigating digital shifts, and to foster stronger partnerships between training providers, employers, and research institutions.

The Budapest meeting emphasised the role of VET in supporting the twin transitions—digital and green—while also addressing policy priorities such as the professionalisation of VET teachers, improved graduate tracking mechanisms, and the enhancement of permeability between VET and higher education. The meeting also served as a preparatory forum for the renewal of the Osnabrück Declaration, which will define the EU's strategic objectives for VET up to 2030.

The National Skills Council's participation in these DGVT and ACVT meetings and discussions ensured that Malta's voice was represented in shaping the future of European VET, while also drawing on best practices and insights from other Member States to inform national policy development.

## C. REFERNET AND CAREERSNET

Towards the fulfilment of its mandate—that of supporting the promotion, development, and implementation of the European Union's policy in the field of VET, skills, and qualifications—input to Cedefop's work is sought from national administrations through its five established networks.<sup>11</sup> Of those, the NSC is involved in ReferNet and CareersNet.

ReferNet is a network of institutions that assists Cedefop's work by providing information on national VET systems and policies. On behalf of the Council, Ms Glorianne Cachia, Director responsible for EU and International Relations, has been representing Malta as the ReferNet National Representative since 2023.

The relationship between Cedefop and ReferNet partners is governed through four-year contractual agreements, referred to as Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA). Further to Cedefop's call for proposals late in 2023, a new ReferNet Malta Team joined the network, coordinated by the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR), through the Directorate for STEM and VET Programmes. Other entities involved in the network are Jobsplus, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) together with various directorates from within MEYR.

The ReferNet secretariat agrees with a defined work plan on a yearly basis. The types of deliverables are aligned with the following themes, with deadlines for submission spread through the year:

1. Reporting on VET and VET-related policy;
2. Reporting on national VET systems;
3. Ad-hoc thematic and other support;
4. Communication and Visibility actions.

Beyond contributing to these deliverables, ReferNet partners are invited to participate in dedicated events—around three to four such meetings are organised per year. The first annual meeting under the 2024-2027 FPA, the 21<sup>st</sup> ReferNet annual plenary meeting,<sup>12</sup> which took place in Thessaloniki between the 28<sup>th</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024, was attended by the national representative.

The subsequent meeting was hosted by the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (AVETAE), home of the ReferNet Croatia team, that organised the 2024 partnership forum in collaboration with Cedefop. The ReferNet Coordinator participated in this meeting, which took place in Zagreb, Croatia, on 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024.<sup>13</sup>

The final meeting for 2024, the 22<sup>nd</sup> ReferNet annual plenary meeting,<sup>14</sup> took place in Thessaloniki, on 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024. The event had a central thematic on '20 Years Together', aiming to celebrate the anniversary of the 2024 enlargement of the EU with the accession of 10 additional countries, including Malta. The aim of the meeting was to take stock of the work carried out in 2024 and the outcomes published and disseminated, as well as to prepare the 2025 workplan.

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11 Cedefop Networks: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/networks>

12 21st ReferNet annual plenary meeting: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/21st-refernet-annual-plenary-meeting>

13 2024 ReferNet Partnership Forum in Zagreb: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/2024-refernet-partnership-forum-zagreb>

14 22nd ReferNet annual plenary meeting: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events/22nd-refernet-annual-plenary-meeting>



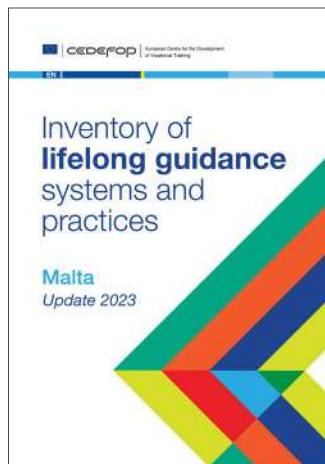
**Figure 33:** ReferNet National Representative, Glorianne Cachia, NSC at the ReferNet 21st annual plenary meeting at Cedefop's premises in Thessaloniki, Greece



**Figure 34:** ReferNet Coordinator, Xanthe Schembri, MEYR at the 2024 Partnership Forum in Zagreb, Croatia

### MALTA'S PARTICIPATION IN CAREERSNET

CareersNet is Cedefop's dedicated network of independent national experts in lifelong guidance and career development. The network plays a central role in supporting the European Union's policy goals in this field by sharing country-level intelligence, contributing to comparative research, and promoting evidence-based policymaking across Member States.



**Figure 35:** Cedefop's (2023) 'Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices – Malta', CareersNet national records

Malta is actively represented in CareersNet by a main expert (Ms. Dorianne Gravina – Education Officer at the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation) and an alternate expert (Mr Clayton Micallef Grimaud – Senior Director at the National Skills Council), ensuring continuous contribution to the EU-wide exchange of expertise and practices in career guidance. In 2024, the Maltese experts participated in Cedefop's consultation meetings for the new set of guidelines on lifelong career guidance, contributing national insights and reflecting Malta's context and priorities. In parallel, work continued at the national level to update the Inventory of Career Guidance Services in Malta, which forms part of Cedefop's broader Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices across Europe. This inventory serves as a key reference point for comparing how different countries structure, deliver, and evolve their career guidance systems. Malta's entry is publicly accessible on the Cedefop website: Inventory – Malta.

This dual engagement — both internationally and locally—reflects Malta's ongoing commitment to strengthening its career guidance ecosystem. By participating in CareersNet, the National Skills Council ensures that Malta remains aligned with European developments, while also adapting best practices to suit the local context.

For more information on the CareersNet experts across all EU Member States, visit: [CareersNet Contacts](#).

#### D. PEER-LEARNING

In 2024, the National Skills Council extended its participation in international dialogues on future skills and education reform. As part of our commitment to peer learning, Senior Directors Clayton Micallef Grimaud and Ruth DeBrincat took part in the Dubai Future Forum 2024. This high-level event brought together thought leaders from across the globe to explore strategies for preparing education and training systems for emerging technological and societal transformations.

The NSC's engagement at this forum underscored Malta's interest in shaping foresight-oriented skills policies, while also learning from global innovations in the governance of the future of work.

In 2024, through the Australian High Commission, peer-learning meetings were held with Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA). Discussions focused on forecasting and modelling of demand including identifying critical industries, thanks to the expertise of Damian Oliver, Assistant Secretary of the Workforce Futures Branch at Jobs and Skills Australia. Australia has a state-of-the-art skills intelligence platform providing significant opportunities for capacity building within the National Skills Council being at the very early stages of building a skills intelligence function locally.

## Prelude to 2025



08

Embedded in the corporate planning strategy of the Council is a mechanism which allows senior management to structurally and systemically reflect on the achievements registered and trace a forward-looking path towards future short-term goals. This manifests itself as two Strategy Days every year, one held towards the end of June, as a mid-year reflection opportunity, and the other in December. Discussions focus on prospects for recruitment and capacity building, new technical projects in the pipeline, and project ideas for which funding is to be sought. Potential collaborations with local partners or foreign consortia are discussed as well, in a bid of managing resources efficiently and effectively.

In turning our focus to 2025 with renewed purpose and strategic clarity, the Council is well aware that the year ahead will mark a defining chapter. 2025 will see the finalisation of Malta's first National Skills Strategy—a comprehensive framework that will chart the course for our country's skills development over the coming decade. This strategy will reflect our shared vision for a future-ready workforce and a more inclusive, agile, and sustainable economy.

A central pillar of this work will be the continued development of Malta's skills intelligence function. By deepening our evidence base and enhancing data integration across systems, more timely, granular, and actionable insights into skills needs will become available—helping policymakers, employers, and learners make informed decisions. This work will also involve closer alignment with European tools and standards, ensuring Malta remains plugged into wider efforts to improve labour market responsiveness and foresight capacity.

2025 will also see the Council invest more heavily in research on the local impact of megatrends—such as digitalisation, the green transition, demographic shifts, and technological disruption. Understanding how these global forces play out in Malta's economy and society is essential to shaping future-proof policies that are both contextually grounded and globally aware.

Increased focus will be invested in strengthening career guidance systems and raising awareness about emerging occupations and sectors highlighting parity of esteem between academic and vocational routes. Through outreach, tools, and partnerships, we shall aim to empower learners and workers of all ages to make confident, informed choices ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, has access to meaningful and rewarding career paths.

The 2025 annual workplan will be more nuanced as we grow organically and build stronger networks with our stakeholders locally and internationally. Stakeholder engagement will remain at the core of our work in focusing on mindsets, skillsets, and toolsets to transition towards a greener and more digital future. As we prepare for 2025, we do so with conviction in our mission and trust in the strength of the partnerships we continue to nurture. Together, we are building a Malta where learning is a lifelong right, skills are a shared responsibility, and the future is within reach.



09

## Financial Overview and Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024



NATIONAL SKILLS COUNCIL  
Annual Report and Financial Statements - 31 December 2024

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## **Chairperson's Report**

The Chairperson presents his annual report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024.

### **Principal activities**

The Council is engaged to invest in human capital development, by using evidence-based practices to understand and anticipate current and future skills within the labour work force, whilst instigating policy changes to this effect.

The Council was established by the Government of Malta through Subsidiary Legislation 605.10 – National Skills Council (Establishment) Order dated 9 August 2016. Although the Council was established in 2016, it started preparatory works in October 2022 and officially opened its doors to the public on 1 March 2023.

### **Review of the business**

The Council has adequately utilised its Government subvention of €1,500,000 (2023: €850,000) for the acquisition of its plant and equipment and towards running costs of the entity. The remaining balance of the subvention at year-end amounted to €379,244 (2023: €53,238), which was used to settle the remaining current liabilities in the beginning of the year. The Council ended with a surplus of €358,171 (2023: €149,265).

The level of business and the Council's financial position remain satisfactory, and the Chairperson expects that the present level of activity will be sustained in the foreseeable future.

### **Results**

The statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income is set out on page 4.

### **Events after reporting period**

As noted in Note 12 of these financial statements, there were no other adjusting or other significant non-adjusting events between the end of the reporting year and the date of authorisation by the Chairperson.

## **Chairperson's Report – continued**

### **Chairperson**

The Chairperson of the Entity who held office during the period ended 31 December 2024 and as at the date of this report is:

- Dr. Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando

### **Statement of Chairperson's responsibilities**

The Chairperson is required to prepare financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Entity as at the end of each financial year and of the profit or loss for that year.

In preparing the financial statements, the Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that:

- ensuring that the financial statements have been drawn up in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union;
- selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies;
- making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances;
- ensuring that the financial statements are prepared on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Entity will continue in business as going concern;

The Chairperson is also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Entity and to enable them to ensure that financial statements are adequate. This responsibility includes designing, implementing, and maintaining such internal controls, as the Chairperson determines the necessary procedures to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. He is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Entity, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Financial reporting framework**

The Chairperson has resolved to prepare the Entity's financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024 in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union.

## **Chairperson's Report – continued**

### **Principal Risks and Uncertainties**

The Chairperson considers the nature and extent of the risk management framework and risk profile that is acceptable to the Chairperson. The Chairperson regularly reviews the work carried out and ensures that any weaknesses identified are remedied so as not to pose a risk to the Entity.

The Entity's principal risks and uncertainties are included in Note 11 of these financial statements.

### **Auditor**

The auditor, Equis Assurance Limited, has intimated its willingness to continue in office and a resolution to reappoint them as auditor of the Entity will be proposed at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

### **Registered address**

The registered office of the Entity is Le Merchant House, Alamein Road, Pembroke PBK 1776, Malta.



Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando  
Chairperson

4 April 2025

**NATIONAL SKILLS COUNCIL**  
Annual Report and Financial Statements - 31 December 2024

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**Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income**

Notes	As at 31 December	
	2024 €	2023 €
Revenue	2	1,500,000
Administrative expenses	3	(1,141,829)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>		<b>358,171</b>
<b>Total comprehensive surplus for the year</b>		<b>358,171</b>

The accounting policies and explanatory notes on pages 8 to 22 form an integral part of the financial statements.

## Statement of Financial Position

		As at 31 December	
	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Tangible assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	182,603	140,510
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	9	379,244	53,238
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>561,847</b>	<b>193,748</b>
<b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Reserve</b>			
Retained reserve	6	507,436	149,265
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	7	54,411	44,483
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>		<b>561,847</b>	<b>193,748</b>

The accountancy policies and explanatory notes on pages 8 to 22 form an integral part of the financial statements.

The financial statements on pages 4 to 22 were approved and authorised for issue by the Chairperson on 4 April 2025.



Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando  
Chairperson

NATIONAL SKILLS COUNCIL  
Annual Report and Financial Statements - 31 December 2024

**Statement of Changes in Equity**

	<b>Retained reserve €</b>	<b>Total €</b>
Balance at 1 January 2023	-	-
Surplus for the year	149,265	149,265
<b>Balance at 31 December 2023</b>	<b>149,265</b>	<b>149,265</b>
Balance at 1 January 2024	149,265	149,265
Surplus for the year	358,171	358,171
<b>Balance at 31 December 2024</b>	<b>507,436</b>	<b>507,436</b>

### Statement of Cash Flows

	Notes	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Operating activities</b>			
Cash generated from operating activities	8	393,768	208,178
<b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>		<b>393,768</b>	<b>208,178</b>
<b>Investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant, and equipment	5	(67,762)	(154,940)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(67,762)</b>	<b>(154,940)</b>
<b>Movement in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>326,006</b>	<b>53,238</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year</b>		<b>53,238</b>	-
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>	9	<b>379,244</b>	<b>53,238</b>

The accountancy policies and explanatory notes on pages 8 to 22 form an integral part of the financial statements.

## Notes to the Financial Statements

### 1. Accounting policies

The principal material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all periods presented, unless otherwise stated.

#### a. Basis of preparation

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs) as adopted by the European Union (EU).

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention, as explained in the accounting policies below. Historical cost is generally based on the fair value of the consideration given in exchange for goods and services.

The Council is engaged to invest in human capital development, by using evidence-based practices to understand and anticipate current and future skills within the labour work force, whilst instigating policy changes to this effect.

#### i. Use of estimates and judgements

In preparing the financial statements, the Chairperson is required to make judgements (other than those involving estimates) that has significant on the amounts recognised and to make estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are no readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on a regular basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future period.

However, in the opinion of the Chairperson, there are no areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements.

#### ii. New and amended IFRS Standards that are effective for the current year

In 2024, the Entity has applied a number of amendments to IFRS Accounting Standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) that are mandatory for the Entity's accounting year beginning on 1 January 2024. The adoption of these revisions to the requirements of IFRSs as adopted by the EU did not result in changes to the Entity's Accounting policies impacting the financial performance and position.

**1. Accounting policies – continued**

**a. Basis of preparation – continued**

**ii. New and amended IFRS Standards that are effective for the current year - continued**

**Amendments to IAS 1 Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current** The Entity has adopted the amendments to IAS 1, published in January 2020, for the first time in the current year. The amendments affect only the presentation of liabilities as current or non-current in the statement of financial position and not the amount or timing of recognition of any asset, liability, income or expenses, or the information disclosed about those items.

The amendments clarify that the classification of liabilities as current or non-current is based on rights that are in existence at the end of the reporting period, specify that classification is unaffected by expectations about whether an entity will exercise its right to defer settlement of a liability, explain that rights are in existence if covenants are complied with at the end of the reporting period, and introduce a definition of 'settlement' to make clear that settlement refers to the transfer to the counterparty of cash, equity instruments, other assets or services.

**iii. New and revised IFRS Standards in issue but not yet effective**

At the date of authorisation of these financial statements, the Chairperson has not applied the following new and revised IFRS Standards that have been issued but are not yet effective had not yet been adopted by the EU:

Amendments to IAS 21

*Lack of Exchangeability*

IFRS 18

*Presentation and Disclosures in Financial Statements*

IFRS 19

*Subsidiaries without Public Accountability: Disclosures*

Amendments to IFRS 9 and IFRS 7

*Amendments to the Classification and Measurement of Financial Instruments – Nature dependent electricity contracts*

The Chairperson does not expect that the adoption of the Standards listed above will have a material impact on the financial statements of the Entity in future years, except for the below.

**1. Accounting policies – continued**

**a. Basis of preparation – continued**

**iii. New and revised IFRS Standards in issue but not yet effective – continued**

**IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosures in Financial Statements**

IFRS 18 replaces IAS 1, carrying forward many of the requirements in IAS 1 unchanged and complementing them with new requirements. In addition, some IAS 1 paragraphs have been moved to IAS 8 and IFRS 7. Furthermore, the IASB has made minor amendments to IAS 7 and IAS 33 Earnings per Share.

IFRS 18 introduces new requirements to:

- present specified categories and defined subtotals in the statement of profit or loss
- provide disclosures on management-defined performance measures (MPMs) in the notes to the financial statements
- improve aggregation and disaggregation.

An entity is required to apply IFRS 18 for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2027, with earlier application permitted. The amendments to IAS 7 and IAS 33, as well as the revised IAS 8 and IFRS 7, become effective when an entity applies IFRS 18. IFRS 18 requires retrospective application with specific transition provisions.

The Chairperson of the Entity anticipate that the application of these amendments may have an impact on the Entity's financial statements in future periods.

**b. Going concern**

The Chairperson has, at the time of approving the financial statements, a reasonable expectation that the Entity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus, they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

**c. Revenue recognition**

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable for services provided in the normal course of business, net of value-added tax and discounts, where applicable.

To determine whether to recognise revenue, the Entity follows a 5-step process:

- i. Identifying the contract with a customer
- ii. Identifying the performance obligations
- iii. Determining the transaction price
- iv. Allocating the transaction price to the performance obligations
- v. Recognising revenue when/as performance obligations are satisfied.

The Entity recognises revenue from the following major sources:

- i. Government subventions – These subventions are based on the annual government general estimates and are recognised when received.

1. Accounting policies – continued

d. Foreign currencies

*Functional and presentation currency*

Items included in the Entity's financial statements are measured using the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates. The Euro is the Entity's functional and presentation currency.

*Transactions and balances*

Foreign currency transactions are translated into the functional currency (Euro) using the exchange rates prevailing at the dates of the transactions. Foreign exchange gains and losses resulting from the settlement of such transactions and from the translation at year-end exchange rates of monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

e. Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment, comprising, improvements to premises, air conditioners, computer equipment, furniture, fixtures and fittings, motor vehicles and signages, are initially recorded at cost and are subsequently stated at cost less depreciation. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of items.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount, or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the Entity, and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. All other repairs and maintenance are charged to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income during the financial year in which they are incurred.

Depreciation is calculated on the straight-line method on a monthly basis to allocate the cost of the assets to their residual values over their estimated useful lives as follows:

• Improvement to premises	2%
• Air conditioners	10%
• Computer equipment	25%
• Furniture, fixtures and fittings	10%
• Motor vehicles	20%
• Signages	2%

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at the end of each reporting year.

Gains and losses on disposal of property, plant and equipment are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount and are taken into account in determining operating profit.

An asset's carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if its carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount (Accounting policy (f)).

**1. Accounting policies – continued**

**f. Impairment of non-financial assets**

At each reporting date, the Entity reviews the carrying amounts of its property, plant and equipment to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any). Where the asset does not generate cash flows that are independent from other assets, the Entity estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs. When a reasonable and consistent basis of allocation can be identified, corporate assets are also allocated to individual cash-generating units, or otherwise they are allocated to the smallest group of cash-generating units for which a reasonable and consistent allocation basis can be identified.

Recoverable amount is the higher of fair value less costs of disposal and value in use. In assessing value in use, the estimated future cash flows are discounted to their present value using a pre-tax discount rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the asset for which the estimates of future cash flows have not been adjusted.

If the recoverable amount of an asset (or cash-generating unit) is estimated to be less than its carrying amount, the carrying amount of the asset (or cash-generating unit) is reduced to its recoverable amount. An impairment loss is recognised immediately in profit or loss, unless the relevant asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the impairment loss is treated as a revaluation decrease and to the extent that the impairment loss is greater than the related revaluation surplus, the excess impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss.

Where an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset (or cash-generating unit) is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, but so that the increased carrying amount does not exceed the carrying amount that would have been determined had no impairment loss been recognised for the asset (or cash-generating unit) in prior years. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised immediately in profit or loss to the extent that it eliminates the impairment loss which has been recognised for the asset in prior years. Any increase in excess of this amount is treated as a revaluation increase.

**g. Financial instruments**

Financial liabilities are recognised in the Entity's statement of financial position when the Entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value. Transaction costs that are directly attributable to the acquisition or issue of financial liabilities (other than financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss) are added to or deducted from the fair value of the financial liabilities, as appropriate, on initial recognition. Transaction costs directly attributable to the acquisition of or financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss are recognised immediately in profit or loss.

1. Accounting policies – continued

g. Financial instruments – continued

i) Financial liabilities and equity

▪ Classification as debt or equity

Debt and equity instruments are classified as either financial liabilities or as equity in accordance with the substance of the contractual arrangements and the definitions of a financial liability and an equity instrument.

▪ Equity instruments

An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of an entity after deducting all of its liabilities. Equity instruments issued by the Entity are recognised at the proceeds received, net of direct issue costs.

Repurchase of the Entity's own equity instruments is recognised and deducted directly in equity. No gain or loss is recognised in profit or loss on the purchase, sale, issue or cancellation of the Entity's own equity instruments.

▪ Financial liabilities

All financial liabilities are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method. The Entity does not have financial liabilities measured at fair value through profit or loss.

However, financial liabilities that arise when a transfer of a financial asset does not qualify for derecognition or when the continuing involvement approach applies, and financial guarantee contracts issued by the Entity, are measured in accordance with the specific accounting policies set out below.

*Financial liabilities at amortised cost*

Financial liabilities that are not (i) contingent consideration of an acquirer in a business combination, (ii) held-for-trading, or (iii) designated as at FVTPL, are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Financial liabilities are classified, at initial recognition, as loans and borrowings, payables, or as derivatives designated as hedging instruments in an effective hedge, as appropriate. All financial liabilities are recognised initially at fair value and, in the case of loans and borrowings and payables, net of directly attributable transaction costs.

The effective interest method is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial liability and of allocating interest expense over the relevant period. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments (including all fees and points paid or received that form an integral part of the effective interest rate, transaction costs and other premiums or discounts) through the expected life of the financial liability, or (where appropriate) a shorter period, to the amortised cost of a financial liability.

The Entity's financial liabilities include trade and other payables which are short-term.

**1. Accounting policies – continued**

**g. Financial instruments – continued**

**i) Financial liabilities and equity – continued**

A financial liability is derecognised when the obligation under the liability is discharged or cancelled or expires. When an existing financial liability is replaced by another from the same lender on substantially different terms, or the terms of an existing liability are substantially modified, such an exchange or modification is treated as the derecognition of the original liability and the recognition of a new liability. The difference in the respective carrying amounts is recognised in the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income.

**h. Cash and cash equivalents**

In the statement of financial position, cash and cash equivalents are comprised of cash (i.e. cash on hand and on-demand deposits).

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents consist of cash and cash equivalents as defined above.

**i. Employee benefits**

The Entity contribute towards the state pension in accordance with local legislation. The only obligation is to make the required contributions. Costs are expensed in the year in which they are incurred.

**j. Government grants**

Government grants are not recognised until there is reasonable assurance that the Entity will comply with the conditions attaching to them and that the grants will be received.

Government grants are recognised in profit or loss on a systematic basis over the periods in which the Entity recognises as expenses the related costs for which the grants are intended to compensate. Specifically, government grants whose primary condition is that the Entity should purchase, construct or otherwise acquire non-current assets (including property, plant and equipment) are recognised as deferred income in the statement of financial position and transferred to profit or loss on a systematic and rational basis over the useful lives of the related assets.

Government grants that are receivable as compensation for expenses or losses already incurred or for the purpose of giving immediate financial support to the Entity with no future related costs are recognised in profit or loss in the period in which they become receivable.

The benefit of a government loan at a below-market rate of interest is treated as a government grant, measured as the difference between proceeds received and the fair value of the loan based on prevailing market interest rates.

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**2. Revenue**

	2024	2023
	€	€
Government subventions	<b>1,500,000</b>	850,000

The above fall under IFRS 15 and are recognised at a point in time.

**3. Expenses by nature**

The major items included within profit or loss are included below:

	2024	2023
	€	€
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment (Note 5)	25,669	14,430
Professional fees	83,058	29,578
Staff costs (Note 4)	608,059	415,938
Auditor's remuneration	1,521	1,121

**Auditor's fees**

Fees charged (including VAT) by the auditor for the services rendered during the financial period ended 31 December 2024 and 2023 relates to the following:

	2024	2023
	€	€
Audit fee	1,521	1,121
Tax advisory services	236	295
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	1,757	1,416
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The Entity did not incur any other non-audit services fees during the period ended 31 December 2024 from the Entity's auditors.

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**4. Staff costs**

	2024	2023
	€	€
Wages and salaries	575,644	398,915
Social security costs	32,415	17,023
<b>Total staff costs</b>	<b>608,059</b>	415,938

Average number of full-time equivalents employed by the Entity during the year:

	2024	2023
	€	€
Operational	9	7
Administration	3	3
<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	

**5. Property, plant and equipment**

	Improvements to premises €	Air- €	Computer equipment €	Furniture €	Fixture and fittings €	Motor vehicles €	Signage €	Total €
<b>At 1 January 2023</b>								
Cost	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Accumulated depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net book amount	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Movements for year ended</b>								
Opening net book amount	37,475	5,632	40,204	40,717	27,843	-	-	-
Additions	(748)	(408)	(7,890)	(3,364)	(1,769)	-	-	-
Depreciation charge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Closing net book amount	<b>36,727</b>	<b>5,224</b>	<b>32,314</b>	<b>37,353</b>	<b>26,074</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,818</b>	<b>140,510</b>
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>								
Cost	37,475	5,632	40,204	40,717	27,843	-	-	-
Accumulated depreciation	(748)	(408)	(7,890)	(3,364)	(1,769)	-	-	-
Net book amount	<b>36,727</b>	<b>5,224</b>	<b>32,314</b>	<b>37,353</b>	<b>26,074</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,818</b>	<b>140,510</b>

**5. Property, plant and equipment – continued**

	Improvements to premises	Air- conditioners	Computer equipment	Furniture	Fixture and fittings	Motor vehicles	Signage	Total
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
<b>At 1 January 2024</b>								
Cost	37,475	5,632	40,204	40,717	27,843	-	3,069	154,940
Accumulated depreciation	(748)	(408)	(7,890)	(3,364)	(1,769)	-	(251)	(14,430)
<b>Net book amount</b>	<b>36,727</b>	<b>5,224</b>	<b>32,314</b>	<b>37,353</b>	<b>26,074</b>	-	<b>2,818</b>	<b>140,510</b>
<b>Movements for year ended</b>								
<b>31 December 2024</b>								
Opening net book amount	36,727	5,224	32,314	37,353	26,074	-	2,818	140,510
Additions	-	2,063	29,187	4,188	-	32,324	-	67,762
Depreciation charge	(749)	(586)	(13,788)	(4,223)	(2,784)	(3,232)	(307)	(25,669)
<b>Closing net book amount</b>	<b>35,978</b>	<b>6,701</b>	<b>47,713</b>	<b>37,318</b>	<b>23,290</b>	<b>29,092</b>	<b>2,511</b>	<b>182,603</b>
<b>At 31 December 2024</b>								
Cost	37,475	7,695	69,391	44,905	27,843	32,324	3,069	222,702
Accumulated depreciation	(1,497)	(994)	(21,678)	(7,587)	(4,553)	(3,232)	(558)	(40,099)
<b>Net book amount</b>	<b>35,978</b>	<b>6,701</b>	<b>47,713</b>	<b>37,318</b>	<b>23,290</b>	<b>29,092</b>	<b>2,511</b>	<b>182,603</b>

Depreciation charge of €25,669 (2023: €14,430) is included in administrative expenses.

**6. Retained reserve**

Retained reserve comprises surplus generated during the period; net of deficits incurred.

**7. Trade and other payables**

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Current</b>		
Trade payables	10,917	39,257
Accruals	43,482	5,226
Other payables	12	-
	<hr/> <hr/> 54,411	<hr/> <hr/> 44,483

**8. Cash generated from operations**

Reconciliation of operating profit to cash generated from operations:

	2024 €	2023 €
Operating profit	358,171	149,265
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment (Note 5)	25,669	14,430
Changes in working capital:		
Trade and other payables	9,928	44,483
<b>Cash generated from operations</b>	<hr/> <hr/> 393,768	<hr/> <hr/> 208,178

**9. Cash and cash equivalents**

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, the cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year comprise the following:

	2024 €	2023 €
Cash at bank	<hr/> <hr/> 379,244	<hr/> <hr/> 53,238

## 10. Related party transactions

The National Skills Council is a public entity funded by the Government of Malta. Transactions with the Government of Malta during the year arose as shown hereunder:

	2024 €	2023 €
<b>Revenue</b>		
Government grants and subventions	1,500,000	850,000

No guarantees have been given or received. The terms and conditions in respect of the related parties balances do not specify the nature of the consideration to be provided in settlement.

## 11. Financial risk management

### Overview

The Entity has an exposure to the following risks arising from the use of financial instruments within its activities:

- Credit risk
- Liquidity risk
- Market risk

This note presents information about the Entity's exposure to each of the above risks, policies and processes for measuring and managing risk, and the Entity's management of capital. Further quantitative disclosures are included in these financial statements.

The responsibility for the management of risk is vested in the Chairperson. Accordingly, it is the Chairperson who has the overall responsibility for establishing an appropriate risk management framework.

### ***Credit risk***

Credit risk is the risk of financial loss to the Entity if a counterparty to a financial instrument fails to meet its contractual obligations and arises principally from the Entity's cash and cash equivalents held at banks. The carrying amounts of financial assets represent the maximum credit exposure.

The Entity assesses the credit quality by taking into account, past experience, and other factors.

### **Cash and cash equivalents**

The cash and cash equivalents held with banks as at 31 December 2024 are callable on demand and held with local financial institutions with high quality standing or rating. Management considers the probability of default from such banks to be insignificant. Therefore, based on the above, no loss allowance has been recognised by the Entity.

**11. Financial risk management – continued**

***Liquidity risk***

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Entity will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. The Entity's approach to managing liquidity is to ensure, as far as possible, that it will always have sufficient liquidity to meet its liabilities when due. Generally, the Entity ensures that it has sufficient cash on demand to meet expected operational expenditure, including the servicing of financial obligations.

The table below analyses the Entity's financial liabilities into relevant maturity grouping based on the remaining period at the end of the reporting period to the contractual maturity date. Trade and other payables are all repayable within one year.

As at 31 December 2024	Less than 1 year	Between 1 and 2 years	Between 2 and 5 years	Over 5 years	Total	Carrying amount
	€	€	€	€	€	€
Trade and other payables	54,411	-	-	-	54,411	54,411
	<b>54,411</b>	-	-	-	<b>54,411</b>	<b>54,411</b>
As at 31 December 2023	€	€	€	€	€	€
Trade and other payables	44,483	-	-	-	44,483	44,483
	<b>44,483</b>	-	-	-	<b>44,483</b>	<b>44,483</b>

***Market risk***

Market risk is the risk that changes in market prices, such as foreign exchange rates or interest rates, will affect the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument. The objective of market risk is to manage and control market risk exposures within acceptable parameters, while optimising the return on risk. There have been no changes to the Entity's exposure to market risks or the manner in which these risks are managed and measured.

*i) Foreign exchange risk*

Foreign exchange risk arises from future commercial transactions and recognised assets and liabilities which are denominated in a currency that is not the respective Entity's functional currency. The Entity is not exposed to foreign exchange risk.

The Company's cash and payables are denominated in Euro.

**11. Financial risk management – continued**

***Market risk – continued***

*ii) Cash flow and fair value interest rate risk*

The Entity is not exposed to cash flow or fair value interest rate risk.

*iii) Other price risks*

The Company is not exposed to equity price risks.

***Capital management***

The Entity's objective when managing capital is to safeguard its ability to continue as a going concern and to sustain the future development of the entity. The Entity's overall strategy remains unchanged from 2023.

The capital structure of the Entity consists of reserves.

The Entity is not subject to any externally imposed capital requirements.

***Fair values***

At 31 December 2024 the carrying amounts of cash at bank, payables and accrued expenses reflected in the financial statements are reasonable estimates of fair value.

**12. Events after reporting period**

There were no adjusting or significant non-adjusting events that have occurred between the end of the reporting year and at the date of authorisation by the Chairperson.

**13. Statutory information**

The National Skills Council was established by the Government of Malta, through Subsidiary Legislation 605.10 – National Skill Council (Establishment) Order.

**14. Income tax**

There is no income tax due for the year (2023: nil).

## Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of National Skills Council

### Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of National Skills Council ("the "Entity"), set out on pages 4 to 22, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2024, the and statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the period then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of material accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Entity as at 31 December 2024, and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards as adopted by the European Union (EU IFRSs).

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants' Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (IESBA Code) together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in accordance with the Accountancy Profession (Code of Ethics for Warrant Holders) Directive issued in terms of the Accountancy Profession Act (Cap. 281) in Malta, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Other Information

The Chairperson is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Chairperson's report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover this information, including the Chairperson's report. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

With respect to the Chairperson's Report, we also considered whether the Chairperson's Report includes the disclosures on the work we have performed, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Chairperson's report for the financial period for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

In addition, in light of the knowledge and understanding of the Entity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we are required to report if we have identified material misstatements in the Chairperson's report. We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Responsibilities of the Chairperson**

The Chairperson is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with EU IFRSs, and for such internal control as the Chairperson determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Chairperson is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Chairperson either intend to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Chairperson.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Chairperson' use of the going concern basis of accounting and based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

## Independent Auditor's Report – continued

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements – continued

We communicate with the Chairperson regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.



Lorraine Muscat  
Director

For and on behalf of  
**Equis Assurance Limited**  
Certified Public Accountants

NOUV  
MRO Frank Galea Road  
Zebbug, ZBG 9019  
Malta

4 April 2025



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