

Factsheet Malta

Main interoperability activities

Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) is the agency in Malta responsible for information technology in the public administrations. MITA has currently drafted NIF, the National ICT Interoperability Framework, for Malta no formal delivery date was provided. Next to that Malta has a considerable number of ongoing initiatives regarding interoperability (see 'other initiatives on interoperability').

Summary of the NIF

As specified within MITA's current three year strategy and business plan¹, the agency is responsible for the development of an Interoperability Framework which shall facilitate the delivery of Government Public services to citizens, businesses and European member state administrations.

In essence the National ICT Interoperability Framework²'s (NIF) objective is to guide the Public Sector in maximising the benefits from all technology investments by introducing ICT resources that are flexible, reusable and interoperable.

This version of the NIF (currently in advanced draft under review by management) shall mostly focus on the identification of technical enablers for the exchange of meaningful information and the ability to reuse existing ICT resources. It shall consider organisational challenges, but shall not directly take into consideration the legal perspective of Public Services.

This document will not present policy, regulation and/or compliance perspectives as these activities fall directly within the ICT Governance and the Compliance Management Frameworks respectively. Related policy documentation shall be issued separately on the GMICT Policy portal³ to compliment the framework's guidance.

The NIF takes into account the European context by, among other things, specifically adopting the definitions and introducing the principles and recommendations issued by the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) as directed by the European Interoperability Strategy (EIS).

The NIF provides a series of tools and guidelines to support Public Sector organisations undertaking interoperability initiatives. It is structured as follows:

- Introduction to the NIF purpose, objectives, key principles and main definitions used throughout;
- A conceptual model for an **Interoperability Architecture** that identifies key **Interoperability Agreements** across the Public Sector to reduce the interoperability gap in a connected Government paradigm. This section sets the scene for more in depth organisational (including business processes), data (semantic) and technical discussions;
- **Organisational interoperability** principles and recommendations for service attributes to contribute in designing interoperable business processes;
- Introduction to the concept of **semantic interoperability** and identification of steps to discover and standardise Government's data assets. This section shall contribute in evolving data into

¹https://www.mita.gov.mt/MediaCenter/PDFs/1_MITA%20Strategic%20Plan%202009-2012%20%28web%29.pdf

² <https://www.mita.gov.mt/page.aspx?pageid=275>

³ <https://www.mita.gov.mt/page.aspx?pageid=216>

meaningful and reusable information by introducing, among other things, data provisioning principles, typical characteristics of reusable data and potential sources for reuse;

- A standardisation approach to **technical interoperability**, including contextualisation through Interoperability Profiles.

Alignment NIF/EIF

Although Malta is pursuing interoperability among the different levels of public administrations through various initiatives (see 'other initiatives on interoperability'), no officially published NIF exists yet. MITA is currently defining a NIF for Malta. The NIF/EIF alignment will be made after the formal publication of the Maltese NIF.

Other initiatives on interoperability

Open Standards: MITA, the central driver of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Malta, is leading an initiative to disseminate the culture of Open Standards within Government and the local ICT industry. In May 2011, MITA has updated the Open Standards policy and directive to harmonise Government's direction with the guidance given by the European Interoperability Framework version 2.0 document published by the Commission on December 2010. This includes the definition and approach towards formalised specifications and "openness" characteristics.

GMICT policies: MITA is responsible for the upkeep of the Government of Malta ICT Policies, Directives, Procedures and Standards, collectively referred to as the GMICT Policy Framework.

Open recommendations: In August 2011, MITA published a Formalised Specification Adoption procedure, a set of guidelines and a request form template ⁴ to provide the public sector, business community and the general public the opportunity to request the consideration for the application of formalised specifications within Government.

Catalogue of formalised specifications: During 2012, the current list of adopted specifications will evolve into a more effective catalogue that is in line with today's public procurement approaches. This forms part of the overall ICT Standardisation lifecycle capturing the overall Interoperability principle of inter-operation through standards.

ICT Vocabulary Standard: MITA is also trying to create common, formal, recognised taxonomies and vocabularies across Government.

Re-use of data and infrastructure services: MITA is also promoting the concept of re-use of corporate shared and/or common data and infrastructure services across Government by formalising "data registries" and identifying "core" enterprise architecture components.

Interoperability Architecture Model: Between Q3 and Q4 of 2011, MITA will also explore the concept and applicability of the Interoperability Architecture model, currently being developed by the European Commission ISA Interoperability Architecture working group, for local use. This will constitute the baseline for relevant practices and measures for the additional targets established for this initiative.

NIF responsables for Malta

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⁴ <https://www.mita.gov.mt/page.aspx?pageid=217>

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