



# NIFO Factsheet – Malta

The main online sources related to interoperability in Malta are

- The National ICT interoperability framework: [https://mita.gov.mt/en/Technology/Initiatives/Interoperability/Documents/NIF\\_framework.pdf](https://mita.gov.mt/en/Technology/Initiatives/Interoperability/Documents/NIF_framework.pdf)
- The GMICT Policies: <https://mita.gov.mt/en/GMICT/Pages/General-GMICT-Policies.aspx>
- Digital Malta, National Digital Strategy 2014 – 2020: <https://digitalmalta.gov.mt/en/Pages/Home.aspx>

## Main interoperability highlights

The Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) is the agency in Malta responsible for information technology in the public administrations. MITA has published the National ICT Interoperability Framework<sup>1</sup> in May 2013. Next to this, Malta has a number of on-going initiatives regarding interoperability.

## Summary of the NIF

As specified within MITA's three year strategy and business plan<sup>2</sup>, the agency is responsible for the development of an Interoperability Framework which facilitates the delivery of Government Public services to [citizens](#), [businesses](#) and European Member State administrations. In essence, the objective of the National ICT Interoperability Framework (NIF) 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 mostly focuses on the identification of technical enablers for the exchange of meaningful information and the ability to reuse existing ICT resources. It considers organisational challenges, but does not directly take into consideration the legal perspective of public services.

The policy, regulation and compliance perspectives of the NIF have been issued as separate documents under the ICT Governance and the Compliance Management Frameworks. Relevant policies include the Interoperability and Open Specifications Policy, Formalised Specification Adoption Procedure, Adopted Specifications that can be found online on the GMICT Policy portal<sup>3</sup>. 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 EIF.

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;

<sup>1</sup> [https://mita.gov.mt/en/Technology/Initiatives/Interoperability/Documents/NIF\\_framework.pdf](https://mita.gov.mt/en/Technology/Initiatives/Interoperability/Documents/NIF_framework.pdf)

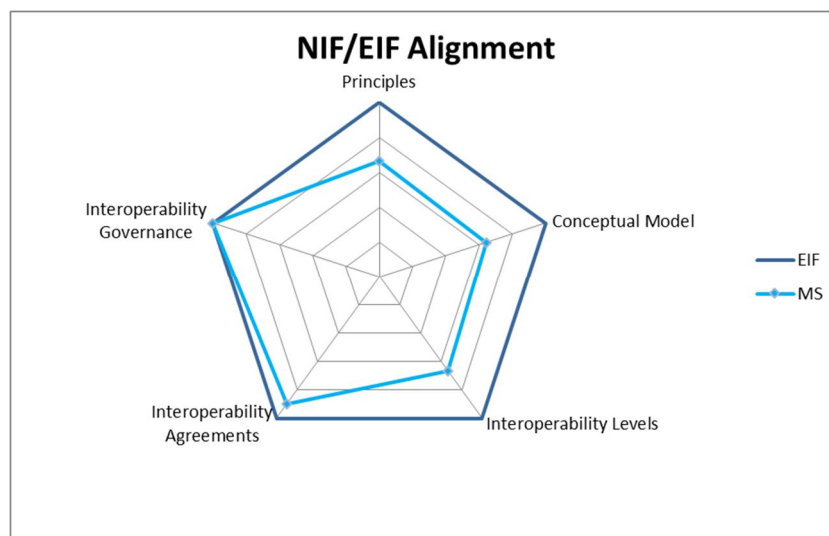
<sup>2</sup> [https://www.mita.gov.mt/MediaCenter/PDFs/1\\_MITA%20Strategic%20Plan%202009-2012%20%28web%29.pdf](https://www.mita.gov.mt/MediaCenter/PDFs/1_MITA%20Strategic%20Plan%202009-2012%20%28web%29.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://mita.gov.mt/en/GMICT/Pages/General-GMICT-Policies.aspx>

- 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 contributes to evolving data into 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

NIF/EIF alignment shows that the Maltese NIF is well aligned with the EIF.



The Maltese NIF fully aligns with four of the twelve EIF principles. These principles are openness, security and privacy, reusability and user-centricity. The Maltese NIF partially aligns with the eight other principles.

Four of the items relating to the conceptual model are partially aligned with the EIF – they are a components-based service model, a common scheme, infrastructure to connect loosely coupled service components, access and control mechanisms and the development of interfaces to authentic sources. Malta has a formal conceptual model as presented in the NIF and encourages making authentic sources of information available.

The interoperability levels described in the Maltese NIF are fairly aligned with the ones described by the EIF. Half of the items are fully aligned with the EIF: they relate to the business processes, a common taxonomy, communities on semantic interoperability and the usage of



formalized specifications to ensure technical interoperability. Two of the items are partially observed: the four levels of interoperability and detail on the business processes (interaction among the different levels of government). Three items were not observed: the consideration to note all relevant legislation related to data exchange, the clarification of organisational relationships and, a change management processes. Generally, the four levels of interoperability are described, together with the political level. The legal framework is noted in the document (it is not referenced with a precise naming nor a clear indication on where this legislation could be found).

Four of the items relating to interoperability agreements are fully aligned with the EIF – they are the basis for interoperability agreements to be based on formalised specifications, encouragement for public administrations to use open specifications, the minimum service requirements for secure data exchange as well as the usage of a structured, transparent and objective approach to assess and select formalised specifications. One is partially observed: relating to leading or participating to standardization work.

There is full alignment for the governance framework. The process exists (GMICT policies and the ICT Governance Framework<sup>4</sup>), interoperability is considered as one of the elements of any given ICT solution. ICT solutions acquired by government are part of the overall enterprise architecture and are therefore governed by the EA policy. Architects assessing solutions, shall use the NIF and relevant policies to guide solution designers accordingly.

More detailed information on NIF / EIF alignment is provided on the NIFO Community on JoinUp on the [Compare NIFs](#) page.

#### Example of alignment –EIF principle 10: Reusability

In Malta, the National ICT Interoperability Framework (NIF) is driven, among other things, by the following objective: shared and reusable information and communication technology (ICT) assets owned by the public sector are discoverable and can be used by public services with minimal effort.

- The Framework includes a Section 2.3 "Share, discover and reuse" which specifies that ICT solutions, based on multilateral agreements, can be viewed as shared or common services of a generic nature which meet common user requirements across multiple sectors and policy areas. It is a consumable service that can be used without modification, in support of the implementation of the public service being offered. An example of a common service (from a technology perspective), provided and managed by the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA), is MAGNET - the Government's own private IP-based network. MAGNET offers a telecommunications interconnection platform that responds to the growing need for secure information exchange between public sector organisations. To be effective, services and tools need to be:
  - o 1. Created with reusability in mind and are shared by their owners;
  - o 2. Discoverable by and meaningful to their consumers.
- There are also plenty of opportunities for reuse beyond our borders. International best practice, data schemas and even entire software solutions can be found from reputable sources and adopted as-is or with minor modifications.

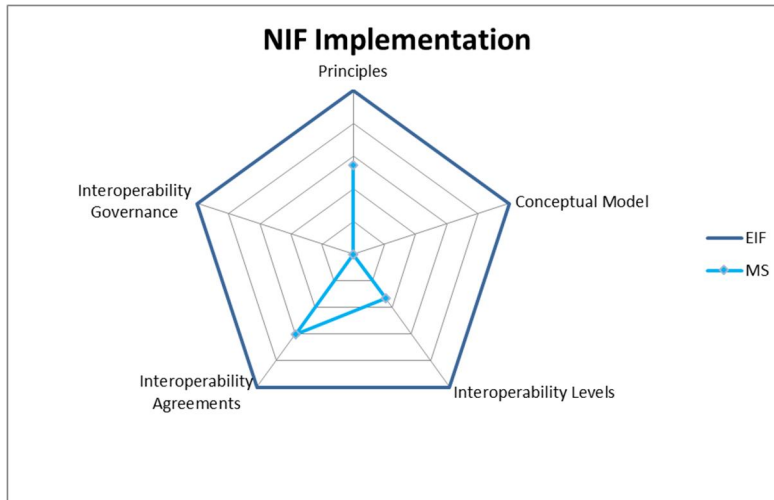
See NIF Framework, chapter 2, section 2.3 Share, Discover and Reuse

[http://mita.gov.mt/en/Technology/Initiatives/Interoperability/Documents/NIF\\_framework.pdf](http://mita.gov.mt/en/Technology/Initiatives/Interoperability/Documents/NIF_framework.pdf)

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

## Implementation of NIF

Examples of implementation of principles, interoperability levels and interoperability agreements have been identified.



For the principles dimension, nine out of twelve are implemented, four at a large scale. The principles not implemented are preservation of information, technology neutrality and adaptability, and effectiveness and efficiency.

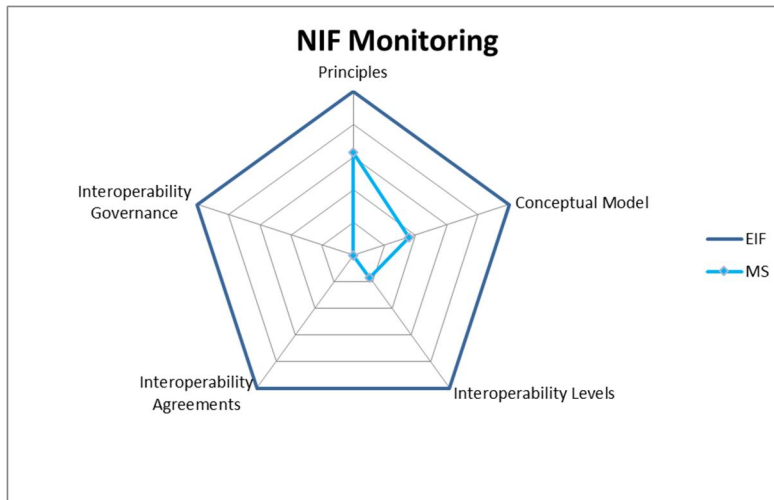
For the interoperability levels, three out of the nine criteria are implemented: change management, cross-sectoral communities supporting semantic interoperability and a list of adopted formalised specifications<sup>5</sup> used when establishing public eServices.

As regards the interoperability agreements, this is implemented through the Formal Specifications suite in the GMICT Policy section of the MITA website<sup>6</sup>: Formalised Specifications Adoption Procedure, Formalised Specification Adoption Guidelines, and Formalised Specification Adoption Request Form. Moreover there is an internal repository of application forms, analysis and results.

<sup>5</sup> [http://mita.gov.mt/en/GMICT/GMICT%20Policies/GMICT\\_X\\_0071\\_Adopted\\_Specifications\\_v8.0.pdf](http://mita.gov.mt/en/GMICT/GMICT%20Policies/GMICT_X_0071_Adopted_Specifications_v8.0.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://mita.gov.mt/en/GMICT/Pages/General-GMICT-Policies.aspx>

## Monitoring of NIF



All principles are monitored, through the MITA architecture assessment but also through the digital strategy for Malta 2014 – 2020<sup>7</sup>. All actions and initiatives defined in the Digital Malta Strategy are monitored and reported publicly. Reports are made available through the Digital Malta portal<sup>8</sup>.

The conceptual model and the interconnection of service components are monitored through the MITA architecture assessment.

### Example of monitoring – Conceptual Model

In Malta, the conceptual model is monitored as follows:

- MITA uses an architecture assessment process to establish and influence the technology strategy aspects based on the Government's vision and drive through governance, the relevant implementations. These aspects include, amongst others, strategy, operational alignment, governance and architecture.

See [https://mita.gov.mt/en/Technology/Initiatives/Interoperability/Documents/ISF\\_framework.pdf](https://mita.gov.mt/en/Technology/Initiatives/Interoperability/Documents/ISF_framework.pdf)

More information on all the implementation and monitoring examples is provided on the NIFO Community on JoinUp on the [Compare NIFs](#) page.

## Other initiatives on interoperability

In February 2014, the Local Councils' Association (LCA), an organisation that represents all 68 Local Councils in Malta and Gozo, launched Open Data Malta (<http://opendatamalta.com/>). This is the first governmental portal aimed at making the Public Sector Information (PSI) in Malta available and re-usable.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.digitalmalta.gov.mt/en/Pages/Home.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.digitalmalta.gov.mt/en/Pages/Home.aspx>



The Digital Strategy 2014 - 2020<sup>9</sup> sets out the vision for “a digitally-enabled country empowering its people, communities and entrepreneurs through the intelligent and universal use of ICT” that aims to improve citizens’ life, to improve community services and to help enterprises grow and become more competitive through ICT.

MITA, the central driver of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Malta, is leading an initiative to disseminate the culture of Open Standards<sup>10</sup> 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. In 2012, the Open Standards policy and directive have been consolidated with other interoperability related policy statements in the Interoperability and Open Specifications Policy.

MITA is responsible for the upkeep of the Government of Malta ICT Policies<sup>11</sup>, Directives, Procedures and Standards, collectively referred to as the GMICT Policy Framework.

In June 2015, Malta’s Information Technology Agency (MITA) together with Denmark’s Digital Agency (Digitaliseringsstyrelsen) organise trainings and workshops for local council officials and citizens on eGovernment solutions. This initiative is part of Malta’s Public Services Online project, which aims to improve government efficiency and effectiveness (<http://www.gov.mt/en/Pages/banner%20pages/2015/Public%20Services%20Online/Public-Service-online-in-depth.aspx>).

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<sup>9</sup> <https://digitalmalta.gov.mt/en/Pages/Home.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mita.gov.mt/page.aspx?pageid=269>

<sup>11</sup> <https://mita.gov.mt/en/GMICT/Pages/General-GMICT-Policies.aspx>