

Malta's Second Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Main Messages

The decision to present Malta's Second Voluntary National Review (VNR) is a testament to Malta's long-standing commitment to sustainable development. The review builds on progress from Malta's first VNR (2018). The process of drafting this VNR included work on a new strategic framework for domestic development-related actions, extensive stakeholder involvement, and reliance on comprehensive data.

Two pivotal strategic documents guide Malta's sustainable development agenda: Malta's Sustainable Development Vision for 2050 (2018) and Malta's Sustainable Development Strategy for 2050 (2024). The Strategy focuses on five strategic goals: transitioning towards a climate-neutral green and blue economy; preserving sustainable urban development and cultural heritage; ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all; accelerating digital transformation, smart mobility and connectivity; and achieving social fairness and prosperity for all.

Malta has built a transparent and participatory multi-stakeholder process that has evolved since the first VNR. The Ministry for the Environment, Energy, and Public Cleanliness (MEEC) coordinated Malta's Second VNR, adopting a whole-of-government approach. A Technical Working Group led by MEEC, comprising representatives from all Ministries and the National Statistics Office (NSO), was set up to ensure a comprehensive and evidence-based review.

Other vital stakeholders, including civil society representatives, academia, the private sector, and individuals, were also mobilised, ensuring a whole-of-society approach. Stakeholder engagement was facilitated through an interest-influence mapping exercise, tailored questionnaires and a Multi-Stakeholder Forum. Social media campaigns enhanced public awareness, ensuring inclusivity and the principle of leaving no one behind.

Malta acknowledges the critical role of young people in advancing sustainable development. A dedicated SDG Youth Meetup provided a platform for youth to discuss progress, challenges, and future directions related to the SDGs. The highlight of these contributions was a dedicated chapter written by Malta's SDG Youth Champions and the UN Youth Delegate.

Enhanced collaboration with the NSO has strengthened data collection and monitoring since the first VNR, allowing for more accurate progress tracking across all SDGs. Malta's Second VNR features a comprehensive Statistical Annex highlighting Malta's evolution across all SDGs since 2015.

Malta's Second VNR showcases Malta's efforts to adopt multiple initiatives that have contributed positively to socio-economic and environmental sustainability. Indeed, the indicators verify the effectiveness of the measures implemented with reduced poverty among adults aged 18-64,

rising employment rates, growth in the value-added of small-scale industries, and sustained investment in innovation.

Malta has made progress in gender equality, particularly by reducing pay gaps, increasing female representation in leadership and politics, and strengthening legal frameworks against gender-based violence. In education, completion rates have risen, and digital skills have improved.

Progress in health includes increasing life expectancy and improving healthcare coverage. Urban greening, heritage preservation, and air pollution reduction have enhanced the quality of the environment. Measures have also effectively reduced domestic material consumption and increased municipal waste recycling. Ambitious measures for renewable energy and the expansion and modernisation of electricity infrastructure also led to positive results. Moreover, Malta has nearly universal access to safe drinking water and wastewater treatment coverage. Significant progress has been made in marine protection, including the establishment of 18 Marine Protected Areas.

These positive trends reflect Malta's commitment to sustainable development. However, looking at SDG implementation worldwide, the need for further action, particularly in response to global challenges such as rising geopolitical uncertainty, the climate crisis, social inequalities, and digitalisation, is clear.

In conclusion, the second VNR builds on the lessons learned from the first review, demonstrating significant progress in Malta's approach to sustainable development. Malta's Sustainable Development Strategy for 2050 will address gaps identified in Malta's Second VNR, further consolidate progress, and ensure that Malta continues to advance towards full implementation of the SDGs.