

SME-related policy measures adopted, implemented or announced in 2021

MALTA

Title of the measure (national language)	Title of the measure (English translation)	Implementing body	Adopted / implemented / announced as part of the 'National Recovery and Resilience Plan' (Yes / No)	Status (Adopted or implemented or announced)	Date of adoption / implementation or announcement (DD/MM/YYYY)	General description (objectives / key features / budget - if applicable, and weblink to online source)
ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY						
Business Reengineering and Transformation Scheme		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Not specified	Implemented	01/01/2021 until 31/12/2023	<p>Objectives: to support SMEs in realigning their business activity by restructuring their product, human resource and/or service portfolio, and optimising the use of technology by embracing green technology and practices.</p> <p>Key features: eligible costs include consultancy services of at least 2 independent advisors to facilitate business transformation in one of the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Digitisation of business processes including the deployment of IoT, artificial intelligence, machine learning and predictive analytics. 2) Identify inefficient use of resources and improve operational performance, reduce errors and improve accountability.

						<p>Aid format: cash grant covering 50% of eligible consultancy costs up to a maximum of EUR 5,000 per beneficiary.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 2.5m</p> <p>https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Business%20Re-engineering%20and%20Transformation%20Scheme%20with%20Annex%20%28Version%201.0%29%20Final 0.pdf</p>
Support for the Construction Industry to replace existing machinery with new, more environmentally-friendly machinery and equipment		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Yes	Implemented	01/12/2020 until 31/12/2021	<p>Objectives: to encourage operators in the construction industry to scrap and replace old machinery and/or equipment with new machinery that generates less harmful emissions, and to invest in equipment that can help reduce the environmentally harmful emissions released by their activity.</p> <p>Key features: the scheme provides a grant covering up to 40% of the cost of new machinery / equipment to replace machinery that was manufactured prior to 2015. An additional 20% is applicable when new machinery is electrically powered, and 10% in the case of a hybrid power source.</p> <p>Aid format: Uncapped grants.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 4m</p> <p>https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Construction%20Industry%20Scheme%20Guidelines%20%28Final%29_1.pdf</p>
SOCIAL ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY						
Eco-friendly Retail Investment Grant		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Not specified	Implemented	01/06/2021 until 30/11/2021	<p>Objectives: to encourage the reduction of packaging and single use plastic in the retail industry through the use of bulk dispensers and reusable containers.</p> <p>Key features: the scheme provides financing to manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers for the purchase of in-store solutions that enable the sale of</p>

						<p>items through reusable containers. Related investments required to implement and facilitate the use of these solutions are also eligible. The scheme covers dispensing equipment, rental of additional retail space, purchase of reusable containers, as well as setting up of collection points for cleaning and sanitisation of reusable containers.</p> <p>Aid format: cash grant of 50% of eligible expenditure capped at EUR 20,000 per project.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 1m</p> <p>https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Eco%20Friendly%20Retail%20Investment%20Grant%20%20-%20Incentive%20Guidelines%20V1.0.pdf</p>
DIGITALISATION (e.g. Digital Innovation Hubs, training, vouchers, grants or loans for digitalisation and to invest in new digital equipment, etc.)						
Smart and Sustainable Investment Grant		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Not specified	Implemented	01/10/2021 until 30/11/2023	<p>Objectives: to encourage business in investing in sustainable and digitalised processes.</p> <p>Key features: eligible projects fall in the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) waste minimisation – modifications or new machinery to reduce waste, reduce packaging or increase lifespan of products 2) sustainable materials – shift to the use of more environmentally friendly materials 3) energy efficiency – reduction in power requirements, insulation, combined heat and power generation 4) water efficiency – water recycling, capture of rainwater 5) digitalisation for sustainability – online shops and services, improved logistics, building management systems. <p>Aid format: cash grant of 50% of eligible expenditure capped at EUR 50,000 per project.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 5m</p>

						https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Smart%20and%20Sustainability%20Development%20Grant%20%28V%201.0%29.pdf
Digitalisation Assistance to Micro and SMEs		Tech.mt	No	Implemented	2021	Tech.mt spearheaded an initiative where Tech.mt is assisting businesses with limited to no digital presence, in digitalising their business. A dedicated team at Tech.mt offers guidance to businesses in every step of their digitalisation journey, from setting up social media pages, to creating a website and eCommerce platform. https://tech.mt/
Kors onlajn fuq t- Trasformazzjoni digitalis tan- Negozju	Online Course about Digital Business Transformation	eSkills Malta Foundation	No	Implemented	Launched in 9 th June 2020 but still online	COVID-19 has brought unprecedented uncertainty and upheaval for all businesses. As companies struggle to adapt to this new reality, SMEs, in particular, are facing unique challenges but also exciting opportunities. To help SMEs in their business transformation, eSkills Malta Foundation has launched three Online tutorials developed by PwC on behalf of eSkills Malta Foundation. The tutorials cover Business Transformation, use of eCommerce, Communications, Competitiveness & Regulations, Effective team collaboration, tools & security. Budget: EUR 5,000 https://eskills.org.mt/en/elearning/Pages/eLearning.aspx
INNOVATION (e.g. vouchers, grants or loans for R&D and innovation, support to encourage SMEs to commercialise RTD results and to acquire patents, etc.)						
COVID-19 R&D Fund	COVID-19 R&D Fund	Malta Council for Science and Technology	No	Implemented	08.04.2021	Objectives: the COVID-19 R&D Fund was established to fund projects seeking to investigate solutions to address the pandemic. Aid Format: cash grant. Budget: Four projects were funded with a budget of EUR 3.54 million. Weblink:

						https://mcst.gov.mt/mcst-news/covid-19-rd-fund-four-projects-receive-research-funding-infectious-diseases-solutions/
Fusion programme – Technology Development Programme LITE		Malta Council for Science and Technology	No	Implemented	04/10/2021	<p>Objectives: the Technology Development Programme LITE provides financial support for research, development and innovation preferably within the SMART Specialisation Areas identified in Malta's National Research and Innovation Strategy 2020. The focus is on innovative research with high commercial Impact. It is similar to the existing Technology Development Programme but has more open eligibility criteria, a reduced funding limit and an easier application process.</p> <p>Key features: the programme funds projects centred on a Technology Readiness Level advancement of 4 through 7. Eligible costs include personnel costs, specialised equipment, travel and consumables.</p> <p>Aid format: cash grant covering 75% of eligible costs and capped at €150,000.</p> <p>Weblink: https://mcst.gov.mt/ri-programmes/fusion/technology-development-programme-lite/tdp-lite-open-call/ </p>
Exploring Research Grant		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Not specified	Implemented	01/03/2021 until 30/11/2021	<p>Objectives: to encourage R&D by providing finance for conducting Feasibility Studies prior to undertaking R&D.</p> <p>Key features: eligible costs include wage costs, contractual research, consultancy, licencing, specialised software, prototype development, consumables and other overheads and operating expenses.</p> <p>Aid format: cash grant of up to EUR 50,000 per beneficiary. The aid intensity varies from 50% for large enterprises to 70% for small ones.</p>

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Strategic Consultation Initiative for Students and Start-ups		Tech.mt	No	Implemented	Q1 2021	<p>Objective: to help start-ups and/or students which have an innovative concept but lack sufficient knowledge and experience to reach the next stage of their entrepreneurial journey. This measure will provide them with pro-bono, unbiased feedback from an external perspective, including concept validation, market assessment, management advice, strategic planning, marketing tactics, internationalisation. Through Tech.mt's consultation partners, currently standing at over 30, a predetermined number of hours of free consultancy are offered to eligible beneficiaries.</p> <p>A number of beneficiaries have already benefitted from this initiative, with glowing reviews and feedback about the quality of consultation provided by Tech.mt's partners. This is an ongoing initiative which Tech.mt will keep promoting and building upon in the foreseeable future.</p> <p>https://tech.mt/facilitating-connections/strategic-partnership-for-tech-startups-and-academia/</p>
MDIA Applied Research Grant		Malta Digital Innovation Authority	No	Implemented	11/01/2022	<p>Objectives: to support capacity-building efforts related to AI research in Malta.</p> <p>Key features: this grant will support activities carried out by applicants in the pursuit of an applied research project within the field of AI. Actions should be aimed at increasing capacity to conduct AI research, making a marked contribution to the field of AI research, or developing novel practical applications of AI technology, amongst other actions which the MDIA will also consider on a case by case basis.</p>

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SKILLS (e.g. vocational education and training, forecasting skill needs, measures to adapt the vocational training systems to the requirements of the labour market, etc.).						
Internationalisation and export management training course		Trade Ltd	Malta	No	Announced	<p>Planned for 16/03/2022 until 08/06/2022</p> <p>The training course for SMEs will include discussions with academia and industry leaders on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internationalisation opportunities and risks • Going digital • International market research • Legal considerations • Networking and relationship management • Financing • Creativity and innovation management • Using social media <p>https://www.trademalta.org/save-the-date-go-global-internationalisation-and-export-management-training-course/</p>
Bootcamp fuq Hiliet Digitali	Digital Skills Bootcamp	eSkills Foundation	Malta	No	Implemented	<p>Launched in April 2021</p> <p>Digital course sessions to various target groups including SME's labour force, teachers and students, citizen, and ICT professionals. Amongst the courses applicable to SMEs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Careers in the Esports Industry for Youth and Adults. - Business digital enablement for business owners for Executives or business leaders. - An introduction to Blockchain and Smart Contract Programming for adults. - Blockchain, DLT, Cryptocurrencies and Smart Contracts. - A Primer on 'Industry 4.0' for Business Leaders & Managers. - Modern Software Development using Microservices for ICT SME's.

						<p>- A Primer on 'Industry 4.0' for Business Leaders & Managers.</p> <p>Budget: Overall around EUR 50,000 https://eskills.org.mt/en/DigitalSkillsBootcamp2021/Pages/Digital-Skills-Bootcamp-2021.aspx</p>
Kors fuq l-elementi tal-Intelligenza Artificjali	Elements of AI course	eSkills Malta Foundation	No	Implemented	Launched in October 2020 but still online	<p>The eSkills Malta Foundation, in collaboration with the University of Malta, Reaktor and the University of Helsinki introduced a course about Artificial Intelligence (AI). The mission is to create a movement that helps people be empowered and not threatened by AI. This course gives an equal opportunity for all adult citizens of any age, employees and leaders from any sector, students from secondary education upwards, and educators of any subject, to know more about AI and its benefits and effect.</p> <p>https://eskills.org.mt/en/onlinetraining/elementsofai/Pages/Online-Launch-Elements-of-AI.aspx</p>
Kors fuq il-Kummerc Elektronicu (eBiznify)	Course on eCommerce (eBiznify)	eSkills Malta Foundation and the Malta Communications Authority (MCA)	No	Implemented	2021	<p>eBiznify training programme develops valuable skills and provides insights on all aspects of eCommerce. This time round, the programme is being offered through a collaborative effort between the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) and the eSkills Malta Foundation. Participants attend for a series of modules via a dedicated eLearning platform supported by guided online tutorials and peer-to-peer discussions.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 20,000</p> <p>https://eskills.org.mt/en/news/Pages/2021/eBiznify%20Lite%20and%20ICT%20Skills%20Demand%20and%20Supply%20Monitor%20Report%20launches%20and%20eBiznify%20graduation.aspx</p>
Monitor tad-domanda u l-provvista tal-hiliet u kompetenzi fis-settur tal ICT	ICT Skills Demand and Supply Monitor	eSkills Malta Foundation	No	Implemented	2021	<p>The Demand and Supply Monitor Report is a study undertaken by the eSkills Malta Foundation. The Demand and Supply Monitor project is a crucial one. It provides an accurate snapshot of the current demand by ICT entities (ICT companies, departments, and units) and the supply of ICT education and training in Malta. The project also gives a thorough</p>

						<p>analysis of many specific areas and looks at the international trending technologies. The project should guide both the demand and the supply organisations for the near- and long-term actions that are required.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 12,500</p> <p>https://eskills.org.mt/en/demandsupplymonitor/Pages/ICT-Skills-Demand-and-Supply-Monitor.aspx</p>
Qafas Ewropej ta' kompetenza fl-ICT	e-Competence Framework in ICT	eSkills Malta Foundation	No	Implemented	March 2021	<p>The e-Competence Framework (e-CF) is a European standard for ICT Professionals' competences that can be adapted and customised into different contexts. Its</p> <p>The eSkills Malta Foundation, in collaboration with IT Professionalism Europe (ITPE), organised a two-day online training course for the ICT Sector aimed to develop the capability of participants to use the Framework as a powerful support tool for the tasks mentioned above.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 5,000</p> <p>https://eskills.org.mt/en/Pages/e-Competence-Framework-in-practice.aspx</p>
ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN						
Increasing VAT Threshold		VAT Department	No	Adopted	01/01/2021	<p>Objectives: the objective of this measure is to reduce the administrative burden on SMEs with an annual turnover below EUR 30,000. The threshold for VAT exempt status was raised from the previous value of EUR 20,000 to EUR 30,000.</p> <p>https://cfr.gov.mt/en/vat/guidelines_to_certain_VAT_Procedures/Documents/Explanatory%20Note%20-%20Small%20Traders%20Threshold_EN.pdf</p>
Family Business: Transfer of Ownership		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Not specified	Implemented	01/05/2021 until 31/12/2021	<p>Objectives: to facilitate and assist transfer of family business from one generation to the next.</p> <p>Key features: transfer duty on immovable property on the first EUR 500,000 is charged at a reduced rate of</p>

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Family Business Grant		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Not specified	Implemented	01/05/2021 until 30/11/2023	<p>Objectives: to facilitate and assist transfer of family business from one generation to the next</p> <p>Key features: the scheme provides funding for (1) advisory services on succession planning and (2) mediation. Succession planning services can be supported at 50% of the costs up to a maximum of EUR 2,000 per assignment. Mediation services can be funded at the rate of EUR 100/hour up to a maximum of 25 hours of assistance.</p> <p>Aid format: cash grant capped at EUR 15,000 per family business in any rolling 3-year period.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 1m</p> <p>https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Incentive%20Guidelines%20Family%20Businesses%20Grant%20%28V1.0%29.pdf</p>
REGULATORY OBSTACLES						
ACCESS TO FINANCE (including guarantee schemes, public funding programmes, support for alternative financing and equity financing, favourable legal, tax and regulatory frameworks for investments, fiscal incentives)						
Access to Finance (Soft Loan)		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Not specified	Implemented	01/09/2021 until 30/10/2023	<p>Objectives: This scheme supports businesses' initiatives to establish new products, to enter a new geographic market, to reduce environmental impact or to digitalise processes.</p>

International Trade Promotion Incentive Scheme		Trade Malta	No	Implemented	01/01/2021 until 31/12/2023	<p>Objectives: to support businesses that want to enter new overseas markets.</p> <p>Key features: the scheme provides funding for exhibiting in trade fairs, brokerage and networking events, trade missions, market research and digital marketing.</p> <p>Aid format: cash grant of 50% of eligible costs for SMEs and 40% for large enterprises, capped at EUR 30,000 to a beneficiary in any calendar year.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 3m for the duration of the scheme</p> <p>https://www.maltabusiness.it/en/itpis-support-for-internationalisation-from-malta/</p>
START-UP ENVIRONMENT						
Business Start 2021		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Not specified	Implemented	01/01/2021 until 31/12/2023	<p>Objectives: the scheme offers seed and growth funding for small start-ups. The measure supports Small Start-up Undertakings that have a viable business concept throughout their development phase prior to seeking third party equity.</p> <p>Key features: Aid will be granted following an evaluation of the start-up's application on the basis of predefined criteria including commercial feasibility, financial feasibility, technological feasibility, innovation, market, process and know-how.</p> <p>Aid format: cash grant of up to EUR 10k for start-ups. Additional grants of up to EUR 20k per quarter may be awarded depending on progress and employee headcount. Total aid per beneficiary is capped at EUR 200k.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 10m</p> <p>https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Business%20Start%202021%20%28V1.0%29_0.pdf</p>

ReStart		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Yes	Implemented	01/07/2021 until 31/10/2022	<p>Objectives: to assist SMEs to get back up and running following closure due to COVID-19.</p> <p>Key features: the scheme provides grants for advisory services up to a maximum of EUR 5,000. A further EUR 5,000 may be granted for the implementation of actions arising from the advisory phase. Eligible costs include rent, marketing, recruitment services and other similar costs identified in the advisory phase.</p> <p>Budget: not specified</p> <p>https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/ReStart%20-%20Incentive%20Guidelines%20%28V%201.0%29.pdf</p>
SCALE-UP ENVIRONMENT						
Business Development Scheme 2021		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Specified	Implemented	01/01/2021 until 31/12/2023	<p>Objectives: to facilitate value-added projects, including new business initiatives, expansions and transformation activities that shall contribute to the regional development of Malta. Initiatives should lead to new opportunities, additional employment, increased competitiveness or widening market reach.</p> <p>Key features: activities such as undertakings establishing an operational base in Malta, expansion projects, consolidation of activities and the reengineering of business processes. Eligible activities include personnel relocation costs, wages, premises, support and advisory services, tangible assets and IP.</p> <p>Aid format: tax credit or cash grant of up to EUR 200k over a period of 3 years.</p> <p>Budget: EUR 5m annually</p> <p>https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Business%20Development%202021%20V1.1%20Final.pdf</p>
Change to Grow		Malta Enterprise Corporation	Yes	Implemented	01/07/2021 until 31/10/2022	<p>Objective: the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the business environment in ways that will endure even after the crisis is over. This scheme aims to assist SMEs to grow through measures which improve their</p>

						<p>efficiency, develop their product and/or service portfolio, embrace digital technology and implement green technology.</p> <p>Key features: the scheme provides grants for advisory services up to a maximum of EUR 5,000. A further EUR 5,000 may be granted for the implementation of actions arising from the advisory phase. Eligible activities include tangible assets, software products, new subscriptions to Software as a Service.</p> <p>Aid format: cash grant of up to EUR 10,000 with an aid intensity of 75% of eligible costs incurred.</p> <p>Budget: not specified</p> <p>https://maltaenterprise.com/sites/default/files/Change%20to%20Grow%20-%20Incentive%20Guidelines%20%28V1.0%29.pdf</p>
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS						
OTHER RELEVANT TOPICS (e.g. second chance for honest bankrupt entrepreneurs, bankruptcy prevention, entrepreneurship education, public procurement)						