



GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA

MALTA'S 4TH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON OPEN GOVERNMENT

2023 - 2025

Ministry for Justice
December 2023



MALTA'S 4TH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON OPEN GOVERNMENT

2023 - 2025

PREFACE

The creation of an inclusive justice system built upon the values enshrined within a people-centred approach encompass the next development in the justice journey of Malta. In order to reinforce foundations on which the rule of law is built in Malta, the need to further strengthen the democratic capital in our justice system is needed by transposing the values of inclusion, participative communication, transparency and accountability into meaningful actions.

The 4th National Action Plan for Open Government is another step forward in achieving this vision. The proposed actions all lie within the interplay between people-centred values and OGP priorities and reflect the government's commitment to work with all stakeholders in the co-creation of a more inclusive justice system. Three of the commitments within the Action Plan target access to justice measures directed towards special populations such as victims, minors, and youth, all supported by a digital infrastructure that aligns itself to the strategic goals of the Malta Digital Justice Strategy 2023. The fourth commitment addresses the need for a space in which an open dialogue between government and civil society can take place. These commitments aim to leverage the knowledge and expertise of both government and civil society in the formulation of more inclusive policies, thereby supporting the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 which focuses on promoting "... access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels".

Open Government has provided government with yet another pathway to enhance access to justice and build structures and processes that are inclusive, transparent and that promote citizen involvement.

INTRODUCTION

Open government policies represent one of the most important drivers to modernize public administrations and improve the quality of services delivered to citizens and businesses. Implementing the principles of open government allows for a more effective response to the growing need for transparency of administrative performance and for citizen and civil society participation.

The OECD describe open government as a culture that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth¹.

Open Government is widely promoted by the Open Government Partnership² (OGP) which is a global partnership initiative that includes 75 countries, 104 Local governments and thousands of civil society organisations. This partnership supports collaboration between governments and civil society organizations to come together to co-create two-year action plans with commitments to enhance transparency, accountability, and public participation in government. The OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) reports on how all countries meet the guidelines in co-creating their plans and delivering commitments over the period.

In this regard, Malta has prepared its two-year National Action Plan (NAP) for the cycle 2023-2025 which contain ambitious commitments defined in collaboration between government and civil society which are relevant to the values of transparency, accountability, and public participation; and contain specific, time-bound and measurable commitments.

¹ https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438#_ga=2.37822115.1251313301.1554450220-751648841.1537891795

² <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

MALTA'S PARTICIPATION IN OPEN GOVERNMENT

Malta's participation in the OGP dates to 2011, thereby committing to uphold the principles of open and transparent government by showing a level of citizen engagement and enabling civil partners to have enough power to be able to deliver their message to government. Since 2011 Malta has enhanced its contribution to open government through various initiatives, such as the introduction of e-government to provide better public service to the public, providing a legal framework for access of information, the launch of an open data webpage and an online public consultation platform where stakeholders and the public can participate.

Since joining OGP, Malta has submitted 3 National Action Plans (NAP). The First NAP for the period 2012 - 2013, the Second NAP covered the period 2015 - 2017 and the Third NAP covered the period 2018 - 2020.

However, in February 2020, the OGP Steering Committee placed Malta under Procedural Review due to not being in line to OGP process for two consecutive cycles for failing to deliver its 2017 action plan on time, and for not meeting the minimum participation and co-creation requirements during the development of its 2018 action plan. In addition, Malta failed to deliver a new action plan by the 31 December 2021 deadline, and as a result had again acted contrary to OGP process.

Due to this the OGP Steering Committee issued a Resolution dated 24th March 2022, designating Malta as inactive in the. The inactive status lasts up to one year from the date of the resolution, or until:

- Malta publishes an action plan, developed in line with OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards, or
- Malta works with the Steering Committee to set a clear timeline to start a new action plan cycle and re-engage with civil society to develop a new action plan.

Following a high-level commitment expressed by the Hon. Dr. Jonathan Attard, Minister for Justice, in April 2023, the OGP Steering Committee resolved to extend Malta's inactivity status up to December 31, 2023, thereby giving Malta the opportunity to proceed with setting a clear timeline to start a new action plan cycle and re-engage with civil society to develop Malta's Fourth National Action Plan 2023-2025.

DEVELOPMENT OF MALTA'S FOURTH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2023 - 2025

As part of its high-level commitment to start a new action plan, by the 20th May 2023, Malta submitted a clear time-line to start a new action plan cycle to the OGP Steering Committee.

The time-line indicated the actions to be taken in the Start-up Phase, the Involvement Phase with the participation of Civil Society and leading to the Development Phase where the action Plan is co-created together with Civil Society Organisations.

The Start-up Phase consisted from developing a dedicated website <https://opengov.gov.mt> to promote OGP initiatives, identification of possible themes as basis for public engagement and preparation for the creation of a multi-stakeholder forum.

The Involvement phase consisted of an outreach exercise with ministries and other State entities to identify possible themes for discussion. Through this exercise, 4 policy areas were identified in order to kick-start the discussion. The Policy areas identified related to civic participation, public service delivery, access to justice and inclusion.

Following the identification of the policy areas, 5 themes related to these policies were initially identified and made public on Malta's OGP website <https://opengov.gov.mt>. During this phase, a call inviting Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to participate in a Multi-Stakeholder Forum was issued in September 2023. Participants were also invited to choose up to two from the identified themes to participate in the discussion. Following the issue of this call, twelve (12) CSOs shown interest to participate in the Multi-Stakeholder Forum with their preferred themes.

The Development Phase consisted from holding the launch of the 1st Meeting of the Multi Stakeholder Forum whereby both Government representatives and CSO representatives were present. During the meeting the initial 5 themes were presented for discussion with a view of identifying commitments to be included in the Malta's Fourth National Action Plan. The five themes included areas related to justice initiatives and access to justice for minors; victims rights and victims support, and youths. Members of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum were divided into sub-groups and workshops to discuss the 5 themes and gather feedback.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM

In September 2023, the Ministry for Justice as lead Ministry coordinating the Open Government process for the development of Malta's 4th National Action Plan, issued a call inviting Civil Society Organisations and other non-Governmental Organisations to join a Multi-Stakeholder Forum, to engage with Government on the development of action plans on matters of national importance related to Malta's present and future vision. Participants were also invited to register their interest on 5 thematic areas that Government was putting forward for discussion. The themes on which discussions would take place were the following:-

- Justice Initiatives
- Victims' Rights
- Online Support to Victims
- Access to Justice for Minors
- Youth Proofing

A positive response for this invite was received from twelve Civil Society Organisations who all chose their area of interest in which they could contribute their expertise.

The Multi-Stakeholder Forum composed from Government reformers and representatives from Civil Society Organisations and other non-Governmental Organisations will be tasked to provide ideas and feedback, identify priorities, and propose commitments to be developed into action plans to be included in Malta's 4th National Action Plan.

THEMATIC AREAS CONSIDERED FOR MALTA'S 4TH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

The themes that were put forward to kick start the discussion in the Multi-Stakeholder Forum amounted to 5. The participating CSO's were asked to involve themselves in the discussions on two preferred themes each.

A summary of the themes under discussion were the following:

Theme 1 - Creating a Justice Forum

In the spirit of transparent and inclusive stakeholder consultation, the Ministry for Justice seeks to establish a consultation forum for justice-related initiatives that it will be working on. This think-tank seeks to involve a broad spectrum of NGOs, and representatives of various sectors of the Maltese population, in order to discuss ongoing initiatives being undertaken by the Ministry for Justice, but also address efforts at engaging in consultation on new reforms in the justice area. The Ministry believes that such consultation will ensure that justice-related initiatives are targeted, effective in their implementation and ensure that the initiatives reach a far-reaching audience as possible.

Theme 2- Awareness on Victims Rights

Taking note of the recent adopted revisions to the Victims Rights Directives, the Victims Support Agency and alongside the Department of Justice is willing to open a channel of discussion with other Stakeholders on the adoption of an action plan to conduct an awareness raising campaign to create awareness on Victims Rights. The promotional awareness campaign shall target access to information, improved support and protection, improved participation in criminal proceedings and facilitated access to compensation. The latter is emanating from Article A4(e) of the newly revised Victims Rights Directive

Theme 3 - Support to Victims of Crime

The Victim Support Agency is responsible for the provision of legal advice/guidance to Victims of Crime and is interested in exploring the development of an online legal tool kit enabling Victims of Crime to understand and exercise their rights better. This online toolkit shall assist both the relevant officials in various ministries who are tasked in providing support to victims and also to the victims themselves. Creating this toolkit through collaboration with the relevant stakeholders such as voluntary organisations will ensure the effectivity of such a toolkit.

Theme 4 - Facilitating access to Justice for minors

Back in 2011, UNICEF promoted the child-friendly governance approach that underscored the importance of good governance as a means to advance children's rights. Since then, major institutions such as the OECD and the European Commission have been espousing people-centred justice as a means of inclusion in policy-formulation and as providing the much-needed impetus to legislative reform. The initiative being proposed is targeted at providing access to justice to minors by setting up a dedicated website with information targeted at children about their rights and other information related to justice. The methodology employed in order to set-up such a portal will see the engagement of key stakeholders working with children including the children themselves. Such a participatory approach will foster transparency and accountability by raising awareness amongst key government and justice authorities to upgrade their services in respect to children, making justice truly more inclusive. The proposal is to develop a freely accessible information system aimed at providing information and facilitating access to justice for minors. This can include but not limited: Online information, telephone, Interactive chat and in-person access. The objective of this proposal is to heighten the Access to Justice principles and link with the National Digital Justice Strategy which is also a key pillar of people-centred justice.

Theme 5 - Youth Proofing

In the era of open governance, where transparency, participation, and collaboration are paramount, one aspect at times remains not clearly addressed: the role of the young people. As governments around the world increasingly embrace the principles of open governance, the importance of integrating the perspectives of the youth should be given importance as the future society that will need to implement. Their dynamic and forward-thinking perspectives can drive remarkable change in societies, and if we create safe spaces through which we can listen to their voices and aspirations we can harvest their potential to reshape the future. One such space would be the idea of Youth Proofing - a youth impact assessment mechanism that would find itself as an integral component of an open government system that has the potential to improve how legislation, policies and strategies are formulated for the benefit of young people and society in general. Integrating Youth Proofing into the decision-making process not only aligns seamlessly with the principles of open governance but also helps decisionmakers to forecast future challenges and envision remedial action.

The feedback gathered from the workshop were included in the action plan commitments template and circulated to all members of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum for their further feedback. The feedback received was analysed and included as part of the action plan commitment. Furthermore on the suggestion of CSO's Theme 2 and Theme 3 on Victims Rights and Victims Support respectively were amalgamated as one commitment.

Following further exchange of correspondence between Co-Chair representing CSO's and Co-Chair representing Government in emails dated 15th and 22nd December 2023 respectively, Government committed that after the submission of the action plan in December it will embark on further discussions in the coming quarter and commits to any possible agreed upon changes in the action plan.

MALTA'S 4TH NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

Malta's 4th National Action Plan on Open Government has been developed through a co-creation process between Government and Civil Society. The Action Plan has been coordinated by the Ministry for Justice alongside with the network representing Civil Society Organisations forming part of Malta's Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Open Government.

The four commitments to be undertaken by Malta in its 4th National Action Plan are:

Commitment 1: The Creation of a Justice Forum

Commitment 2: Mutual collaboration towards raising public awareness in support of victims' rights and victim support services.

Commitment 3: Access to justice for minors

Commitment 4: Youth proofing mechanism.

These commitments will be implemented across four ministerial portfolios.

All four commitments promote the open government values of transparency, accountability, and participation.

A summary of all 4 commitments is included in the table hereunder:

No	Commitment	Transparency	Participation	Accountability	Policy Area
1	Creation of a Justice Forum	✓	✓	✓	Civic Participation
2	Mutual collaboration towards raising public awareness in support of victims' rights and victim support services	✓	✓	✓	Public Service Delivery
3	Access to Justice for minors	✓	✓	✓	Access to Justice
4	Youth Proofing Mechanism	✓	✓	✓	Inclusion

These commitments will also contribute towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goals** in Malta. In particular:

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, which among others focuses on access to justice and effective, accountable and transparent institutions, and

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals, which encourages effective multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources

Commitment 1:

**Civic Participation – Creation of a
Justice Forum**



<p>Our Commitment</p>	<p>The commitment entails the establishment of an inclusive stakeholder consultative forum that will discuss new and ongoing initiatives, and lacunae in justice-related initiatives. Drawing on the experience of the government and civil society alike, the purpose of the forum is to be a collaborative space marked by open and constructive dialogue, with the aim of meeting international standards of justice for all stakeholders and to ultimately strengthen the rule of law in Malta.</p> <p>The Forum will discuss proposals for initiatives in the Justice sector brought to it by any of its participating entities. It will strive to reach consensus and in the spirit of transparency record any different views of participating entities on these proposals.</p> <p>Government acknowledges that civil society has an important role to play in ensuring that justice institutions are transparent and responsive to the needs of society, and through this forum, it is engaging them as key stakeholders in the democratic decision-making process.</p> <p>Hence the ultimate objective of the forum is to facilitate constructive interaction between government and civil society in an enabling participative environment based on the principles of inclusiveness, openness, and transparency to strengthen institutional accountability and the sustainability of public policies.</p>	
<p>Our Stakeholders</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>Ministry for Justice:</p> <p>Permanent Secretary</p> <p>Director Justice Initiatives & Reforms</p> <p>Director Justice</p> <p>Director Legal Affairs & Policy</p> <p>Victims Support Agency</p> <p>CEO Courts Services Agency</p>	<p>Civil Society</p> <p>aditus foundation</p> <p>Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation</p> <p>Repubblika</p> <p>Malta Law Academy</p> <p>Kunsill Nazzjonali Żgħażaġh</p> <p>Malta Sociological Association</p>
<p>Lead: Ministry for Justice</p>		

Problem Definition

What problem does the commitment aim to address?

The rise of civil society in Malta, especially in respect to matters related to justice, has been a relatively recent development in the policy-making and governance landscape. Previous ways of developing policy have to be re-thought as citizens have become more engaged and want to have a say in the process. Furthermore, public participation in the legislative making process is the essence of democracy and allows for citizens to scrutinise and contribute to the development of effective laws and policies. The establishment of such a Forum will be a step forward in meeting the need noted by various democracy ratings, and other international instruments, as regards the need to strengthen participation in a deliberative democracy, making this proposal a desirable action that responds to the need.

So far, a lack of cooperation between government and civil society is giving rise to the perception that the two sectors are opposing forces, and as a result of this conflictual relationship, trust in the justice system is being eroded. Jointly pursuing the goals of ensuring the rule of law and ensuring that Justice meets international standards, will enable all parties to become partners in the development of a healthy justice system that serves the needs of the country and its citizens.

To date however, there is no dedicated space in relation to justice reform in which both government and civil society can come together. In this respect, the setting up of this Forum will provide the opportunity for all government and social partners to engage proactively with each other in strengthening good governance within the field of justice. This should lead to an increase in the level of trust in the justice sector. Once the Forum embraces the principles of participative dialogue, transparency and accountability, civil society and the public at large will become an active participant in the justice reform process, thereby ensuring that the human and legal rights of citizens, including minorities, are being addressed.

What are the causes of the problem?

Lack of consultative communication lies at the heart of the issues that the Forum will seek to address. As explained previously, a major part of this problem lies with the historical way of doing policy, namely one that lies exclusively within the remit of the government and its internal stakeholders. The engagement of equally important external stakeholders in the identification of key government priorities, and subsequently in policy-formulation, is a cultural transformation that the Ministry for Justice is willing to embrace and promote in the interests of good governance.

A resulting concern from lack of proper communication is the creation of a narrative that erodes trust in the justice system. Trust is an essential component of a strong rule of law culture, as it provides citizens and businesses with the assurance that the national justice system will, irrespectively, safeguard their rights. Indeed, trust is both a cause and an effect of good governance. By strengthening the participatory role of citizens in the legislative and policy-making process, trust becomes a measure by which good governance is promoted. Likewise, measures of transparency and accountability made possible by a degree of public scrutiny, will foster trust in the institutions and in justice in particular. To date, the government has not provided a forum where a constructive and participatory debate with civil society can take place. Furthermore, the Ministry for Justice recognises that external stakeholders, including NGOs, have specialised knowledge that could enhance the quality of policy and legislation.

The Forum will address this lacuna and will apply good governance principles to foster a culture of trust, cooperation and sharing between all stakeholders within the justice sector.

Commitment Description**What has been done so far to solve the problem?**

Government has adopted various measures to ensure citizen involvement in its policy-making efforts. One key avenue soliciting citizen participation is the increase in public consultation exercises being carried out throughout government. Public consultations are a popular participatory tool that enables organisations and citizens alike to express their opinion and provide their own feedback on policies or legislative amendments that the government is proposing. Such feedback often results in the re-shaping of public policy and is an excellent tool in formalising citizen participation.

A more targeted and widespread means of stakeholder involvement used by various ministries across government, is the setting up of inter-ministerial committees that are usually made up of representatives of government entities (together with the involvement of related NGOs). Such committees are focused on specific thematic areas and they seek to foster a solution-focused constructive dialogue between government from a policy perspective and the NGOs working from a more client-based perspective. Such fora are also a very important tool to ensure accountability and are answerable not only to the Maltese public but also to international institutions who seek to safeguard the implementation of benchmarks set by European conventions.

Last but not least, to ensure transparency, government has set-up the legislative and administrative structures required for a comprehensive freedom of information service. In principle, the Freedom of Information Act, (Chapter 496 of the Laws of Malta) makes it possible for Maltese citizens (including journalists, NGOs and civil society), EU citizens and third-country nationals who have resided in Malta for at least five years to request information from public authorities. In the spirit of accountability, the legal framework also provides that refusal to provide information has to be properly motivated and that citizens should have redress mechanisms to appeal such decisions. However, the EU 2023 Rule of Law Report highlighted that there is still need to improve access to official documents and has recommended that Malta adopts legislative safeguards to improve access to official documents.

Our Solution

Government will back its commitment to participative communication by ensuring a space where civil society and government entities within the justice sector become active participants and partners in the discussion of specific justice initiatives, including the passing of new laws and policies, and the need to address lacunae in the justice system. The Forum will adopt a participatory approach, upholding the principles of transparency, participatory involvement and accountability throughout its operations, and ensure that these principles are integrated in all justice-related initiatives.

The results we want to achieve by implementing this commitment

The setting up of the consultative forum will deliver the following outputs:

it will create the opportunity for government and civil society to engage in a collaborative and inclusive dialogue on justice initiatives;

it will provide a setting in which initiatives are discussed, ensuring a more participative approach to problem identification and the formulation of solutions through targeted actions;

it will ensure that information and data relating to proposed initiatives are publicly disseminated and that the necessary structures are set up to ensure adequate timeframes for the consultative process;

it will ensure that civil society will have the space to put forward for dialogue its own proposed justice initiatives and for such initiatives to be discussed in a collaborative and inclusive way;

it will map out previous studies and research carried out by the stakeholders to ensure that there will be no duplication of work,

it shall carry out evaluation studies to support the sustainability of implemented initiatives;

it will ensure that accountability structures are set up in order to ensure that commitments undertaken within the Forum are honoured by all participants.

Our Commitment Analysis	
How will the commitment promote transparency?	<p>To foster collaborative and participatory communication, the Forum has to embrace transparency as one of its core principles. To this end, the Forum will set up its own digital environment which will act as the vehicle through which both government and civil society can share documents, propose initiatives and communicate in an open, accessible and transparent manner. This platform will not replace in-person communication or meetings between Forum members, but will support the interaction of the participants in pursuit of the achievement of the agreed agenda. This measure will ensure inclusion, while promoting transparency at different points of the implementation of justice initiatives.</p>
How will the commitment help foster accountability?	<p>The importance of sustaining accountability within the justice field cannot be understated. Justice is tasked with safeguarding the basic human fundamental rights of its citizens, and to this end, it is primarily accountable towards them. The Forum shall promote accountability through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish procedures that ensure participation and transparency; the sharing, of any documents, research or any other material that will help inform public opinion on proposed justice initiatives; establish methods of post-implementation evaluation to ensure that justice initiatives have successfully met the targeted needs which they were meant to address - this process will enable corrective actions to ensure the sustainability of justice reforms; outline the responsibilities and commitments of all participants in the Forum, thereby fostering accountability towards the shared goals by all participating members; the formalisation of accountability structures to ensure that the work of the Forum is open to scrutiny and that all participants' work within the Forum is based on shared goals and responsibilities, and are answerable to the public for their output.
How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	<p>The Forum will honour its commitment to improve the participation of civil society through the following solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the creation of a forum to establish a designated space in which government and civil society can proactively interact and communicate collaboratively on justice initiatives proposed by government and by civil society; provide an opportunity for all members of the Forum to voice their ideas and ensure more effective implementation; reach out and incorporate the opinion of additional stakeholders, including even citizens at large, through more targeted public consultations, joint research projects and the creation of a public portal as a digital entry point through which feedback on justice initiatives can be received. overall promote inclusivity and the ownership of solutions and outcomes to strengthen the legitimacy of justice initiatives.



Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Start Date	End Date
Establish the set-up of the Justice Forum and its proceedings	<p>Hold discussions between all stakeholders in the Forum to establish clear Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures;</p> <p>Reach an agreement on how the digital environment should be shaped;</p> <p>Agree on the consultative process and define the channels of communication that will be adopted by the Forum.</p>	Jan - 2024	Dec - 2024
The Justice Forum becomes fully functional	Using test cases, pilot the way the Forum will operate and evaluate the whole process in order to fine-tune the new system.	Jan - 2025	Dec - 2025

Commitment 2:

Public Service Delivery - Mutual collaboration towards raising public awareness in support of victims' rights and victim support services



<p>Our Commitment</p>	<p>Article 4 (a) of the Victims Rights Directive states that:</p> <p>'(a) the type of support they can obtain and from whom, including, where relevant, basic information about access to medical support, any specialist support, including psychological support and alternative accommodation'.</p> <p>In line with the Victims Right Directive, our commitment is to provide concerted efforts from all stakeholders to raise public awareness, streamline information, facilitate access to services and ensure that victims are informed about their rights and the available support services.</p> <p>In order to carry out this commitment it is being proposed to promote an information and educational campaign on victims rights and support services with the collaboration of civil society organisation and to develop a concentrated online information tool that facilitates access to information.</p>
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<p>Our Stakeholders</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality</p> <p>Victims Support Agency</p> <p>Justice Department</p> <p>Court Services Agency</p> <p>Legal Aid Agency</p>	<p>Civil Society</p> <p>Repubblika</p> <p>Victim Support Malta</p> <p>SOS Malta</p> <p>Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation</p>
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Lead: Victims Support Agency - Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality

Problem Definition

What problem does the commitment aim to address?

Developing a victim-centred approach at all levels has played an important role in the creation of a European area of freedom, security, and justice. The amendments within the revised Victims' Rights Directive identify five main victims' rights: access to information, improved support and protection, improved participation in criminal proceedings and facilitated access to compensation.

The impact of a crime on the quality of life of a person is devastating unless treated carefully. Facilitating access to information for a person to reach out and seek support is crucial for regaining a better lifestyle.

Victims do not always report the crime and hence these victims are deprived to access for information, including information regarding support and protection.

The objective of this commitment is to reach out to all victims of crime in order to help them out to seek support and report the crime.

What are the causes of the problem?

The devastating effects that crime leaves on victims tends to make victims of a crime feel abandoned due to their traumatic experience. A lot of questions comes to mind and support can only be sought if the victim is aware that it exists. Some victims do not always have the financial means to support their cause either because they may be dependent on the perpetrators per se, or have been rendered penniless by the crime itself. Other victims may also take a step back for lacking knowledge on their rights and the support available.

Victims require a voice, information and guidance, legal advice and emotional support. Providing the right information and support tools is key for victims of crime to overcome their ordeal.

However, there is a situation where victims often lacks support and the proper information that would be needed to overcome their ordeal.

Media coverage more often focuses on the perpetrators of crime rather than the experiences and rights of the victims. Limited media attention to victims' rights is contributing to a lack of public education and information.

To address these challenges, concerted efforts are needed from all stakeholders to raise public awareness, streamline information, facilitate access to services and ensure that victims are informed about their rights and the available support services.

Commitment Description	
<p>What has been done so far to solve the problem?</p> <p>Following the adoption of the Victim of Crime Act in 2015, a specialized unit was established by the Malta Police Force to support Victims of Crime. Further on in 2020, a dedicated agency was established to act as a national contact point for Victims of Crime whilst providing for information, emotional support and legal advice. The same Agency collaborates with various public entities such as Malta Police Force, Court Services, Legal Aid Agency and the Department of Justice and other non-governmental organisations such as SoS Malta and Victim Support Malta to ensure a holistic approach in the delivery of support.</p> <p>A national victim support line was also established 116 006 free of charge and attended by trained professionals.</p> <p>The justice sector through the Legal Aid Agency provides legal aid assistance to victims.</p>	
<p>Our solution</p> <p>Victims of crime must be treated with dignity and respect. This means that it is very important for victims to be provided with the correct information and the necessary support. Our solution is to educate and raise public awareness on the Information and Services provided.</p> <p>In this regard and in collaboration with Civil Society Organisations working in this field to come together and device an awareness campaign and online tool that would facilitate the dissemination of information on victims' rights and available support services that are offered both by Government and also by organisations.</p> <p>This concentrated effort is needed from all stakeholders to raise public awareness, streamline information, facilitate access to services, removing cultural and linguistic barriers and ensure that victims are informed about their rights and the available support Services and serves also to promote transparency involving Government and Civil Society</p>	
<p>Results we want to achieve by implementing this commitment</p> <p>Coordination and better accessibility of different services available;</p> <p>raising awareness and advocacy for victims' rights to encourage other victims to report and seek support;</p> <p>Promote a multi-agency, multidisciplinary approach to maintain the holistic wellbeing of victims.</p> <p>Measurable activities</p>	
Our Commitment Analysis	
How will the commitment promote transparency?	The contents of the awareness campaign and online tool kit shall be discussed with all stakeholders involved and implemented according in line with the resources available.
How will the commitment help foster accountability?	A set of milestone shall be set amongst the stakeholders to follow and report.
How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	Promoting Victim Support Services and advocating in support of Victims' rights shall undoubtedly enhance the public in general to take interest and be active by preventing from ending up in similar situations.

Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Start Date	End Date
Establishment of a dedicated sub-working group for the implementation of this OGP commitment	Identification of Victims Rights and Support Services that need to be promoted. Identification of different mediums for the dissemination of information Identification of gaps that need to be addressed to remove barriers and facilitate access to information	Jan - 2024	Dec - 2024
Launching and implementation of Awareness Campaign	Development and implementation of Public Awareness campaign.	Oct - 2024	Dec - 2025
Launching and implementation of Online toolkit	Design and implement an online toolkit to be set on VSA web portal and linked with other organisations	Oct - 2024	Dec - 2025

Commitment 3:

**Access to Justice – Facilitating
access to Justice for Minors**



<p>Our Commitment</p>	<p>When discussing children within the justice system, one often thinks of the barriers that need to be removed in order to safeguard to the specific needs and rights of minors who are in some way part of the judicial proceedings. In this regard, child-friendly justice should guarantee respect and implementation of all children's rights. In particular, justice should be accessible, age appropriate and should give children the tools to participate in and to understand the proceedings. This means that children should be informed of their rights.</p> <p>The Maltese government is also aware that information structures for children (for example free helplines and the office for the Children's Commissioner) are in place, however, children must be aware of how and who to complain to about their treatment.</p> <p>This commitment will seek to enhance informational access to children about their rights and other matters related to justice in a language that is easily understood by all children irrespective of age, educational level or cultural or language background. It is also imperative that the most vulnerable and marginalised children are also aware of their rights, and this commitment will look into ways to reach those children and to provide them with the most relevant information in relation to their rights.</p> <p>In so doing, this commitment will continue to build on the work carried out by the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights and the Commissioner for Children in addressing a number of lacunas in the current provision of justice-related information for all children.</p> <p>The commitment shall also seek the input of civil society stakeholders active in the field of justice and child rights. In particular, civil society stakeholders including other stakeholders experts in the field, will provide their expertise and share previous studies and research carried out in the field.</p> <p>Furthermore, this commitment draws on the principles of access to justice for children from another perspective, one that aligns itself to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that the possibility "...to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media ..." echoes the fundamental right of freedom of expression.</p> <p>As such, the commitment goes beyond the simple provision of information on digital platforms but foresees the children as co-creators of the content that is to be transmitted. In this sense, this commitment aligns with the fundamental principles of good governance in that it actively engages the main recipients of the service, redefining the way that child-centered services are designed and implemented. The commitment foresees further action in terms of capacity building of those working with children, therefore of those front liners who are in direct contact with children. The campaign will include a continuous effort to assess the impact and evaluate the ways the content reaches and engages children.</p>	
<p>Our Stakeholders</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>Ministry for Justice</p> <p>Justice Initiatives and Reforms Directorate</p> <p>Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights</p> <p>Policy Development and International Affairs Directorate, MSPC</p> <p>Strategy and Implementation Division, MSPC</p> <p>Commissioner for Children</p>	<p>Civil Society</p> <p>aditus foundation</p> <p>Malta Sociological Association</p>
<p>Lead: Ministry for Justice in collaboration with the Ministry for Social Policy & Children's Rights</p>		



Problem Definition

What problem does the commitment aim to address?

The commitment aims to address two problems, namely, the lack of provision of information about justice to children that is delivered in a manner that is mindful of children's needs, and the lack of active engagement of children in the creation of this content. These two issues are symptoms of systems that are not people-centered, let alone child-friendly.

UNICEF has long advocated that children's rights cannot be properly advanced unless they are embedded within a system based on sound principles of good governance. The Ministry for Justice has embarked on a process that will embrace people-centred principles and hence the need for a more child-friendly justice is acknowledged and endorsed. Yet so far, the application of this approach has manifested itself in efforts addressed at the removal of obstacles to access to justice, rather than the application of good governance principles in support of children rights.

To this end, this commitment seeks to empower children to become engaged with the justice sector, through the targeted design and delivery of justice-related information that is mindful of the specific circumstances of children such as the age, the educational background and their level of maturity. The commitment will see the involvement of children representatives and possibly also children, in a co-creation process that will ensure that the perspective of children is kept at the forefront of the content creation process. Equally importantly, the commitment will be carried out within a framework that espouses good governance principles such as transparency, active engagement, accountability and sustainability in order to ensure that the bridge between good governance and children rights is sustained.

What are the causes of the problem?

Historically speaking, government has structures aligned to a top-down management approach in which policies, initiatives and priorities across all sectors are issued centrally. Whilst the value of such an approach for managing the biggest organization in Malta cannot be understated, it does come with its set of pitfalls. For example, within the justice sector, such an approach tends to centralize service provision within traditional definitions of justice, namely the courts, the judiciary and the legal profession. In addition, the prevalent narrative defines users of the justice system as those who in some way or another are involved in the legal process. This approach blinds the system to the under-representation of vulnerable clients but also of the general public who constitutes an important voice in matters related to justice.

As a result of this traditional framework, there is often a lack of consultative dialogue between the service provider and the users of services resulting in services that are not addressing the needs of clients themselves. For example, information about justice services is written in a language targeting adults within websites that children will definitely not access. This reflects an underlying assumption that children lack the insight, experience or knowledge to be able to contribute towards the design of systems and services that are intended for them as well. This alienates children from seeking information about justice, perhaps to the extent to make them believe that justice is something that adults, rather than children, have to deal with. The system therefore reinforces debilitating preconceptions, alienating children from informational content that would help them grow and prosper in a society which values inclusion, engagement and accountability towards all users.



Commitment Description**What has been done so far to solve the problem?**

At a national level, a major advancement within the field of children rights lies in the Children's Policy Framework 2024 - 2030 which has just been launched for public consultation by the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights³. This document outlines the vision of the government for the protection and empowerment of children over the next 6 years, identifying a set of 4 national priorities which are made implementable by a set of targeted measures. The commitment being undertaken within the OGP, builds upon two main priorities, namely Improving Child Wellbeing with its related aim and corresponding measures on child-friendly justice, and Strengthening Child Participation with its related aim and corresponding measures on enhancing the dissemination of child-friendly information on law, policy and services.

The framework has been developed through the active engagement of relevant stakeholders including children themselves. In addition, the public consultation initiative further invites parents, educators, policymakers and concerned citizens to participate in a nationwide conversation. Cognisant of the fact that actions must be taken to actively include children's voices, concerns and recommendations, the Ministry responsible for Social Policy is also inviting all children to submit their opinions through the Empowering Children App: <https://empoweringchildren.gov.mt>. On this platform, children find the child-friendly version of the Policy Framework⁴ enabling them to understand this important information for their wellbeing and make their voice heard. By sharing insights, experiences, and recommendations, we aim to create a comprehensive policy framework focused on improving child well-being, supporting families, providing a better environment, and strengthening child participation. The broad online consultation app 'Empowering Children' App not only provides information to children in a child-sensitive language, but also offers children the possibility to continuously forward feedback on any of the national priorities covered by the Framework as well as on other policies and initiatives presented in a child-friendly format. The 'Empowering Children' App forms part of the 2-year (2023-2025) EU co-funded Project 'Empowering Children's Participation in Malta'⁵ which will also provide:

capacity building for policymakers to integrate and improve child participation in decision making; ii) an innovative Child Policy Evaluation Toolkit for use in Malta but which has transnational applicability; and

an awareness raising campaign on children's right to be heard and on child participation, as well as promote the project and the App.

The project will be implemented in full consultation with children throughout, whilst also ensuring that the project takes a do-no-harm approach in terms of gender and discrimination concerns. Therefore, the Children's Policy Framework and the Project 'Empowering Children's Participation in Malta' are in effect already applying good governance principles of active engagement, public consultation, transparency and accountability in order to support the development and implementation of a/ national policy focused on strengthening and empowering children.

In tandem with this development, the Ministry for Justice is embracing a people-centred approach to Justice, based on the Framework for People-Centred Justice championed by the OECD. This Framework lays the ground for justice initiatives that are more responsive to the needs of the people, making justice more accessible and strengthening trust in the system through the application of 4 pillars that reflect the application of good governance principles to achieve access to justice and meet the legal needs of society. These four pillars detail the role of government in designing people-centred justice initiatives, the importance of embracing good governance enablers and designing the technological infrastructure that enhances access to justice, the need to empower people to engage in the identification of legal needs and co-design of services, and last but not least, the design of systems that measure, monitor and evaluate initiatives within the spirit of transparency, accountability and sustainability. A child-friendly justice framework is built within this people-centred approach, supporting governments in implementing measures and initiatives in pursuance of the legal needs of children.

Given these developments, this commitment will solidify the resolve of the Ministry for Justice to actively embrace child-friendly initiatives that are based on inter-ministerial cooperation, the involvement of relevant stakeholders including children and the setting up of structures that promote transparency, accountability and sustainability.

3 Link to the policy document for consultation: https://socialsecurity.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Childrens-Policy-Framework-2024-2030_EN.pdf

4 <https://empoweringchildren.gov.mt/childrens-policy-framework-2024-2035/>

5 Accessible on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/empoweringchildrensparticipation>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/empowering.child.participation/>).

<p>Our Solution</p> <p>The Ministry for Justice is proposing to start implementing child-friendly measures to enhance informational access to justice through the design and development of justice-related information disseminated through dedicated channels of communication. The commitment foresees the engagement of relevant stakeholders, both from the government and from civil society and NGOs working with children, as well as children, in a co-design and co-creation process of information related to human rights, justice systems, ethics and other material delivered in a format that meets the differing needs of all children irrespective of age, academic level, cultural background and availability of access. The commitment will also entail the analysis of current digital infrastructures that can be used as a vehicle to promote informational access to children, and will devise a five-year action plan with defined milestones and governance enablers that will ensure that the process respects transparency, active engagement and sustainability.</p>	
<p>The results we want to achieve by implementing this commitment</p> <p>In implementing this commitment, the Ministry for Justice aims to achieve the following objectives:</p> <p>Provide access to justice-related information in a format that meets the diverse needs and requirements of children;</p> <p>Set-up a dedicated multi-disciplinary working group whose task would be to identify the range of content that can be made accessible, design it, co-create it and agree on the methodology of dissemination (for example the digital platforms to be used and other means of disseminating information);</p> <p>Draft a five-year action plan that includes the ways in which children will be engaged in the process as well as evaluation measures and development of key indicators that will ensure accountability and sustainability;</p> <p>Carry out pilot testing of the process in order to ensure a successful roll-out of the action plan at the end of the 2-year set-up process.</p>	
<p>Our Commitment Analysis</p>	
<p>How will the commitment promote transparency?</p>	<p>The very aim of this commitment is to promote informational access to justice through the engagement and active participation of relevant stakeholders including children. The link between informational access and transparency is very strong and forms the basis of a number of EU treaties safeguarding the right to access to information. Transparency requires governments to set-up structures that enable the disclosure of documents, data, expenditure and other relevant information in such a way as to support accountability and promote trust in the process.</p> <p>This specific commitment builds on this principle of transparency and seeks to provide avenues for justice-related information to reach target audiences, in this case children, in a way that is understandable to them. It acknowledges that children have a right to information about decisions and policies that will effect their rights and, in addition, seeks to provide them with the means to voice their opinion on such matters. Intrinsic within the commitment is the publication and dissemination of information that can assist children make informed decisions on matters related to their rights, and will help educate and raise awareness amongst the public in general on child-justice issues, thereby shaping opinions and entrenching them in the political discourse.</p>
<p>How will the commitment help foster accountability?</p>	<p>Accountability is a key principle of good governance that is difficult to extricate from other principles such as active engagement, voice, and transparency. Whilst in its definition it relates to the ability of service users to hold to account service providers, in reality it is achieved through its interaction with other good governance principles.</p> <p>This commitment seeks to uphold accountability in a number of ways. First of all, in principle, this commitment is seeking to educate children and raise their awareness about their human and legal rights, thereby equipping them with the knowledge necessary to hold government and other entities accountable towards the protection of their rights. Secondly, this initiative seeks to set-up accountability mechanisms through the active engagement of the main recipients of the service, the drafting of an action plan with set milestones, and the development of evaluation protocols that will ensure the sustainability of the initiative. All of this will be made public through dedicated channels. This will enable all relevant stakeholders to hold government to account if it fails to deliver in line with the proposed commitments.</p>

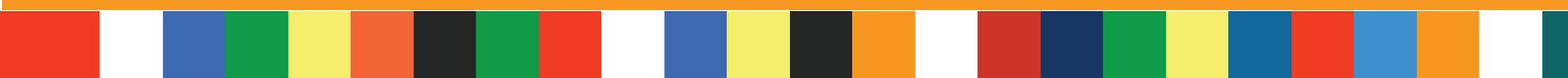


<p>How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?</p>	<p>Just like in the case of Accountability, the essence of the commitment is to provide information to children on justice-related themes. This will improve their chances of voicing their concerns and opinions and equip them with the knowledge required to actively participate and shape government-wide policies. In this broad sense, this commitment will enhance the inclusion and active participation of children across diverse policies, such as educational and/ or environmental policies, that impact their rights.</p> <p>At a more specific level, the commitment will provide a channel for active participation and will build on initiatives already implemented by other Ministries in ensuring an open channel of communication. For example, the Empowering Children App by the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights is not simply an important vehicle of information-sharing, but it provides children with the means to forward their thoughts and views at any point and in various formats according to their preference: in writing as well as by uploading drawings, audio and/or video recordings. Thus, this commitment supports collaboration across various government agencies, allowing relevant stakeholders to provide informed opinions across different policy areas and thereby actively contribute to the improvement of public policy.</p>
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Commitment Planning

Milestones	Expected Outputs	Start Date	End Date
<p>Preparation for the setting up of the digital environment</p>	<p>Identify key stakeholders and discuss possible options of how to implement access to information on justice-related issues;</p> <p>Hold discussions related to the type of content that will be disseminated and also the technical infrastructure that will shape it;</p> <p>Agree on a list of initial content to be tested and uploaded within the 2nd year</p>	<p>Jan - 2024</p>	<p>Dec - 2024</p>
<p>Launch of the Digital Environment hosting child-friendly justice information</p>	<p>Set up the digital infrastructure to host the justice information;</p> <p>Create the content agreed about in Year 1 and test it online;</p> <p>Launch of the digital environment</p> <p>Draw a 5-year Action Plan for enhancing informational accessibility for children</p>	<p>Jan - 2025</p>	<p>Dec -2025</p>

Commitment 4:
Inclusion – Youth Proofing
Mechanism



<p>Our Commitment</p>	<p>The commitment entails the implementation of a legislative framework known as the Youth Proofing system in governance. This initiative addresses the issue of insufficient representation and consideration of young people’s perspectives in decision-making processes, legislation, and policy development. The Youth Proofing system aligns with the principles of open governance, aiming to actively integrate the voices and aspirations of young citizens into the decision-making process.</p> <p>Youth Proofing is a forward-looking youth impact assessment mechanism that evaluates how proposed legislation, policies, and strategies may affect young people. Unlike traditional impact assessments, which often focus on immediate and tangible outcomes, Youth Proofing takes a comprehensive approach, considering various dimensions of youth experiences, vulnerabilities, and well-being. It seeks to anticipate and address vulnerabilities in areas like education, employment, mental health, social inclusion, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, promoting a proactive approach to governance.</p> <p>This commitment envisions a participatory framework overseen by the National Youth Agency, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, in collaboration with youth representatives and various stakeholders involved in policy formulation. This collaborative approach ensures a thorough understanding of the potential impacts of policies and initiatives on young people, emphasising their needs and concerns in decision-making.</p> <p>The Youth Proofing system emphasises transparency through stakeholder engagement, and it encourages collaboration across government departments to comprehensively address youth-related issues. The ultimate goal is to empower young citizens, grant them ownership over policies that affect their lives.</p> <p>This legislative framework will aim to create youth-inclusive policies, engage young people in decision-making, anticipate and address vulnerabilities, promote evidence-based decision-making, enhance government accountability and transparency, encourage collaboration, and empower young citizens. It is expected to result in more effective, responsive, and inclusive governance, policies, and strategies that cater to the needs and aspirations of young people, benefiting both young citizens and society as a whole.</p>	
<p>Our Stakeholders</p>	<p>Government</p> <p>Ministry for Education, Youth and Research (MEYR)</p> <p>Aġenzija Żgħażaġh</p> <p>Ministry for Justice (MFJ)</p> <p>Office of the State Advocate</p>	<p>Civil Society</p> <p>Kunsill Nazzjonali Żgħażaġh</p> <p>Maltese Association of Youth Workers</p> <p>Malta Youth Ministers Association</p> <p>Malta Catholic Youth Network</p> <p>Kummissjoni Djocesana Żgħażaġh Ghawdex</p>
<p>Lead: Aġenzija Żgħażaġh - Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation</p>		

Problem Definition

What problem does the commitment aim to address?

This commitment aims to address a problem in the governance and policy-making landscape: the underrepresentation and insufficient consideration of the perspectives and interests of young people. Young people, defined by the National Youth policy as that cohort between the ages of 13 and 30, face unique challenges and opportunities that are not always adequately recognized and addressed by traditional governance systems. The problem stems from a historical lack of opportunities of engagement for young people in decision-making processes and a failure to thoroughly assess the impact of policies and legislation on that particular period of life.

During these formative years government policies and initiatives can determine their well-being and future prospects. However, traditional governance structures often overlook the unique needs and vulnerabilities of young people and how these affect their transition from childhood to adulthood, as they navigate crucial decisions related to education, employment, mental health, social inclusion, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.

In this context, this commitment seeks to build upon the National Youth Policy: Towards 2030, which had already recognised the importance of addressing the needs and interests of young people in governance. By implementing a Youth Proofing system, this commitment is places Malta as a forerunner in youth policy development, much like previous legislative reforms in 2014 that regulated the youth work profession and the introduction of voting rights for 16-year-olds. The commitment seeks to proactively engage and empower young individuals, ensuring their voices are heard and their concerns are taken into account, ultimately shaping policies, strategies, and legislation that better serve their interests.

Hence, this commitment's primary aim is to address the underrepresentation and inadequate consideration of young people's perspectives in governance and policy-making. This problem affects all young people in Malta, as they navigate crucial life decisions. The commitment seeks to rectify this long-standing issue by introducing a Youth Proofing system, establishing a participatory framework that actively engages young people, and collaboratively envisions remedies for a more inclusive and responsive governance system. In doing so, it paves the way for Malta to continue its legacy of pioneering youth policy development.

What are the causes of the problem?

The problem of underrepresentation and inadequate consideration of young people's perspectives in governance and policy-making is a multifaceted issue with both immediate and deep-rooted causes.

Immediate causes of this problem include the lack of youth engagement in decision-making and the inadequacy of current impact assessments. Young people are often excluded from key discussions, consultations, and debates that shape the policies and legislation affecting their lives. This exclusion results in policies that fail to align with the unique needs and aspirations. Additionally, traditional impact assessments predominantly focus on economic and short-term consequences, often neglecting broader and youth-specific impacts. This narrow view can lead to policies that inadvertently hinder young people's prospects and overall well-being.

The causes of such problems are often intertwined with societal and governance structures. The most obvious are related to cultural norms and attitudes that marginalise young people's perspectives. Young people are often perceived as lacking experience or understanding, leading to their exclusion from decision-making processes. These entrenched attitudes perpetuate the issue and create significant barriers for youth engagement. This leads to the exclusion of young people from governance and policy-making processes, in a way that it has become deeply ingrained in the structures of government. This lack of inclusion has made it challenging for young individuals to have their voices heard and contribute meaningfully to decision-making.



Commitment Description**What has been done so far to solve the problem?**

The establishment of Agenzija Zghazagh, the national youth agency, marked a significant step towards addressing the problem of underrepresentation and insufficient consideration of young people's perspectives in governance and policy-making. Since its inception in 2011, Agenzija Zghazagh has played a pivotal role in monitoring and mainstreaming youth policy, making the young person its primary client. This approach signified a substantial shift in recognising the importance of youth in the national policy landscape.

Agenzija Zghazagh's establishment can be considered a foundation for addressing the issue. It laid the groundwork for subsequent initiatives and solutions aimed at fostering youth engagement and ensuring their voices are heard in governance and policy-making processes. By creating an agency dedicated to youth affairs, Malta the government had set the stage for more targeted and effective measures to empower young people.

In the context of the commitment outlined earlier, the introduction of a Youth Proofing system represents the next natural step in youth policy development in Malta. This innovative approach, which involves evaluating the impact of policies and legislation on young people, is a forward-looking solution that aligns with the principles of open governance and inclusivity.

The success of Agenzija Zghazagh and other previous initiatives in addressing the underrepresentation of young people in governance and policy-making can be measured by the extent to which these initiatives have led to increased youth engagement, influenced policies, and resulted in tangible improvements in the lives of young individuals. Over the years, Malta has witnessed several groundbreaking achievements in youth policy, such as the regulation of the profession youth workers and the introduction of voting rights for 16-year-olds. In this regard while the specific outcomes and impact of these initiatives may require further analysis and evaluation, the fact that Malta continues to take progressive steps in youth policy development suggests a level of success in recognizing and addressing the problem at hand. The introduction of the Youth Proofing system, as outlined in the commitment, reflects a commitment to further enhancing youth engagement and ensuring that young people's perspectives are considered in governance and policy-making processes.

Our solution

The proposed solution to tackle the problem of inadequate representation and consideration of young people's perspectives in governance and policy-making through the implementation of a Youth Proofing system differentiates itself from past initiatives by adopting a forward-looking perspective, proactively assessing the potential impact of proposed legislation, policies, and strategies on young people. While previous efforts, including the establishment of Agenzija Zghazagh, laid the foundation for youth-centric policies, the Youth Proofing system takes a step further by comprehensively assessing the multidimensional aspects of youth impact. It aims to address the specific vulnerabilities that young people face, such as in education, employment, mental health, social inclusion, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies and emphasizes their overall well-being. However, it's important to note that while this system represents a significant leap towards more youth-friendly governance, it may not entirely eradicate deeply rooted cultural and societal norms that marginalise young voices and hence the emphasis on a legal basis. Nevertheless, it contributes significantly to empowering and engaging young people in decision-making, resulting in policies that better align with their needs and aspirations.

Results we want to achieve by implementing this commitment

The implementation of the commitment to establish a Youth Proofing system in governance aims to as to create policies and legislation that genuinely consider the needs and aspirations of young people, resulting in youth-centered governance. Additionally, the commitment envisions a more engaged youth population, actively participating in shaping policies that directly impact them. By proactively addressing vulnerabilities in areas like education, employment, mental health, social inclusion, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, it aims to develop solutions that mitigate these challenges, ultimately leading to improved well-being for young individuals. The commitment prioritises evidence-based decision-making, ensuring that policies are grounded in objective information, promoting transparency and government accountability. Also, collaboration across government departments to comprehensively address youth-related issues is expected to result in more interconnected and effective solutions. Ultimately, the commitment empowers young citizens, granting them a sense of ownership over policies that influence their lives. Making the results of Youth Proofing assessments public enhances public understanding, enabling informed and active citizen participation in discussions about policies and strategies. Lastly, the commitment strives for holistic solutions that consider various dimensions of young people's lives, going beyond immediate impacts to address deeper and more comprehensive aspects. In summary, these outcomes collectively aim to create a more youth-inclusive, engaged, and informed society, fostering policies and strategies that better cater to the needs and aspirations of young individuals.

Our Commitment Analysis	
How will the commitment promote transparency?	<p>The commitment to implement a Youth Proofing system in governance involves the sharing of open data and information, enabling public access to critical details related to the potential impact of policies and legislation on young people. Moreover, it promotes transparency by actively engaging representatives of young people in decision-making processes, ensuring that their voices and concerns are acknowledged and that the decision-making procedure is more accountable and open to scrutiny. In addition, the commitment may entail public consultations and feedback mechanisms, providing opportunities for the public to contribute their insights and opinions, thus making the decision-making process more transparent and inclusive.</p> <p>The commitment also encourages cross-sectoral collaboration to comprehensively address youth-related issues, promoting transparency by breaking down departmental silos and ensuring various stakeholders work together to find effective solutions. Lastly, the involvement of the Ministry for Justice in coordinating the Youth Proofing process adds an additional layer of transparency, ensuring that the procedure is managed efficiently and that expert insights, youth voices, and government involvement are effectively integrated into decision-making. In essence, the commitment seeks to boost transparency in governance by championing open data sharing, stakeholder engagement, consultations, the publication of impact assessments, cross-sectoral collaboration, and government oversight, collectively contributing to a more transparent, inclusive, and accountable decision-making process.</p>
How will the commitment help foster accountability?	<p>The commitment to establish a Youth Proofing system in governance serves as a catalyst for fostering accountability in various as it champions transparency by openly assessing and sharing the potential impact of policies and legislation on young people, creating a platform for clear accountability where stakeholders can review and scrutinise the decision-making process and its outcomes. The active engagement of young people and their representatives in the decision-making process further reinforces accountability, as decision-makers are held responsible for considering the perspectives and concerns of this demographic, and stakeholders can hold them accountable for addressing the issues raised during the process. Public consultations and feedback mechanisms, integral to the commitment, provide an avenue for the public, including young people, to voice their opinions and offer feedback on policies and legislation, thus compelling decision-makers to be accountable for incorporating public input. By making the results of Youth Proofing assessments public, the commitment holds decision-makers accountable for the potential consequences of their decisions, allowing the public to scrutinise the impact assessments and ensuring that decision-makers are answerable for their choices. Collaboration across government departments and agencies on youth-related issues enhances accountability by encouraging shared responsibility and accountability among various entities working toward common objectives.</p>
How will the commitment improve citizen participation in defining, implementing, and monitoring solutions?	<p>The commitment to introduce a Youth Proofing system actively involves representatives of young people in the decision-making process, ensuring that youth have a voice in shaping policies that directly affect them, thereby enabling them to articulate their needs and aspirations and participate in the creation of solutions. Secondly, it incorporates public consultations and feedback mechanisms, which empower citizens, including young people, to provide input and feedback on policies and legislation. This participatory element allows citizens to define solutions by sharing their perspectives and concerns, and they can also monitor how their input is integrated into the decision-making process. Thirdly, the commitment encourages cross-sectoral collaboration among government departments and agencies, allowing citizens to participate in solutions by collaborating with various governmental bodies to develop comprehensive approaches to address the multifaceted challenges faced by young people. Furthermore, the publication of impact assessments ensures that citizens have access to information about the potential consequences of policies, allowing them to monitor the outcomes of decisions and assess whether the solutions implemented align with their expectations and needs.</p>



Commitment Planning			
Milestones	Expected Outputs	Start Date	End Date
Discussion between stakeholders to discuss possible youth proofing mechanisms	Identifying the mechanism for youth proofing	Jan - 2024	June- 2024
Drafting proposal to introduce the identified youth proofing mechanism.	Youth proofing mechanism to be approved by Cabinet	July - 2024	Dec - 2024
Public Consultation Process on the proposal to introduce the identified mechanism for youth proofing	<p>Launch of the Public Consultation process on the introduction of a Youth Proofing Mechanism</p> <p>The feedback received will be analyzed and included in the finalised proposal</p>	Jan - 2025	June - 2025
Formulation of the final proposal to implement the agreed youth proofing mechanism	Implementation of the youth proofing mechanism framework	June - 2025	Dec - 2025



GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA

