

General Information



KEY INFORMATION ABOUT MALTA

Capital: Valletta
Official Language: Maltese & English
Population: 542,051 (as of 2022)*
Currency: Euro (EUR)
Calling Code: +356

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

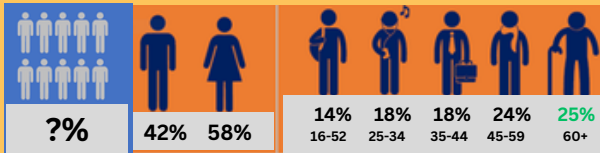
GDP per capita: US\$ 43,898.60 (as of 2024)**
Real GDP growth in 2022: 6.9%**
Unemployment rate in February 2026: 3.5%***

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING

There is no specific law which addresses volunteering or is concerned with individual volunteers in Malta. The only law which touches upon volunteering is the Voluntary Organisations Act (Act XXII of 2007), which was adopted with the intention of regulating the voluntary sector. This law addresses the institutions responsible for the voluntary sector and voluntary organisations in general. It provides a legal definition of a volunteer within the voluntary sector in Malta. The Act defines the ‘volunteer’ as ‘a person who provides unremunerated services through or for a voluntary organisation’. The Voluntary Organisations Act also defines the “voluntary sector” as including voluntary organisations, volunteers, donors who make voluntary grants of money or assets to voluntary organisations, beneficiaries of the services of volunteers and voluntary organisations and the administrators of such organisations.

Statistics and Demographics*****

Volunteer experience at least once in a lifetime (percentage of the total population)



?% Total number of volunteers in Malta is not known

The average volunteer in Malta, a person who has been involved in volunteering at least once in their life, is more likely to be female, of elder age (60+ years, 25%), with post-graduate education (31%) and employed full time (57%).

According to the level of education, volunteer experience at least once in a lifetime was reported by 31% of those with post-graduate education, 28% with tertiary education, 22% with post-secondary education, with 12% secondary education, with 7% vocational education and with 1% other studies.

About 1/3 of the volunteers have been volunteering for more than 10 years and a little less than half volunteer on a weekly basis, reflecting a long-term commitment to volunteering. This is indicative and not exactly representative of the volunteering population as the total number of volunteers in Malta is not known. While there is diversity in volunteers across age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity, they are still not as diverse as the local population. Moreover, the majority of the Volunteering Organisations in Malta are small having a turnover of less than €50,000 a year. *****

Motivation for Volunteering

No data available for the moment.

SOCIAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF VOLUNTEERING****

The voluntary sector in Malta has only in recent years started becoming regularised, even if it has been existing and supporting different groups of society for many years. It has also, in recent years, evolved and grown, with its presence and voice in society gaining traction. The voluntary sector is very dynamic, with new VOs continually being set up and others dissolving. The current number of active voluntary organisations in Malta stands at 1,800+, with the range of sectors being very diversified - from animal welfare, arts & culture, health & disability, environmental, humanitarian & social, youths and sports organisations. Many cultural and religious activities, for instance, together with services for the socially deprived have long involved significant number of volunteers who engage in preparatory and organisational work all year round.

Types of Volunteer Activities*****

Results obtained from a 2023 study show that **Youth** was the sector in which most volunteers contribute, then followed by the **education** and **social sector**. This is indicative and not exactly representative of the volunteering population as the total number of volunteers in Malta is not known.

The largest proportion of Volunteering Organisations in Malta is in the **sports sector**, which amounts to one fifth of the sector, followed by **culture and education and social sectors**. There are significantly fewer VOs in **animal welfare, disability, environment, health, humanitarian and youth**.

* Source: <https://nso.gov.mt/world-population-day-11-july-2023/>

** Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=MT>

*** Source: <https://nso.gov.mt/unemployment-rate-february-2026/>

**** Source: <https://maltacvs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/VERA-Final-Report-Official.pdf>

Impact of Volunteering

Participation in volunteering is often related to having a healthy and positive lifestyle which results in a strong social capital, mental tranquillity, and sense of calm for volunteers and to the wider community. Volunteering is associated with positive well-being among older people, providing opportunities to stay active and socially connected.

Quality Standards in the Field of Volunteering

No data available for the moment

Challenges to the Development of Volunteering in Malta*

- Lack of legal status, regulation, protection, rights and code of ethics of volunteers
- Protection of volunteers in case of an accident
- Voluntary sector not credited for its contribution to Malta's economy
- Administrative and financial burdens for record-keeping considered burdensome for small VOs with a low turnover.
- Difficulty to invest and engage in the required amount of lobbying for actions and initiatives in their sectors.
- Lack of recognition
- Lack of time and resources to invest in training volunteers with low literacy and digital skills.
- Difficulty to be noted by the media



National E-platform for Volunteering****

A national volunteer database does not exist. What MCVS has is a small database of volunteers (specifically part of a local volunteering programme called Voluntiera Malta which is managed by MCVS) who help in events and activities organised by voluntary organisations (not in the daily/weekly operations of the organisations). Whenever an organisation needs any extra help for an event, MCVS can support through volunteers from this database.

Trends in the Development of Volunteering in Malta*

There is increasing recognition of the voluntary sector within society. It has gained a lot of attention and respect from different spheres of society in recent years. As the voluntary sector has evolved, so has the role of the volunteer. As services offered by VOs become more specialised, the selection process of volunteers becomes more rigorous and demanding. The trends reflect how the voluntary sector still tends to have a large concentration of Maltese volunteers, many of whom are Catholic. This shows that the growing diversity in Malta's population has not yet started to be reflected well within the voluntary sector. While there is diversity in volunteers across age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity, it is still far off from the increased diversity that is being experienced in the local population.

Key Stakeholders in the Development of Volunteering

- The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS),
- The Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations (OCVO)
- Ministry for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector (MIV)
- European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA)

Research in the Field of Volunteering

No data available for the moment.

Institutional and Legal Framework for Volunteering in Malta

The **OCVO** (Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations) was set up to create a regulatory framework for voluntary organisations to ensure the observance of high standards of accountability and transparency and compliance with law.

On the other hand, the role of the **Council** is to promote and support the voluntary sector, provide a forum for the voluntary sector and a platform from which to develop co-operation. **

There is agreement that there is need for better regulation and incorporation in relevant legislations of volunteers as well as ensuring that government starts considering incorporating implications specific to volunteers in relevant legislations. This was demonstrated by the publication in 2020 of the first National Strategy on volunteering (MCVS, 2020)***

Financial Support for the Development of Volunteering in Malta



Financial support for the development of volunteering in Malta is primarily provided through a combination of national funding schemes, EU programmes, and indirect support mechanisms.

At national level, the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector plays a central role in administering funding schemes aimed at strengthening voluntary organisations and supporting volunteering activities. These include grant schemes that support project implementation, training initiatives, and operational development of voluntary organisations.

In addition to direct funding, there are also indirect financial support mechanisms that contribute to the sustainability of the sector. These include fiscal incentives, fundraising platforms such as SimplyGiving Malta, and capacity-building initiatives that enhance the ability of organisations to access and manage funding effectively.

National award and recognitions for volunteering

The National Volunteer Award is awarded to individual volunteers who have contributed in any field, such as social, humanitarian, health, ecological, cultural, education, sports, etc. The voluntary work must have had a positive contribution towards a particular field and should ideally have served as an inspiration to others. Other Awards granted in conjunction with the National Volunteer Award include the Voluntary Organisation Award, Children Award, Corporate Volunteer Award and Youth Volunteer Award.

Tax benefits:

- A tax exemption of up to a maximum of €500 for companies and businesses that support the voluntary sector in social, environmental, and animal welfare.
- A voluntary organisation may apply in writing to the tax authorities requesting exemption from the local Income tax.

* Source: <https://maltacvs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/VERA-Final-Report-Official.pdf>

** Source: <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/492/eng/pdf>

*** <https://maltacvs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/National-Strategy-on-Volunteering-2019-2024-Report-2.pdf>

****Source: <https://volunteers.mt/voluntary-organisations/one-time-events/>