



eSkills Malta Foundation

**2014** Annual Report



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The eSkills Malta Foundation is a Purpose Foundation registered in accordance with the provisions of the Second Schedule of the Civil Code – Chapter 16 of the Laws of Malta.

<http://eskills.org.mt>

Gattard House, National Road, Blata I-Bajda. HMR 9010, Malta



# Introduction

Developing the right human capital for the digital age is one of the pillars of the National ICT 2020 strategy - Digital Malta. The eSkills Malta Foundation is a multi stakeholder initiative that recognises synergy of action between Government, education and industry as a key enabler of the human capital outcomes identified in the Digital Malta strategy.

The Foundation was launched in February 2014 by the Hon. Dr. Edward Zammit Lewis, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry for the Economy Industry and Business (MEIB) and the Hon. Evarist Bartolo, Minister for Education and Employment. It brings together representatives from Education, the Malta Information Technology Agency, Malta Enterprise, the Malta Communications Authority, the Malta Gaming Authority, and The Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry. The Foundation is a multi stakeholder partnership with a mandate to:

- Advise Government and stakeholders on matters related to eSkills policy;
- Contribute to the expansion of ICT educational programmes and related formative initiatives;
- Lead an ICT professionalism development programme;
- Instigate further reform in the ICT educational offerings and contribute to capacity-building in the ICT education community; and
- Champion campaigns and promote the Maltese eSkills potential locally and internationally.

During 2014 the designated administrators of the Foundation met eleven times to discuss a range of issues, including the Statute of the Foundation, a programme of actions in line with the purposes approved by the Founders and other related matters. The Foundation's statute was notarised on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 and duly registered on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

The following pages outline the activities of the Foundation during the first year of its operations. In line with its statutory purposes the activities focused on making an impact in areas relevant to eSkills. Key impacts included:

- Increased awareness amongst policy makers and a variety of stakeholders on the importance of eSkills as a core requirement for jobs of the future.
- Increased awareness within the ICT Industry on the eCompetence Framework as a core building block for talent management.
- Increased awareness amongst the Employment Agencies and Employment advisors on standard ICT job profiles and the eCompetence Framework.
- Increased awareness amongst students and student representative bodies on the career opportunities and competences required for ICT jobs.
- Reached over 50,000 Maltese citizens through social media (Twitter and Facebook) with targeted messages for policy makers, employers and youths.

- Reached over 200,000 Malta citizens through printed news media with targeted messages for policy makers, employers and youths.
- Trained over 50 College Career Advisors, and ETC Employment Advisors on the skills and competences needed for ICT Jobs.
- Organised public consultation sessions for industry and SMEs to provide direct contributions on eSkills to the National 2014 - 2024 Education Strategy for Malta.
- Participated in different career oriented exhibitions and events with the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, and the University of Malta.
- Promoted and coordinated Malta's participation in the eSkills for Jobs ICT Competition. A Maltese student body placed second in the Digital Citizenship Category.
- Engaged with the European Commission's secretariat for the Grand Coalition of Digital Jobs and formalised the eSkills Malta Foundation as a National Coalition for Digital Jobs.

Looking forwards, 2015 will be a challenging year in which we expect to build on the core talent management assets we have identified as key enablers for the eSkills capacity crucial to the success of Malta's digital future.



Hon. Dr. Edward Zammit Lewis, Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry for the Economy Industry and Business (MEIB), the Hon. Evarist Bartolo, Minister for Education and Employment and Mr. Anthony Sultana, MITA Chairman, announce the formation of the eSkills Malta Foundation in February 2014.

# Raising the profile of eSkills in the National policy agenda

The Foundation's purposes include the provision of advice to Government and stakeholders on policy matters regarding skills related to ICT. During 2014 the Foundation brought stakeholders in ICT and Education together to enrich the policy debate surrounding ICT skills.

## Seminar on the Framework for a ten year Education Strategy for Malta

In April, the Foundation organised a stakeholder consultation meeting to discuss eSkills related issues relevant to the formulation of the National 2014-2024 Education Strategy.

Dr. Frank Fabri, Director R&D Department, (MEDE), provided a general overview of the challenges and strategies proposed to address these. Dr. Lawrence Zammit from MISCO outlined the state of play on skills capacity in the ICT industry. The Seminar was also addressed by Keith Fearn on behalf of the ICT section of the Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, representatives from MITA and the Foundation.

The event was well attended by policy makers, educators, private training providers, and recruitment agencies. It provided an opportunity and a forum for stakeholders to express their views on issues relevant to ICT skills and the National 2014–2024 Education Strategy for Malta.



Dr. Frank Fabri addresses the Audience at the Seminar.



A selection of the audience at the Seminar.



# Activating the Right ICT Skills for Tomorrow's Jobs

CONSULTATION / INFORMATION / EU FUNDING  
Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs  
eSKILLS FOR JOBS 2014  
Europe House, Valletta – 11.06.2014



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

## Activating the right ICT skills for tomorrow's jobs

The eSkills Malta Foundation and the Malta–EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) organised an information session on 'Activating the Right ICT Skills for Tomorrow's Jobs'. The aim of this event was to inform and consult civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders on the importance of ICT skills for employment. The session highlighted the demand for ICT skilled employees and the need to ensure that students acquire the right skills to develop into the ICT enabled workforce of tomorrow.

The Head of MEUSAC, Dr. Vanni Xuereb, opened the event. The Parliamentary Secretary for Competitiveness and Economic Growth, Hon. Dr. José Herrera delivered the keynote speech. This was followed by a presentation from the eSkills Malta Foundation and an open discussion with the audience.



The importance of eSkills is also reflected in the EU Digital Agenda.

The Foundation participated in a European Campaign promoting eSkills for Jobs. An initiative under the umbrella of the European Commission's Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, which recognizes that people with strong eSkills will play a central role in an innovative and competitive Europe.



A selection of the audience at the Seminar.





# ICT in education – capacity building

The Foundation's purposes include actions aimed at improving ICT educational offerings and capacity building in the ICT Education Community.

## Mainstreaming Computing in Compulsory Education

A curriculum designed for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills is one of the fundamental building blocks for developing the human capital of a knowledge based information society. The Foundation contributed to the formulation of a report detailing the fundamental transition from the current approach to ICT education towards the mainstreaming of computing as a core entitlement for all students.

The importance of digital literacy together with traditional basic definitions of literacy is widely accepted, however the curricular approach in schools today is largely reflective of the difficulties adults experience with digital competences. Today's youth are *born digital* and immersed in technology from an early age.

The shift to embed Computing as a core entitlement in the curriculum is therefore based on ensuring all students:

- Can understand and apply the fundamental principles and concepts of computational thinking, including abstraction, logic, algorithms and sequencing.
- Can analyse problems in computational terms and have repeated practical experience of writing solutions using computing applications to solve such problems.
- Can evaluate and apply information technology, including new or unfamiliar technologies, analytically to solve problems and self-learning.
- Are safe, responsible, competent, confident and creative users of information technology.



Mainstreaming computing as a core entitlement in education is a necessary step to prepare youths for the jobs of the future.

The Foundation also endorsed the recommendation for a review of the Computing 'optional' subject offered at Forms 3, 4 and 5. Students selecting computing as an optional subject generally form the cohort of students inclined to pursue ICT studies at post-secondary and tertiary levels.

### Raising the awareness and knowledge and on ICT careers within the career guidance community

The Foundation recognises the importance of reaching out to career guidance teachers and practitioners who are key influencers in study choices and career aspirations.

In collaboration with the Student Services Directorate within the Ministry of Education and Employment, the Foundation organised a number of seminars on the eCompetence Framework and its application, ICT job roles, barriers and solutions to entering the ICT labour pool, self-directed learning, qualifications and possible trajectories into employment.

Field Visits to MCAST, the University of Malta and the MITA Data Centre provided a snapshot of post secondary education and employment environments.

16 College Career Advisors, Trainee College Career Advisors and Career Guidance Teachers attended the training.



Presentation of certificates of attendance to one of the attendees.

In December the Foundation participated in the annual Euro Guidance (Malta) Conference held on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014. The Conference is organised by the EuroGuidance Centre in Malta in collaboration with the Malta Career Guidance Association and the Student Services Department within the Directorate for Educational Services.

The Foundation highlighted the importance of eSkills for employability, and the demand for ICT practitioners. The Foundation also facilitated a discussion on the barriers to further take-up of ICT studies.



A representative of the ICT Students Association shares some personal insights with Career Guidance Practitioners.



### Training for ETC employment advisors

The Foundation extended the training provided to guidance practitioners and hosted four informative seminars addressing particular issues relevant to employment advisors within the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC).

A training session for career guidance practitioners.

### Career choices are formed in our school years

In December the MITA Data Centre hosted the first in a series of student Career Exposure days for teenagers. A group of enthusiastic students had the opportunity to tour Malta's vital network operations hub and the government helpdesk and call centre.

The students also received a pack of colourful eSkills info-graphics and educational material explaining the various digital career paths open to them. These activities are being co-organised by the Ministry of Education and Employment (Student Services Directorate) and the eSkills Malta Foundation.



A school visit to the MITA Data Centre.



# Promoting professionalism in ICT

The Foundation's purposes include the promotion of an eCompetence Framework to strengthen HR processes in the continuous professional development of ICT practitioners.

## eCompetence Framework

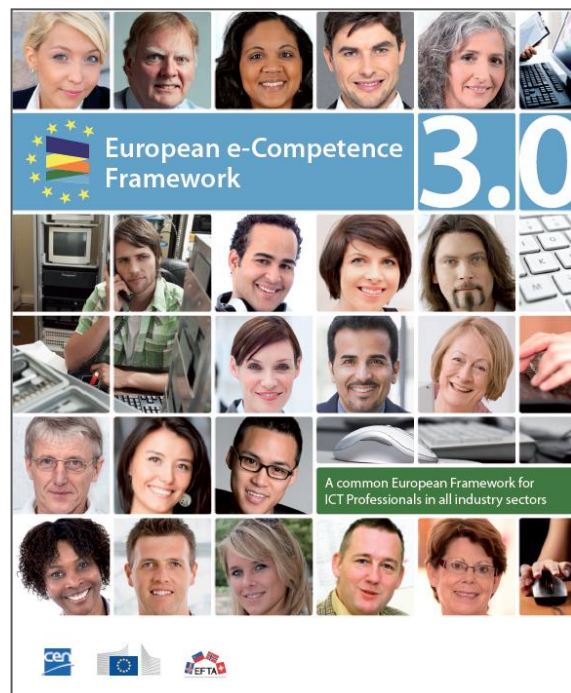
An effective competence framework has applications across the whole range of human resource management and development activities. Competence frameworks are now an integral part of the talent management cycle for achieving high organisational performance. Adopting a tried and tested framework is particularly relevant for SMEs aiming to improve their talent management practices.

The Foundation identified the European eCompetence Framework (Version 3.0) as an ideal building block for the local ICT industry and community of ICT practitioners.

Structured in four dimensions, the European eCompetence Framework reflects different levels of human resource planning requirements and includes job proficiency guidelines.

- Dimension 1 reflects five eCompetence areas, derived from ICT business processes: Plan, Build, Run, Enable and Manage.
- Dimension 2 defines 40 different competences for each area.
- Dimension 3 sets out proficiency levels (e-1 to e-5) of each eCompetence, which correspond with levels 3 to 8 in the European Qualification Framework (EQF).
- Dimension 4 provides examples of knowledge and skills that relate to the specific eCompetences defined in dimension 2.

The European eCompetence Framework version 3.0 has been published by CEN as a Workshop Agreement (CWA 16234).

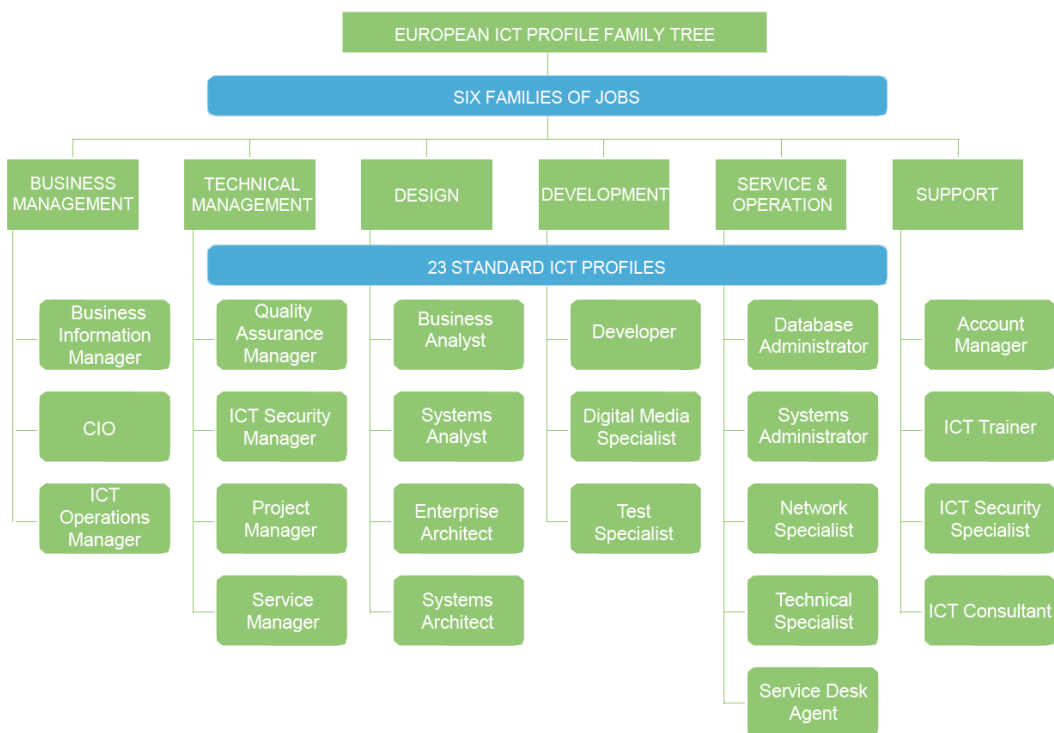


## European eCompetence Framework Online Tools

The eCompetence Framework (eCF) gives clear definitions and decision-making support wherever issues of skills and knowledge requirements of ICT professionals, and organizations are concerned. The eCF is accompanied by an extensive toolkit of resources to facilitate its use by individual practitioners as well as organizations.

The Foundation has actively promoted this toolkit, including online career profiling, online assessment tools for personal competences as well as training and certification paths for assuring continuous professional development.

As a response to the huge number of ICT Profile Frameworks and Profile descriptions used today in European ICT business and qualification systems, a CEN Workshop on ICT Skills created a set of reference ICT job profiles built on the eCF. The Foundation has adopted these profiles in its promotional activities.



## A Framework Body of Knowledge for ICT Professionals

In December, the Foundation endorsed an EU Framework Body of Knowledge (BOK) for ICT professionals.

Aimed largely at providing a framework for guiding continuous professional development as well as the overall maturity of the ICT profession, the BOK includes major industry certification programs widely recognised as contributing to the employability and career trajectories of ICT practitioners. The Foundation will be promoting the BOK within the local community of ICT practitioners and professionals.

This endorsement, together with the adoption of the EU eCompetence Framework earlier in the year, consolidates the policy direction and the availability of pan-European assets for the Foundation to meet one of its statutory purposes.

## Promoting the eCompetence Framework with SMEs

In June 2013 the Foundation was invited to address SME executives and entrepreneurs. Focusing on the importance and challenges of digital transformation within all industries. The Foundation highlighted the value of an eCompetence Framework in addressing ICT talent management challenges.

The Foundation outlined a methodology for utilising eCompetence Frameworks in a forward looking, scenario based context, that addresses some of the talent management constraints inherent in managing ICT competence issues in digital transformation projects.

The presentation emphasised the practical application of an eCompetence Framework and the value of the eCompetence Framework as one of the core building blocks for various aspects of talent management.



Addressing the audience at an event for SME executives.

## Promoting the eCompetence Framework with Human Resource professionals

In October 2014 Foundation participated in a Talent Management exhibition and conference organised by The Foundation for Human Resources Development (FHRD).

Mainly aimed at HR practitioners the event provided the opportunity to disseminate information and materials about ICT careers amongst HR practitioners from a variety of industries.

The foundation manned a specific informative stand promoting the eCompetence Framework. Informative materials on a range of online tools for HR practitioners was available for over 200 attendees.

The event attracted key HR professionals from Recruitment Agencies and Private Training Providers as well as representatives from HR functions in local industry.



The Foundation's stand at the FHRD Talent Management exhibition.

# Promoting eSkills

Championing and promoting the potential of Maltese eSkills locally and internationally is integral to the Foundation's purposes.

During 2014 the Foundation selected a number of key themes for activities that champion and promote eSkills with a special emphasis on the development of ICT practitioners, professionals and leaders.

## Promoting eLeadership and Entrepreneurship

The Million Dollar Idea is a project that has been developed by the ICT Student Association (ICTSA) to encourage students to take their innovative ideas and turn them into a business reality.

In April, the Foundation was invited to participate in judging the Million Dollar Idea Competition.

Over an intense weekend competitors were required to identify an ICT business 'Idea', develop a basic business plan, conduct market research and present the overall strategy to a panel of judges.



The ICTSA Million Dollar Idea Competition.

## The Foundation promotes the ADA Awards for female role models in ICT

In August the Foundation launched an online campaign to promote participation in The European Ada Awards™. The international Ada Awards™ recognise outstanding girls and women in digital sectors globally, and the organizations that support them. The awards are affectionately named after the first-ever computer programmer, Ada Lovelace, Lady Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace.

The Foundation popularised this competition through high ranking local news portals and social media.





The Ada Awards recognise achievements in three different areas.

The **Digital Girl of the Year™** Award is destined for girls who distinguish themselves and their communities by demonstrating, promoting or actually increasing digital skills.

The **Digital Woman of the Year™** Award is destined for women, 18 years of age or older, who are positively impacting the number of girls and women participating in digitally-driven or digitally-enabled areas of study or work.

The **Digital Impact Organisation of the Year™** Award is destined for organizations around the world that distinguish themselves by fundamentally impacting the eco-system to increase girls and women studying or working in ICT and digital sectors.

### The Foundation and ICTSA promote eSkills at Freshers' Week

The Foundation and the ICT Students Association joined forces at the University of Malta Freshers' Week to promote ICT Careers and the range of vibrant activities organised by the ICT Students Association.

Over 4000 students pass through the various stands during Freshers' week. The Foundation's collaboration with ICTSA was aimed at reducing stereo typical perceptions of ICT studies and promoting the range of informal learning, and extra-curricular events organised by the ICTSA.



Representatives of the ICTSA at the joint ICTSA / Foundation stand.

## Introduction to Coding – The Foundation organises a range of activities to join the rest of Europe in CodeWeek

The EU CodeWeek took place between the 11th and 17th October 2014. Across Europe, hundreds of thousands of children, parents, entrepreneurs and policy makers came together in events and classrooms to learn programming and related skills.

The Foundation collaborated with MCAST and MCA in a series of coding workshops.

Hands-on coding sessions with various themes were offered to the public.

- Building a website using HTML and CSS
- Building a desktop application using C#
- Web Design
- Building your first mobile App
- Coding made Easy on a Raspberry Pi
- Building a game
- Interactive Animation (Edge Animate)

All participants were able to get their first taste of coding and were issued with a certificate of attendance to the workshop. Malta's CodeWeek was ranked in the 8th position out of 38 participating countries on the basis of the number of coding events and the target population.



**CODE WEEK**

**OCT 11-17**  
One week of activities for everyone

Our partners





Follow us

www.eskills.org.mt

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**REGISTER** [www.eskills.org.mt/codeweek2014](http://www.eskills.org.mt/codeweek2014)

<b>OCT 11</b>	<b>Building a website using HTML &amp; CSS</b> Saturday 11 October > 09:00-13:00 Qawra (St. Francis Parish Centre)
<b>OCT 11</b>	<b>Build your first mobile app in one hour</b> Saturday 11 October > 15:30 and 17:00 SmartCity Malta (by the Laguna)
<b>OCT 13</b>	<b>Building a desktop application using C#</b> Monday 13 October > 17:00-19:00 MCAST Institute of ICT Kordin
<b>OCT 14</b>	<b>Web Design</b> Tuesday 14 October > 17:00-19:00 MCAST Institute of ICT Kordin
<b>OCT 15</b>	<b>Coding made easy on Raspberry Pi</b> Wednesday 15 October > 17:00-19:00 MCAST Institute of ICT Kordin
<b>OCT 16</b>	<b>Building a game</b> Thursday 16 October > 17:00-19:00 Qawra (St. Francis Parish Centre)
<b>OCT 17</b>	<b>Interactive Animation (Edge Animate)</b> Friday 17 October > 17:00-19:00 MCAST Institute of ICT Kordin

*"I have attended the HTML and CSS course conducted by Mr. Paul Pulis of MCAST. I wish to congratulate the lecturer for the five star performance."*

*William Gatt  
Code Week Attendee October 2014*



One of the sessions during CodeWeek.

## Building your first App during CodeWeek

'Building your first mobile app in one hour' proved to be one of the most popular events during CodeWeek. Over 60 attendees in various sessions were guided through the planning and development stage of an app. Each attendee was provided with hands on exposure to the Intel® XDK HTML5 Cross-platform Development Tool with which they developed a simple app.

## ETC Jobs Fair

In March the Foundation participated in the Employment and Training Corporation's Jobs Fair.

The Foundation manned a stand and disseminated information on the importance of ICT skills for employment and the demand for skilled ICT practitioners.

Attended by several hundred students over three days; the Foundation focused its communication on the gap between demand and supply of ICT practitioners and vast opportunities for job seekers with the right digital skills.



The Foundation's stand at the ETC Jobs Fair.

**SOFTWARE DEVELOPER**

**FACT**  
Every electronic device relies on some form of software

**Your Passion**  
Translating ideas into systems using computational knowledge and code

**Your Mission**

- Building and implementing of ICT applications
- Designing, writing and compiling code for operating systems and software

**Qualifications**

- An Undergraduate or graduate qualification at MQF Level 5/6
- Experience and capability in using programming languages
- Industry certifications in relevant technologies

**Knowledge & Skills**

- Follow a design methodology to apply appropriate software and /or hardware architectures
- Using an Integrated Development Environment with expertise in one or more programming languages to develop user interfaces
- Develop business or embedded software components, perform and evaluate quality tests
- Work and cooperate with a multidisciplinary team



The Foundation's stand at the MCAST Expo.

## MCAST Expo

In October the Foundation participated in an MCAST Exhibition aimed particularly at new and prospective students.

The eCompetence framework and the online tools for benchmarking competences, standard ICT career profiles and career paths were the focus of the Foundation's Stand.



## eSkills4Jobs European Competition

The eSkills Malta Foundation embarked on a media campaign to promote a European wide 'eSkills for Jobs' competition.

The competition focused on identifying concrete successful initiatives made possible by ICT and the mastery of eSkills. It aims to reach out to motivated and talented young people under the age of 25, educators, job seekers and entrepreneurs. The competition was based on five categories:

- Young digital talent
- Digital citizenship
- Outstanding use of ICT for teaching
- Digital Entrepreneurship
- Most active job seeker

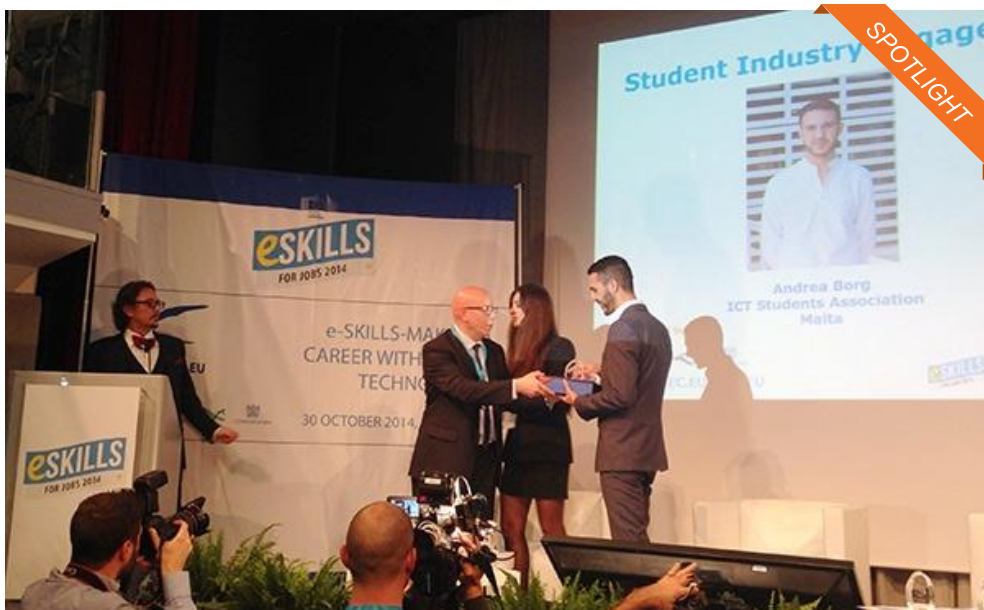
One of Malta's entries was submitted by the ICT Students Association (ICTSA) at the University of Malta. This entry was ranked as a runner-up in the Digital Citizenship category. Andrea Borg, President of the ICTSA, represented the association during the awards ceremony at the eSkills for Jobs High-Level Conference in Rome on 30 October 2014.



Dual education models improve the quality of ICT skills for digital jobs.

In October, the Foundation participated in a high level conference organized by the EU Secretariat of the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs.

The main theme of the event centered around international experience and good practice in dual education (academic and vocational work experience). This is identified as a key policy option to bridge the gap in the demand and supply of ICT practitioners. The introduction of accredited work based learning at MCAST is a positive development in this direction.



Andrea Borg collects the prize for runner-up in the Digital citizenship category.



## Digital Engagement

Reaching out to the community of existing ICT practitioners, as well as the generation of young students with a potential career interest in all things digital, is essential to the achievement of the Foundation's purposes.

During the year the Foundation embarked on a media campaign based on a small set of core online assets, available on its website, [eskills.org.mt](http://eskills.org.mt). Adverts on local news portals as well as an outreach campaign based on the two dominant social media tools used in Malta, Twitter and Facebook, boosted the reach of key messages.

Links with the pan European eSkills4jobs campaign provided international exposure with some local media assets, including career info graphics being shared internationally.

 @eskills4jobsMT

 /eskills4jobsMT

 /eskillsMalta

<http://eskills.org.mt>

# Financial overview

The Foundation commenced operations with an allocation of €200,000 by the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA). This allocation mainly covered personnel and facilities contributed in kind by MITA.

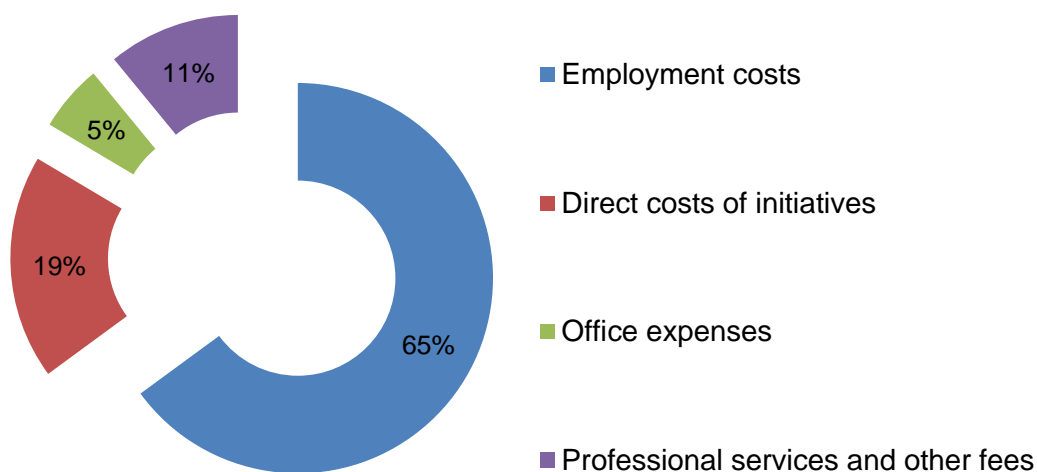
In parallel with the formalization of the legal status as a Purpose Foundation in accordance with the provisions of the Second Schedule of the Civil Code – Chapter 16 of the Laws of Malta, the Foundation appointed a Financial Officer. With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014, the Foundation commenced its own accounting and financial operations.

In the Government's financial estimates for 2015, Government identified a subvention of €150,000 (line item 6816) to support the activities of the Foundation.

The Foundation has appointed NEXIA BT to audit its Financial Statements.

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## Allocation of expenditure in 2014











MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT



MALTA ENTERPRISE



MALTA COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY



MALTA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AGENCY

The eSkills Malta Foundation is a multi-stakeholder partnership set up in 2014.

We are committed to focus on the ICT skills that are fundamental for Malta to develop a resilient ecosystem of institutional and human capital to sustain a Digital Economy.

The Foundation works with partners to implement the underpinning policies, taxonomies, resource demand and supply monitors, supporting standards and incentives that Government requires to nurture the ICT Skills for a leading Information Society and Digital Economy.

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