In 2020, coronavirus forced upon the world a variety of unforeseen changes whose repercussions are not yet fully understood. The cultural sector has been one of the most impacted. Performing artists and events promoters have had to grapple with restrictions affecting venues with seismic implications on the economic viability of live performance, creative expression and public access. Organisers, artists and audiences were all profoundly affected and may still be for years to come.

Engaging constructively with this changed reality, Festivals Malta responded decisively. We have conceptualised a new strategy to help chart the organisation’s course over the next five years until 2025. Our accompanying new branding speaks not just to an organisational evolution, but to a forward-thinking response to the profound disruption in our sector.

Although unpredictability is challenging, we are ready to embark on this exciting voyage, both of discovery and of expanding cultural horizons.

At the beginning of 2020, Festivals Malta was launched as an independent public cultural organisation. Hived off from Arts Council Malta where it had been embedded as a directorate, the entity took wing in accordance with a 2018 phase one strategy – to deliver, and develop under its own brand identity, Malta’s glorious tradition of cultural festivals and events.

During the course of the year, Festivals Malta initiated work on the next stage of its evolution – this second phase strategy, +25. Embarking on a structured process, the team was invited to revisit its overarching first phase goals of increasing audiences, deepening roots in the community and cultural development. This reflection not only highlighted our achievements to date in establishing economic, organisational and artistic synergies within the sector but also helped identify existing focus areas for renewed attention. From this audit, the staff, Artistic Directors and management all contributed to workshopping this strategy.

More than a flight path, +25 is a foundational framework to enable us to meet our challenges through understanding where our best energies and resources are optimally invested to ensure a sustainable future.
Francis Agius  
Assistant Director Operations  

While setting up the second phase of our strategy, we identified five important pillars that will lead us closer to excellence in providing a more professional platform for festivals in Malta. These pillars are the notions of evolution, partnerships, proficiency, methodology and legacy.

We also recognise that in challenging times, we may be asked to stretch ourselves. That flexibility, and our willingness to go above and beyond the expected, means we must think laterally about how we do what we do. To go the extra mile may require a plus-sized effort.

Fortunately, we love our work; we love the culture sector and we are optimistic that our strategy will contribute to enhancing the relevance of Malta’s cultural sector in the future. The plus sign in the +25 strategy indicates our positivity.

We invite you to join us on our journey.

Introduction

Festival Malta’s +25 strategy is so called to refract a variety of illuminating interpretations. Firstly, it is a signpost indicating, the intended arc for this next phase of the organisation’s strategic development.

Additionally, the strategy addresses five key components: stakeholders, values, mission, vision and strategic pillars. To celebrate our Maltese identity, the letters of the word ‘ħamsa’ (five) are embroidered in each of these headings; thus, we have five stakeholders, five values, etc. Five multiplied by five equals twenty-five.

Each of the five strategic pillars in the final section stands on five strategic goals, the foundation stones that we have set ourselves to build on. These twenty-five foundation stones represent the bedrock of what we need to address over a five-year term. They provide a blueprint for the PCO to develop and deliver upon and they are engineered to be optimally load-bearing regarding the most constructive application of our efforts.

This is how we propose building a future for cultural festivals and events in Malta.
Contents

01  Stakeholders

02  Values

08  Mission

12  Vision

16  Strategic Pillars & Goals

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Our work resonates across the cultural sector in Malta.

In addition to artists and audiences, our list of stakeholders includes the community, government, Arts Council Malta and other Public Cultural Organisations. By cultivating our relationships and understanding the needs of all our stakeholders, we will enhance our mission and achieve higher levels of excellence.
Our Values are our strength and provide the structure to our initiatives.

They nurture trust among our stakeholders in our ability to steward our festivals and events, thereby enriching the national culture.
Passion for cultural excellence
Respect for our planet, colleagues, audiences and artists
Excellence through best practice and leadership
Collaboration to realise a quality experience
Innovation to remain relevant
To sustain Malta’s tradition of cultural festivals

Realised through:
**Curation**
Showcasing the arts to the people

**Brokerage**
Investing in stakeholder relationships
Facilitating of stakeholder relationships

Promotion
Attracting and engaging audiences

Brokerage
Facilitating of stakeholder relationships
Motivation
Encouraging dialogue between different artistic expressions
Festivals Malta aspires for a vibrant and sustainable festival sector achieved in collaboration with key market players. Through its expertise, knowledge and information, the Agency will help raise the bar of festivals and cultural productions in Malta, promoting intercultural diversity, audience engagement and constant innovation.
EXPANDING

cultural horizons for all, including artists and audiences

SUPPORTING

private initiatives to produce cultural festivals
and documenting best practices

sustainability and policy for the festivals sector
Fostering the Festivals Malta brand
STRATEGIC STRATEGIC STRATEGIC STRATEGIC STRATEGIC STRATEGIC STRATEGIC STRATEGIC STRATEGIC

STRATEGIC PILLARS
LEGACY
EVOLUTION
PROFICIENCY
PARTNERSHIPS
METHODOLOGY
STRATEGIC GOALS

01
To cultivate festivals and events in Malta with a heightened focus on sustainability, innovation, brand building and development, while utilising online as a key data-capturing tool that stimulates evolution.

02
To foster partnerships through collaboration, outreach, and internationalisation.

03
To nurture quality and leadership through training and overall proficiency across producers of festivals and events in Malta.

04
To employ methodology to aid the evolution and development of Festivals Malta, which will enhance its marketability and its mandate.

05
To honour and respect legacy through accurate and detailed archiving, research, and record keeping that will subsequently support analysis of data and substantiate brand building.
Festivals Malta is now well-established and respected for its execution and delivery of cultural festivals and events in Malta. Perpetual evolution is critical for our survival and greater prosperity.

To effect fundamental change, we aim to document, act, and promote an achievable sustainability policy that respects the environment, institutions, stakeholders, communities, and ultimately the audiences that we wish to appeal to. Honouring and taking responsibility for all these aspects will progressively legitimise our status as an authority and thought leader in our area of expertise.

To achieve this, we will analyse, interrogate and respond to data in a manner that stays true to our mandate, thereby challenging and growing our influence and brand worth, not only in Malta but across the European Union and around the world.
Expanding cultural horizons for all, including artists and audiences

01 Product innovation and development
02 Audiences
03 Commissioning new work
04 Organisational sustainability
  - Black swan events
  - Revenue models
05 Eco-sustainability
The strategy recognises that the future relevance and importance of festivals in Malta pivots on the investment in the quality, credibility, skillset, and power of collaboration.

Our partnerships are an outreach that embraces and employs empathy, understanding, and support of new communities through a culture that promotes inclusivity.

This outreach fosters internationalisation and promotes collaboration with new audiences, suppliers, and investors in the greater EU entertainment economy.
02 Partnership

Supporting private initiatives to produce cultural festivals

01 Stakeholders

02 Private sector

03 Media

04 Communities

05 Other (tourism bodies, venues, international festivals, promoters, etc.)
As has been experienced since the foundation of Festivals Malta, the producers of festivals and events are constantly challenged on a societal, technological, and technical level, as well as by unexpected global events.

Our team members are qualified, many with extensive experience in festival production and related academic backgrounds. Further stakeholder training and skills transfer can be optimised.

To address the plethora of challenges, constant formal training, coupled with leadership from all within Festivals Malta, is important so that we are kept proficient in our role and equipped in our ability to deliver on our evolving mandate.
Goal 03 Proficiency

Promoting and documenting best practice

01 Qualification (skills development and training)
02 Experience (job shadowing, exchange programmes)
03 Employee performance (KPIs and measurement)
04 Foster transition of new artists (internationalisation)
05 Training of stakeholders (Carnival community, etc.)
For Festivals Malta to remain relevant and instrumental in informing the evolution of festivals and events development, it is critical to establish a methodology.

Data mining and measurement tools provide valuable insights on audience and marketability, and serve us well in understanding, through ongoing analysis and research of our many data capturing points, how to adapt, tweak, and perpetually evolve overall.

With this information captured, it can then be referenced from an archival perspective in order to inform and equip the Festivals Malta team to deliver on our mandate.
We have produced an extraordinary body of work since our inception that will continue to grow in the future. It is therefore critical that detailed records are not only captured but, most importantly, documented in print/digital/audio/video or otherwise.

Every cultural event is a mark in time that holds significant value to future generations.

Our events and festivals are thus critical assets in ongoing brand building and in reaffirming the legacy, qualification, and influence that Festivals Malta needs to defend.
Fostering the Festivals Malta brand

01 Programming content
02 Potential future monetisation
03 Marketing collateral
04 Impact measurement
05 Historical legacy
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