

OUR
**STRATEGIC
OPERATIONAL
PLAN**
2022-2026



Aġenzija Sapport **Our Strategic Operational Plan 2022-2026**

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CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER	4
FOREWORD	6
MISSION, VISION AND CORE VALUES	8
SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL PLAN	9
STRATEGIC PILLARS	10
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	11
Strategic Objective 1	12
To provide support to persons with disability to live the life they choose and actively participate in an inclusive society	
Strategic Objective 2	13
To strengthen and optimise professional support	
Strategic Objective 3	14
To practice co-production whereby all relevant stakeholders are involved to develop support services or activities in equal partnership with persons with disability	
Strategic Objective 4	15
To remove barriers and ensure persons with disability have accessibility to societal systems, facilities and services	
SUPPORT OBJECTIVES	17
Strategic Objective 5	18
To invest in its workforce and promote a culture of accountability and professionalism	
Strategic Objective 6	19
To use technology and AI to enhance inclusion, participation and independence	
Strategic Objective 7	20
Enhancement of ICT systems and digitisation to keep pace with changing realities	
Strategic Objective 8	21
To be an active body at the forefront of conducting research and compiling data on the lives of persons with disability	

ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVES	23
Strategic Objective 9	24
To be an effective and pro-active Agency, committed to delivering on strategic priorities in line with good governance practices	
Strategic Objective 10	25
To continue managing the Agency's finances efficiently and effectively, in an accountable and transparent manner ensuring quality services and value for money	
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES	27
Strategic Objective 11	28
To understand and advise on societal changes, challenges and opportunities that impact on the lives of persons with disability	
Strategic Objective 12	29
Re-branding the Agency's website in line with new strategy reflecting service users' needs	
Strategic Objective 13	30
To collaborate with all relevant stakeholders and international counterparts to achieve more inclusive communities	
MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION	32



HON. JULIA FARRUGIA PORTELLI
MINISTER FOR INCLUSION, SOCIAL WELLBEING
AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Dear colleagues and friends,

I would like to congratulate Aġenzija Support on the launch of their own internal Strategic Operational Plan. I have no qualms in saying that the Agency is an example of a national success story. From its humble beginnings as the Supported Living Division within the Ministry responsible for Social Policy many years back, it has now grown into a dynamic, transdisciplinary service provider, the largest in the country, serving the needs of persons with disability and their families in line with international best practice models. It is definitely one of the showpieces of the Ministry for Inclusion, Social Wellbeing and Voluntary Organisations, the Ministry responsible for the equal rights and full inclusion of persons with disability in Maltese society.

While I am proud to have overseen the launch of Malta's first ever National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons, entitled 'Freedom to Live', in September 2021, it is important to ensure that the different stakeholders listed in this Strategy can deliver on its Actions. The National Strategy contains very specific Actions, and timeframes for delivery, so structure and organisation is key towards ensuring that targets are reached. In launching its very own internal Strategic Operational Plan, Aġenzija Support is enshrining a strategic vision, making sure that its different departments and sub-entities, and its many dedicated professionals, can coordinate their work

in sync with the National Strategy, and with the obligations of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which this Ministry has also ensured was fully transposed into Maltese law in July 2021.

By streamlining its operations and support structures, while ensuring appropriate outreach with other stakeholders, beneficiaries and the general public, Aġenzija Support will be able to deliver on its mission, a mission that aligns with the National Strategy and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, that of Leaving No One Behind. I was particularly happy to see a specific focus on Accountability and Governance, since the Agency operates using public funds, running essential services funded by the people, for the people.

I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate the Agency and every single one of its staff members, who tirelessly, and many times behind the scenes, work to make sure that the lives of persons with disability and their families are made better, thus ensuring that Malta can become a society where inclusion is truly the norm for everyone. I am fully confident that this internal Strategic Operational Plan will be an extremely useful tool, in reaching this aim, and coordinating with the wider policy goals set forth by Government, and those which Malta has undertaken in virtue of the international obligations it signed up to.



FOREWORD

MS RUTH ROSE SCIBERRAS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
AGENZIJA SAPPORT

Over the past few years, Agenzija Support has developed into a national focal point for persons with disability and their families to find support, advice and guidance in the challenges faced through everyday life. The Agency aims to empower its service users to actively participate in the community and to develop their skills to the maximum of their potential. Since enshrining its autonomy in 2016, Agenzija Support has worked towards consolidating its services, its structures and its capabilities to become a cornerstone for the public service provision for persons with disability and their families. After these five years, Agenzija Support is proud to set out its first formal Strategic Operational Plan for the next five years. This strategic direction has been developed on the basis of the experience gained by professionals, service users and service providers.

The proposed Strategic Operational Plan also aligns in its objectives, initiatives, and values to the National Strategy on the Rights of Disabled Persons published by the Ministry for Inclusion, Social Wellbeing and Voluntary Organisations and is also based on the 5-year Strategy for the Public Service. The Support Strategic Operational Plan indeed integrates the key objectives and guiding principles of the Public Service Strategy, focusing on quality service provision based on set standards, involving the Agency's stakeholders and service users, and developing efficient and sustainable services and initiatives based on research and evidence.

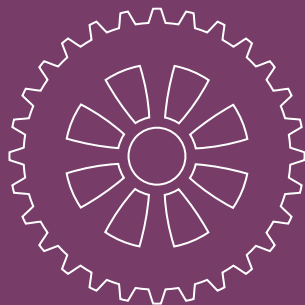
The Strategic Operational Plan sets out our core values, which will guide our direction for the coming years: integrity, respect, equity, empathy, and co-production. Our strong ethical and moral principles, coupled with a professional and respectful team of professionals, will guide us towards providing

individuals with different levels of support needed to manage their disability. Agenzija Support recognises that every person with disability should be individually involved in an ongoing manner at all stages in the design, development and delivery of the relevant support service or activity thus integrating the service users in the decision-making and implementation stages concerning their care plans. In doing this, we strive to portray high levels of respect amongst individuals, showing care and compassion in all organisational responsibilities.

Our overarching objective is to continue to lead change and enhance our services and projects towards more inclusion for persons with disability within society. Our updated mission and vision, together with the values which our entity identifies with, has helped us map 13 strategic objectives. These are categorised into four distinct but interrelated pillars:

- (i) Operational**
- (ii) Support**
- (iii) Governance and Accountability**
- (iv) Marketing and Communications**

Agenzija Support, being the lead organisation offering a myriad of services to persons with disability, insists on quality support as a prerequisite for persons with disability to be able to reach their full potential, enjoy their fundamental rights and contribute to the overall well-being and diversity of the community they are living in. Agenzija Support endeavors to continuously strengthen and optimise its services by taking into consideration the individual needs of its service users. This includes the provision of services which are flexible and optimised to integrate the emerging needs and address the changes and realities communities are facing.



Our Mission

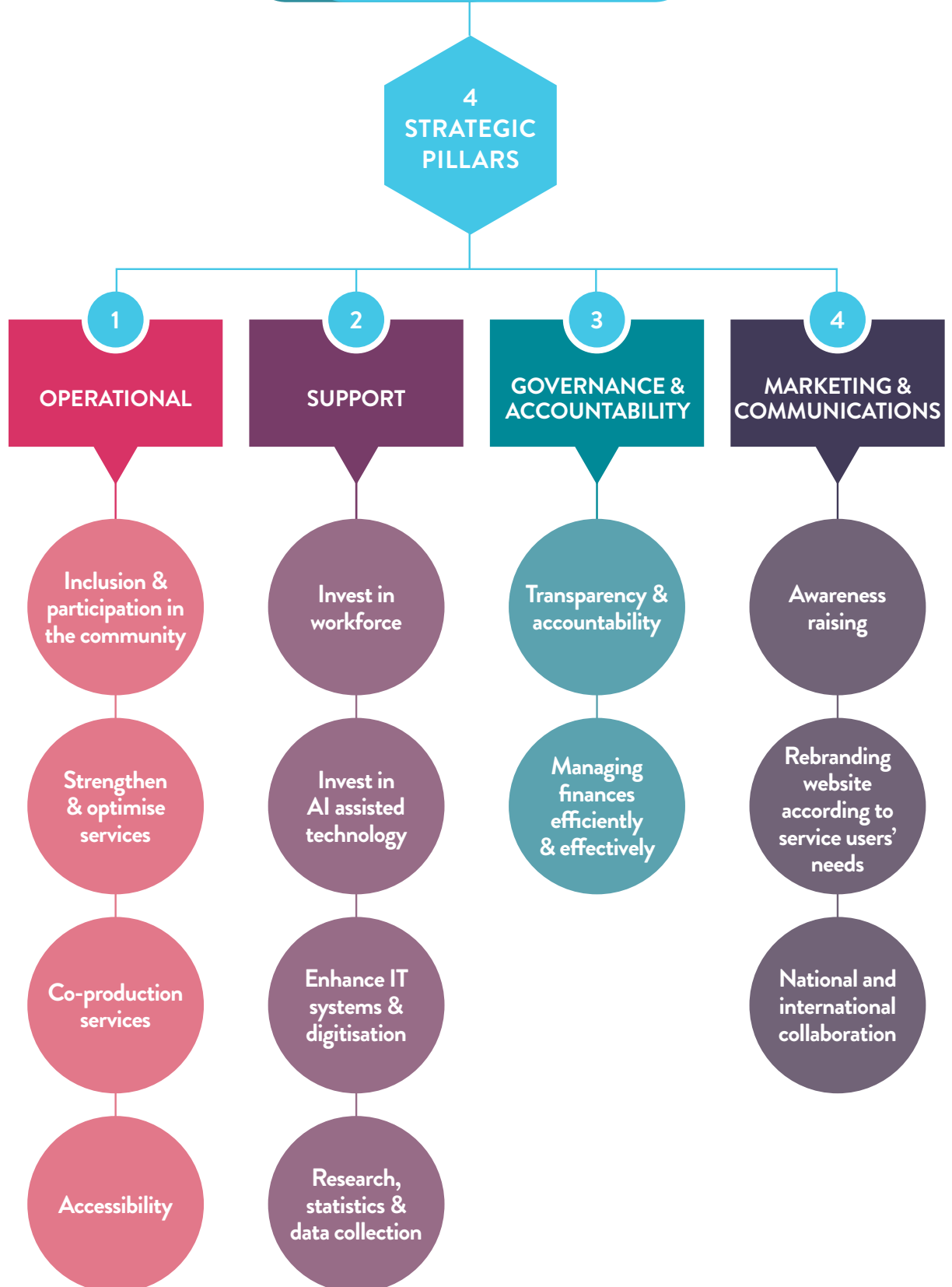
The National Agency that provides professional and innovative services to enhance the quality of life of persons with disability.

Our Vision

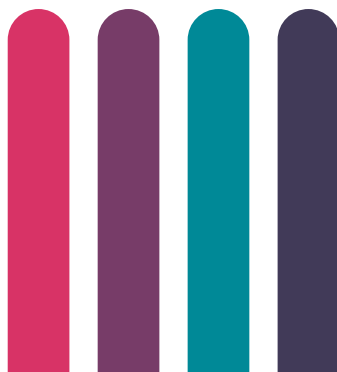
To be the leader in guiding the community which promotes ability rather than disability.

Our Core Values

Integrity
Respect
Equity
Empathy
Co-production



STRATEGIC PILLARS



1. OPERATIONAL

This pillar identifies and reflects the availability, accessibility, and range of services to reach various persons with disability, and their social network, across the Maltese islands.

2. SUPPORT

This pillar incorporates the supporting functions needed within the Agency to be able to achieve and action the operational objectives above.

3. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This pillar identifies the framework needed for the Agency to operate in line with good governance. The aim is for the Agency to enhance accountability and transparency and function in line with the rule of law, particularly since it is the national focal point for persons with disability.

4. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

This pillar seeks to increase Aġenzija Sapport's national and international presence, in order to reflect the fact that the Agency is the national focal point for persons with disability. The ultimate aim is to increase awareness and seek collaborations to better reach persons with disability and their support networks to enhance their quality of life.

1 OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

To provide support to persons with disability to live the life they choose and actively participate in an inclusive society.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

To strengthen and optimise professional support services.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

To practice co-production whereby all relevant stakeholders are involved to develop support services or activities in equal partnership with persons with disability.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

To remove barriers and ensure persons with disability have access to societal systems, facilities and services.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1

TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITY TO LIVE THE LIFE THEY CHOOSE AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

ACTIONS

- 1.1 Participate in discussions with stakeholders and involve relevant public and private service providers regarding accessibility of mainstream services in the community.
- 1.2 Consult with persons with disability including key stakeholders to assess the needs of persons with disability embarking on independent living and identify any gaps related to such service.
- 1.3 Continue investing in projects whereby persons with disability live within the community.
- 1.4 Enhance project management systems in place to ensure adequate utilisation of national funds regarding projects related to inclusion and independent living.
- 1.5 Provide support to the parents, siblings and support network of persons with disability during the transition of enabling their adult son or daughter or relative to lead a more independent life of their choice within the community.
- 1.6 Be the voice of persons with disability and their families, identifying concerns, highlighting gaps and take a pro-active approach to propose and action sustainable solutions.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

TO STRENGTHEN AND OPTIMISE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

ACTIONS

- 2.1** Add another Day Centre within the South of Malta to gain further outreach of service users within such area. Moreover, services at the existing Day Centres should be optimised and consolidated. Day Centres should also serve as a base for networking discussions and activities aimed at addressing the personal aspirations of service users.
- 2.2** Equipping the existing Day Centres with modern and technological infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of existent and future service users.
- 2.3** Support persons with disability to access mainstream services offered by the Government such as health, mental health, transport, education, employment, housing and justice.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

TO PRACTICE CO-PRODUCTION WHEREBY ALL RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS ARE INVOLVED TO DEVELOP SUPPORT SERVICES OR ACTIVITIES IN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

ACTIONS

- 3.1** Enhance early childhood interventions to capture service users during early years and compile a holistic assessment and an action plan encompassing different life stages.
- 3.2** Act as the point of reference between service users, professionals and all relevant stakeholders in ensuring the needs and aspirations of persons with disability are met and if not, realign with the holistic assessment.
- 3.3** Maintain continuous lines of communication open with service users and obtain increased feedback from service users through questionnaires to assess the relevance of the professional service provided towards their needs and wants.
- 3.4** Adopt a flexible approach towards amending professional services according to the changing needs and aspirations of service users.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4

TO REMOVE BARRIERS AND ENSURE PERSONS WITH DISABILITY HAVE ACCESSIBILITY TO SOCIETAL SYSTEMS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

ACTIONS

- 4.1 Continue to promote awareness, understanding and propose solutions on the need to include accessibility features in the physical environment, services, and information and communication technologies through promoting and participating in stakeholder meetings, workshops and conferences. This involves collaboration with the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) and other Ministries.
- 4.2 Tap EU funds to invest more in assistive technology devices that would support and supplement national activities for implementing accessibility and removing existing barriers at an educational, employment and social level.
- 4.3 Enhance mobility training to service users to encourage them to live independently within the community.
- 4.4 Invest in technological devices and equipment that would facilitate accessibility for persons with disability, such as:
 - i. *invest in devices and features of devices to help service users with limited motor skills to eat, play games and accomplish other activities such as cooking, dressing and grooming;*
 - ii. *computer software and hardware, such as voice recognition programmes, screen readers, and screen enlargement applications, to help people with mobility and sensory impairments use computers and mobile devices;*
 - iii. *closed captioning to allow people with hearing problems to watch movies, television programmes, and other digital media.*



2 SUPPORT OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

To invest in its workforce and promote a culture of accountability and professionalism.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6

To use technology and AI to enhance inclusion, participation and independence.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7

Enhancement of ICT systems and digitisation to keep pace with changing realities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8

To be an active body at the forefront of conducting research and compiling data on the lives of persons with disability.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5

TO INVEST IN ITS WORKFORCE AND PROMOTE A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

ACTIONS

- 5.1** Ensure effective use of resources in the delivery of strategic priorities and taking account of existing expertise and future knowledge and skills requirements.
- 5.2** Ensure effective internal communications through enhanced information management systems and sharing processes.
- 5.3** Maintain efficient and effective management of facilities, premises and organisational systems, including Information Communication Technologies.
- 5.4** Centralise administrative tasks to allow professionals to focus on service users' needs.
- 5.5** Develop SMART goals tied to specific performance metrics enabling staff to understand their areas of responsibility and the work they need to contribute to the Agency-wide objectives.
- 5.6** Review staff training and development in light of staff personal development and future organisational needs.
- 5.7** Provide tailor-made professional training for dealing with persons with disability and instill a culture of knowledge sharing whereby the knowledge and skills developed during such training is shared across the Agency.
- 5.8** Developing a training centre to train support workers and personal assistants.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6

TO USE TECHNOLOGY AND AI TO ENHANCE INCLUSION, PARTICIPATION AND INDEPENDENCE

ACTIONS

- 6.1** Encourage the development of options available for the use of assistive technology by recognising the diverse needs of persons with disability.
- 6.2** Consider the use of different smart technology applications that may be developed to assist service users in everyday life.
- 6.3** Ensure that ICT methods offered to persons with disability are available in different formats appropriate to the different needs of service users.
- 6.4** Engage in discussions with different stakeholders within the IT industry, Government entities and practitioners, both nationally and internationally on the introduction of different assistive technologies that are AI based.
- 6.5** Tap EU funds and programmes to be able to invest with non-intrusive AI-assisted technology for more inclusive education, increased employment opportunities, enhanced communication and independent living.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7

ENHANCEMENT OF ICT SYSTEMS AND DIGITISATION TO KEEP PACE WITH CHANGING REALITIES

ACTIONS

- 7.1** Invest in systems for efficient data capturing which is an important pre-requisite to facilitate the extraction of information for statistical purposes and also for strategic and decision-making purposes.
- 7.2** Look into an enhanced centralised IT System enabling better data sharing of information and data across the Agency.
- 7.3** Ensuring effective database systems in place to log in any feedback or complaints received by service users and their families together with the necessary analytical tools to filter, assess and investigate such complaints.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8

TO BE AN ACTIVE BODY AT THE FOREFRONT OF CONDUCTING RESEARCH AND COMPILING DATA ON THE LIVES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

ACTIONS

- 8.1** Collaborate with professional researchers and/or educational institutions to conduct research that will serve to:
 - i. build information and evidence on the implications of societal changes and developments, with the flexibility to prioritise issues such as ageing, health, engagement with persons with disability and consider the role of technology in planning for the future needs of persons with disability to facilitate inclusion and independence;*
 - ii. guide the development of policy and practice and support the implementation of the National Disability Strategy.*
- 8.2** Conduct research and develop guidelines on mechanisms to achieve community integration and social inclusion.
- 8.3** Gather and analyse information, data and statistics relevant to these areas in order to provide an evidence base for future policy advice and input and to measure progress in key areas.
- 8.4** Disseminate and communicate the learning from research to the public and all relevant stakeholders.



3 ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 9

To be an effective and pro-active Agency, committed to delivering on strategic priorities in line with good governance practices.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 10

To continue managing the Agency's finances efficiently and effectively, in an accountable and transparent manner ensuring quality services and value for money.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 9

TO BE AN EFFECTIVE AND PRO-ACTIVE AGENCY, COMMITTED TO DELIVERING ON STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN LINE WITH GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

ACTIONS

- 9.1** Maintain high standards of governance, including actions to improve systems, controls, documented procedures, data protection procedures, and other actions to ensure compliance with legislation and good practice.
- 9.2** Following the appointment of a Risk Management Manager, implement a risk management framework and policy to identify potential threats, identify gaps and include actions to mitigate or minimise the impact of these risks on the overall operations of the Agency.
- 9.3** Identify training requirements using a top-down approach, in relation to various levels of risk management. Promote a risk management culture through the formalisation of risk management practices and techniques.
- 9.4** Ensure effective compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.
- 9.5** Carry out a review of current operational processes and procedures in order to establish ownership and accountability of operations, and ensuring procedures are in line with good governance practices.
- 9.6** Conduct a client satisfaction survey on a regular basis, take note of any justified shortcomings and bind itself to rectify them.
- 9.7** Publish strategy documents and annual reports on the Agency's website in formats accessible to various service users for transparent communication.
- 9.8** Increase service audits to monitor and control the quality of the professional service delivered to ensure they are in line with the standards and policies of the Agency.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 10

TO CONTINUE MANAGING THE AGENCY'S FINANCES EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY, IN AN ACCOUNTABLE AND TRANSPARENT MANNER ENSURING QUALITY SERVICES AND VALUE FOR MONEY

ACTIONS

- 10.1** Enhance and strengthen the internal control functions to monitor that expenses are reasonable and justified, ensure financial statements are complete and accurate to ensure Government and EU funds are adequately and efficiently utilised.
- 10.2** Enhance the monitoring and control of the utilisation of Government funds and EU funds to ensure responsible and effective utilisation of public spending and value for money.
- 10.3** Tap EU funds in order to invest in further projects, equipment and technology in line with service users' needs. This also entails prioritising and monitoring projects to ensure funds are available and delivered according to agreed and pre-determined timeframes.



4 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 11

To understand and advise on societal changes, challenges and opportunities that impact on the lives of persons with disability.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 12

Re-branding the Agency in line with new strategy reflecting service users' needs.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 13

To collaborate with all relevant stakeholders and international counterparts to achieve more inclusive communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 11

TO UNDERSTAND AND ADVISE ON SOCIETAL CHANGES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

ACTIONS

- 11.1** Conduct national campaigns on the contributions and capabilities of persons with disability.
- 11.2** Promote and create awareness on different media platforms on the challenges faced by persons with disability in everyday life and the manner to overcome them to raise more awareness.
- 11.3** Create awareness and educate younger audience through workshops, activities and discussions with Heads of Schools and Ministries to ensure younger individuals are taught to appreciate diversity and to value and learn from similarities and differences of others.
- 11.4** Promote positive parenting sessions within the community to transmit social skills on how to communicate with others, accept individual differences in their children and foster principles based on inclusion.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 12

RE-BRANDING THE AGENCY'S WEBSITE IN LINE WITH NEW STRATEGY REFLECTING SERVICE USERS' NEEDS

ACTIONS

- 12.1** Add features to the website based on the outcomes of questionnaires to ensure website is based on needs and expectations of service users.
- 12.2** Publish ongoing information that interests service users and the community through the use of newsletter features in an interesting, engaging and concise manner.
- 12.3** Render the website less formal and reducing the number of submenus to keep information easily accessible and to the point.
- 12.4** Include practical resources using engaging images and videos that empower persons with disability to utilise their abilities in everyday life skills without patronising them.
- 12.5** Adjust presentation of the content to make it easier to distinguish and understand in line with Web Accessibility Directive (WAD) of the EU.
- 12.6** Include accessibility features in line with the requirements of WAD.

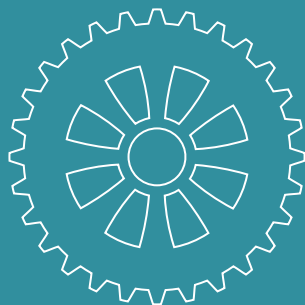
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 13

TO COLLABORATE WITH ALL RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS AND INTERNATIONAL COUNTERPARTS TO ACHIEVE MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

ACTIONS

- 13.1** Work in partnership with Government agencies and organisations from the public and private sector to implement projects and ideas derived from workshops and networking events.
- 13.2** Organise ongoing workshops and networking events open to all relevant stakeholders from the public, private and civil society spheres together with persons with disability to share ideas, experience and discuss initiatives and projects for a more inclusive community.
- 13.3** Collaborate with similar agencies abroad to share knowledge, ideas, policies and frameworks and professional services adopted by foreign counterparts.
- 13.4** Increase collaboration with public, private and voluntary organisations to organise campaigns and events involving persons with disability together with members of the community to promote the abilities of service users and the values of an inclusive society.
- 13.5** Collaborate with foreign networks and alliances within the disability sector to be able to discuss and promote inclusive and sustainable development goals within a global environment.
- 13.6** Increase participation in fora, summits, seminars and training on an international level to learn what other countries are doing, document best practices and identify areas where there is a need to place more focus and attention.
- 13.7** Seek international mobility opportunities by collaborating with international providers to assist towards accessibility and assistive technology, to train and serve service users and professionals.





MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The launch of this Strategic Operational Plan 2022-2026 marks the five year milestone since the setting up of Aġenzija Sapport as an autonomous organisation. The strategic planning spanned over a number of months which culminated in the issuing of this plan. Our strategic planning will not be put on hold for another five years but will be continually under review while we monitor the implementation process of this strategic document.

The implementation of this plan is intended to be an iterative process while taking into consideration the changes which might come our way. Our organisation will remain agile and dynamic to take into consideration the socio-economic changes in Malta and the arising needs of our clients.

The strategic plan is underpinned by multiple planning documents. Our action plans outline the individual governance and management structures for each respective strategic objective. These will be reviewed regularly by the relevant Unit within Aġenzija Sapport, measured through key performance indicators and reported annually.



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