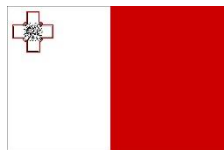


***EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms  
2014 – 2021***

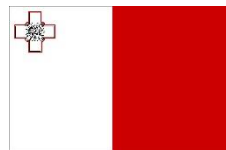
**“Reduction in Social Inequalities in  
Health and the Burden of Disease”**



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**Programme Title:** EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2014 – 2021

**Programme Area:** Social Inclusion, Youth Employment and Poverty Reduction



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**Project Promoter:**

Ministry for Health (MFH)

**Project Partners:**

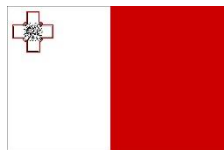
Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE)

**Donor Project Partners:**

Oslo University Hospital

Norwegian Occupational Therapy Association

(promoting SIT training course)



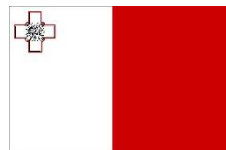
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## Introduction

Malta has always championed

- Universal access to healthcare
- The reduction of inequalities in health
- Prevention and reducing burden of disease
- Developing our children to their maximum potential
- Reducing any disadvantages which may hamper their productivity in adult life

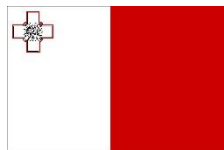
Unfortunately, intellectual difficulties (ASD, ADHD ) are on the increase



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## Introduction

- Phenylketonuria is another condition that can lead to significant cognitive disability and consequent social exclusion
- However it is a preventable disease if detected early
- Malta's geographical location is faced with a threat of communicable and tropical diseases including the West Nile Virus, Zika Dengue, Chinkungunya
- All these diseases can be prevented with screening

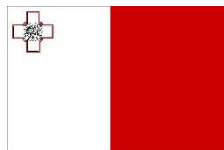


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## EEA Norwegian Funds 2014 – 2021

The Ministry for Health has applied for Norwegian funds for the set up of:

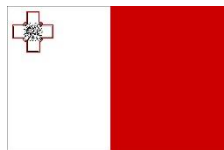
1. An Ayres Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT) Centre in a mainstream school in a socially deprived area
2. Training of at least 12 Maltese Occupational Therapists , 2 Norwegian OTs, 2 Physiotherapists and 2 Speech & Language Pathologists in Sensory Integration to be able to provide the SIT services



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## EEA Norwegian Funds 2014 – 2021

3. Training of Psychologists to screen for ASD through the LENTI screening project
4. Screening newborns for Phenylketonuria (PKU) in collaboration with the Norwegian Newborn Screening Programme at Oslo University Hospital
5. Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAT) for all blood donations from donors with a history of travel to endemic countries



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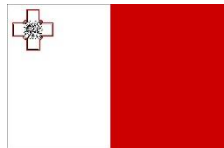
## Total Estimated Budget for the Project

**The total project cost = €2,407,059**

85% Norwegian funds = €2,046,000

15% Maltese funds = €361,059

Annual sustainability costs = €1,049,408



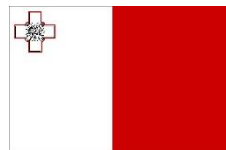
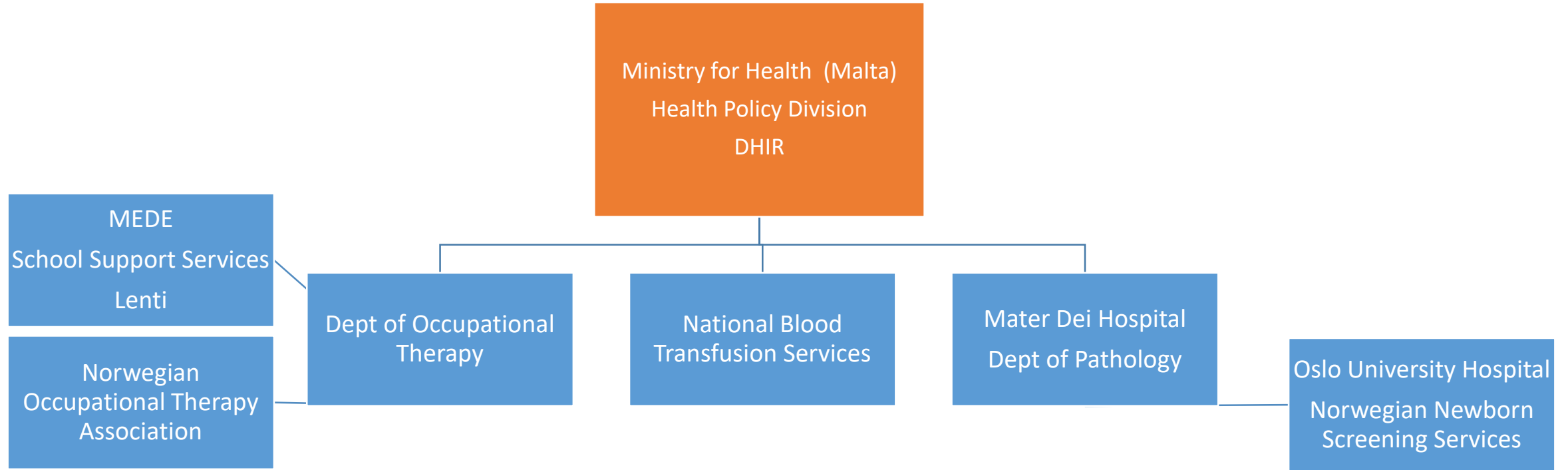
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**Iceland**  
**Liechtenstein**  
**Norway grants**

**Norway**  
grants

# Collaboration

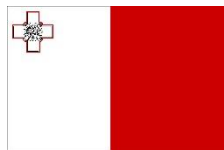


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## Inter-Ministerial Collaboration

The collaboration between the two ministries (MFH and MEDE) is fundamental in providing continuous support from early years through the child's school life in preparation for adulthood. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed for this purpose.

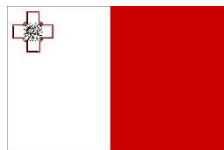
The project is being seen as a holistic national initiative that includes preventative measures through the screening for children at risk and offer early intervention and support for children and their families.



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## The LENTI Fuq I-Izvillup ta' Wliedna Programme

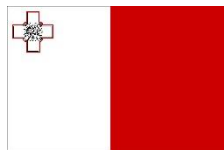
This is a screening programme which will be run by the psychologists employed by MEDE. The aim of this programme is to identify children at risk of autism and other conditions through assessment at the age of 18 months.



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## The Ayres Sensory Integration Centre

- \* Ayres SI is an Occupational Therapy play-based method of intervention that uses active engagement in sensory-rich activities.
- \* Children with sensory processing/integration differences can have trouble integrating all the information received from their senses to produce coordinated motor movements and perform everyday activities.
- \* Studies estimate one in 20 children are affected by sensory issues and can experience struggles with coordination, balance, focus, play, self-expression, organization, and motor skills.

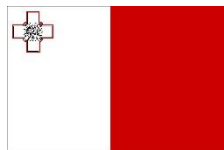


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## The Ayres Sensory Integration Centre

- At present we are aware of about **800 children who require sensory integration therapy programmes.**
- Dedicated therapists for this intervention will provide **children between the ages of 0 – 16 years** intensive therapy programmes.
- Currently families have to seek such therapy privately, mostly abroad at **exorbitant costs**, sometimes with the help of NGOs.

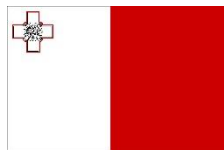


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## Benefits for Norwegian Partners

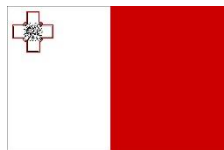
- **Two Norwegian OTs** will be benefitting from the **training programme** offered in Malta.
- **Future collaboration** with the Norwegian professionals would enable the two parties to continue to **develop together**.



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## PKU Screening

- PKU is classified as a rare disease with an incidence of 1 in 10,000 in Europe
- Undetected PKU can lead to severe irreversible lifelong neurological problems
- Early detection allows for early dietary management with full protection from neurological damage
- Screening is feasible as it latches on to the neonatal hypothyroid screening programme

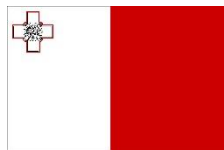


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## How will funds be used?

- Procurement of kits required to perform PKU screening.
- UHPLC for confirmatory testing of positive cases and monitoring of known cases.
- Training of laboratory staff in the interpretation of screening data.



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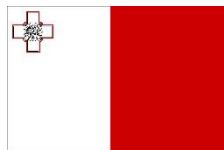


## Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAT)

### Setting up of Testing Platform for Transfusion Transmissible Emerging Diseases

Between 24 and 30 August 2018, EU Member States reported 300 human cases of West Nile fever: Italy (144), Romania (61), Greece (41), Hungary (38), Austria (8), France (6), Croatia (1) and Slovenia (1). EU neighbouring countries reported 55 cases: Serbia (54) and Kosovo\* (1).

Other Viruses : Dengue, Chinkungunya, Zika, HIV, Hep B/C/E, emerging infections



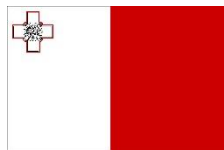
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## Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAT)

### Impact on Blood Services

- A **28 day deferral** needs to be applied for donors returning from the listed countries.
- In summer NBTS had a deferral rate of 30%, 10% due to travel.
- Besides the risks of transfusion transmission.



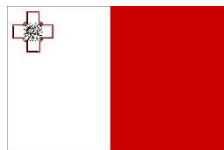
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## Nucleic Acid Amplification Testing (NAT)

### Conclusion:

1. Added Guarantee of supply of blood/products
2. Enhanced Safety

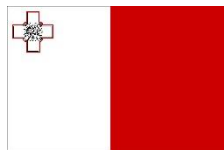


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## Expected Outcomes of the Project:

- \* At least 12 Maltese and 2 Norwegian OTs, 2 PTs and 2 SLPs certified in SIT and psychologists trained in ASD screening
- \* A minimum of 1,500 children screened per annum through the LENTI Screening Programme
- \* By 2021 approximately 200 children annually will benefit from the National Health Services through the set up of the SIT centre
- \* 95% screening of neonates born in Malta and Gozo for PKU
- \* 100% NAT screening of donated blood products in Malta



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