

# Connecting Europe Facility - Transport

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## Newsletter 1 - Benefits for Malta through the Air Navigation sector

**Dear Readers,**

This is the first Newsletter issued by the National Contact Point for Malta for Connecting Europe Facility - CEF Transport. This Newsletter is aimed at showing you one of the projects co funded under this EU funded programme and to bring out the opportunities available to respond to required developments in air traffic management, which are necessary to ensure that Malta's Air Navigation Service Provision maintains essential connectivity with the rest of Europe and beyond.

I hope you will enjoy reading this newsletter and remain updated about the developments in this programme.

**Donna Borg Micallef**

National Contact Point

Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works



## **What is CEF?**

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is a European Union fund that was formed in 2014 which is aimed at promoting increased connection amongst EU member states by supporting infrastructure investments (specifically, the Trans-European Networks) in the areas of transportation, energy, digital initiatives, and telephony. This programme is divided into three main strands (Digital, Energy and Transport). The Ministry for Transport, Infrastructure and Public Works is the national contact point for the strand on Transport.

CEF Transport supports the European transport infrastructure policy by helping realise key projects across Europe along the Trans European Network for Transport (TEN-T). CEF Transport focuses on cross-border projects and projects aiming at removing bottlenecks or bridging missing links in various sections of the TEN-T Core Network and on the TEN-T Comprehensive Network, as well as for horizontal priorities such as traffic management systems.

CEF Transport also supports innovation in the transport system in order to improve the use of infrastructure, reduce the environmental impact of transport, enhance energy efficiency and increase safety.

The budget for CEF Transport from 2014 and until 2027 is almost €50 billion.

## **Success Story in Malta**

Malta Air Traffic Services Ltd (MATS), the Air Navigation Service Provider (ANSP) of Malta, providing air traffic management (ATM) to airspace users in the Maltese airspace have benefited from CEF Support. By partnering with other EU Member States, MATS participated successfully in the Project: SESAR Deployment Programme Implementation-2016 (2016\_109\_AF5 BLUEMED FAB IP Network deployment). MATS continues to build on this positive experience by securing further CEF Transport Support to invest further in its internal capacity through additional investment in equipment through continuous support under CEF Transport 2.

MATS has a pivotal role as it acts on behalf of the State in providing air navigation services for the Maltese islands and the Malta Flight Information Region. Despite being the smallest air navigation service providers in Europe, and the only one in Malta in regards of Air Traffic Services, MATS does not fail to represent Malta and collaborate with European countries, demonstrating a commitment to fostering partnerships for the advancement of air navigation services.

MATS is made up of several units, including the Area Control Centre (ACC) which manages air traffic in the Malta Flight Information Region (FIR) and Upper Information Region (UIR). This includes flight information for aircrafts traveling through the area and arriving at or leaving Lampedusa, which is also in Malta's FIR. This service is also supported by using radar data from several stations, such as those in Malta, Sicily, and Greece. The same unit also manages the approach sector for Malta's airport.



Another Unit manages the Control Zones (CTZ). Aerodrome Control Zones that afford protection to aircraft within the immediate vicinity of aerodromes, and Control Areas (CTA) that are situated above the Aerodrome Traffic Zone (ATZ) and afford protection over a larger area to a specified upper limit.

MATS also provides Aeronautical Information Service (AIS) that is responsible for the collection and dissemination of information for the territory of Malta and for the airspace over the high seas encompassed by the Malta FIR/UIR. The AIS unit is currently at the forefront of a European Union project towards digital services.

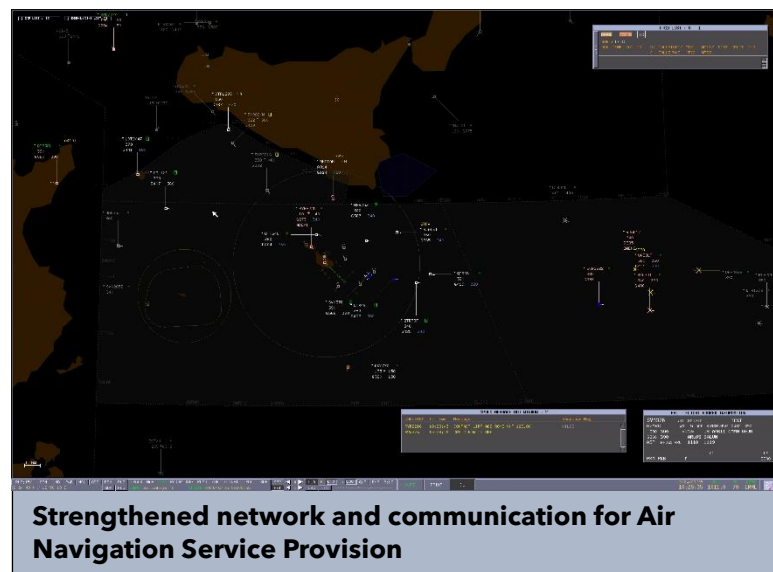
MATS also has its Training Organization, while it supports Search and Rescue Operations, local flying schools, as well as Maintenance, Repairs and Overhaul organizations.

MATS has also worked with other small entities to help achieve projects and goals. Since 2010 the organisation has collaborated with University of Malta and MCST to provide its technical expertise.

## SESAR 2016 - BLUE MED

In order to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness of its service provision, MATS applied for CEF funding as part of the SESAR Deployment Programme Implementation 2016 project. The project was divided into several components and MATS mostly worked with Greece, Italy and Cyprus.

The BLUE MED (Mediterranean Functional Airspace Block) implemented the local IP (Internet Protocol) network. Internet Protocol Network connectivity aims to enable to exchange ATM (Air Traffic Management) information, thus ensuring improved operational capabilities.



**Strengthened network and communication for Air Navigation Service Provision**

Through this project, MATS benefitted from technical guidance and tools in the design of the network and in ensuring interoperability between the concerned Ground/Ground arrangements, enabling provisional connectivity to PENS (Pan European Network Services). This project was specifically aimed at elevating Malta's and the other partners' network infrastructure by establishing a comprehensive upgrade, transitioning numerous analogue lines to more advanced internet protocols. The upgrade not only enhanced communication channels but also facilitated the step towards accommodating capabilities of future projects like the Data Link Services and futuristic System Wide Information Management (SWIM). Moreover, this project was vital for MATS as it set the framework of future collaborations with other countries.

## **CLEAN ATM (CEF Transport 2 project)**

In 2022, MATS have once again applied for the CEF 2022, in which all three proposed projects have been awarded: ACADIA, SWIM and extended FRA.

The Acceleration of Aeronautical Digital Information Availability (ACADIA) project will mainly focus to provide digital notices to airmen, enhances interoperability and efficiency.

SWIM, on the other hand aims to digitize information exchanges in the European ATM system, enhancing flight safety, optimizing airspace capacity, and reducing CO2 emissions by providing real-time airspace status information to Air Traffic Control systems. This project will also be contributing to the European Green Deal targets.

In addition, MATS aims at fully utilising the Free Route Airspace (FRA) and contribute to more efficient and flexible flight paths, as it has been doing since 2018, when MATS was one of the first countries to implement such.

Through these projects MATS will help enhance the safety, effectiveness and efficiency of the Maltese airspace, provide savings to the airspace users that in terms means more accessible air transport to the general public, whilst also adding to the nation's contributions in climate action and digital advancements.

For more information on CEF Transport Programme, visit our website:

<https://infrastructure.gov.mt/connecting-europe-facility-cef-for-transport/>

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