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esplora[®]

**DRAFT
STRATEGY
2030**

Commissioned by

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THE STRATEGY



Figure 1 – Theory of Change



FACT SHEET

22,000 m² of space



interactive exhibits **200+**

10.7 metre diameter
Planetarium dome

Total visitors since 2017 **781,000**

10k+ visit during
holidays | **95% Maltese**

Public perception and attitude towards Esplora & science and technology¹

1 Esprimi, 2026 - Esprimi was commissioned to carry out a survey amongst members of the general public in order to better understand their perception and attitude towards science and technology. The sample size is that of 400 respondents who are members of the general public aged over 16. A quota was implemented on age and gender as per national Census figures and a spread on region and education levels were achieved within the sample. The research was carried out via online research. Fieldwork took place between 7th April and 7th May 2026. Wherever questions are comparable to the wave carried out in 2023, the results in this report also present the findings from 2023.

62%

of Maltese have
visited Esplora at
least once.

57%

of those who visited
Esplora mainly visited to
accompany children or
attend with family.

67%

expressed an
interest in science
and technology
but 51% find
it difficult to
understand
science related
information.

20%

are not interested
because they
find it difficult
to understand
science.

71%

seek information
about science
and technology
out of general
curiosity and
personal interest.

VISION

Inspiring curious minds to shape our future.

MISSION

To nurture curiosity, enable discovery and empower people of all ages through interactive STEAM engagement, that sparks imagination, creativity and lifelong engagement with science.

PRINCIPLES

The implementation of this strategy will be guided by three organisational principles that underpin Esplora's culture, decision-making and public engagement. These principles apply across all strategic actions, providing a consistent foundation for decision-making and the delivery of Esplora's mission.

1. Sustainability

Embed environmental, social and organisational sustainability across programming, operations, procurement, partnerships and decision-making, while promoting sustainable behaviours through public engagement.

2. Respect and ethical practice

Foster a safe, respectful and inclusive environment that values the wellbeing, dignity and equitable treatment of visitors, staff, volunteers, partners and collaborators.

3. Quality and Excellence

Commit to the highest standards of quality across programming, visitor experience, science communication, partnerships and organisational practice. Esplora will embed a culture of continuous improvement through planning, quality assurance, monitoring, visitor feedback and regular evaluation to ensure its programmes and services remain relevant, effective and inspiring.

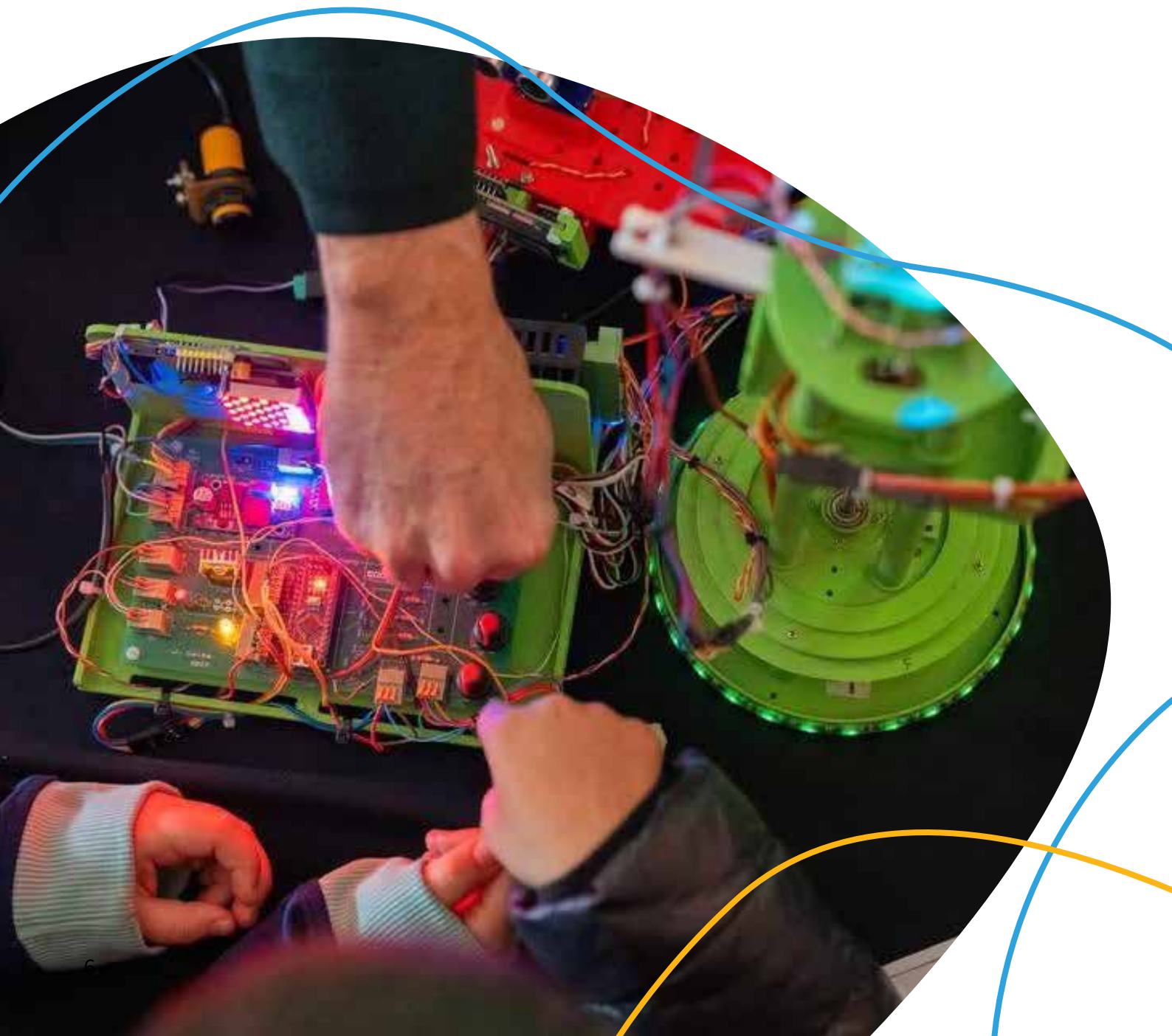
ABOUT US

Esplora is Malta's National Interactive Science Centre and forms part of Xjenza Malta, the national agency responsible for advancing science, research and innovation. Situated within the historic Bighi complex overlooking the Grand Harbour, Esplora combines interactive learning, scientific exploration and creativity within one of Malta's most distinctive heritage settings.

Officially opened in 2016, Esplora celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2026, as one of Malta's leading destinations for science engagement. Over the past decade, it has welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors from Malta and abroad, inspiring curiosity through over 200 interactive exhibits, immersive science shows, a state-of-the-art Planetarium, workshops, educational programmes and public events.

At the heart of Esplora's approach is the belief that learning is most powerful when it is active, participatory and enjoyable. By bringing together science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM), Esplora connects scientific ideas with creativity, emotion, innovation and everyday life, encouraging people of all ages to question, experiment, discover and better understand the world around them.

Working closely with schools, families, educators, researchers, public entities, community organisations and industry, Esplora contributes to Malta's wider ambitions in science, culture, research and innovation by making STEAM accessible, engaging and relevant to everyone.



INTRODUCTION

The world is changing at an unprecedented pace. Scientific breakthroughs, artificial intelligence, climate change, demographic shifts, rapid technological innovation and the accelerating pace of discovery are transforming the way people live, work and engage with society. At the same time, increasing complexity, misinformation and global uncertainty require citizens to be curious, adaptable and equipped to understand evidence, think critically and make informed decisions.

These global shifts present both significant challenges and unprecedented opportunities for Malta. Malta achieved Strong Innovator status for the first time in the European Innovation Scoreboard, reflecting sustained progress in research, innovation and digital transformation. Building on this momentum, Malta Vision 2050 sets out an ambitious national agenda centred on innovation, sustainability, wellbeing and opportunity. It identifies advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, life sciences, digital technologies, the blue economy, creative industries and high-value tourism as strategic sectors that will shape Malta's future competitiveness, while recognising that long-term success depends above all on developing the country's greatest asset: its people.

Realising this vision presents a significant opportunity for Malta to build on its recent progress. Achieving this ambition will require a collective national effort across government, education, research, industry and civil society to address the challenges that continue to shape the country's future competitiveness. These include the need to strengthen research and innovation investment, deepen collaboration between academia and industry, address shortages of highly skilled workers and STEM skills, and further align education and training with the demands of a rapidly changing economy. Responding to these priorities will not only accelerate Malta's innovation ambitions but also strengthen its resilience, productivity and long-term prosperity.

Science centres have an increasingly important role to play in helping societies respond to these opportunities and challenges. They provide trusted spaces where people of all ages can explore ideas, engage with science and technology and contribute to conversations about the future. Esplora is uniquely positioned to contribute to Malta's long-term ambitions.

While it cannot address national priorities alone, it will play a significant role by nurturing curiosity from an early age, strengthening science capital, inspiring future talent towards STEAM careers, connecting research with society and creating meaningful opportunities for lifelong STEAM engagement.

Malta Vision 2050 makes clear that future prosperity will not be achieved through technological advancement alone. It calls for a society where talent, innovation, sustainability and opportunity work together to improve not only economic performance, but also the wellbeing, confidence and resilience of communities. Delivering this ambition requires people who are scientifically literate, creative, collaborative and confident in navigating an increasingly knowledge-driven world. It requires citizens who are able to engage with complex issues such as climate change, artificial intelligence, health, ethics and sustainability, while embracing lifelong learning and contributing actively to society.

Importantly, Malta Vision 2050 also signals a significant evolution in national thinking by moving beyond STEM towards STEAM. It recognises culture and creativity not as complementary additions to science and technology, but as essential drivers of innovation, social cohesion and national confidence.

This strategy sets out Esplora's contribution to Malta's long-term ambitions by cultivating the confidence, imagination and scientific understanding that empower individuals and communities to shape Malta's future. Through stronger partnerships and lifelong STEAM learning and meaningful public engagement with science, Esplora will contribute to developing the science capital, creativity and active citizenship that underpin a resilient, innovative and inclusive society.

As Esplora enters its second decade, it does so from a position of strength. This strategy builds on the Centre's achievements over its first ten years while setting a new direction for the future, strengthening Esplora's role, broadening its reach and deepening its impact. The first decade established Esplora as Malta's interactive science centre. The next decade will establish Esplora as Malta's national platform for STEAM engagement.

THEORY OF CHANGE

Esplora believes that curiosity is the starting point for lifelong engagement with science, but curiosity alone is not enough. Through inspiring experiences, local relevance, meaningful learning, emotional connections, creative collaboration and opportunities for participation, curiosity develops into discovery, discovery into understanding and understanding into informed action.

Central to this approach is STEAM, where the arts are both a vehicle for engaging with science and a catalyst for innovation. Creativity, storytelling, design, empathy and communication help make scientific ideas more accessible, relatable and participatory, enabling people to connect with science in ways that are intellectually engaging as well as emotionally meaningful. At the same time, scientific discovery and innovation depend on creativity, imagination, design and the ability to think across disciplines. STEAM recognises that the arts play a vital role in generating new ideas, solving complex problems and developing solutions that respond to real-world needs.

By investing in high-quality programming, inclusive and diverse visitor experiences, strategic partnerships and enabling infrastructure, supported by research, international collaboration and learning, Esplora will create opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with STEAM throughout their lives.

This approach will contribute to stronger science capital, increased participation, greater confidence in science, more inclusive access to STEAM opportunities and stronger connections between science and society. Ultimately, Esplora aims to inspire curious minds capable of shaping Malta's future through informed participation, creativity and innovation.

Figure 2 – Theory of Change



STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

This strategy is guided by a set of strategic foundations that articulate Esplora's core beliefs, ambitions and approach to STEAM engagement. These foundations reflect how Esplora understands its role within Malta's educational, scientific, cultural and societal landscape, while responding to emerging opportunities and challenges shaping the future in Europe and beyond.

For Esplora, STEAM means using all the different disciplines and ways of knowing to lead to making and acting in today's culture, economy and society. It combines evidence, creativity, ethics, design, emotion and public participation to help people respond to real-world challenges.

The foundations in Esplora's STEAM engagement strategy provide the conceptual framework that informs the institute's priorities, decisions and future actions. They explain what Esplora seeks to achieve and why these ambitions matter. Above all, they will shape Esplora's growth over the coming years.

Grounded in research, stakeholder engagement and international practice, these foundations recognise that science centres today play a key societal role that extends beyond education and entertainment.

The following five strategic foundations articulate the principles through which Esplora will pursue its vision and mission.



1. Nurturing curiosity

Why is this important for us?

Curiosity is the foundation of learning, innovation and lifelong engagement with the world around us. In a world shaped by uncertainty, misinformation and rapid technological change, curiosity enables people to ask questions, seek understanding and remain open to new ideas. For Esplora, nurturing curiosity is particularly important because early encounters with science, research, creativity and exploration can shape confidence, aspiration and future engagement with STEAM throughout life.

Curiosity contributes to personal wellbeing and societal resilience. Curious individuals are more likely to explore, participate, problem-solve and engage critically with the world around them. Curiosity is a civic and human value.

How are we currently addressing this?

Esplora already nurtures curiosity through its hands-on, experiential approach to learning. Interactive exhibits, the planetarium, the multisensory room, science demonstrations, events and live engagement encourage visitors to experiment, explore and ask questions at their own pace. The centre's informal learning environment creates opportunities for discovery that feel playful, accessible and non-intimidating, particularly for younger audiences and families.

Research highlights that current visitors particularly value Esplora's interactive nature and freedom of exploration, reinforcing curiosity as one of the organisation's strongest existing assets. In a public survey carried out to better understand their perception and attitude towards science and technology and the role of Esplora (Esprimi, 2026), the primary motivations for seeking general information about science and technology were identified as general curiosity and personal interest (71%) and learning new things and expanding knowledge (63%). These findings highlight that curiosity is an important motivation in its own right.

How will we take this further?

Esplora will strengthen its role as a curiosity-driven institution by ensuring experiences remain dynamic, relevant and responsive to emerging societal questions and scientific developments. This means creating more opportunities for experimentation, wonder and repeat engagement through temporary experiences, immersive technologies, creative collaborations and interdisciplinary programming.

Curiosity will also increasingly be nurtured across the life course, ensuring that teenagers, adults and older audiences encounter experiences that remain meaningful, challenging and inspiring.

What will the strategy do?

The strategy will:

- Prioritise experiential and participatory learning models.
- Increase opportunities for temporary, immersive and rotating experiences.
- Expand transdisciplinary STEAM programming that combines science, arts and creativity to create effective approaches to public engagement.
- Develop targeted pathways for underrepresented audiences, particularly teenagers and adults.
- Strengthen Esplora's role as a place of wonder, experimentation and lifelong curiosity.



2. Enabling discovery

Why is this important for us?

Discovery has long been a driving force of human progress and societal development. It enables people to transform curiosity into understanding. It creates opportunities for individuals to explore new ideas, deepen knowledge and better understand themselves, society and the wider world. In a rapidly changing context shaped by scientific advancement, environmental challenges and technological disruption, enabling discovery becomes essential to preparing people for the future.

Discovery is also central to innovation, aspiration and personal growth. By creating opportunities to engage meaningfully with science and exploration, Esplora can support people to understand their place in the world and imagine new possibilities for themselves and society.

How are we currently addressing this?

Esplora enables discovery through interactive exhibitions, science communication, educational programmes, school engagement, live science experiences and immersive environments such as the planetarium. The centre provides opportunities for visitors to encounter scientific ideas through experimentation and play, helping make science more accessible and tangible.

Findings from a survey addressed to educators² who have visited Esplora confirm Esplora's

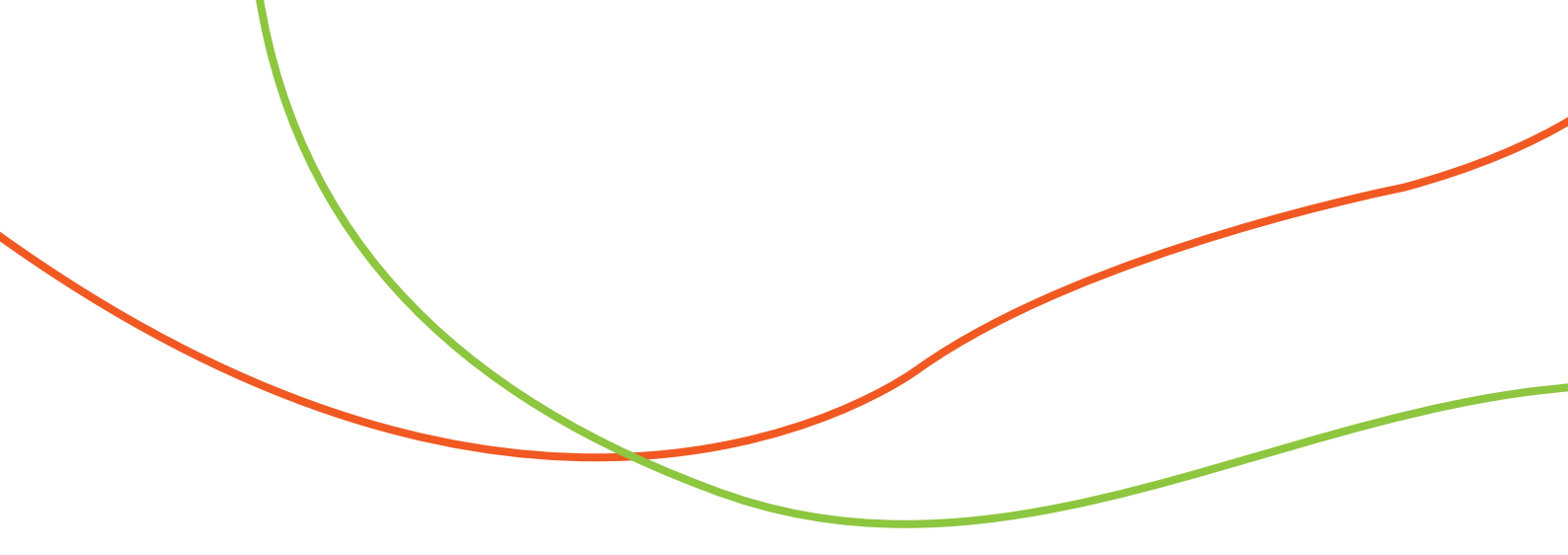
strong positioning as an educational resource that complements formal learning environments. The primary motivation for visiting Esplora was identified as providing students with educational outings and exposure to science-related subjects (80%). Additionally, 45% of respondents highlighted curriculum-linked learning as a key purpose of their visit, while 35% indicated that hands-on science experimentation was a central motivator. Educators demonstrated clear expectations regarding the educational outcomes of their visits. The most frequently identified expected outcomes included hands-on learning experiences (69%) and an improved understanding of scientific concepts among students (68%). Feedback indicates that these outcomes are being successfully delivered to a significant extent. In particular, educators reported strong achievement levels in relation to hands-on and inquiry-based learning (75%), increased student interest in science (75%), and the development of students' motivation and confidence in science-related subjects (71%).

Esplora also contributes to discovery through partnerships, international collaborations, science festivals and engagement activities that connect people to new ideas and emerging fields of knowledge.

How will we take this further?

Esplora will expand opportunities for deeper engagement, particularly for adolescents and lifelong learners, and strengthen pathways between curiosity, experimentation and real-

² Feedback from Educators was collected in April 2026. The survey was administered using both on-site and online channels with a total sample size of 105 responses. Respondents were predominantly classroom teachers (83.8%), mostly working in primary schools (61%).



world scientific experiences. The public survey carried out in 2026 (Esprimi, 2026), suggests that Esplora's current public identity is strongly associated with children and families, with a limited appeal to adults without children, older people and adolescents and young people. The findings relating to non-visitors are particularly important in identifying barriers to participation and opportunities for future audience development. Among respondents who had never visited Esplora, one of the most commonly cited barriers was the perception that Esplora is "a place for children only" (26%). This latter finding is strategically significant, as it confirms that Esplora's current public image may unintentionally exclude or discourage adults without children, older audiences, and individuals who do not immediately identify themselves as interested in science.

The development of Fort Bingemma as the National Space Park presents an important opportunity in this regard, enabling immersive engagement with astronomy, environmental science, overnight experiences and direct interaction with scientists. This will help extend Esplora's role from introductory discovery towards deeper and more specialised forms of exploration.

How will this inform our next strategy?

The strategy will:

- Create stronger connections between Esplora, education, research and STEAM stakeholders.
 - Work with the National STEAM Engagement network and education stakeholders to support STEAM careers throughout the entire pipeline.
 - Support more STEAM engagement training for researchers and the development of curriculum-linked STEAM resources for educators.
 - Strengthen partnerships nationally and internationally to expand opportunities for exploration and learning.
-
- Refresh and renew experiences to strengthen repeat visitation.
 - Integrate emerging technologies such as VR, AR and immersive experiences.
 - Develop Bingemma as a complementary advanced discovery space for adolescents and lifelong learners.

3. Empowering active citizenship

Why is this important for us?

Science increasingly shapes how people live, make decisions and participate in society. Questions relating to climate change, health, artificial intelligence, technology, sustainability and ethics require citizens to engage critically with evidence and make informed choices. In this context, active citizenship means more than civic participation; it requires the confidence, understanding and curiosity to engage meaningfully with societal challenges. Esplora is not just as a science attraction but a participatory civic space where people explore how the sciences and decision-making connect to everyday life.

Esplora believes science should not belong only to scientists, but to everyone. By inspiring active citizenship, Esplora seeks to empower people to become informed, curious and engaged members of society who can contribute positively to Malta's future.

How are we currently addressing this?

Esplora already contributes to active citizenship through science communication, school engagement, public programming and opportunities for informal learning. Exhibitions and experiences frequently address topics linked to sustainability, health, the environment and everyday scientific understanding.

Community-based initiatives and events have also demonstrated Esplora's ability to engage wider audiences and strengthen local participation, while partnerships across sectors create opportunities for broader public dialogue around science and society.

Respondents to the public survey (Esprimi, 2026) who indicated that they do not actively seek information about science and technology, but who described themselves as rather or very interested in science, expressed interest in activities and events (36%) specifically targeted towards adults, while 29% indicated interest in science activities taking place within museums or exhibition settings. 29% expressed interest in events organised within their local communities, highlighting demand for more decentralised and accessible forms of engagement. 28.5% of respondents were interested in hands-on and interactive activities, while 27.5% expressed interest in attending science festivals. Results

indicate that individuals may be more receptive to informal, experiential, social, and event-based engagement formats than to actively seeking scientific information independently. The demand for community-based activities suggest that geographical accessibility may be a crucial point to focus on. The strong interest in interactive and festival-based formats further reinforces the importance of experiential learning and participatory engagement.

How will Esplora take this further?

Esplora will increasingly position science as a tool for participation, dialogue and informed decision-making. This means strengthening opportunities for citizens to engage actively with contemporary issues, contribute to discussions and participate in co-creation, experimentation and problem-solving.

Esplora will seek to become a space where citizens not only learn about science, but explore how science relates to their everyday lives, communities and collective future.

How will this inform our next strategy?

The strategy will:

- Strengthen programming around contemporary societal challenges, including climate, health, technology, ethics and other issues relevant to Malta and Gozo.
- Position Esplora as a civic platform for informed dialogue, citizen science, participation and co-creation around science and society.
- Strengthen collaboration with local councils, government, communities and strategic partners to develop programmes that respond to local priorities and emerging issues.
- Foster community participation and intergenerational engagement through inclusive and accessible public programmes.
- Evaluate public engagement through measures of participation, confidence, dialogue and social impact, alongside attendance.

4. Embedding the STEAM approach

Why is this important for us?

The challenges facing society increasingly require creativity, transdisciplinarity and problem-solving. Esplora recognises that scientific knowledge alone is not enough; innovation also requires imagination, empathy, design, communication, creative and critical thinking. STEAM therefore provides a holistic framework through which people can understand and respond to complex problems.

The integration of arts within STEM also enables more inclusive and emotionally engaging ways of learning, helping science become accessible, relevant and meaningful to broader audiences, while encouraging new ways of knowing.

How are we currently addressing this?

Esplora already applies STEAM principles through interactive learning, exhibitions, science communication, funded projects, shows, creative programming and engagement approaches that encourage experimentation and inquiry. Collaborations across arts, education, science communication and public engagement have also strengthened interdisciplinary approaches.

STEAM has increasing recognition in Europe with a recognised value for integrating creativity, storytelling, relevance and artistic methods within science engagement. Malta already has a very popular science and arts festival called *Science in the City*. While STEAM education programmes exist, such as *Teen4STEAM*, STEAM activities have enabled inclusivity and diversity. Esplora ran *Grandma got S.T.E.A.M* bringing teenagers and the elderly together through science and arts. Improved coordination will enable Esplora and Malta to reap more benefits from such initiatives.

45% of respondents of the public survey (Esprimi, 2026) stated that they had attended a science-related event during the previous two years (2024–2025). Among those who attended such events, the primary motivations were attending with family members (25%), personal curiosity (14%), and educational purposes (13%). These findings reinforce the importance of science-

related activities and events, the role of family-oriented activities, curiosity and informal learning.

Furthermore, findings from consultation with educators provide important strategic direction for Esplora Interactive Science Centre. The expressed interest in creativity and arts-based science experiences indicates an opportunity for Esplora to adopt a stronger STEAM-oriented approach, supporting broader national objectives related to innovation, education, creativity, and future skills development.

How will Esplora take this further?

Esplora will strengthen STEAM as a defining principle across programming, partnerships and experiences. This includes greater collaboration between artists, scientists, researchers, industry, educators and communities, as well as more immersive, creative and participatory experiences that bridge scientific understanding with imagination and emotional connection.

STEAM will also increasingly support future career pathways, helping young people connect creativity, science and emerging careers.

How will this inform our next strategy?

The strategy will:

- Embed STEAM across all programming and audience experiences.
- Strengthen collaborations between artists, researchers, communicators, educators and communities.
- Expand creative and transdisciplinary approaches to science communication.
- Position Esplora as a national hub for STEAM engagement and innovation.
- Development of appropriate evaluation tools to rapidly inform Esplora staff about the effectiveness of its exhibits, shows, projects and other activities.
- Investments in research and educator training and support resources to improve their engagement effectiveness.
- Develop stronger pathways linking curiosity, creativity, education, emotional engagement and future opportunities.

5. Creating spaces that spark imagination

The spaces in which people encounter science shapes their experience. Creative, welcoming and immersive environments can shape how people feel, participate and engage with ideas. As Malta's national interactive science centre, Esplora believes physical spaces should do more than host activities; they should spark imagination, encourage participation, and reflect local culture to make science tangible, meaningful and connected to everyday life.

Esplora's physical environments are central to how people experience curiosity, discovery and participation. Whether through music, theatre, shows, interactive installations, festivals, exhibitions, nature, heritage, astronomy or hands-on engagement, science becomes more accessible and memorable when it is experienced in environments designed to encourage exploration and interaction.

How are we currently addressing this?

Esplora already provides a distinctive environment for science engagement through the historic Bighi complex overlooking the Grand Harbour. Its interconnected heritage buildings, outdoor spaces, over 200 interactive exhibits,

Planetarium, workshops, science shows and public events create opportunities for people of all ages to engage with science in memorable and participatory ways.

The centre's unique combination of heritage, creativity and interactive engagement positions Esplora as one of Malta's most distinctive destinations for learning, participation and family engagement.

Furthermore, public survey results highlight geographical accessibility as an important issue, with 18% of respondents perceiving Esplora as being too far away, with difficulties with public transport access (5%) also mentioned as barriers to visit Esplora (Esprimi, 2026). This highlights the importance of maximising and diversifying the use of Esplora's premises but also the need to broaden Esplora's ecosystem of spaces to allow for inclusive audience development strategies capable of making science engagement feel relevant, approachable and socially welcoming to broader sections of society.

How will Esplora take this further?

Esplora will continue evolving its environments to meet changing audience expectations and societal needs. These spaces within its Bighi site will remain dynamic, immersive, welcoming and



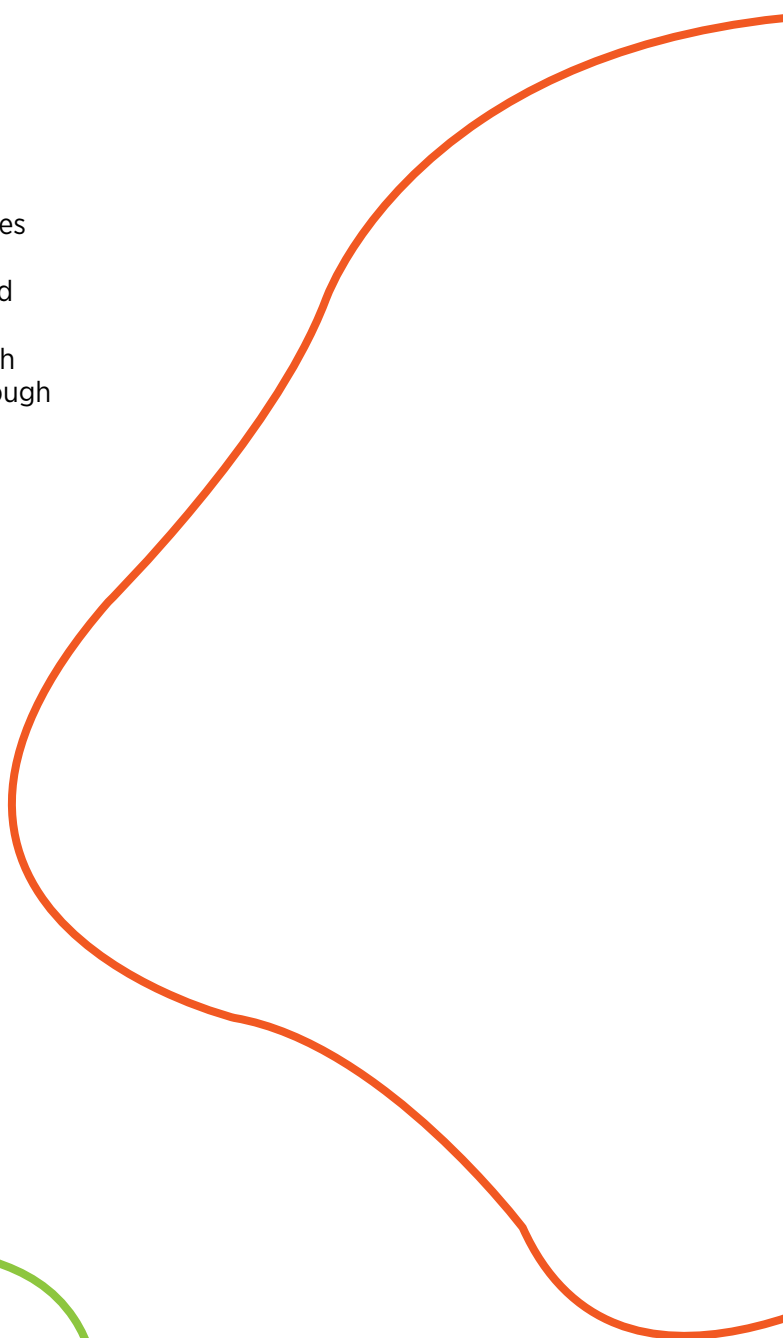
responsive across generations, while supporting repeat engagement and deeper exploration.

The development of Bingemma presents a significant opportunity to broaden Esplora's ecosystem of spaces, creating new opportunities for astronomy, environmental science, overnight learning and closer engagement with scientific practice. Future environments will increasingly support participation, imagination, experimentation and connection.

How will this inform our next strategy?

The strategy will:

- Strengthen Esplora's role as an interactive, inclusive and accessible science destination.
- Enhance the quality, diversity and renewal of experiences across Esplora's physical environments.
- Develop complementary science engagement spaces at the Esplora Spazju within the Malta Space Park (Bingemma Fort);
- Expand immersive and participatory experiences across sites.
- Better integrate science, creativity, heritage and nature within Esplora's environments.
- Ensure Esplora's programmes and spaces - both on-site in Bighi and across Malta and Gozo through its outreach initiatives - remain welcoming, relevant and inspiring across generations.



THE EXPLORERS

At Esplora, we see our visitors as explorers because exploration lies at the heart of everything we do. Science begins with curiosity, questions and discovery, and every person who engages with Esplora - regardless of their age, background or reason for visiting - is embarking on their own journey of exploration. The term reflects Esplora's belief that learning is an active, participatory and lifelong process, where individuals are encouraged not only to observe, but also to experiment, discover, question and contribute.

Esplora recognises that different groups engage with science in different ways, at different life stages and for different reasons. Building on research findings, visitor insights and stakeholder engagement, the strategy adopts a differentiated approach that creates tailored explorer pathways, recognising that meaningful engagement extends far beyond a single visit.

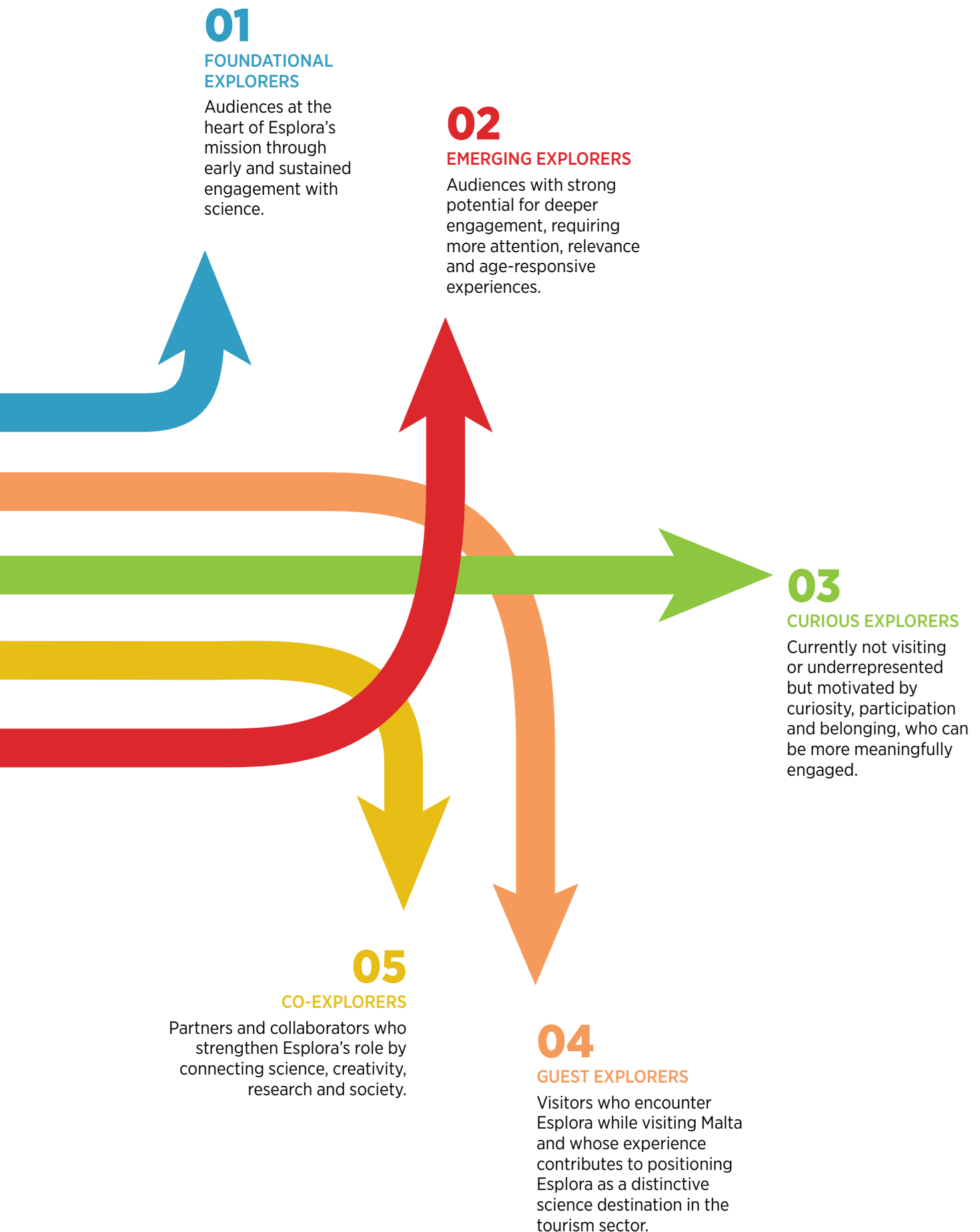
Each explorer pathway brings together a combination of:

- Programming – experiences designed around the interests and motivations of each explorer group.
- Communications – targeted messaging and channels that reach audiences in relevant ways.
- Access – appropriate pricing, timing, accessibility and welcoming environments that reduce barriers to participation.
- Partnerships – collaboration with schools, communities, industry, researchers and cultural organisations to extend reach and relevance.
- Participation – opportunities for co-creation, dialogue and deeper engagement beyond one-off visits, both on-site and off-site
- Evaluation – ongoing research to understand motivations, behaviours, barriers and long-term engagement.

The explorer pathways presented here establish the framework for Esplora's engagement approach. The detailed actions, campaigns and delivery mechanisms for each audience will be developed through annual operational plans.



Figure 3 – Esplora’s Explorers



The following priority groups will guide programming, participation, communications and evaluation over the next five years.

TYPE FOUNDATIONAL EXPLORERS		
Segment	Children and families	Schools and educators
Scope for prioritisation	Families and younger children represent Esplora's strongest and most established visitor segment. Early engagement with science and creativity plays a critical role in nurturing curiosity, confidence and lifelong attitudes towards learning and exploration.	Schools remain one of Esplora's most significant pathways for engagement and provide opportunities to complement formal education through experiential and inquiry-based learning.
Segment's motivation	Hands-on and playful learning experiences in a safe environment.	Curriculum-linked experiences.
	Interactive exhibits and experimentation.	Hands-on and experiential learning.
	Family-oriented experiences and shared discovery.	Teacher support and educational curriculum-aligned resources.
	Memorable and enjoyable outings.	Accessible and meaningful STEAM engagement.
Esplora's role	To nurture curiosity and positive early experiences with science through playful, interactive and family-friendly engagement.	To complement formal education by providing memorable, creative and participatory STEAM learning experiences.
Strategic focus	Strengthen family learning experiences.	Strengthen curriculum relevance.
	Sustain membership and repeat visitation.	Develop teacher engagement and partnerships.
	Continue interactive and immersive programming.	Support transitions between formal and informal learning.

TYPE			EMERGING EXPLORERS	
Segment	Teenagers and young people		Adults and lifelong learners	
Scope for prioritisation	Research consistently identifies a participation drop-off during adolescence. Teenagers are currently underrepresented despite being a critical age for identity formation, educational choices and future aspirations.		Adults remain an underdeveloped audience segment despite growing interest in science, wellbeing, sustainability, technology and contemporary societal challenges.	
Segment's motivation	Social, aspirational and age-relevant experiences.		Relevant and intellectually stimulating experiences.	
	More advanced, immersive and real-world engagement.		Science connected to everyday life.	
	Independence and peer-led experiences.		Dialogue around contemporary issues.	
	Encounters with role models and future opportunities.		Social and cultural experiences.	
Esplora's role	To create inspiring and relevant STEAM experiences that build confidence, aspiration and belonging while supporting future educational and career pathways in STEM.		To position science as culturally relevant, important, accessible and meaningful throughout adulthood.	
Strategic focus	After-hours and weekend programming.		Evening and themed programming.	
	Esplora Spazju at the Malta Space Park as a complementary 12+ engagement space.		Science dialogue and public debate.	
	Mentoring, role models and real-world science.		Contemporary issues programming linked to health, sustainability, AI and ethics.	

TYPE			CURIOUS EXPLORERS
Segment	Non-visitors	Communities and underrepresented groups	
Scope for prioritisation	Understanding who is missing from Esplora's audience is essential to strengthening relevance and widening participation.	Not everyone currently sees Esplora as relevant, accessible or "for them." Greater inclusion is necessary to widen participation and ensure science engagement reflects Malta's diversity.	
Segment's motivation	Curiosity about science, technology, art, heritage.	Accessibility and belonging (increased science capital).	
	Opportunities for social, family or community-based experiences.	Representation and relevance of engagement.	
	New and memorable experiences that feel relevant, inspiring and enjoyable.	Community-based culturally relevant participation.	
	Experiences aligned to interests and needs.	Reduced barriers to engagement.	
Esplora's role	To continuously understand and respond to changing public expectations and barriers.	To widen access and ensure science engagement becomes more inclusive, relevant, representative and accessible.	
Strategic focus	Diversify entry points to the Esplora experience.	Inclusion and accessibility officer responsible for engagement and local partnerships.	
	Targeted communications.	Volunteer programme.	
	Barrier analysis.	Community-based engagement.	

TYPE			CO-EXPLORERS	GUEST EXPLORERS
Segment	Xjenza Malta teams, researchers, scientists and the STEAM ecosystem (strategic partners)		Tourists and International Visitors	
Scope for prioritisation	Researchers, scientists, universities, artists, industry and innovation stakeholders play a key role in strengthening Esplora's credibility, relevance and future-facing role.		Tourism presents an opportunity for Esplora to diversify audiences and strengthen its position as a distinctive family and science-based visitor attraction in Malta.	
Segment's motivation	Public engagement opportunities.		Family-friendly attractions.	
	Science communication platforms.		Memorable and immersive experiences.	
	Collaboration and experimentation.		Unique experiences linked to Malta.	
	Knowledge exchange.		Accessible short-duration visits.	
Esplora's role	To act as a bridge between science, creativity and society.		To position Esplora as a distinctive and high-quality science experience within Malta's tourism sector.	
Strategic focus	Artist-scientist residencies.		Tourism partnerships.	
	National STEAM network.		Family visitor experiences.	
	Public engagement partnerships.		Improved interpretation and visitor journeys.	
	Supporting professional STEAM training programmes.			



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The following objectives set the direction for Esplora's next phase of development. Together, they translate the organisation's vision into areas of strategic focus, responding to the evolving needs of Malta's communities, the STEAM ecosystem and an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.

They reflect Esplora's commitment to ensuring science remains accessible, relevant and meaningful across generations, while supporting future opportunities, informed citizenship and lifelong engagement.

Over the next five years, Esplora will:

1. Establish Esplora as Malta's National Platform for STEAM engagement across generations.

Strengthening Esplora's national role as a connector, convener and destination for STEAM engagement across different age groups, communities and sectors.

2. Expand inclusive access and participation in STEAM.

Ensuring more people can meaningfully engage with science and creativity by reducing barriers

and widening participation across generations, backgrounds and communities.

3. Empower citizens with science capital for a rapidly changing world.

Building confidence, understanding and critical engagement with science and research to support informed participation in a society increasingly shaped by technological, environmental and social change.

4. Enable STEAM learning that builds confidence, inspires curiosity and opens pathways to future careers.

Strengthening opportunities for meaningful STEAM learning that develop curiosity, confidence and science capital, while inspiring aspiration and progression towards future education and careers in STEM-related fields.

5. Enhance public dialogue on science, technology and society.

Positioning Esplora as a space for participation, reflection and informed discussion around contemporary issues shaped by science, technology and innovation.





STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Delivery Framework provides the organisational architecture through which Esplora will deliver its vision and strategic objectives over the coming years. It brings together the organisation's principal areas of activity with a set of cross-cutting strategic enablers that strengthen every aspect of delivery.

The framework is built around four strategic pillars that represent Esplora's core areas of investment and development:

- **Programming Framework** – shaping the experiences, learning opportunities and public engagement activities that inspire curiosity and lifelong STEAM participation.
- **Visitor Experience** – creating accessible, inclusive and memorable visitor journeys that encourage participation, repeat visitation, long-term engagement and new visits.
- **STEAM Partnerships** – strengthening collaboration across education, research, culture, industry and communities to position Esplora as Malta's national platform for STEAM engagement.
- **Infrastructure** – investing in physical environments and facilities that enable new

forms of learning, participation and scientific discovery.

These pillars do not operate independently. They are supported by **four cross-cutting strategic enablers - Research, Internationalisation, Capacity Building, and Digital Innovation** - which strengthen organisational capability, encourage continuous improvement and support the successful delivery of the strategy.

The implementation of every strategic action is further guided by Esplora's organisational principles of Sustainability, Respect and Ethical Practice, and Quality and Excellence. These principles inform decision-making, shape organisational culture and ensure that programmes, partnerships and visitor experiences are delivered consistently and to the highest standards.

This strategic framework ensures that Esplora's strategic deliverables remain evidence-informed, internationally connected, professionally delivered, environmentally responsible and responsive to emerging technological developments. This integrated approach ensures that every investment, programme and partnership contributes towards the delivery of Esplora's vision.

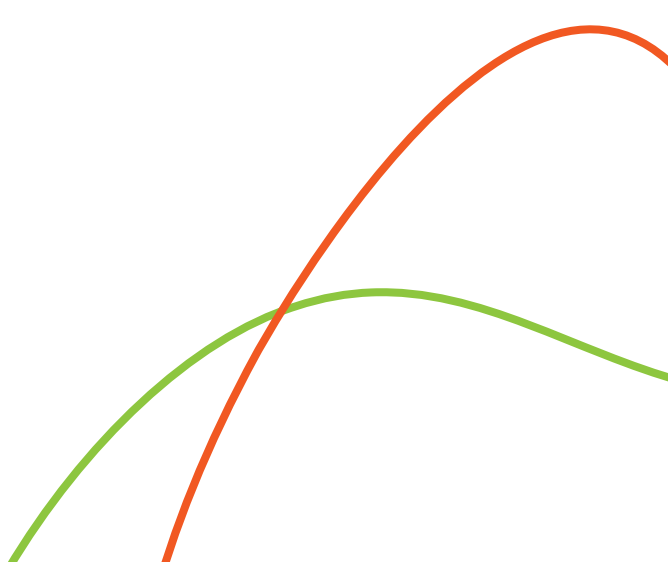
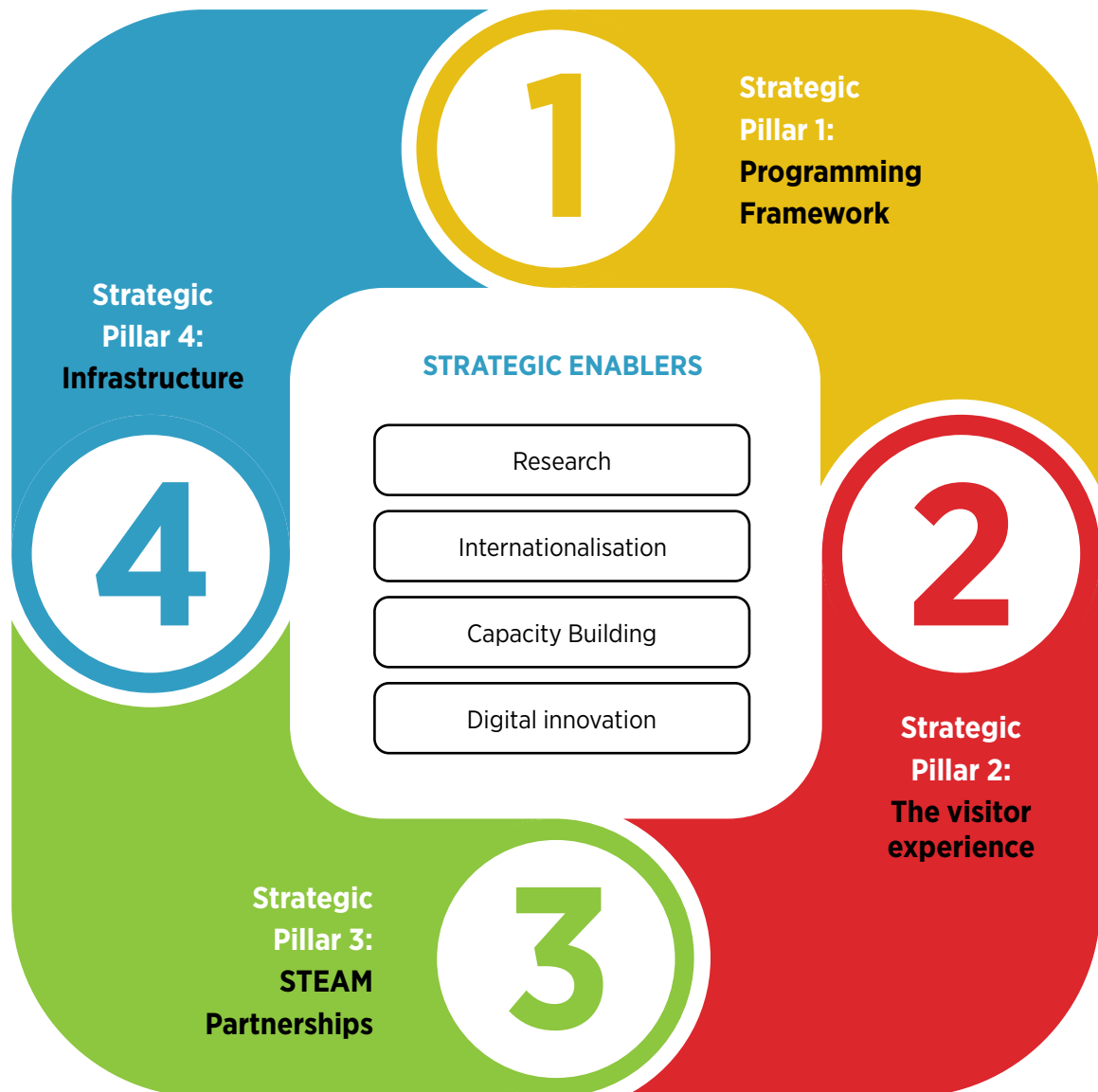


Figure 4 – The Strategic Delivery Framework

PRINCIPLES

Sustainability, Respect & Ethical Practice, Quality & Excellence



STRATEGIC PILLARS

1. PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK

2030 target: Establish a curatorial approach to programming that introduces greater thematic coherence across exhibitions, workshops, science communication, public engagement and events, ensuring that all programming reflects Esplora's vision and responds to contemporary societal issues, visitor interests and strategic priorities.

Drawing on the principles of fourth-generation science centres, Esplora will position itself as a platform where people explore the scientific and societal challenges of our time through dialogue, participation, creativity and citizen science. Success will be measured not only by learning, but by the Centre's ability to foster participation, informed decision-making, collaboration and positive social impact.

Programming across the organisation will be guided by four transversal themes that cut across exhibitions, learning programmes, temporary exhibitions, public events, artistic collaborations and communications:

- **Health and Wellbeing** - exploring physical and mental health, nutrition, ageing, biotechnology, neuroscience, public health and quality of life.
- **Innovative Technology** - examining artificial intelligence, robotics, digital technologies, future industries, ethics, creativity and emerging innovation.
- **Sustainability** - addressing climate change, biodiversity, renewable energy, circular economy, water, food systems and environmental stewardship.
- **Space** - inspiring curiosity through astronomy, planetary science, exploration, satellite technologies and humanity's future beyond Earth.

Rather than functioning as isolated thematic areas, these transversal themes will provide a continuous curatorial lens through which exhibitions are renewed, educational content is developed, partnerships are established and public dialogue is facilitated. They will also provide the flexibility to respond to current affairs and emerging scientific developments, enabling Esplora to engage audiences with significant events such as space missions, major scientific discoveries, technological breakthroughs, environmental phenomena and other developments of national or international

relevance. This approach will create stronger coherence across Esplora's visitor experience while allowing programming to remain current, responsive and relevant to emerging scientific developments and societal priorities.

1.1 Permanent Exhibitions

ACTION: Develop a structured long-term programme for the maintenance, upgrading and renewal of exhibits to ensure Esplora's environments remain dynamic, relevant, technologically updated and capable of encouraging repeat visitation.

The programme will:

- Establish cyclical maintenance and renewal schedules.
- Prioritise visitor experience and exhibit quality.
- Integrate immersive technologies where appropriate.
- Support the continuous evolution of Esplora's offer.

Over the lifetime of this strategy, Esplora will progressively renew approximately 20% of its permanent exhibition portfolio, representing around 40 of the Centre's 200+ exhibits. This rolling investment programme will introduce continuous renewal across the visitor experience, ensuring that repeat visitors encounter new content and refreshed experiences each year.

The renewal programme will adopt a tiered approach that balances financial sustainability with visitor impact. Existing exhibits will be assessed according to their educational value, technical condition, visitor performance and strategic relevance. Interventions will range from minor content and technological refreshes to major redevelopments and the introduction of a minimum of 5 new flagship experiences.

Renewal will prioritise:

- improving accessibility and universal design.
- integrating emerging digital and immersive technologies where they enhance learning outcomes.
- strengthening opportunities for inquiry, experimentation and collaborative problem-solving.
- embedding current scientific research and societal challenges within the visitor experience.
- increasing flexibility so that exhibits can be updated more efficiently as scientific knowledge evolves.

1.2 Temporary Exhibitions

ACTION: Develop a programme of temporary exhibitions organised around annual or seasonal themes that explore issues affecting everyday life, including climate, health, sustainability, technology, ethics and future societies.

The programme will:

- Strengthen Esplora's responsiveness to contemporary societal challenges.
- Encourage repeat visitation through changing content and experiences.
- Support collaboration with national and international institutions.
- Extend Esplora's presence through exhibitions and partnerships beyond the physical site.

1.3 Tinkering Space

ACTION: Develop a dedicated Tinkering Space that encourages open-ended experimentation, creativity and problem-solving through self-directed exploration.

The space will:

- encourage learning through experimentation rather than predetermined outcomes.
- enable visitors to build, test and refine their own ideas.
- explore scientific principles through hands-on making.
- support creativity, collaboration and iterative learning.
- provide flexible programming that evolves with different themes and audiences.

1.4 Live STEAM Experiences

ACTION: Establish a programme of original live science experiences that combine scientific knowledge with performance, storytelling, hands-on experimentation and audience participation to create engaging and memorable STEAM experiences for diverse audiences.

The programme will comprise three complementary strands:

1. Science Shows

Performance-led experiences that combine storytelling, scientific demonstrations and audience participation to inspire curiosity and make science engaging, memorable and accessible. Science shows will also draw on Malta's culture, heritage and environment to create locally relevant experiences that strengthen the connection between science and everyday life.

2. Interactive Workshops

Facilitated hands-on sessions that encourage enquiry, experimentation and problem-solving through age-appropriate activities designed around specific themes that are relevant to different explorers.

3. Science on the Spot

Short demonstrations and pop-up activities are delivered throughout Esplora's galleries and public spaces creating spontaneous opportunities for exploration, conversation and experimentation as part of the visitor journey.

Together, these three strands will form a continuously evolving repertoire aligned with Esplora's four strategic programming themes and delivered both on-site and through Esplora Lil Hinn.

The programme will:

- Develop an original repertoire of live science experiences, including science shows, interactive workshops and Science on the Spot activities, delivered in both Maltese and English.
- Strengthen science communication by promoting the development and wider use of scientific terminology in the Maltese language.
- Continuously commission, refresh and evaluate

experiences to ensure they remain relevant, engaging and encourage repeat visitation.

- Foster collaboration between scientists, educators, artists, writers, performers and science communicators to co-create original content.
- Deliver a diverse range of live science experiences tailored to different explorer groups, learning contexts and engagement settings.
- Extend Esplora's live science experiences beyond the Centre through festivals, regional outreach and Esplora Lil Hinn.

1.5 Learning Programmes

ACTION: Develop a structured programme of lifelong STEAM learning that supports learners from early childhood through to adulthood, combining formal, informal and experiential learning opportunities. Organised around age-appropriate learning pathways, the programme will nurture curiosity, build scientific literacy and develop the transversal skills needed for lifelong learning, active citizenship and future employability.

Learning programmes will be designed to foster the development of transversal skills that complement scientific knowledge and prepare learners for a rapidly changing world. Alongside STEAM knowledge and practical application, the programmes will strengthen creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, problem-solving and digital literacy, recognising these as essential competencies for lifelong learning, active citizenship and future employability.

School programmes will complement formal education through curriculum-aligned experiences that support different stages of learning, while encouraging enquiry, experimentation, creativity and critical thinking. School programmes will support pre-visit preparation, on-site experiences and post-visit learning, ensuring that Esplora complements and extends learning beyond the classroom.

Learning experiences will be tailored to different age groups and developmental stages, supported by appropriate learning outcomes, educator resources and flexible delivery models that respond to the needs of schools, learners and educators.

A dedicated Teen Explorers programme will provide age-relevant experiences that encourage adolescents to remain engaged with science through peer learning, innovation, mentoring, co-creation and progression into further STEAM opportunities.

Early Years and Schools

Curriculum-linked programmes that support inquiry-based, hands-on STEAM learning, supporting age-appropriate learning outcomes while strengthening connections between schools, research and real-world science.

Including:

- Curriculum-linked school visits aligned with different learning stages.
- Hands-on STEAM workshops and facilitated laboratory experiences.
- Live science shows and demonstrations.
- Meet the Researcher sessions connecting students with scientists, innovators and researchers.
- STEAM Connect initiatives linking schools with universities, industry and the wider STEAM ecosystem.
- Teacher resource packs and curriculum support materials.
- Professional learning and continuous development opportunities for educators.
- School outreach programmes and Esplora Lil Hinn activities.

Families and Young Explorers

Programmes designed to encourage intergenerational learning through shared exploration and discovery.

Including:

- Family workshops
- Weekend programmes
- Holiday learning activities
- Interactive discovery sessions
- Multigenerational adult and child experiences

Teen Explorers

A dedicated programme for teenagers designed to bridge the gap between childhood curiosity and lifelong engagement with STEAM. Teen Explorers will provide age-appropriate opportunities that encourage independence,

experimentation, creativity and deeper engagement with science and innovation.

The programme will include:

- After-hours STEAM events
- Weekend and holiday activities
- Innovation and maker challenges
- Mentoring with scientists, researchers and industry professionals
- Peer-led learning opportunities
- Citizen science projects
- Leadership and volunteering opportunities

The programme aims to:

- Address the teenage participation gap.
- Build scientific confidence, aspiration and belonging.
- Strengthen pathways to higher education and STEAM careers.
- Foster peer communities centred around science, creativity and innovation.

Adults and Lifelong Learning

Programmes supporting continuous learning and public engagement with science throughout adulthood. These dedicated programmes for adults and lifelong learners will explore contemporary scientific, technological and societal issues through lectures, discussions, workshops, cultural experiences and participatory learning opportunities.

Initiatives will include :

- XjenzAnzjan
- Adult workshops
- Public courses
- Skills development
- Community learning initiatives
- Professional development opportunities

1.6 Seasonal events

Action: Sustain and further develop a year-round calendar of seasonal events that celebrate science through immersive, participatory and family-focused experiences.

Building on Esplora's established seasonal programme, currently at 10% of overall yearly footfall, these events will be strategically aligned with the curatorial Programming Framework, ensuring that each programme contributes to the

Centre's broader thematic priorities and visitor experience.

Rather than operating as standalone events, they will provide opportunities to explore contemporary topics through hands-on learning, creativity, performance and public engagement.

Seasonal events will continue to serve as Esplora's flagship annual engagement moments, encouraging repeat visitation, strengthening audience loyalty and reinforcing Esplora's position within Malta's cultural, educational and tourism calendar. They will also provide opportunities to pilot innovative programming approaches, develop interdisciplinary collaborations and test new content that can inform Esplora's wider programme throughout the year.

The programme will:

- Create recurring opportunities for families and young audiences to engage with Esplora throughout the year.
- Encourage repeat visitation through distinctive seasonal experiences.
- Integrate exhibitions, science shows, workshops and public engagement into coherent visitor journeys.
- Support experimentation with new programming formats and interdisciplinary collaborations.
- Strengthen Esplora's role within Malta's cultural, educational and tourism calendar.

The programme will include:

- Summer Programme
- Halloween Programme
- Christmas Programme
- Carnival Programme
- Easter Programme

1.7 Public Engagement Programme

ACTION: Develop a diverse programme of public engagement activities that encourages people of all ages to explore, discuss and participate in STEAM beyond formal learning. Delivered through in-person, hybrid and digital formats, public programmes will create accessible opportunities for lifelong learning while positioning Esplora as a civic platform for dialogue around the scientific, technological and societal issues shaping Malta's future.

The public programme will complement Esplora's exhibitions, science shows and learning activities by creating spaces where audiences can engage directly with scientists, innovators, artists, policymakers and communities. Through discussion, participation and collaborative exploration, the programme will strengthen scientific literacy, encourage critical thinking and foster active citizenship.

Programming will also celebrate Maltese scientific achievement by showcasing local researchers, research projects and innovation, strengthening public awareness of the scientific work taking place across Malta.

Esplora's Public Engagement Programmes will provide flexible opportunities to introduce new themes, strengthen partnerships and encourage meaningful dialogue between science and society. In doing so, Esplora will reinforce its role not only as a place of discovery, but as a trusted public forum where people come together to understand and engage through the STEAM approach.

The programme will:

- Foster informed public dialogue on contemporary scientific and societal issues.
- Celebrate and communicate Maltese research, scientific achievement and innovation.
- Encourage lifelong participation in STEAM through accessible, inclusive and engaging programmes.
- Strengthen collaboration between researchers, educators, artists, industry and communities.
- Promote citizen science, co-creation and participatory approaches to public engagement.
- Extend Esplora's reach through regional, hybrid and digital engagement.

The programme will include:

- Talks and lectures
- Science cafés
- Panel discussions and public debates
- Meet the Scientist sessions
- Citizen science initiatives
- Maker activities and innovation workshops
- Community dialogue and co-creation programmes
- Public demonstrations
- Hybrid and digital engagement programmes

1.8 Esplora Lil Hinn (Beyond Esplora)

ACTION: Develop Esplora Lil Hinn as Esplora's national outreach and engagement platform, extending Esplora's programmes beyond its physical spaces to ensure that high-quality STEAM experiences are accessible to communities across Malta and Gozo.

The initiative will adapt and deliver exhibitions, science shows, learning programmes, events and public engagement activities in schools, communities, festivals, cultural venues, heritage sites and public spaces.

Through a place-based approach, Esplora Lil Hinn will strengthen partnerships with local councils, educational institutions, cultural organisations, community groups and national events to create meaningful STEAM experiences that respond to local contexts and community needs. The programme will reinforce Esplora's role as Malta's national platform for STEAM engagement, ensuring that opportunities to explore science and innovation are not limited by geography, accessibility or circumstance.

This pillar will also provide a flexible platform for testing new programming models, strengthening regional engagement and building long-term relationships with audiences who may not regularly visit the Centre. In doing so, it will extend Esplora's impact, increase participation and contribute to a more scientifically engaged and connected society.

The programme will:

- Adapt and deliver Esplora's exhibitions, live STEAM experiences, learning programmes, seasonal events and public engagement activities beyond the Centre.
- Deliver travelling exhibitions, mobile science experiences and touring science shows across Malta and Gozo.
- Develop targeted initiatives that strengthen engagement with Gozo through partnerships with schools, community organisations and local stakeholders.
- Establish a structured regional engagement programme, ensuring a sustained presence across all six regions by the end of the strategy period.
- Strengthen partnerships with schools, local councils, cultural organisations, community groups and national festivals.

- Develop place-based programmes that respond to local communities and regional priorities.
- Improve access to STEAM for geographically underserved communities and audiences facing barriers to participation.
- Increase Esplora's national visibility and position it as Malta's leading platform for STEAM engagement and science communication.

Programme Platforms

Esplora Lil Hinn will be delivered through a range of complementary platforms, including:

- **Schools and educational settings** - curriculum-linked outreach, workshops and teacher engagement.
- **Communities** - Local Councils, community centres and voluntary organisations.
- **Festivals and public events** - national celebrations, arts and science festivals and civic events.
- **Heritage and cultural venues** - partnerships that connect science with Malta's cultural and natural heritage.
- **Public spaces** - pop-up science experiences, demonstrations and interactive installations.
- **Mobile STEAM experiences** - travelling exhibitions, science shows and transportable learning environments.

2. THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

2030 target: Embed a visitor-centred approach, recognising the different motivations, expectations and needs of Esplora's diverse visitors.

Visitor experience lies at the heart of Esplora. Every interaction - before, during and after a visit - shapes how people connect with science and discovery. Creating memorable experiences goes beyond exhibitions and programmes but include accessibility, welcome, participation, hospitality and the overall visitor journey.

By combining high-quality facilities, inclusive design, engaging tailored services and continuous evaluation, Esplora will create more memorable experiences that increase satisfaction, encourage repeat visitation and build lasting relationships with different visitors.

EXPLORER GROUP	STRATEGIC FOCUS
Children and Families	Family-centred visitor experiences; interactive exhibitions and live science experiences; membership and repeat engagement; immersive and hands-on learning.
Schools and Educators	Curriculum-linked learning programmes; teacher partnerships and resources; stronger connections with researchers and industry.
Teenagers and Young People	Teen Explorers Club; mentoring and co-creation; targeted youth engagement.
Adults and Lifelong Learners	Evening and themed programming; temporary exhibitions; public dialogue; lifelong STEAM learning opportunities.
Communities and Underrepresented Groups	Inclusion and accessibility; diversified entry points.
Tourists and International Visitors	Tourism partnerships; tailored visitor journeys; multilingual engagement; positioning Esplora as a distinctive STEAM attraction.

The following strategic priorities will guide the continued development of Esplora's visitor experience.

2.1 Visitor Journey Framework

ACTION: Establish a Visitor Journey Framework that places the explorer at the centre of every interaction with Esplora. The framework will adopt a holistic approach to visitor experience, recognising that successful engagement begins before arrival, continues throughout the visit and extends well beyond leaving the Centre.

The Visitor Journey Framework will adopt an organisational approach to visitor experience, recognising that memorable visits are shaped not only by exhibitions and programmes, but also by customer care, accessibility, communications and the quality of every interaction. Esplora will design seamless visitor journeys tailored to the needs and motivations of its diverse explorer groups, supported by

integrated marketing and communications, welcoming environments, high standards of customer service and opportunities for continued engagement beyond the visit. Recognising that visitor-facing staff are central to the overall visitor experience, Esplora will continue to invest in their professional development, strengthening customer care, science communication and visitor engagement skills.

The framework will also celebrate the unique naval, medical and cultural heritage of the Bighi site through engaging interpretation and storytelling, connecting science, culture and heritage. It will also implement visitor research, feedback and digital technologies to continuously improve the overall visitor experience.

The framework will:

- Design seamless visitor journeys from inspiration and planning through to post-visit engagement, tailored to the needs of Esplora's diverse explorer groups.
- Deliver inclusive, welcoming and emotionally engaging experiences that encourage participation, repeat visitation and long-term relationships with Esplora through memberships, communications and evolving visitor experiences.
- Strengthen engagement, storytelling, orientation and wayfinding to enrich both the science centre and the unique heritage of the Bighi site.
- Embed a culture of continuous improvement through visitor feedback, customer experience measurement, digital innovation and evidence-informed service development.

2.2 Memberships

ACTION: Sustain and evolve Esplora's membership programme to strengthen repeat visitation, foster lifelong engagement and cultivate a community of active supporters and participants.

Moving beyond a benefits-based model, the programme will position membership as an engagement tool to deepen involvement in Esplora's activities by providing exclusive content, experiences and opportunities that encourage ongoing participation throughout the year. The current membership model attracts under 5% of yearly footfall.

Membership will extend beyond discounted admission to include curated content, priority access, members-only events, learning opportunities and opportunities to actively participate in Esplora's programme and community.

The programme will:

- Strengthen repeat visitation and build long-term relationships with members.
- Develop differentiated membership tiers, aligned with their respective needs and engagement objectives.
- Prioritise the creation of exclusive year-round content, experiences and learning opportunities available only to members.
- Encourage deeper participation through

priority access, behind-the-scenes experiences, special events and member-only activities.

- Build a stronger sense of belonging by creating an active community of members who engage regularly with Esplora's programmes and mission.
- Review the membership model to ensure benefits, pricing and membership tiers support Esplora's strategic objectives and audience development priorities.

2.3 Inclusion and Accessibility

ACTION: Strengthen Esplora's commitment to accessibility, equity and participation by embedding inclusive practice as a permanent organisational principle across governance, programming, visitor experience and operations.

The framework will build on Esplora's excellent track record in accessibility measures and establish accessibility as a core institutional policy, ensuring that inclusive design, equitable participation and universal access are systematically considered in the planning, delivery and evaluation of all programmes, exhibitions and services.

The framework will support a culture of continuous improvement through dedicated leadership, organisational policies, staff development and strategic partnerships, enabling Esplora to respond proactively to the diverse needs of its audiences while reflecting the diversity of Maltese society.

The framework will:

- Embed accessibility and inclusion as permanent organisational principles across governance, programming, visitor experience and operations, with dedicated organisational responsibility for leading, coordinating and continuously improving accessibility across Esplora.
- Strengthen universal and inclusive design across exhibitions, facilities, digital platforms, interpretation and visitor services, ensuring accessibility is considered throughout planning, design and delivery.
- Reduce physical, sensory, cognitive, linguistic, financial and social barriers to participation, enabling more people to engage with Esplora.
- Invest in continuous staff development to strengthen inclusive practice, accessibility

awareness and engagement with diverse audiences, including neurodivergent visitors.

- Foster partnerships with organisations representing people with disabilities, underrepresented communities and other stakeholders to co-design programmes, share expertise and continuously improve accessibility.
- Monitor accessibility, participation and visitor feedback to evaluate progress, inform continuous improvement and ensure Esplora increasingly reflects and serves the diversity of Malta's communities.

2.4 Tourism Segmentation

ACTION: Develop tourism as a strategic visitor segment through targeted partnerships, tailored visitor journeys, multilingual engagement and stronger positioning within Malta's tourism ecosystem.

Building on Esplora's established reputation as a visitor attraction and its continued recognition through the Malta Tourism Authority's Quality Assured Seal, the strategy will strengthen the Centre's contribution to Malta's cultural and family tourism offer while maintaining the highest standards of visitor experience. With international visitors currently representing approximately 5%³ of annual attendance, Esplora has considerable scope to strengthen its position within Malta's tourism ecosystem. Esplora aims to increase this proportion to 10%, positioning the Centre as a must-visit attraction within Malta's visitor economy.

The strategy will focus on developing distinctive visitor experiences that integrate science with Malta's cultural, maritime and natural heritage, encouraging visitors to see Esplora not simply as a science centre, but as an essential component of the visitor journey. Particular emphasis will be placed on strategic partnerships with the tourism, hospitality and cruise sectors.

A flagship initiative within this strategy is the continued development of the *Sail to Science Luzzu Experience*, transforming the journey to Esplora into part of the visitor experience itself. Travelling aboard a traditional Maltese luzzu across the Grand Harbour combines scientific discovery with one of Malta's most recognisable

cultural icons and historic landscapes. The experience offers visitors a seamless connection between Valletta, the Three Cities and Esplora while promoting sustainable mobility and creating a distinctive tourism product that cannot easily be replicated by other science centres. By combining maritime heritage, storytelling and science within a single visitor journey, the initiative strengthens Esplora's unique identity within Malta's tourism offer.

The strategy will:

- Position Esplora as one of Malta's leading family-friendly STEAM and science attractions, increasing the proportion of international visitors from approximately 5% to 10% over the lifetime of the strategy.
- Develop tailored visitor experiences, interpretation and marketing for priority tourism segments, including families, independent travellers, cruise passengers, international schools, business travelers and cultural tourists.
- Maintain and build upon the standards recognised through the Malta Tourism Authority's Quality Assured Seal by continuously enhancing visitor experience, accessibility and service quality.
- Strengthen strategic partnerships with the Malta Tourism Authority and the wider tourism sector to increase Esplora's visibility within destination marketing, visitor itineraries and international promotional campaigns.
- Develop curated visitor journeys that connect science with Malta's cultural, maritime and natural heritage through engaging interpretation and storytelling.
- Expand multilingual visitor information, engagement and digital resources to improve accessibility for international audiences.
- Further develop Sail to Science as Esplora's flagship tourism experience, combining science, heritage and sustainable mobility into a distinctive visitor proposition.

³ Based on ticketing data collected.

3. STEAM PARTNERSHIPS

2030 target: Deepen existing partnerships while actively participating in national and international STEAM networks and establishing new collaborative platforms that connect organisations, professionals and communities.

Esplora's mission extends beyond its physical site. Delivering the vision of becoming Malta's national platform for STEAM engagement requires strong partnerships, active networks and collaboration across education, research, culture, industry, tourism, government and communities. By bringing together diverse expertise, perspectives and resources, Esplora will strengthen the quality, relevance and impact of its work.

These networks will support knowledge exchange, professional development, collaborative programming, innovation and international cooperation, reinforcing Esplora's role as a national connector and trusted partner within Malta's STEAM ecosystem.

Central to this approach will be stronger collaboration across the wider Xjenza Malta ecosystem. Esplora will work closely with Xjenza Malta's scientific, technical and research units to bring local research, innovation and scientific expertise closer to the public through shared programmes, researcher engagement, science communication initiatives and opportunities for direct interaction between visitors and STEAM practitioners.

Esplora will also strengthen strategic collaboration with public entities whose mandates intersect with STEAM engagement and public participation. Partnerships with organisations such as the Malta Tourism Authority, Malta Enterprise, the Malta Digital Innovation Agency, the University of Malta, MCAST, Heritage Malta, the National Literacy Agency and Arts Council Malta, can extend Esplora's reach, diversify its programming and create new connections with culture, heritage, creativity, innovation, education, literacy and tourism. Such collaborations may include joint programmes and campaigns, shared use of expertise and resources, cross-sector initiatives and the development of new approaches to engaging different communities.

The following strategic priorities will support the successful delivery of this strategic pillar.

3.1 Artist-STEM Residency Programme

ACTION: Establish an Artist-STEM Residency Programme that brings together artists and STEM practitioners in a shared environment to foster transdisciplinary collaboration, innovation and creative exploration.

The residency will create opportunities for artists and STEM practitioners to work alongside Esplora's teams, combining artistic and scientific perspectives to develop new approaches to public engagement, learning and science communication.

The programme will serve as a platform for collaborative research, experimentation and co-creation. Esplora will explore a strategic partnership with Arts Council Malta in the development and implementation of the residency programme, drawing on its expertise and networks within Malta's cultural and creative sectors to support artist engagement, interdisciplinary exchange and the wider development of the initiative.

Each residency will focus on developing ideas, prototypes and public-facing outcomes that become integrated into Esplora's wider programme, enriching exhibitions, science shows, learning programmes, public engagement activities and science communication initiatives. In doing so, the residency will establish lasting partnerships between the cultural and scientific sectors while positioning Esplora as a place where creativity and scientific inquiry work together to inspire new ways of understanding the world.

The programme will:

- Foster interdisciplinary collaboration between artists, STEM practitioners, educators, science communicators and Esplora's teams.
- Create opportunities for joint research, experimentation and creative problem-solving between the arts and STEM disciplines.
- Develop original content and experiences that are embedded within Esplora's programmes.
- Strengthen partnerships between the cultural, scientific, research and higher education sectors.

- Support innovative approaches to science communication through artistic practice and creative interpretation.
- Establish Esplora as a leader for Artist-STEM collaboration and interdisciplinary innovation in Malta.
- Produce lasting creative and educational outcomes that continue to enrich Esplora's programme beyond the residency period.

3.2 National STEAM Engagement Taskforce

ACTION: Establish and maintain a national STEAM stakeholder network bringing together policy, media, education, research, culture, technology, industry and community actors to strengthen country-wide collaboration and support implementation of the strategy.

The National STEAM Engagement Taskforce will position Esplora as the national coordinating platform for STEAM engagement in Malta. Bringing together representatives from education, research, industry, the arts, public authorities, local councils, civil society and community organisations, the Taskforce will strengthen collaboration across sectors and ensure that STEAM becomes a shared national endeavour rather than a collection of disconnected initiatives.

The Taskforce will reinforce Esplora's role within Malta's STEAM ecosystem through five complementary functions:

Convener - bringing together academia, educators, STEM practitioners, researchers, NGOs, the cultural and creative sectors, industry and government entities to foster collaboration, identify common priorities and coordinate national STEAM initiatives.

Platform - providing national visibility for STEAM initiatives taking place across Malta and Gozo by showcasing programmes, facilitating partnerships and connecting organisations working towards shared objectives.

Communicator - transforming scientific research and technological innovation into accessible public experiences, exhibitions, artistic collaborations, dialogue, citizen science initiatives and lifelong learning opportunities that make science relevant to everyday life.

Testbed - piloting innovative approaches to

STEAM engagement, public participation, science communication and interdisciplinary collaboration before supporting their wider adoption across the country.

Evidence Hub - generating and sharing evidence on participation, science capital, engagement patterns, inclusion and barriers to participation, while providing data and policy insights to support evidence-informed decision-making across the sector.

Through these functions, the Taskforce will:

- Strengthen pathways into STEAM education and careers by coordinating initiatives across formal and non-formal learning sectors and addressing gaps in the talent pipeline.
- Facilitate collaboration between education, research, industry, culture and public policy around shared national priorities.
- Support the co-creation and delivery of Esplora's flagship programmes, including public engagement with research, regional outreach initiatives and STEAM career development programmes.
- Widen participation by coordinating activities across Malta and Gozo, ensuring that programmes reach diverse communities and under-represented audiences beyond those who physically visit Esplora.
- Develop a national framework for monitoring STEAM engagement through shared indicators, culminating in an annual National STEAM Engagement Report that tracks participation, inclusion, science capital, public engagement, policy influence, partnerships and innovation across the ecosystem.

3.3 STEAM Engagement Community Fund

ACTION: Building on Esplora's role as administrator of the STEAM Engagement Community Fund on behalf of Xjenza Malta, the strategy will continue to position the Fund as a key mechanism for strengthening national partnerships and supporting community-led STEAM engagement across Malta.

The Fund enables schools, local councils, museums, NGOs and other community-based organisations to collaborate with STEAM professionals in developing participatory projects that address local needs while fostering scientific curiosity, creativity and active citizenship.

Successful projects receive funding and are expected to produce lasting benefits for their communities.

The Fund will:

- Continue supporting community-led STEAM projects through an annual competitive funding programme.
- Strengthen partnerships between community organisations, STEAM professionals, researchers and educators.
- Encourage citizen science, community participation and locally relevant STEAM innovation.
- Create opportunities for successful community projects that connect with Esplora's strategy and programming initiatives.

3.4 Young Researchers Grant Programme

ACTION: Establish the Young Researchers Grant Programme as an entry point that enables young people to undertake STEAM research while developing the knowledge, skills and confidence required to progress into Malta's wider research and innovation ecosystem.

The programme will provide competitive grants that support young people in designing and delivering original STEAM research projects, combining practical research experience with mentoring, skills development and public engagement. Working alongside researchers, educators and other professionals, participants will strengthen their understanding of scientific inquiry while developing research, communication and presentation skills through real-world learning experiences.

As an entry point into Xjenza Malta's wider research and innovation ecosystem, the programme will create progression to future opportunities in research, innovation and STEAM careers. It will strengthen links between Esplora's educational programmes, school-based initiatives and national research opportunities, ensuring that young people are supported throughout their development as future researchers, innovators and science communicators.

The programme will:

- Provide competitive grants that enable young people to undertake authentic STEAM research

projects.

- Develop research, critical thinking, communication and science engagement skills through mentoring and experiential learning.
- Connect participants with researchers, educators and STEAM practitioners through structured mentoring and collaboration.
- Strengthen progression pathways between Esplora's programmes, school initiatives and Xjenza Malta's wider research and innovation opportunities.
- Translate young people's research into public engagement activities, exhibitions, presentations and science communication initiatives.
- Showcase emerging Maltese research while nurturing the next generation of researchers, innovators and science communicators.

4. INFRASTRUCTURE

2030 target: Invest in the renewal and maintenance of its facilities, the enhancement of visitor environments and the development of complementary learning spaces that support a diverse range of experiences.

Delivering outstanding STEAM experiences depends on high-quality facilities, reliable infrastructure, safe and welcoming environments, efficient operational systems and continuous investment in the visitor experience. As Esplora continues to evolve into Malta's national platform for STEAM engagement, it must ensure that its physical spaces, digital systems and operational capabilities evolve alongside its programming and partnerships.

Equal attention will be given to operational excellence, including customer service, health and safety, digital systems and the ongoing custodianship of the historic Bighi site. Together, these investments will ensure that Esplora remains a destination of excellence capable of delivering high-quality STEAM engagement.

The following strategic priorities establish the infrastructure and operational foundations that will enable the successful delivery of this strategy.

4.1 Esplora Spazju within the Malta Space Park (Bingemma Fort)

ACTION: Subject to the development of the Malta Space Park, establish Esplora Spazju within the Malta Space Park (Bingemma Fort) as a complementary environment that expands Esplora's public engagement offer beyond its main site.

Building on Bingemma's unique natural setting and dark-sky environment, Esplora Spazju will provide opportunities for immersive engagement with astronomy, space science, environmental science and other emerging STEAM disciplines through hands-on exploration, public engagement and collaboration with the wider scientific community.

Esplora Spazju will strengthen Xjenza Malta's public engagement mission by creating new opportunities for visitors to experience science beyond the traditional science centre

environment while complementing the experiences available at Esplora.

The governance, operational model, staffing arrangements and programme of activities will be developed in alignment with the wider Malta Space Park project.

The action will:

- Establish the Esplora Spazju as a complementary extension of Esplora's public engagement mission within the Malta Space Park.
- Develop immersive experiences centred on astronomy, space science, environmental science and emerging scientific disciplines.
- Facilitate engagement between visitors and researchers, scientists and engineers from Xjenza Malta and partner institutions.
- Strengthen advanced STEAM engagement opportunities for teenagers, young people and lifelong learners.
- Encourage public participation through citizen science, field-based learning and collaborative research initiatives where appropriate.
- Support national and international collaboration in science communication and public engagement.
- Develop future programming and operational arrangements in line with the overall Malta Space Park implementation framework.

4.2 Learning and Visitor Spaces

ACTION: Continue developing Esplora's learning, visitor and support spaces to ensure that every environment contributes to exploration, creativity, wellbeing and high-quality visitor experiences.

The programme will:

- Continuously improve the Planetarium, Black Box Theatre, workshop and activity spaces, Makerspace and future Culinary Experience laboratory as flexible environments for STEAM engagement.
- Develop the Botanical Garden, LittleEsploras Playscape, Adventure Park and other outdoor

spaces as environments that encourage exploration, movement and nature-based learning.

- Integrate the historic character of the Bighi site into the visitor experience through interpretation, storytelling and public engagement.
- Optimise visitor facilities including the cafeteria, EsploraShop and visitor amenities to improve comfort and overall satisfaction.
- Ensure all spaces remain welcoming, accessible and adaptable to the changing needs of different explorer groups.

4.3 Estate management

ACTION: Maintain, renew and continuously improve Esplora's buildings and technical infrastructure to provide safe, reliable and engaging environments for visitors and staff.

The programme will:

- Implement a long-term programme for the maintenance, renewal and upgrading of all spaces.
- Upgrade visitor environments through phased refurbishment of galleries, public areas and arrival spaces, integrating artistic and experiential design throughout.
- Maintain utilities, digital infrastructure, landscaping, security systems, fire safety systems, communications networks and other operational assets.
- Ensure regular maintenance, refurbishment and deep cleaning of exhibits to preserve quality, functionality and visitor experience.

4.4 Visitor operations and digital services

ACTION: Strengthen visitor operations through integrated digital systems, efficient services and high standards of customer experience.

The programme will:

- Continuously improve booking, ticketing and visitor management systems.
- Develop integrated digital services supporting visitors before, during and after their visit.
- Strengthen signage and wayfinding across the Esplora site.
- Enhance visitor information and operational systems to support different explorer groups.
- Use visitor data and operational insights to

continuously improve service quality and visitor experience.

4.5 Health and Safety

ACTION: Maintain high standards of health, safety and operational resilience across all aspects of Esplora's activities.

The programme will:

- Maintain comprehensive health and safety management systems across all facilities and activities.
- Regularly review risk assessments, emergency procedures and business continuity arrangements.
- Invest in ongoing staff training in First Aid, Fire Warden responsibilities and emergency preparedness.
- Ensure facilities, equipment and visitor environments meet high standards of safety and accessibility.
- Promote a proactive culture of continuous improvement, wellbeing and operational excellence across the organisation.



CROSS CUTTING STRATEGIC ENABLERS

1. Research

Research will underpin Esplora's development by embedding evidence-informed decision-making across programming, visitor experience, organisational development and strategic planning. Through an ongoing programme of research, monitoring and evaluation, Esplora will generate knowledge that informs continuous improvement, measures long-term impact and strengthens its contribution to national and international discussions on science engagement.

Research will extend beyond performance measurement by fostering collaboration with universities, research institutions and strategic partners. A culture of inquiry and reflective practice will ensure that programmes remain responsive to visitor needs, societal challenges and developments within the STEAM sector.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will provide the structure for measuring the implementation and impact of the strategy, supporting adaptive decision-making and continuous organisational learning.

This strategic enabler will:

- Roll out ongoing research to assess visitor experiences, participation, science capital, inclusion, learning outcomes and the wider impact of the strategy.
- Monitor the implementation of the strategy and measure progress against strategic objectives and key performance indicators.
- Measure changes in visitor participation, confidence, engagement and lifelong involvement with STEAM.
- Strengthen audience research, segmentation and visitor insight to inform programme development.
- Support evidence-informed decision-making and continuous improvement across all areas of Esplora's work.
- Foster research partnerships with universities, research institutions and scientific organisations to strengthen knowledge exchange and innovation.
- Position Esplora as a centre for applied research and evaluation in STEAM engagement, contributing to national

and international knowledge on science communication.

2. Internationalisation

Internationalisation will strengthen Esplora's position as Malta's internationally connected science centre by embedding global collaboration across programming, research, professional development and organisational learning. Through active participation in international networks, strategic partnerships and collaborative projects, Esplora will continuously benchmark its programmes against international best practice while contributing Maltese expertise to global discussions on STEAM engagement and science communication.

Building on Esplora's membership of Ecsite, the leading European network of science centres, museums and science engagement organisations, the strategy will strengthen collaboration through professional exchanges, conferences, working groups, collaborative programming and European projects. These partnerships will provide access to emerging approaches ensuring that Esplora remains at the forefront of innovation.

Esplora will also continue to build on its membership of CLEAPSS, supporting excellence in practical science education, laboratory practice and health and safety. Access to international expertise, resources and professional development opportunities will strengthen Esplora's educational programmes, practical science activities and staff capabilities, ensuring that STEAM learning experiences continue to meet the highest professional standards.

While Europe will remain a strategic priority, Esplora's international outlook will extend well beyond the European context. The Centre will actively pursue partnerships, knowledge exchange and collaborative opportunities with leading science centres, museums, universities and STEAM organisations worldwide, recognising that global challenges require global collaboration and that innovation is strengthened through diverse international perspectives.

This strategic enabler will:

- Strengthen Esplora's active participation and leadership within international science engagement networks.
- Build strategic partnerships with science centres, museums, universities and STEAM organisations across Europe and internationally.
- Facilitate mobility exchanges for stakeholders such as staff, educators, researchers, artists and science communicators.
- Expand participation in European and international research, innovation and funding programmes.
- Encourage the exchange of exhibitions, science shows, educational resources and professional expertise.
- Benchmark Esplora's programming, visitor experience and organisational development against international best practice.
- Promote Malta as a contributor to global conversations on STEAM engagement, science communication and public participation.

3. Capacity Building

The strategy will continue to foster a culture of continuous professional development by investing in the knowledge, skills and leadership of Esplora's staff, ensuring they remain confident, adaptable and equipped to respond to the rapidly evolving landscape of science, technology, education and public engagement.

As STEAM disciplines, digital technologies and visitor expectations continue to evolve, Esplora will strengthen its organisational capacity by encouraging continuous learning, interdisciplinary collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and experience across teams. Staff will be supported to engage with emerging trends, innovative practices and international developments, enabling them to translate new ideas into high-quality visitor experiences, science communication and educational programmes.

Beyond individual professional development, Esplora will promote a collaborative learning culture where staff regularly exchange expertise, reflect on practice and contribute to organisational innovation. Capacity building will also extend beyond Esplora's workforce to other stakeholders such as educators, facilitators, researchers, artists, students, STEAM practitioners and community partners,

strengthening Malta's wider STEAM ecosystem through shared learning, mentoring, exchanges and collaborative development opportunities.

Recognising the value of international collaboration, Esplora will actively promote mobility opportunities that enable staff and the wider STEAM community to participate in exchanges, residencies, study visits, conferences and professional development initiatives. These opportunities may be supported through European Union programmes, Government and Xjenza Malta funding schemes, and other national and international initiatives that encourage knowledge exchange, innovation and professional growth.

This strategic enabler will:

- Invest in continuous professional development and lifelong learning for all staff across the organisation.
- Strengthen organisational capability in science communication, STEAM education, customer experience, visitor engagement and inclusive practice.
- Support participation in conferences, professional networks, exchanges, study visits and international mobility programmes.
- Facilitate mobility opportunities through European Union programmes, Government initiatives, Xjenza Malta schemes and other funding mechanisms where appropriate.
- Create structured opportunities for cross-departmental and inter-agency collaboration, peer learning and knowledge sharing across the organisation.
- Equip staff to respond proactively to emerging technologies, evolving scientific knowledge and changing audience expectations.
- Foster leadership, innovation and reflective practice across all levels of the organisation.
- Build capacity across Malta's wider STEAM ecosystem by supporting educators, artists, researchers and community partners through collaborative training, mentoring and professional development initiatives.

4. Digital Innovation

Digital innovation will enable Esplora to continuously evolve the way people experience science, ensuring that technology enhances learning, creativity and participation while responding to rapidly changing visitor expectations. Rather than viewing digital technologies as standalone tools, Esplora will

integrate digital innovation across exhibitions, learning, public engagement and its operations.

Emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, immersive media, virtual and augmented reality, digital fabrication, interactive environments and data analytics will be explored where they demonstrably improve visitor experience, accessibility and learning outcomes.

Digital innovation will also strengthen Esplora's ability to extend its reach beyond its physical spaces, supporting hybrid learning, digital engagement and personalised visitor journeys.

This strategic enabler will:

- Integrate immersive technologies where they enhance visitor experience.
- Explore the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in learning and visitor engagement.
- Expand hybrid and digital learning opportunities.
- Strengthen digital accessibility and inclusion.
- Improve data-informed decision-making through visitor analytics.
- Support experimentation with emerging technologies through pilot projects and partnerships.
- Build staff capability in digital innovation and technology-enabled science communication.

GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Delivering the Strategy

The successful implementation of this strategy requires clear governance, shared ownership and a culture of continuous learning. As a strategic entity within Xjenza Malta, the delivery of this strategy will be guided through a governance framework that combines organisational oversight at the level of Xjenza Malta with operational leadership within Esplora. This integrated approach will ensure that the strategy aligns with national priorities for science, research and innovation while enabling Esplora to respond effectively to the evolving needs of its visitors, partners and communities.

Delivering this strategy also represents a process of organisational development and change. Success will depend not only on implementing new programmes and initiatives, but also on fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation and continuous improvement across the organisation. Esplora is committed to engaging staff throughout implementation, encouraging employee voice, cross-team learning and reflective practice, while ensuring that teams are supported in developing the knowledge, skills and confidence required to deliver the strategy successfully.

Implementation will be embedded across the organisation through annual planning, regular performance monitoring and evidence-informed decision-making. Responsibility for delivery will be shared across Xjenza Malta's senior leadership, Esplora's Senior Management Team and staff, with strategic partners contributing to the implementation of specific initiatives. Each strategic pillar will be supported by annual delivery plans that identify lead responsibilities, supporting teams, delivery timelines, resource requirements, risks, performance indicators and internal communication arrangements to support effective implementation and organisational engagement.

Implementation will be guided through four complementary mechanisms:

Strategic Leadership

Strategic oversight will be provided by the senior leadership of Xjenza Malta, ensuring that Esplora's strategic direction remains aligned with the organisation's wider vision, national priorities and organisational objectives. Operational leadership and day-to-day implementation of the strategy will be the responsibility of Esplora's Senior Management Team, which will translate the strategy into annual operational plans, coordinate delivery across departments and foster a culture of innovation, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Performance Monitoring

Progress will be monitored through the Results Framework, combining quantitative and qualitative performance indicators, visitor research, programme evaluation and organisational reporting to assess implementation, measure impact and inform evidence-based decision-making. Alongside programme and visitor outcomes, the framework will monitor organisational readiness through indicators relating to staff engagement, cross-team collaboration, professional development and implementation capacity. Regular reporting will enable both Esplora and Xjenza Malta to review progress, identify emerging trends and ensure resources remain aligned with strategic priorities.

Annual Strategic Review

An annual strategic review will be undertaken by Esplora's Executive Team to assess progress against strategic objectives, review key performance indicators, identify opportunities and risks, and agree priorities for the following year's operational plan. The review will also provide an opportunity for staff reflection and organisational dialogue, ensuring that implementation continues to benefit from shared experience and continuous improvement. This process will also ensure that

the strategy remains dynamic and responsive to changing scientific, technological and societal contexts.

Mid-term Evaluation

A comprehensive mid-term evaluation will be undertaken midway through the strategy period to assess the effectiveness, relevance and impact of the strategy. Drawing on the Results Framework, stakeholder feedback and visitor research, the review will identify achievements, emerging challenges and areas requiring adjustment, ensuring that the strategy continues to support Esplora's long-term vision and Xjenza Malta's wider organisational objectives.

ESPLORA STRATEGY RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The Results Framework provides the basis for monitoring the implementation and impact of this strategy. It combines quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess not only participation and visitor growth, but also learning, inclusion, science capital, visitor experience, organisational development and the wider contribution of Esplora to Malta's STEAM ecosystem.

Where robust baseline data already exists, targets have been identified within the strategy. For emerging areas where new measurement systems are required, baseline values and quantified targets will be established during the first year of implementation through the annual delivery planning process. This approach will ensure that performance measures remain evidence-based, achievable and supported by appropriate data collection systems.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1		2030 TARGET		
Programming Framework		Curatorial framework embedded across all programming, ensuring that all programming reflects Esplora's vision and responds to contemporary societal issues, visitor interests and strategic priorities.		
ACTIONS	Intended Result	Key Indicators	2030 Target	Evidence
Permanent Exhibitions	Permanent experiences remain dynamic, relevant and engaging.	% exhibits renewed; exhibit functionality; visitor satisfaction; repeat visitation.	20% exhibit renewal completed; 5 new flagship experiences.	Asset management; visitor surveys
Temporary Exhibitions	Visitors experience changing content connected to contemporary issues.	Temporary exhibitions delivered; partnerships; repeat visitation; explorer participation.	Minimum 3 exhibitions.	Programme reports; visitor surveys
Tinkering Space	Visitors engage in open-ended experimentation and creativity.	Participation; dwell time; visitor feedback; repeat use.	Tinkering Space fully operational with increasing participation.	Observation; visitor surveys
Live STEAM Experiences	Live science inspires curiosity and participation.	Science shows; workshops; Science on the Spot; audience engagement; visitor satisfaction.	Bilingual content with high satisfaction ratings. 5 new Science Shows	Programme evaluation
Learning Programmes	Lifelong STEAM learning is strengthened.	School visits; Teen Explorers; adult participation; educator satisfaction; learning outcomes.	Growth across all learner groups. Specific attention to young people and adult learners.	Education database; educator surveys; enrollment; observation.
Seasonal Events	Seasonal programming encourages repeat engagement.	Attendance; repeat visitation; family participation.	Increasing participation and repeat visitation year-on-year.	CRM; ticketing
Public Engagement Programme	Public participation with science expands beyond formal learning.	Public events; adult participation; citizen science; digital engagement.	Annual increase in participation beyond family audiences.	Participation records; digital analytics
Esplora Lil Hinn	STEAM engagement reaches communities nationwide.	Outreach activities; local partnerships; regional reach; new explorers.	Dedicated annual engagement delivered across Malta's 6 regions.	Engagement reports

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2		2030 TARGET		
The visitor experience		A visitor-centred approach, recognising the different motivations, expectations and needs of Esplora's diverse visitors.		
ACTIONS	Intended Result	Key Indicators	2030 Target	Evidence
Visitor Journey	Visitors experience seamless, memorable and inclusive journeys.	Visitor satisfaction; customer care; emotional engagement.	Visitor satisfaction >90%; continuous improvement across all touchpoints.	Visitor surveys, Reviews
Membership Programme	Long-term relationships with Esplora are strengthened.	Members; renewal rate; member participation; repeat visitation.	Renewal >75%; New Members >25%; measurable annual membership growth.	CRM
Inclusion & Accessibility	Participation becomes more inclusive and representative.	Accessibility audits; participation by underrepresented groups; staff training.	Inclusion framework fully implemented and reviewed annually.	Accessibility audits; audience research
Tourism Segmentation	Tourism becomes a significant visitor segment.	Tourist visitors; tourism partnerships; multilingual services.	Increase tourist share from 5% to 10% of annual visitors.	Ticketing; visitor surveys

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3		2030 TARGET		
STEAM Partnerships		Participation in national and international STEAM networks and establishing new collaborative platforms that connect organisations, professionals and communities.		
ACTIONS	Intended Result	Key Indicators	2030 Target	Evidence
Artist-STEM Residency Programme	Creative and scientific collaboration generates new public engagement.	Residencies; public outputs; collaborative projects.	Annual residency programme producing public outcomes.	Programme reports
National STEAM Engagement Taskforce	National collaboration and policy dialogue are strengthened.	Participating organisations; joint initiatives; policy outputs.	National Taskforce operating with an annual work programme.	Taskforce reports
STEAM Engagement Community Fund	Community-led STEAM initiatives are supported nationwide.	Projects funded; communities reached; participants engaged.	Annual funding programme successfully delivered.	Project reports
Young Researchers Grant Programme	Increase in young people undertaking STEAM research.	Grants awarded; research outputs; collaborations with STEAM practitioners.	Annual cohort	Project reports

STRATEGIC PILLAR 4 2030 TARGET				
Infrastructure		The renewal and maintenance of its facilities, the enhancement of visitor environments and the development of complementary learning spaces that support a diverse range of experiences.		
ACTIONS	Intended Result	Key Indicators	2030 Target	Evidence
Esplora Spazju	Esplora expands its public engagement offer through a complementary site.	Project milestones; public programmes; partnerships.	Operational, subject to Malta Space Park implementation.	Project reports
Learning and Visitor Spaces	Visitor environments support learning, creativity and wellbeing.	Spaces renewed; utilisation; visitor satisfaction.	Continuous enhancement of learning and visitor spaces.	Facility reports
Estate Management	Facilities remain safe, functional and well maintained.	Planned maintenance; asset condition; infrastructure reliability.	Preventative maintenance programme fully operational.	Asset management system
Visitor Operations & Digital Services	Visitor services become increasingly seamless and efficient.	Booking performance; ticketing efficiency; digital usage; customer satisfaction.	Continuous improvement in digital visitor services.	Operational reports
Health & Safety	Safe and resilient visitor and working environments are maintained.	Compliance; risk assessments; staff training; incidents.	Full compliance with the annual review cycle.	H&S reports

ESPLORA IN 2030

By 2030, Esplora has become Malta's recognised national platform for STEAM engagement, bringing together science, creativity, education, research, industry and communities to inspire curiosity, enable empowerment and support lifelong discovery. More than a destination, Esplora has become a trusted national institution where people of all ages come together to explore the ideas, technologies and challenges shaping our future. Across Malta, STEAM is becoming more recognised as a fundamental life skill that helps individuals, communities and organisations respond with confidence to technological change, misinformation and the complex challenges of the future. Internationally, Esplora is increasing its visibility and actively contributing to the global science centre community.

STEAM is more accessible than ever through a seamless blend of in-person and digital experiences, reaching people wherever they choose to engage. Science has travelled across Malta and Gozo, popping up in schools, village squares, festivals, cultural venues and public spaces. The Esplora mobile experience now brings inspiring hands-on STEAM experiences directly into communities, making science more accessible, relevant and part of everyday life.

Children and families continue to form the heart of Esplora's audience, while teenagers, adults and lifelong learners are embracing Esplora as a place that speaks to them. International visitors have increased and increasingly recognise Esplora as one of Malta's must-visit destinations.

In an increasingly complex world shaped by artificial intelligence, climate change and rapid

technological transformation, Esplora has become a trusted place where people build the confidence and critical thinking needed to understand scientific developments, question information and participate more actively in society. Science is no longer seen as distant or specialist, but as something that helps people make sense of everyday life and the world around them.

Esplora has also contributed to Malta's future talent by inspiring more young people towards STEAM studies, careers and lifelong engagement with science. Esplora has helped build science capital, widened participation, supported future skill development and careers, and turned Malta's national priorities and European missions into public learning and action.

At the same time, Esplora is evolving into Malta's leading public space for dialogue around science, technology and society. Artists, scientists, educators, researchers and communities collaborate to explore contemporary issues, creating innovative experiences that encourage conversation and participation.

Above all, Esplora is no longer just seen as an interactive science centre for children. It is a place where curiosity becomes discovery, discovery inspires action, and science helps people navigate the opportunities and challenges of an increasingly complex world.

Inspiring curious minds to shape our future.



Esplora Draft Strategy 2030: Have Your Say

We invite visitors, educators, researchers, creative practitioners, and members of the public to share their thoughts on the draft strategy. Your feedback is vital in shaping the future of Esplora.

Scan the QR code to send your feedback or access <http://publicconsultation.gov.mt/>



esplora.org.mt