

Making electoral history in Malta

Breaking records across the board with Idox's innovative e-counting software



Deliverables at-a-glance

- » Partnered with the Electoral Commission of Malta and ScytI to transform the democratic counting process in Malta
- » Supported an 18-month phased delivery and implementation operation to ensure a robust, secure and transparent e-counting system
- » Built a count centre from scratch in Naxxar, Malta with all software testing, performance trials, verification and accreditations received prior to the first use of the system in May 2019
- » Ensured the timely delivery of software, services and hardware for the simultaneous election of councillors across Malta's 68 Localities for the Local Council Elections and the election of 6 MEPs across Malta for the European Parliament Election
- » Reduced the count times from days to hours, delivering poll results in record time
- » Counted over 270,000 votes following a record number of eligible voters on Malta's EPE electoral register

Challenge: Transforming traditional processes to deliver timely poll results

As with a number of countries around the world, Malta's adoption of the single transferable vote (STV) system – designed to achieve proportional representation through preferential voting – brings with it a level of complexity when undertaking the manual counting of votes. Given voters rank as many candidates as they wish in order of preference, calculating the winner isn't as straightforward as electoral systems such as First Past the Post, where voters indicate on a ballot their candidate of choice, and the candidate who receives the most votes wins. As such, manual counting under the STV method resulted in the country taking days to deliver the ballot results in previous nationwide elections.

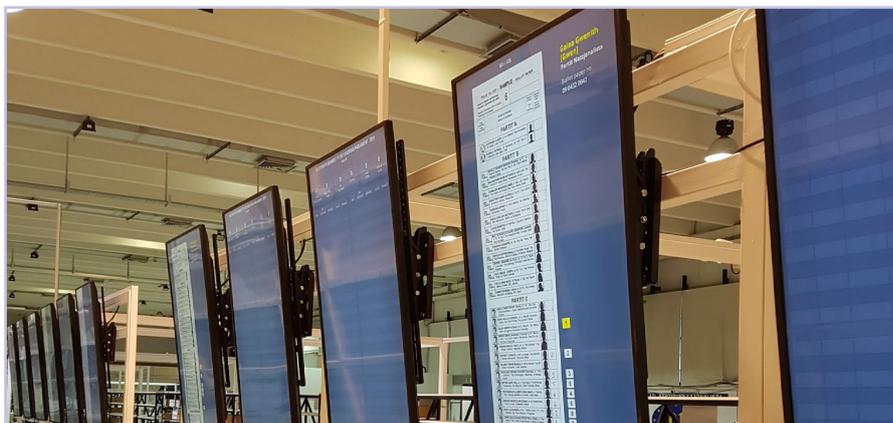
The Office of the Electoral Commission of Malta subsequently sought to streamline its processes, improve the timeliness of poll results announcements and transform its manual counting operations. The Commission went out to tender for a supplier of an Electronic Vote Counting Solution in 2017.

Following the competitive tender process, Idox Elections was selected as the official provider in November 2017, securing a contract to deliver the required software, services and support for all Parliamentary, General and Local elections across Malta during the 2019-2024 period.

The e-counting system had to be in place to support Malta's next round of European Parliament and Local Council elections in May 2019 – the first time it would ever be used in the country.

Solution: Delivering the technology and the team to modernise Malta's electoral system

Idox eCount is a robust and secure e-counting solution, proven to manage STV counting on a national scale following its use by all 32 Scottish councils in the 2012 and 2017 local elections. Ahead of Malta's 2019 elections, the Idox Elections team sought to implement, test and verify the solution for the Electoral Commission.



“This digital system from Idox has been revolutionary for us as it has even changed the way our team thinks and plans given we never used an electronic system like this before.”

Joseph Church
Chief Electoral Commissioner
Electoral Commission of Malta

Supporting a phased delivery and implementation process over an 18-month period, Idox performed ongoing system trials and performance checks, as well as external verifications and accreditations in the build-up to the May 2019 elections. This rigorous testing process included:

- » Extensive bulk and performance testing over an extended testing period to provide confidence in the system operating under load. This included the scanning of **392,000** ballots within expected timescales
- » **100%** match when both political parties in Malta verified their own software against the Idox eCount engine
- » External validation from **Radboud University** (The Netherlands)
- » Validated by an **ISO/IEC 17025** accredited Electronic Voting System test laboratory in the USA

Alongside the provision of the e-counting software, Idox’s remit extended to providing a complete infrastructure and services solution, delivering a closed network in Malta’s Naxxar Count Centre which spanned hardware, security software, training and support.

The team also built on a longstanding and successful partnership with Scytl – a specialist in developing secure elections management solutions – to ensure first-class security and process consultancy, and comprehensive electoral staff training via a dedicated e-learning platform.

Following final solution acceptance by the Electoral Commission, the team were poised and ready for the 2019 European Parliamentary and Local Council Elections.

Outcomes: Making electoral history with a landmark election

In May 2019, Idox Elections supported a successful MEP eCount in Malta, alongside the simultaneous election of councillors across Malta’s 68 Localities for the Local Council elections. This was the first time the country had used e-counting software, and the first time it had carried out all Local Elections at any one time in 25 years.

The elections also delivered several other milestones in Malta’s electoral history, including:

- » Idox’s e-counting technology accelerated the counting process – the poll results were delivered in record time, cut from days to hours
- » The European Parliament Election had the largest electoral register for a MEP election, with over **370,000** people eligible to vote, and over **270,000** exercising this right on polling day (**72.7%** turnout) – all of which were counted using the Idox eCount solution
- » Malta was one of the first two countries to issue its official European Election results



Following the successful delivery of the May 2019 elections, Chief Electoral Commissioner, Joseph Church noted:

“The Electoral Commission is very satisfied with the well-organised and timely delivery of software, services and hardware for the simultaneous election of councillors across Malta’s 68 Localities for the Local Council elections and the election of 6 MEPs across 13 Electoral Divisions for the European Parliament Election using the Weighted Inclusive Gregory (WIG) method of Single Transferable Voting (STV). The speed and accuracy of the solution was essentially evident throughout all four counting days generating very positive feedback from a number of stakeholders, including the major political parties.

“The Electoral Commission Malta looks forward to continued working and collaboration with Idox in the coming months, ahead of the forthcoming General Elections.”