

STATUTE GOVERNING THE OPERATIONS OF THE INSIGHTS RESEARCH CLUSTER

The University of Malta Intelligence and Security Research Cluster (INSIGHTS) (hereinafter "the Cluster") is a multidisciplinary research initiative that aims to:

- Conduct high-quality, cutting-edge, forward-looking empirical and theoretical research that bridges disciplinary and methodological boundaries into efficient ways of addressing challenging security issues for the well-being of society.
- Design and test new and holistic approaches to preventing crime in real and virtual worlds, promoting justice and human rights through the responsible use of science and technology.
- Educate professionals and the wider public to increase awareness and resilience in the face of security challenges.

INSIGHTS aspires to become the leading research cluster in the field of intelligence and security research in the Mediterranean, building bridges across multiple disciplines, public and private stakeholders, as well as security practice and academic scholarship. Security challenges are multi-dimensional and crosscutting, ranging from the more 'traditional' forms—such as conflict and war, terrorism and organised crime—to 'new' or more 'non-traditional' forms—including gender violence, human smuggling, climate change, disinformation and hybrid warfare. The multi-dimensional nature of security and insecurity demands the multi-disciplinary perspective that INSIGHTS seek to provide.

INSIGHTS wishes to build on its members' current track record of internationally – acknowledged research embracing issues and partners on all continents. We believe that by harnessing the collective wisdom and real-world experiences of a diverse academic community covering an extensive span of subjects from artificial intelligence to intelligence studies, law, education, political science, international relations and gender studies we gain invaluable insights into the ever-changing threat landscape. This allows us to prioritise and address the most critical risks to individuals, organisations and states alike, empowering actors to make informed decisions and optimise resource allocation.

The Cluster's mission is implemented by:

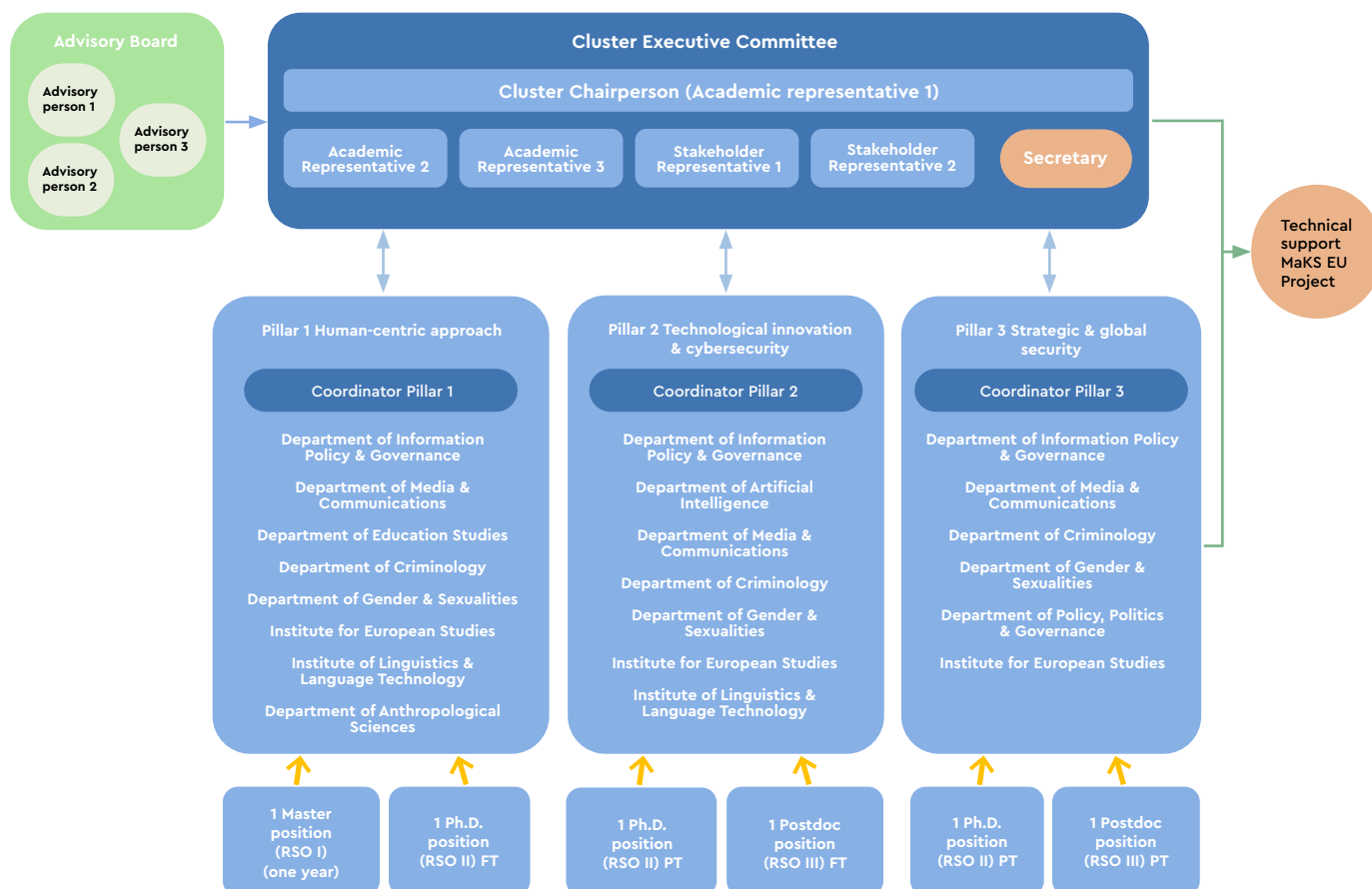
- Participating in collaborative initiatives for highly competitive and successful funding for joint research with a special focus on EU-funded projects.
- Promoting creativity and innovation in the education of security practitioners by implementing a continuous exchange of best practices at national and international levels.

- Developing a less national/regional and a more international trans-oceanic outlook in security research and education while maintaining a special focus on the Mediterranean region and neighbouring states.
- Working closely with security and intelligence practitioners from both the public and private sectors in designing research initiatives, as well as in testing research findings in the field.
- Participating in and providing evidence-based findings to academic and policy-making conversations on complex and difficult topics, such as intelligence oversight, CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design), irregular migration and disinformation.

There shall be a Research Cluster and an Executive Committee:

I. THE RESEARCH CLUSTER

1. The organisational structure of the INSIGHTS Cluster will be as follows:



The Cluster is coordinated by an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is elected from among the Resident Academics taking part in the Cluster and representatives of public and private stakeholders. The Committee should have five (5) members but not more than eight (8) including the Cluster Chairperson.

The first Chairperson would be selected by the Executive Committee from among its members in an ad-hoc procedure during its first meeting. If there are two nominees, then an anonymous vote is taken for each nominee (each member of the Executive Committee has one vote – they cannot vote for both nominees). If one nominee gets a majority of votes, then they are elected as Chairperson. If, in any circumstances, the election of the first Chairperson results in three different nominations or more, then the role of first Chairperson shall be carried out by those nominees rotating over periods of one year.

The Executive Committee of the Cluster shall initially include representatives of external public and private stakeholders, namely the Malta Police Force, the Malta Security Service, and the Alberta Group. While these entities are the founding stakeholders, additional public or private stakeholders may be invited to join the Cluster, subject to alignment with its mission and in accordance with the procedures established in this Statute. The Executive Committee shall reserve two seats for stakeholder representatives. These two positions shall be filled through an election process among all eligible stakeholder members of the Cluster, as regulated by the internal governance provisions set out herein.

The INSIGHTS Cluster Advisory Board (AB) is an independent external expert board that the Cluster consults regularly on relevant scientific issues. The AB provides expert advice on the quality of the results and outputs of the Cluster. Further, the AB can also advise on dissemination and the dissemination of the results produced within the Cluster.

The following experts are members of the INSIGHTS Advisory Board: Prof. Jeanne Mifsud Bonnici, Professor in European Technology Law and Human Rights at the University of Groningen, Netherlands; Dr. Adam Klein, Director of the Strauss Centre, University of Texas, US; Dr. Cristina Ivan, Head of the National Institute for Intelligence Studies, National Intelligence Academy, Romania; and Mr. Daniel Drewer, Head of Data Protection Function Europol.

The initial Human Resources Organisational Chart shall provide for one part-time Master by Research position, three Doctoral (PhD) positions, and two Postdoctoral Researcher positions. The Cluster shall aim to expand the number of Doctoral positions to a minimum of five within the next five years. This objective shall be pursued through the strategic mobilisation of the Cluster's resources to secure external funding, including but not limited to EU research funding and other comparable funding mechanisms.

2. Memberships of the Cluster shall proceed as follows

- i. All academics who are Council-appointed University of Malta members of staff having a demonstrable research track or interest in the subject matter of the Cluster are eligible to become members of the Cluster with voting rights.
- ii. Researchers at UM who are not resident academics, such as RSOs, can be associate voting members of the Cluster.

iii. To attain membership, whether as a full participant or as an observer, the applicants shall make a written request via email, attaching a detailed CV as well as a motivational note about the potential contribution. This request shall be addressed to the Cluster Chairperson and shall require the approval of not less than two-thirds of the membership of the Executive Committee. Such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld, and the Executive Committee shall adopt the following criteria for membership approval.

- alignment of research interests to Cluster objectives after evaluation of CV.
- relevance of specific contribution to specific pillar(s) of the Cluster.
- adequacy of time availability for allocation to Cluster-related activities.

iv. Cluster members may be removed for:

- lack of satisfactory response to Cluster-related activities and correspondence.
- failure to attend two (2) meetings in succession unless the Cluster member concerned can provide a written statement outlining mitigating circumstances to the satisfaction of the Executive Committee.
- failure to produce agreed deliverables.
- breach of any fiduciary duty within the Cluster.
- serious breach of any part of the University's Manual of Conduct and Procedures which may cause members of the Cluster to lose trust in the person concerned.

3. The Cluster will initially comprise 3 Pillars as approved by the Research Cluster Committee.

i. The Pillars will initially be as follows:

- Pillar 1 – Human-Centric Security. This pillar looks at the individual as both a provider and consumer of security. The goal is to produce innovative research that can assist in better understanding how individual behaviour contributes to the creation of security threats on one hand (e.g., use of online attitude analysis in risk analysis) and identify improved ways for building individual resilience to security threats (e.g., preventing sexual crimes; understanding radicalisation & violent extremism; preventing the spread of disinformation).
- Pillar 2 – Technological innovation and cybersecurity. The second pillar seeks to find creative solutions to improving various processes taking place within security and intelligence organisations (e.g., improving open-source information analysis in the field of irregular migration and human trafficking and fostering a victim-centric approach in criminal investigations and prosecutions).
- Pillar 3 – Strategic and global security. This pillar focuses on the wider physical and virtual world environments and how different actors are impacted by crime, with a view towards predicting change and providing solutions for mitigation.

ii. The following criteria apply to the Pillars:

- The number and thematic focus of the Cluster's Pillars shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee at least once every three years. Based on this review, the Executive Committee may decide to establish new Pillars or Lenses, modify existing ones, or discontinue those deemed no longer aligned with the Cluster's objectives.
- During the course of its activities, the Cluster may also identify the need to introduce additional Pillars in response to emerging or strategically important areas. However, unless dedicated funding is secured or reasonably anticipated, the total number of Pillars within the Cluster shall not exceed six (6).
- A Pillar Co-ordinator will be appointed for a term of between 1 and 3 years by the Executive Committee.
- A Pillar Co-ordinator will be appointed at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee, normally but not necessarily exclusively on the grounds of a proven track record of team leadership and relevant research expertise.
- A Pillar Co-ordinator may be removed at his or her own request or for gross incompetence or breach of any of the criteria indicated for in par. 2. (iv) above.

iii. The following criteria apply to the establishment of new Pillars:

- Positive evaluation by the Executive Committee after examination of a written proposal.
- A new pillar may be proposed by any member of the Cluster.
- A proposal for a new pillar shall include the research objectives and a financial plan outlining the viability of the resource allocation for the activities envisaged in the new Pillar.
- The Executive Committee may consult with the Advisory Committee about the viability and advisability of creating the proposed new pillar.

Once approved, any new pillar will follow the procedure established in Clause 3 above.

iv. The following criteria apply to the removal of existing Pillars:

- Any member of the Executive Committee or the Pillar Co-ordinator concerned may initiate the procedure for the removal of an existing Pillar through a written request providing at least four weeks' notice ahead of the next meeting of the Executive Committee where such request is scheduled to be discussed.
- In case of demonstrable redundancy or lack of adequate funding for the Pillar in question or where it appears expedient to absorb that Pillar's activities into those of another new or existing Pillar.

4. The Research Cluster must maintain an up-to-date webpage within the UM website framework detailing, among others, the statute, the organisational structure, current and past research projects, achievements, and deliverables.

5. The Cluster is subject to appropriate fiscal controls and audits that ensure that it remains true to its approved mission. All the UM's financial, human resources and research policies, IP policy, regulations, SOPs, etc. shall apply to the Research Cluster.
6. The University Research Clusters Committee will review the Cluster every three years to decide whether it shall be allowed to continue its operations if an updated proposal for cluster continuation is submitted.
7. The Research Clusters Committee retains the right to dissolve the Cluster and/or the right to remove a cluster member for valid grounds, including among others, mismanagement, significant deviation from objectives, significant under achievement of targets/ deliverables, and transgressions related to research integrity.
8. Without prejudice to the fact that the funding of these Research Clusters by the UM significantly depends on and is subject to the availability of governmental funding, the Cluster will operate as a revenue centre with the ability to raise its own funds, subject to the UM's financial and procurement regulations. Any revenue generated by the Research Cluster shall be used solely for re-injections into that same cluster fund.
9. Any grievances of any kind between the members of the Research Cluster and /or with Executive Committee should, in the first instance, be resolved internally using the Cluster governance structures. If unsuccessful, these should be brought to the immediate attention of the Research Clusters Committee. The Research Clusters Committee will investigate the grievances and aim to settle the issue amicably, it may if the need arises, propose remedial action where necessary for Council's approval.

II. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Cluster shall be managed and overseen by an Executive Committee approved by the University Council on the recommendation of the Rector and shall have the following structure:
 - i. 3 members who are Council-appointed University of Malta Resident Academics, one of whom is nominated to act as Chair of the Committee, which shall include, but is not limited to, experts in the following areas: intelligence studies, security science, digital technologies and criminology. The appointment of the nominated Chair of the Executive Committee needs to be endorsed and approved by Rector. The Chair will be a UM resident academic who is also an expert in the area; and
 - ii. a maximum of two (2) members from relevant stakeholders who are external to UM.
2. The Executive Committee will serve for a term of three (3) years, after which it may be reappointed.

3. The procedure for the selection of the Executive Committee members at the end of the first three-year term of the Founding Executive Committee members nominated below, shall be upon election held during an Annual General Meeting which shall be held in person, and which shall be called in the month of November of every third year that the Cluster is in existence. All members of the Cluster, save for the Electoral Official, shall be entitled to vote for three members in the election. During the month of September preceding the election, the outgoing Executive Committee shall seek a minimum of one and a maximum of two volunteer Electoral Official(s) from amongst those members of the Cluster who do not intend to stand for election. The name and email address of that election official shall be communicated to all the members of the Cluster by no later than the 30th of September immediately preceding the election. During the October immediately preceding the election, those members of the Cluster who wish to seek election to the Executive Committee shall submit notice of such request via email, cc. added to the proposer and seconder named in the email, both of whom should be members of the Cluster. During the Annual General Meeting, the outgoing members of the Committee shall present a summary report of the achievements during the preceding years. Any new candidate for membership of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to give a presentation of no longer than seven minutes as to his or her motivation for standing for election. The three candidates who poll the highest number of votes shall be deemed to be duly elected for the next term of three years. When, upon counting the votes, the Electoral Official(s) declares one of the positions to be tied, a fresh election will be held after the AGM adjourns for 15 minutes. The Chair shall be elected by the newly elected Executive Committee during its first meeting.
4. The quorum of the Executive Committee meetings of the Board shall be 3 members.
5. Apart from keeping regular Agendas and Minutes of meetings, the Committee shall regulate its own procedures during meetings, provided that every decision requires the approval of the majority of members at said meeting. It is recommended that the Executive Committee should meet regularly and as necessary but should hold not less than three (3) meetings annually.
6. Subcommittees may be set up at the discretion of the Executive Committee and shall be regulated internally by it.
7. The Executive Committee shall submit annual progress reports to the University's Research Clusters Committee. In this respect, it is recommended that the Committee appoints a secretary for minute taking and recording purposes.
8. Any grievances of any kind between the members of the Executive Committee and /or with the Research Cluster should, in the first instance, be resolved internally using the Cluster governance structures. If unsuccessful, these should be brought to the immediate attention of the Research Clusters Committee, it may if the need arises, propose remedial action where necessary for Council's approval.

III. DISTRIBUTION AND OVERSIGHT OF FUNDS

1. All funds shall be managed, and all expenditures formally approved by the Chair of the Cluster. This approval is only a step in the standard procedures adopted by the University for the approval and disbursement of funds and expenses, which should be followed at all times.
2. As per Cluster Funding regulations, a Cluster is allowed to make changes to the financial plan that can take the form of either: (a) a shift from one budget heading to another; or (b) a transfer of funds from one year to another. While such shifts are regulated by the cluster funding rules, decisions in relation to such shifts require the approval of the Executive Committee by a two-thirds majority voting of members present at the Executive Committee meeting.

IV. THE STATUTE

1. This Statute is without prejudice to the Research Clusters Launch Plan Document issued by the Rector, dated _____.
2. This Statute and any subsequent amendments thereto must be approved by the Council of the University of Malta.

Executive Committee Members for 2025 to 2028

Signed by: _____

Name of Chair: _____

On this date: _____