



SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVE WORKING GROUP - MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Number	07
Date	22/07/2025
Time	09:30 - 11:30hrs
Venue	Arts Council Malta Offices, Mrieħel
ACM	Karsten Xuereb, Research Exec Ġorġ Vella Exec P.A.C.
PCOs	Festivals Malta, Frans Agius Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Vanessa Mangion
Present Members	Alex Bezzina Kristina Borg Charlie Cauchi, MPA Francesco Grech MEIA Lisa Gwen Chetcuti Maria Galea, MEIA Diane Portelli Moiria Scicluna Zahra MCI
Excused	-

Other	Eszter Kosa, Daniela Marotta EMCS (Strategy 2030 Researchers)
Chair	Karsten Xuereb, ACM
Rapporteur	Ġorġ Vella, ACM

Agenda Item		Action
1.	Approval of Minutes	Minutes approved
2.	<p>Monthly Updates – Actions form last meeting</p> <p>1. Participants expressed concern if the Chairing of these sessions and minute-taking are a burden that would hinder participation, but it was promptly made clear by the Chair that ACM representants present can handle these duties and allow participants to engage in discussion.</p> <p>2. MEIA requested a full list of upcoming focus group sessions (up to end of Aug-Sept) to distribute to appropriate personnel for attendance. It was clear that there will also be online sessions.</p>	<p>ACM to chair & take minutes</p> <p>List of Strategy 2030 public consultation focus groups to be communicated</p>
3.	<p>Strategy 2030 Focus Group</p> <p><i>Update by EMCS</i></p> <p>EMCS status update on Strategy 2025 analysis and initial structure, and well as envisaged additions for Strategy 2030. Desk research centered on ACM publications (Publications, Annual Reports (deemed exemplary), Ongoing and Previous Strategies) and other relevant policy documents (MT, EU, Int).</p> <p>EMCS also found Strategy 2025 has clear values but covers too many topics thus making it less measurable. Some were out of reach, i.e. Cultural Rights enshrined in the Constitution.</p>	

After EMCS's introduction points were immediately raised about the exclusion of evaluators' names and their selection criteria in annual reports

Funds & evaluators

Lisa Gwen Chetcuti: Noticed that in the recent editions of the Annual report the names of evaluators have been excluded and has suggested that these names should resume being listed at the end (not by fund). Moreover, guidance should be made available to evaluators on grading methods as well as the consideration of improvements from previous applications in the case of reapplication.

Kristina Borg: Evaluators should be confirmed before applications are closed, and that feedback should be constructive. Observed that evaluators are currently confirmed before application cease and queried as to whether it would be more ideal to have evaluators chosen after applications close, so that evaluators with experience relevant to submitted applications are chosen, thereby matching their expertise with the pool of applications.

Alex Bezzina: Raised an issue that as an evaluator he, at times, ended up evaluating his own friends' applications, an issue which merits itself to Malta's size.

Maria Galea (MEIA): continuing Lisa's argument, presented a recent example from a complaint received by one of its members who received a worse (50) mark after undergoing mentored training abroad, and addressing the shortcomings of a previous application (65). This was explained as disheartening.

Chair: Evaluators are given feedback from applicants' previous submission. Lisa Gwen argued that this is not always the case, and that she frequently took it upon herself to do so. Kristina Borg also argued that Evaluators are not always aware of applicant's previous applications.

Chair: Clarified that Evaluators are indeed made aware of this and have access to the feedback provided on previous occasions.

Diane Portelli also made a point that a stronger re-application does not imply a funding award when there are better applicants. This was agreed, however, for motivation's sake, improvements should be noted in the evaluation report.

Kristina Borg suggested the domestic Book Fund award as something to be inspired from

EMCS noted that given that the Cultural and Creative Sectors are small in Malta, with even smaller niches, and that additional burdens on evaluations may deter them from putting themselves forward. MEIA considered this but argued that lack of note of improvement disheartens the artist, referring once again to the recent complaint received.

Charlie Cauchi MPA: suggested that in order to reduce the pressure and expectation on funding schemes as the only means of support, other prizes, apart from existing ones, should provide support in terms of career development, access to space, resources, international collaboration, etc

Lisa Gwen: there exists a tension between competitive and non-competitive funding schemes

Less focus on money, more focus on value added and impact

EMCS shifted back to Strategy 2030 by stating that the new strategy needs to be actionable, and that focus needs to be oriented on value-added and measurable impact. EMCS went on to say that it was difficult to attribute funds to strategic actions

Infrastructure

Festivals Malta and Malta Philharmonic Orchestra voiced together that their main issue is infrastructure, such as the concert hall. MPO went on express how 3 concerts during May were organized in St Elmo's Tower since May is the peak season for conferences, thus all conference halls were booked. This led to issues with instruments, with one case being a 60kEUR violin which had to be refurbished following long exposure at St Elmo's. "We cannot have PCOs without a home". Festivals Malta echoed this and stated that with the status quo PCOs are competing amongst each other for space, to carry out their calendared events. Moreover, Festivals Malta noted that the application and enforcement of State Aid limitations including De Minimis standards by MFSA on the engagement of service providers is understood to be imminent for Festivals Malta and MTA, which will create new challenges with regard to the use of logistics, catering, production set up and other services.

MEIA stressed on the word stability, and that this stability of often provided by infrastructure in tandem with policy, and not policy alone. MEIA claimed that PCOs contribute, at times inadvertently, to the highly competitive market in terms of use of resources, payment structures, and calendars.

Francesco raised concern pertaining to his situation as a writer; even if he published a book every 2 years it still won't fund his life, is a basic income being considered? He was rest assured by Karsten since the Strategy 2030 will build on the Charter,

however it has not yet been determined if this will be in the form of a basic income (Irish Model) or in some other form. Studies are undergoing.

Francesco also made note on the fragmentation of funds, such as funding for literature which falls under the National Book Council, which falls under another Ministerial Portfolio. Maria of MEIA too informed Francesco that the existing Strategy suggests that the National Book Council shift towards the Ministry overarching ACM, for more streamlined funding.

Film Industry

Charlie Cauchi MPA: Films are perceived to be shifting to ACM's remit, and an inquiry was made on the state of data on funding dedicated towards films, given that data has been recorded since 2008. Karsten assured Charlie that ACM has acquired as much data as the Film Commission could provide.

Lisa Gwen Chetcuti: Stressed that given the scale of the film industry, ACM requires professionals or experts to take ownership in steering one of the largest of the domestic creative industries.

Invisibility

Kristina Borg shifted to the tangent of 'Invisibility' felt by artists as they find it difficult to quantify their professional level and technical skill, preparation and research. Karsten phrased this difficulty to give value to your work as self-invisibility.

Lisa Gwen Chetcuti argued about the fast oversaturation of the CCS.

Gorg, referring to Lisa Gwen's point on oversaturation and the PCO's previous worry on infrastructure, argued for collective planning, where all PCO program directors plan together to offset the issues of infrastructure and oversaturation. MEAI, EMCS, and Festivals Malta echoed the need to shift away from a silo mentality.

CSR

The discussion then shifted to broadening financing resources, and tapping into CSR funding, such as Banks, as noted by Alex. Lisa Gwen argued that there is a disconnect (procedural, timeframe) between public funding and CSR funding and missing out on either may leave an artistic project in jeopardy. Argued for streamlined approaches.

EMCS argued that ACM can take the task of developing an environment in which CSR funding is available to the CCS. MEIA highlighted the 'Academy of Givers' who provide capacity building

	<p>on CSR funding.</p> <p>Rewarding those who go professional</p> <p>MEIA suggested that more rewards should be made available for those artists who make their art their profession.. Alex Bezzina intervened, arguing that ACM needs to acknowledge the diversity of the CCS, and that amateurs play a very significant part and role in sustaining this diversity. To note this presence, Alex referred to the CCPS 2024 results.</p> <p>Lastly, EMCS gave a brief run-through of the draft structure for 2030 which was well received.</p>	
4.	<p>Items for the next meeting</p> <p>Meetings 8 & 9 to be dedicated to Funding with Rita Falzon, Head of Funding</p>	
5.	<p>AOB</p>	

Next Meeting Number	8
Date	19 August 2025
Time	09:30 - 11:30hrs
Venue	ACM