



SECTORAL REPRESENTATIVE WORKING GROUP - MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Number	08
Date	19/08/2025
Time	09:30 - 11:30hrs
Venue	Arts Council Malta Offices, Mrieħel
ACM	<p>Rita Falzon, Head of Funding</p> <p>Glen Calleja, Creative Entrepreneurship Exec</p> <p>Nikki Petroni, Education Exec (online)</p> <p>Daniela Said, Domestic Film Development and Strategy Unit</p> <p>Ġorġ Vella, Partnerships, Advocacy & Collaborations Exec</p> <p>Karsten Xuereb, Research Exec</p> <p>Lyona Xuereb Gatt, Domestic Film Development and Strategy Unit</p>
Members Present	<p>Alex Bezzina</p> <p>Kristina Borg</p> <p>Rebecca Cremona, Malta Producers' Association (MPA)</p> <p>Maria Galea, Malta Entertainment Industry & Arts Association (MEIA)</p> <p>Lisa Gwen Chetcuti</p> <p>Diane Portelli</p> <p>Moira Scicluna Zahra, Malta Community of Illustrators (MCI)</p>

	PCOs Vanessa Mangion, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra
Excused	Frans Agius, Festivals Malta
Other	Aiden Sommers (MEIA), Maria Fsadni (MEIA)
Chair	Karsten Xuereb (ACM)
Rapporteur	Ġorg Vella (ACM)

Agenda Item		Action
1.	Approval of Minutes	Minutes approved
2.	<p>Monthly Updates from Last Meeting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated list of Strategy 2030 public consultation focus groups communicated 2. Dr Nikki Petroni (ACM) provided an update on the Arts Education Conference wherein it was established that the conference is in the second phase of research. Details on the objectives, and the conference's topics and panel were provided. 3. The prospect of the Għaqda Kazini tal-Banda joining the SRWG was then discussed. The value of this inclusion was acknowledged, with members noting this would bring about a wider representation of the arts within the SRWG. Others noted it would be important to address the varying funding awarding procedures applied for band clubs with the Għaqda Kazini tal-Banda present (first come, first served vs competitive). Whether band clubs' activities ought to remain under ACM's funding umbrella or not was raised. Rita Falzon (ACM) noted the Maltese Festa was part of the domestic cultural product and that culture falls within the remit 	

	<p>of ACM's overarching responsibilities within the pertinent ministry. She explained the nature of activities supported by ACM addressing this sector, such as the restoration and creation of feast decorations, health and safety installations at fireworks factories, and supporting activities band clubs organise in the build-up to their respective parish feast.</p> <p>4. 1-1 meetings with Dr Luke Dalli are being set over the coming weeks.</p>	
3.	<p>Discussion Points - Funding Schemes</p> <p><i>1 Screen Support Scheme</i></p> <p>Lyona Xuereb Gatt: introduced herself and the unit and went on to provide an overview of the domestic sector in relation to ACM's recent responsibilities. The sector is in its infancy, and ACM has been increasing internal capacities to operate and manage this fund.</p> <p>Lisa Gwen Chetcuti: Enquired whether a CPD (Continuing Professional Development) was available for fund managers</p> <p>Rita Falzon: Stated there a support system is in place and capacity building is ongoing.</p> <p>Maria Galea (MEIA): Argued that MEIA has been made aware of the fact that a number of foreign creators are opening companies in Malta, contributing to increased competition on already scarce funds, asking whether a level playing field, supporting the nurturing of the domestic scene, was being preserved enough</p> <p>Rebecca Cremona: Enquired what makes a project eligible as a 'Maltese domestic production'. If the status quo remained, the domestic film sector would remain at a disadvantage, as projects from the servicing industry would be able to be smuggled into the process and access the funds.</p> <p>Rita Falzon: ACM applies and is guided by EU State Aid Regulations (GBER), and that applications are obliged to be open for all EU citizens. ACM adds the requisite of a Maltese passport. Rita explained how ACM created and applies a cultural test for eligibility. The nature of the test differed from that of the Malta Film Commission. Above-the-line crew needed Maltese residency.</p> <p>Maria Galea (MEIA): Enquired on instances where Maltese creators wish to do a film unrelated to Malta.</p> <p>Rita Falzon: There are other applicable funds.</p>	

Rebecca Cremona: Asked whether funded projects are sustaining the fund's vision.

Lyona Xuereb Gatt: The need for reliable data in addressing the fulfilment of funding criteria was noted. Data scarcity is a significant issue, but effort is being made to join Eurimages, a cultural support fund of the Council of Europe. Ongoing reporting from previous funding rounds will help give a clear picture of impacts felt.

Daniela Said: Structured databases will assist in Eurimages report writing, but for previous funds it will be more difficult as some data may be unorganised or lost.

Rebecca: Stressed that the domestic film community is at a disadvantage in comparison to that of other nations, by having a limit on soft money financing. Furthermore, the definition of difficult film should be more inclusive. This way, productions could enter co-productions: national soft monies pooled with others' soft monies and projects would be able to be financed and go into production.

2 Creative Industries Platform Scheme

Glen Calleja: The revised platform scheme shall be open for any creative business. The scheme will address the common issue when creatives have ongoing work and little attention is afforded for preparatory actions for future projects. This issue will be addressed through Phase 1 of the platform. Phase 2 will be available for those who finish Phase 1 and will be focused on tailored capacity building. Following Stage 2, applicants can then apply for a 3-year funding programme. This platform will push for an approach that is more centred around the needs of the applicant, yet still within funding policy parameters.

Rita Falzon: ACM is in the phase of establishing guidelines and regulations. Rita also stated that the platform will be supporting issues clearly identified by applicants, and that Phase 1 will be made public this October on a first come, first served basis for a maximum of 25 applicants. The award for Phase 1 is €2000 Phase 2 will comprise a maximum of 10 applicants. Phase 3 will be open for 3 to 5 applicants who successfully finish Phase 2.

Glen Calleja: Innovation, research, and sustainability are vital elements that shall be sought in applications. The expression of business development processes does not equate to digitalisation ones, and the innovative element lies in identifying clear issues to address.

3 Application Process

Rita Falzon outlined funding application processes, namely Open Calls and Rolling Calls. Efforts are being made at further standardising processes.

Kristina Borg: Since filling an application form with an authentic proposal may be resulting in a very long application, the processes involved should be further streamlined, simplified and made concise. Clarity on required details and documents should be made.

Evaluators may find the process to take very long, also since some questions were repetitive.

Lisa Gwen Chetcuti: In the past, questions may have been confusing as some sections required anonymity while addressing others somewhat required some form of identification (e.g. regarding track record). Feedback was being given on all aspects of the application, but not all sections had weighting.

Rita Falzon: These issues have been and were being addressed, and anonymity was removed. The 'Concept' section was the chief section being evaluated, which is being changed, considering the effort put by applicants into other areas such as budgeting.

Kristina Borg: There may be instances where evaluators may give judgement on attachments which the application did not oblige the applicant to include. She suggested that the submission of budgetary documentation may be phased out across the application process and milestones..

Rebecca Cremona: To give context on Kristina's suggestion, Rebecca referred to Creative Europe funding, which does not require documentation on certain aspects of a proposal unless requested due to flags raised.

Diane Portelli: While acknowledging their value in providing reliable evidence of serious collaboration, requests for letters of Intent, CVs and bios make the process onerous.

Lisa Gwen Chetcuti: Suggested a Declaration of Honour, similar to Creative Europe funding thereby shifting liability onto applicants.

Rita Falzon: Exhibited concern regarding this method as ill practice may only be flagged in retrospect.

Rebecca Cremona: While this may be true, with strong repercussions applicants are motivated to be honest and avoid penalties. Tight deadlines and heavy workloads may make it

	<p>very difficult to provide all commitment letters beforehand. Perform Europe adopts the declaration of honour system.</p> <p>Aidan Somers: In a way of striking further balance between beneficiaries, and regarding the diversification of artistic forms supported through the Arts Support Scheme, recently concluded, he noted there is too much competition for set funding. ACM may consider diversifying funds by sector, as well as (in music/performing arts) by creators and promoters, and to make funds more accessible to entry-level or amateurs.</p> <p>Lisa Gwen Chetcuti: Suggested that the frequency of calls should improve, due to the high competition applicants are ‘pigeon holing’ their projects with respect to the funds and a greater frequency would allow for more flexibility. Applications should not be sifted through the same sieve.</p> <p>Maria Galea MEIA: Suggested that the budget needs to increase, along with adopting broader criteria, and that the fund should be issued more frequently. Some applicants are creating projects based on the fund criteria, which may not be conducive to the development of sustainable, forward-looking and beneficial project work.</p>	
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4.	<p>AOB</p> <p>1. Next SRWG meeting of 23 September to continue discussing Funding with Rita Falzon.</p>	
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Next Meeting Number	9
Date	23 September 2025
Time	09:30 - 11:30hrs
Venue	ACM