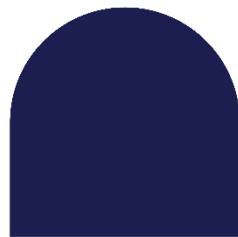


Investment in Cultural Organisations – Malta –

Guidelines and Regulations



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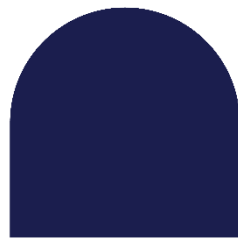
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Strand 1: Investing in Organisational Development

Guidelines and Regulations



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ALLOCATIONS

SESSION BUDGET	MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER ORGANISATION
EUR 160,000 per year	EUR 20,000 per year The amount will be granted for a period of three consecutive years. Subject to the availability of government funds.

CO-FUNDING	DISBURSEMENT
The Programme may cover up to 80% of total project costs	100% of payment applicable to the 1 st year as pre-financing and upon signing of contract. 100% of the 2 nd year payment upon approval of the 2026 progress report and the 2027 action plan. 70% of the 3 rd year payment upon approval of the 2027 progress report and the 2028 action plan. 30% of the 3 rd year payment upon approval of final report for the year 2028.

TIMEFRAMES

APPLICATION DEADLINE	RESULTS	PROJECT DURATION	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
11 th November 2025	8 th January 2026	36 months	1 st January 2026 – 31 st December 2028

1 Introduction

Through this initiative, Arts Council Malta aims to create partnerships with local voluntary organisations operating in the cultural and creative sectors. The organisations will collaborate with Arts Council Malta to fulfil its vision, “we want the arts to be at the heart of Malta’s future”, and to achieve its mission “driven by our commitment to cultural rights, we invest in the arts to strengthen Malta’s creative and cultural ecology”.

The programme is intended to provide stable support for organisations to plan, grow, develop, and deliver ACM’s strategic goals, primarily addressing creative professionals and communities, particularly to:

1. Invest in and foster diverse artistic and cultural expression;
2. Support and promote the conditions in which Malta’s cultural and creative sectors can flourish;
3. Advocate and provide for community-led opportunities to engage in arts and culture;
4. Strengthen Malta’s international cultural relations to continue developing international artistic exchanges and collaborations;
5. Nurture cross-sectoral collaborations that contribute to Malta’s sustainable development.

Arts Council Malta will be receiving applications from voluntary organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the priorities and ambitions highlighted above.

The funds allocated to the selected organisations will be covering activities happening in 2026, 2027, and 2028.

The programme is composed of two strands:

Strand 1, **‘Investing in Organisational Development’**, focuses on capacity building and business development.

Strand 2, **‘Investing in recurring cultural programmes and Events’**, focuses on the development of professional opportunities for artists and audiences (kindly refer to the guidelines and regulations for Strand 2).

Applications for Strand 1 must be submitted through the correct application form.

1.1 General Principles

- 1.1.1. ACM will be receiving proposals from voluntary organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations that are compliant and operating in the cultural and creative sectors that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the goals and principles of ACM's ongoing strategy.
- 1.1.2. The organisations and their programmes are expected to be developed and implemented with a commitment towards:
 - a. Championing the advancement of the status of artists and cultural and creative practitioners. This entails the facilitation of artistic development as well as utmost consideration of the right to artistic freedom, right of association, right to access public investment, and fair working conditions to contribute towards sectoral sustainable growth (refer to the Charter for the Status of the Artist and [Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021](#) for further guidance).
 - b. Valuing and positioning the diversity of artistic and cultural expression, access and participation as integral to Malta's wider cultural and creative ecology. In view of the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the recognition of cultural rights is at the core of ACM's Strategy 2025 (refer to ['Right to Culture – Resource Pack'](#) for further guidance).
 - c. Embracing artistic and cultural practices and activities as contributors and pillars to sustainable development in terms of their sustainability and interlinkages with the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of well-being. The 2030 Agenda UN Sustainable Development Goals are at the basis of ACM's ongoing strategy's guiding principles, entailing cross-sectoral, participatory, and equitable approaches to artistic and cultural practices (refer to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) for further guidance).
- 1.1.3. ACM reserves the right not to consider the submitted proposal if it does not match the priorities of this call.

2 Definitions

Applicant

- An applicant must be a voluntary organisation enrolled with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.
- The applicant's NACE code Rev. 2.1 must be:
 - S.90 - Arts creation and performing arts activities;
 - S.91.3 - Conservation, restoration, and other support activities for cultural heritage
 - S.94.99 - Activities of other membership organisations n.e.c.
- Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or involved in the management of the *Investment in Cultural Organisations – Malta*.

Application

- An application is a submission, inclusive of all mandatory documents and any annexes to the application form made by an eligible applicant.

Beneficiary

- The beneficiary is the recipient of the grant. The beneficiary is responsible for the implementation of the proposal supported by this programme. The beneficiary of the grant may not be changed throughout the duration of the funded project and until the final disbursement is issued. The disbursement of the grant may only be issued on behalf of the beneficiary. The beneficiary is responsible to ensure that any VAT invoices are issued on behalf of the beneficiary and include the beneficiary's VAT information. In the case of a beneficiary who does not carry out economic activity and as a result is not registered for VAT the beneficiary has the duty to ascertain that they will receive a fiscal receipt for the goods and services received.

Creative professionals

- All artistic and creative individuals active in the cultural and creative sectors.

Disbursement of Funds

- The grant will be disbursed as indicated on page 2 of these guidelines and regulations. A cheque payment will be issued on behalf of the applicant. The applicant must have an active bank account when submitting the application.

Eligibility

- Applications will first be screened in terms of technical and artistic eligibility by the programme administrators and managers. Proposals which are not considered eligible in terms of the set criteria shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

Evaluation

- Applications deemed compliant and eligible are evaluated against the criteria established in these guidelines by the appointed evaluators.

Evaluators

- Arts Council Malta appoints an evaluation team for the programme. The Arts Council may appoint both local and foreign professionals in the sector of culture and the arts.

Management and Administration

- Arts Council Malta is responsible for the management of this programme. All official correspondence, including the online submission of applications, must be sent to the address indicated in these guidelines.

Mandatory documentation

- Any document(s) needed to support your proposal and aid the evaluation of your project (e.g. track records, portfolios, artistic CVs, official correspondence confirming rental of space, permits or other); please refer to section 5.1 of these guidelines for a list of mandatory documents.

Maximum Funding

- There is a ceiling amount of €20,000 per organisation per year to be allocated. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the project.

Public Cultural Organisations

- Public cultural entities falling under the remit of Arts Council Malta, which include Teatru Manoel, Mediterranean Conference Centre, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Fondazzjoni Kreattività, Pjazza Teatru Rjal, Valletta Cultural Agency, Malta International Contemporary Arts Space, Festivals Malta, and the National Agency for Performing Arts.

Self-sustainability

- Refers directly to those projects which may, in the short or long-term, prove to be financially sustainable, i.e. can be implemented without the need of public investment. Financial sustainability of the project may be the result of the contribution, participation, or investment of third parties in the products or services being offered by the applicant(s) within the proposed project.

Single Undertaking

- Includes all enterprises having at least one of the following relationships with each other:
 - a. One enterprise has a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another enterprise;
 - b. One enterprise has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another enterprise;
 - c. One enterprise has the right to exercise a dominant influence over another enterprise pursuant to a contract entered into with that enterprise or pursuant to a provision in its memorandum or articles of association;
 - d. One enterprise, which is a shareholder in or member of another enterprise, controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders in or members of that enterprise, a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in that enterprise.

Enterprises having any of the relationships referred to in points (a) to (d) above through one or more other enterprises will be considered a single undertaking.

Undertaking

- An undertaking is defined as an entity engaged in an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU (i.e. any activity consisting in offering goods and services on a market), regardless of its legal status and the way in which it is financed. The classification of a particular entity as an undertaking depends entirely on the nature of its activities. The application of State aid rules does not depend on whether the entity is set up to generate profits. Non-profit entities can also offer goods and services on a market. When this is not the case, non-profit entities remain outside the scope of State aid. Furthermore, the classification of an entity as an undertaking is always relative to a specific activity. An entity that carries out both economic and non-economic activities is to be regarded as an undertaking only with regard to the former.

Voluntary Organisation

- An organisation which is legally established and/or publicly registered in Malta, having a statute. Voluntary organisations must be enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act (CAP 492 of the Laws of Malta) requirements (<http://www.maltacvs.org>). The applicant must be a legally authorised representative of the organisation.

3 Eligibility

Following the approval of proposals, Arts Council Malta will establish a financing programme for beneficiaries following negotiations on the proposed budgetary plans. The choice of funding allocation as well as the ceiling established lies at the discretion of Arts Council Malta.

Proposals will first be screened in terms of technical and artistic eligibility. Ineligible proposals in terms of the points below shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

The timeframe to implement the project is 36 months

3.1 Who can apply?

Strand 1. 'Investing in Organisational Development' is open to voluntary organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations with a registered address in Malta.

3.2 Who cannot apply?

- Applicants whose profile is not verified due to it being incomplete or missing any one or all of the below mandatory documents:
 - A copy of your Maltese ID card (including the front and back side) or your Maltese residence permit or your Maltese citizenship certificate or your Maltese passport
 - A signed statute of the voluntary organisation
- Applicants who do not qualify under the definition of applicant for this specific scheme;
- Beneficiaries who did not submit or complete at least one final report related to a previous grant funded by Arts Council Malta within the established timeframes.
- Beneficiaries who have not honoured previous funding commitments;
- Organisations/activities receiving local public funds through established government line-votes;
- Voluntary organisations which are:
 - not enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations;
 - which have not presented their updated accounts to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and are not compliant by the date of application;
 - which do not have a registered address in Malta.

3.3 What costs can be covered?

The yearly grant may cover up to 80% of the total costs up to a maximum of EUR20,000 per beneficiary (whichever is the lowest), subject to the availability of government funds, depending on the voluntary organisation and the initiative proposed. Arts Council Malta reserves the right to award grants to beneficiaries based on a fixed allocation every year, without exceeding the 80% co-funding threshold or the maximum allocation depending on the project.

The amount to be awarded is at the discretion of the Evaluation Board set up by Arts Council Malta.

Eligible costs will be the following:

- rental of spaces
- professional fees
- operational costs
- training and development of active members in the organisation
- business development (market research, sales, testing, fees or salaries for human resources and administrative expenses)

For more information about presenting your budget, refer to our General Budget Guidelines available on <https://artscouncilmalta.gov.mt/funding-and-grants/general-budget-guidelines/>.

3.4 What costs cannot be covered?

- Budgets exceeding 80% of the project expenditure.
- Contributions in kind exceeding 15% of the total expenditure.
- Costs already covered by public cultural organisations, or another public funding programme/scheme managed or co-managed by Arts Council Malta or other public agency, government department or ministry.
- Costs declared by the beneficiary and already covered by another grant of the Government of Malta.
- Costs which are already covered through usual operational budgets (space which is owned by the applicant or the partner/supporting organisation/individual).
- Debt and debt service charges.
- Doubtful debts.
- Exchange losses.
- Expenditure deemed excessive or reckless.
- Fees for services provided by other public entities, government department or ministry.
- Funding for the creation or upholding of contests, bursaries, prizes or scholarships.
- Interest owed.
- Provisions for losses or debts.
- Recoverable VAT, where applicable
- Retroactive costs.
- Return on capital.
- Subsistence, catering, and hospitality.

3.5 What applications are not eligible?

The following activities are **not** eligible under this programme:

- Activities of an intrinsically self-sustainable nature;
- Activities which are not related to culture, the arts, and the creative industries;
- Activities whose objective is fundraising or political propaganda;
- Applications for funding the creation or upholding of contests, bursaries, prizes, or scholarships
- Applications submitted after noon (12:00) of the respective day of deadline;
- Applications submitted by public entities with or without a line vote;
- Costs for traditional activities and festivities;
- Events held on a regular basis, including school/annual shows, regular training programmes, and/or repeated events;
- Incomplete applications (refer to application check list in section 5.1);
- Individual modules credited as part of an educational course or research as part of established academic programmes;
- Initiatives eligible under Festivals Malta, Annual Cultural Activities Scheme, VOPS, National Book Council, Valletta Cultural Agency, Malta Arts Scholarships, or any other state-funded programme dedicated to Maltese arts/culture
- Projects of an intrinsically self-sustainable nature;

- Projects that would have already started and/or taken place before the result is notified to applicant(s);
- Projects whose duration does not entirely fall within the eligible timeframe.

Any other activity which may be developed outside the scope of the *Investment in Cultural Organisations – Malta – Strand 1* is not eligible for support.

Applicants can submit more than one application under the same call; however, only one of the applications can be funded per session. An applicant that is supported through Strand 1 is not eligible for support through Strand 2.

4 Evaluation

The Evaluation Board will base its decision upon the following criteria:

4.1 Criterion 1: The Proposal (40 marks)

The proposal must include a clear outline of the what, the why, and the how of this request for funding. The project's aims and objectives, including the proposed organisational development and capacity building plans, must be clearly defined. The proposal must be aligned with the objectives of this programme as outlined in Section 1 of these guidelines and regulations.

The proposal must address the following:

- What: Provide the proposed outcomes and the key performance indicators or success criteria. Refer to the priorities in section 1.1. (5 marks)
- Why: Provide background research/data in which this project is rooted. What needs motivated you to seek funding for organisational development and capacity building? (5 marks)
- How: What actions will be implemented to address the proposed needs? Who will be engaged to implement these outcomes (provide their portfolios)? How is the proposed plan aligned with the objectives of this fund? (10 marks)
- Provide the organisational development and capacity building plan. This must include a strategic plan for the years covered by the programme together with the organisation's vision, its goals and the artistic programme. A detailed programme of activities for year 1 and a broader plan for years 2 and 3 are required. (20 marks)

4.2 Criterion 2: Project Management (20 marks)

This project management must include a clear outline of the who, the when, and the where. The funding proposal should present a well-thought-out plan of action based on background research.

It must include a clear timeline highlighting the key milestones of the project. The application needs to identify the potential threats that may hinder the project's successful implementation. In this section, the following guiding questions should be addressed:

- Provide the plan to deliver the proposed activities. Clearly indicate who is responsible for what (e.g. provide timeframes, workplans, responsibilities, skills and track record of people managing projects, logistics plan) Are there any necessary permits, copyright issues, and other legal, ethical, and administrative matters to be addressed? (5 marks)
- What is the degree of flexibility in the planning, given the risks and uncertainties? What are the mitigation measures envisaged in view of the identified potential threats? (e.g. provide contingency plans, risk assessments, health and safety measures, possible adjustments that may take place) (5 marks)
- What sustainable development practices will be adopted throughout the implementation of the programme? Refer to the priorities in section 1.1. (10 marks)

4.3 Criterion 3: Audience Engagement (20 marks)

This criterion considers the engagement and development of all stakeholders. This may include the organisation's existing staff and members, established clients and audiences, as well as other stakeholders and audiences that the organisation may be aspiring to reach. Engagement refers to the role, the nature of involvement in the programme, and the experience offered to the stakeholders. This criterion emphasises the level of engagement based on what is being proposed by the applicant/s in line with the following questions:

- Who are your target audiences (whether that is internal and/or external) and how will these audiences be reached? (5 marks)
- What mechanisms and strategies will you adopt to communicate and promote the programme's outcomes with your stakeholders? Why did you opt for these specific mechanisms?
- (Note: communications plan also includes internal dissemination which may not be at a public level) (5 marks)
- By making reference to the priorities in section 1.1, elaborate on how the audience engagement practices are fostering the organisation's commitment towards cultural rights (10 marks)

4.4 Criterion 4: Budget (20 marks)

This criterion considers how well-planned and realistic the presented annual budget plan is. It also considers efforts to secure funds from other sources. The following questions will need to be addressed:

- Provide a detailed income-expenditure budget for Year 1 and forecasts for the two consecutive years. (10 marks)

- What are the budgeted costs that are both directly and indirectly linked to the delivery of the proposed programme / plan? (e.g. fixed costs that are ongoing such as artistic fees for specific productions) What is the budgeted annual income for the proposed programme / plan? If no income is envisaged, what is the justification? Present a one-page document with budget assumptions, explanations, notes, and workings. (10 marks)

5 Submitting the application

Follow these steps to apply:

1. Read these guidelines and regulations very carefully.
2. Check whether your proposed idea can be addressed by this programme.
3. Press the [link](#) that will take you to the online application system.
4. If you do not have a profile, create your profile with Arts Council Malta by clicking on 'Register Now' and filling in the details. Applicants are required to register a profile on the ACM's CRM at least two weeks prior to the deadline of the call.
5. From the open calls section, select the online application for the programme you intend to apply.
6. Follow the instructions step by step. Fill in all the required information from the online application, including the budget, and attach the supporting documentation.
7. Submit the application. You should be receiving an automatic acknowledgement by the system. If you do not receive such a notification, contact us on applyforfunds@artscouncil.mt.

Applicants are required to register a profile on the ACM CRM at least two weeks prior to the deadline of the call.

In case of difficulty, or if you would like to consult us regarding this fund, you can call us on 2334 7230, Monday to Friday, between 09:00 and 16:00, or email us on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt.

It is your responsibility to present a complete application form as explained in these guidelines and regulations. If you do not present all the necessary information and documentation, your application will not be processed and evaluated.

Prior to the application deadline, Arts Council Malta representatives will not be checking your application forms. It is solely at Arts Council Malta's discretion to request that applicants provide any missing mandatory documentation following the call deadline.

Upon the submission of the application, applicants accept that should the application be awarded funding, the name, the project title, short project description, and the amount awarded can be published by Arts Council Malta.

A decision on funding will be made on the strength of the submitted information and supporting documents.

Applications handed in after 12.00 (noon) of the respective deadline cannot be accepted.

5.1 Checklist

In order to be complete, applications must be accompanied by:

- A copy of the VAT certificate of registration showing the applicable NACE code Rev. 2.1, where applicable;
- A detailed income-expenditure budget for year 1 and forecasts for the two consecutive years;
- A proposed programme of activities for the period being applied for; this may include any artistic and cultural events, productions, performances, exhibitions, festivals, training and development initiatives that are relevant to the objectives of the applicant (detailed programme for year 1, and forecast programme for the two consecutive years);
- A proposed detailed budget for year 1, and a forecast budget for years 2 and 3;
- Applicant biography/artistic CV to be included in the applicant profile;
- Audiovisuals / portfolio showing the applicant's work, as relevant to the proposal (audiovisuals up to 5MB may be uploaded directly in the application form, in the case of larger files these may be provided as a link);
- Letters of intent from collaborators;
- Quotes to support the income-expenditure budget for year 1;
- Strategic plan
- The track record of the applicants and collaborators—this includes the CV, artistic portfolios, and related documentation
- A *de minimis* declaration, where applicable (refer to Section 9).

6 Evaluation process

This programme is competitive and will be evaluated by a panel of three relevant experts, according to the established criteria.

As specified above, each criterion is allocated specific marks. In order to be considered for funding, funding proposals have to obtain an average of 60 marks or more.

Nevertheless, the evaluation session and funding decisions depend on the quality of the submitted proposals as well as the availability of the funds. Therefore, obtaining 60 marks or more does not automatically mean that your project proposal has been successful. The

Evaluation Board may decide not to allocate the total funds available for a particular call if the proposed projects do not reach the required level in terms of the programme criteria.

Eligible applications will be assessed by an evaluation team selected by the Council on the basis of their professional experience. Arts Council Malta will select evaluators on the basis of their independent and professional experience. The evaluators will present an assessment on each of the proposed projects, indicating the relevant ratings awarded.

6.1 Shortlisting

The evaluation board will meet during an initial evaluation in which all the eligible applications will be discussed. All applications will be given a score, and those scoring 60 marks and higher will be shortlisted. The shortlisted applications will attend an online pitching session. The pitching session is compulsory; a maximum of three participants may attend the pitching session.

It is solely at the evaluators' discretion to invite any applicant scoring less than 60 marks to attend a pitching session.

All applications, including those that are not shortlisted, will receive the official result notification together with a copy of the feedback form on the result date as indicated in page 3 of this document.

6.2 Pitching

The aim of the online pitching session is to create an opportunity for applicants to make a case for their projects to the evaluators. The project applications would already have been reviewed by the evaluators and the fund manager before the pitching session.

During the online session, the applicant has the opportunity to present comments, latest insights, and additions to the already submitted project description.

The pitch can be presented in a variety of formats, including, but not limited to, visual aids, power point presentations, audio, etc. that should not be longer than ten (10) minutes. During the pitch, applicants are expected to explain the project's artistic vision and communicate how the project will be implemented. This ten-minute pitch will be followed by a Q&A session with the panel of evaluators.

6.3 Communication of results

On the day indicated on page 3, you will receive your result notification from Arts Council Malta. Together with the covering letter, we will also attach a copy of the feedback form, indicating the reasons and marks leading to the evaluation board's decision, according to the programme criteria.

The order of classification of the projects, according to the marks allocated by the evaluators, will be published online. Only the names and summaries of the successful projects will be published; in the case of projects which have not been awarded any funds, only their reference number will be published.

If you have any difficulties concerning your results, you should email us on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt within five (5) days of receiving your funding decision.

No information on the evaluation process will be released before the official result notification.

Any form of soliciting will automatically disqualify an application.

All information received by the Funding Unit, fund manager, and evaluators will be considered confidential, both during and after the evaluation process. Provisions on data protection and confidentiality for successful projects will be included in the grant agreement.

7 Project implementation and monitoring

A contract specifying the conditions of the programme will be signed. The pre-financing payment consisting of 100% of the amount allocated by the evaluation board for the year 2026 will be processed after the signing of the contract. The amount allocated for the year 2027 will be processed upon the submission and approval of the progress report for the year 2026, including certified accounts and VAT invoices and the year 2027 action plan. 70% of the amount awarded for the year 2028 will be processed upon the submission and approval of the progress report for the year 2027, including certified accounts and VAT invoices and the year 2028 Action Plan. The remaining 30% will be disbursed after the submission and approval of the final report for the year 2028 including certified accounts and VAT invoices.

The beneficiaries must use the Arts Council's logo on all related material and specify that the project was supported by the grant as follows: **Supported by Arts Council Malta**, in all marketing, PR, and printed material. The grant received must be used solely for the purpose for which it was awarded, in line with the submitted proposal and the contract.

Beneficiaries must notify Arts Council Malta immediately if changes affecting the nature of the project take place during implementation. Changes cannot be implemented unless approval is received. Arts Council Malta reserves the right to revise or withhold the final

payment if the change in the project is not considered to be in line with the initial proposal, or if the Council is not informed of the changes within a reasonable time.

Beneficiaries must make themselves available for visits and communication with Arts Council Malta representatives for monitoring purposes, both during the implementation of the project as well as after its completion.

Arts Council Malta also reserves the right to revise the final payment if the total expenditure is less than that estimated in the application form.

7.1 Report

At the end of each year, you will be required to submit a detailed report highlighting the work carried out and the project achievements, by not later than eight (8) weeks after your annual project has concluded. Arts Council Malta will provide a template for your reports. If relevant, together with this report, beneficiaries must submit copies of any relevant marketing, publicity or information material developed for the funded project. Beneficiaries will also be requested to submit evidence of the research process, which includes visual documentation (a minimum of 5 high-resolution images should be submitted), blogs and other documentation.

Beneficiaries must provide a final detailed and certified budget breakdown. The budget must be prepared in compliance with applicable financial standards and aligned with these guidelines and regulations, and they must be certified by a warranted auditor.

The Council retains the right to request the beneficiary to submit the VAT invoices and/or fiscal receipts to support the detailed certified budget.

At the end of year 1 and year 2, you will be required to submit an action plan and a detailed budget breakdown for the following year's programme.

Arts Council Malta retains the right to make use of submitted project material.

Arts Council Malta retains the right to recover funds in case these are not being used and/or are misused and/or are not used according to the submitted budget.

8 Complaints procedure

Filing a complaint will not affect your chances of receiving support from Arts Council Malta in the future. All complaints will be treated with confidentiality.

8.1 Grounds for complaints

Applicants can make a complaint regarding procedural anomalies and irregularities during the submission and evaluation process in terms of the procedures stipulated in these guidelines and regulations. Complaints cannot be made concerning:

- The Arts Council's or the government's policies and procedures.
- The merits of the application in terms of the criteria stipulated in these guidelines and regulations. Only applicants may file complaints concerning their project.

8.2 Filing a complaint

Complaints must be made in writing and must be as clear as possible. The complaint must state the grounds and the reasons for the complaint, providing a detailed explanation and justification supported by relevant documentation or testimonials as to why the complainant deems that irregularities were committed in the procedure/s stipulated in these guidelines and regulations or in standard good governance rules and regulations governing the public sector. The decision at the end of the complaint process will be final. Complaints need to be made to the Head of Funding, Arts Council Malta within five (5) working days of receipt of your funding decision. You will normally receive a reply to your complaint within ten (10) working days.

In case you are not satisfied with the reply, Arts Council Malta will convene a board that will discuss your complaint further. If you approach our complaints procedure, then you are accepting that we can use information about your project to address the complaint. The decision of the board is final.

9 Applicability of State Aid Rules

9.1 Voluntary organisations that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU

Voluntary organisations that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU may also apply for the programme. The rules outlined in section 9.2 below are not applicable in such case.

9.2 State aid rules applicable to voluntary organisations that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU

The State Aid scheme will be implemented in line with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid.

This regulation applies to aid granted to undertakings in all sectors, with the exception of:

1. aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of fishery and aquaculture products;
2. aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of price or quantity of products purchased or put on the market;
3. aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products;
4. aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of agricultural products, in one of the following cases:
 - a. where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertakings concerned;
 - b. where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
5. aid granted to export-related activities towards third countries or member states, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, the establishment and operation of a distribution network or other current expenditure linked to the export activity;
6. aid contingent upon the use of domestic goods and services over imported goods and services.

The total amount of *de minimis* aid granted to a single undertaking shall not exceed the amount of €300,000 over any period of three years. This period is assessed on a rolling basis.

This maximum threshold would include all state aid granted under this aid scheme and any other state aid measure implemented in line with the *de minimis* rule including that received from any entity other than Arts Council Malta. Any *de minimis* aid received in excess of the established threshold will have to be recovered, with interest, from the undertaking receiving the aid.

The rules on cumulation of aid as outlined in Article 5 of the *de minimis* regulation will be respected.

Applicants are to submit a *de minimis* declaration indicating any other *de minimis* aid received or applied for during the previous three years. This will ensure that the total amount of *de*

de minimis aid granted to a single undertaking under the *de minimis* rule will not exceed the *de minimis* threshold over the applicable three-year period.

Should a successful applicant not be eligible to receive *de minimis* aid, the said applicant will be deemed ineligible, and the next ranked applicant will be awarded.

In line with the *de minimis* regulation, records regarding *de minimis* aid shall be maintained for 10 years from the date on which the aid under the programme is granted.

Publication in Central Register

In line with Article 6(1) of the *de minimis* regulation, as of 1 January 2026, information on *de minimis* aid granted under this programme shall be made publicly available in a central register.

The following information shall be made public:

- the identification of the beneficiary,
- the aid amount,
- the granting date,
- the aid instrument, and
- the sector involved on the basis of the statistical classification of economic activities in the Union ('NACE classification').

Need advice?

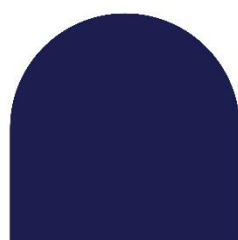
ACM offers pre-submission consultation services to help secure support for your project. We are there every step of the way. We can help you determine whether the core concept and profile of your project are in line with the targeted support mechanism, and provide feedback on the way you plan to present your project. Plan ahead and get in touch with us at least four weeks before the submission deadline to make the best of our services.

You are welcome to call us on 2334 7230, on weekdays, between 09:00 and 16:00, or to send us an email on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt.

Guidelines updated on 5th August 2025

Strand 2:
**Investing in Recurring Cultural
Programmes and Events**

Guidelines and Regulations



**ARTS
COUNCIL
MALTA**

ALLOCATIONS

SESSION BUDGET	MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER ORGANISATION
EUR 340,000 per year	EUR 30,000 per year The amount will be granted for a period of three consecutive years. Subject to the availability of government funds.

CO-FUNDING	DISBURSEMENT
The programme may cover up to 80% of total project costs	100% of payment applicable to the 1 st year as pre-financing and upon signing of contract. 100% of the 2 nd year payment upon approval of progress report 2026 and action plan for the year 2027. 70% of the 3 rd year payment upon approval of progress report 2027 and action plan for the year 2028. 30% of the 3 rd year payment upon approval of final report for the year 2028.

TIMEFRAMES

APPLICATION DEADLINE	RESULTS	PROJECT DURATION	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
11 th November 2025	8 th January 2026	36 months	1 st January 2026 – 31 st December 2028

1 Introduction

Through this initiative, Arts Council Malta aims to create partnerships with local voluntary organisations operating in the cultural and creative sectors. The organisations will collaborate with Arts Council Malta to fulfil its vision—“we want the arts to be at the heart of Malta’s future”—and to achieve its mission—“driven by our commitment to cultural rights, we invest in the arts to strengthen Malta’s creative and cultural ecology”.

The programme is intended to provide stable support for organisations to plan, grow, develop, and deliver ACM’s strategic goals primarily addressing creative professionals and communities, particularly to:

1. Invest in and foster diverse artistic and cultural expression;
2. Support and promote the conditions in which Malta’s cultural and creative sectors can flourish;
3. Advocate and provide for community-led opportunities to engage in arts and culture;
4. Strengthen Malta’s international cultural relations to continue developing international artistic exchanges and collaborations;
5. Nurture cross-sectoral collaborations that contribute to Malta’s sustainable development.

Arts Council Malta will be receiving applications from voluntary organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the priorities and ambitions highlighted above.

The funds allocated to the selected organisations will be covering activities happening in 2026, 2027 and 2028.

The programme is composed of two strands:

Strand 1, **‘Investing in Organisational Development’**, focuses on capacity building and business development (kindly refer to the guidelines and regulations for Strand 1).

Strand 2, **‘Investing in recurring cultural programmes and Events’**, focuses on the development of professional opportunities for artists and audiences.

Applications for Strand 2 must be submitted through the correct application form.

1.1 General Principles

- 1.1.4. ACM will be receiving proposals from voluntary organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations that are compliant and operating in the cultural and creative sectors that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the goals and principles of ACM's ongoing strategy.
- 1.1.5. The organisations and their programmes are expected to be developed and implemented with a commitment towards:
- a. Championing the advancement of the status of artists and cultural and creative practitioners. This entails the facilitation of artistic development as well as utmost consideration of the right to artistic freedom, right of association, right to access public investment, and fair working conditions to contribute towards sectoral sustainable growth (refer to the Charter for the Status of the Artist and [Malta's National Cultural Policy 2021](#) for further guidance).
 - b. Valuing and positioning the diversity of artistic and cultural expression, access and participation as integral to Malta's wider cultural and creative ecology. In view of the 2005 UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the recognition of cultural rights is at the core of ACM's Strategy 2025 (refer to ['Right to Culture – Resource Pack'](#) for further guidance).
 - c. Embracing artistic and cultural practices and activities as contributors and pillars to sustainable development in terms of their sustainability and interlinkages with the social, economic and environmental dimensions of well-being. The 2030 Agenda UN Sustainable Development Goals are at the basis of ACM's ongoing Strategy guiding principles, entailing cross-sectoral, participatory, and equitable approaches to artistic and cultural practices (refer to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) for further guidance).
- 1.1.6. ACM reserves the right not to consider the submitted proposal if it does not match the priorities of this call.

2 Definitions

Applicant

- An applicant must be a voluntary organisation enrolled with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.
- The applicant's NACE code Rev. 2.1 must be:
 - S.90 - Arts creation and performing arts activities;
 - S.91.3 - Conservation, restoration and other support activities for cultural heritage;
 - S.94.99 - Activities of other membership organisations n.e.c.
- Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or involved in the management of the *Investment in Cultural Organisations – Malta*.

Application

- An application is a submission, inclusive of all mandatory documents and any annexes to the application form made by an eligible applicant.

Beneficiary

- The beneficiary is the recipient of the grant. The beneficiary is responsible for the implementation of the proposal supported by the programme. The beneficiary of the grant may not be changed throughout the duration of the funded project and until the final disbursement is issued. The disbursement of the grant may only be issued on behalf of the beneficiary. The beneficiary is responsible to ensure that any VAT invoices are issued on behalf of the beneficiary and include the beneficiary's VAT information. In the case of a beneficiary who does not carry out economic activity and as a result is not registered for VAT the beneficiary has the duty to ascertain that they will receive a fiscal receipt for the goods and services received.

Creative professionals

- All artistic and creative individuals active in the cultural and creative sectors.

Disbursement of Funds

- The grant will be disbursed as indicated on page 2 of these guidelines and regulations. A cheque payment will be issued on behalf of the applicant. The applicant must have an active bank account when submitting the application.

Eligibility

- Applications will first be screened in terms of technical and artistic eligibility by the programme administrators and managers. Proposals which are not considered eligible in terms of the set criteria shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

Evaluation

- Applications deemed compliant and eligible are evaluated against the criteria established in these guidelines by the appointed evaluators.

Evaluators

- Arts Council Malta appoints an evaluation team for the programme. The Arts Council may appoint both local and foreign professionals in the sector of culture and the arts.

Management and Administration

- Arts Council Malta is responsible for the management of this programme. All official correspondence, including the online submission of applications, must be sent to the address indicated in these guidelines.

Mandatory documentation

- Any document(s) needed to support your proposal and aid the evaluation of your project (e.g. track records, portfolios, artistic CVs, official correspondence confirming rental of space, permits, or other); please refer to section 5.1 of these guidelines for a list of mandatory documents.

Maximum Funding

- There is a ceiling amount of €30,000 per organisation per year to be allocated. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the project.

Public Cultural Organisations

- Public cultural entities falling under the remit of Arts Council Malta, which include Teatru Manoel, Mediterranean Conference Centre, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Fondazzjoni Kreattività, Pjazza Teatru Rjal, Valletta Cultural Agency, Malta International Contemporary Arts Space, Festivals Malta, and the National Agency for Performing Arts.

Self-sustainability

- Refers directly to those projects which may, in the short or long-term, prove to be financially sustainable, i.e. can be implemented without the need of public investment. Financial sustainability of the project may be the result of the contribution, participation or investment of third parties in the products or services being offered by the applicant(s) within the proposed project.

Single Undertaking

- Includes all enterprises having at least one of the following relationships with each other:
 - a. One enterprise has a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another enterprise;
 - b. One enterprise has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another enterprise;

- c. One enterprise has the right to exercise a dominant influence over another enterprise pursuant to a contract entered into with that enterprise or pursuant to a provision in its memorandum or articles of association;
- d. One enterprise, which is a shareholder in or member of another enterprise, controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders in or members of that enterprise, a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in that enterprise.

Enterprises having any of the relationships referred to in points (a) to (d) above through one or more other enterprises will be considered a single undertaking.

Undertaking

- An undertaking is defined as an entity engaged in an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU (i.e. any activity consisting in offering goods and services on a market), regardless of its legal status and the way in which it is financed. The classification of a particular entity as an undertaking depends entirely on the nature of its activities. The application of state aid rules does not depend on whether the entity is set up to generate profits. Non-profit entities can also offer goods and services on a market. When this is not the case, non-profit entities remain outside the scope of State aid. Furthermore, the classification of an entity as an undertaking is always relative to a specific activity. An entity that carries out both economic and non-economic activities is to be regarded as an undertaking only with regard to the former.

Voluntary Organisation

- An organisation which is legally established and/or publicly registered in Malta, having a statute. Voluntary organisations must be enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act (CAP 492 of the Laws of Malta) requirements (<http://www.maltacvs.org>). The applicant must be a legally authorised representative of the organisation.

3 Eligibility

Following the approval of proposals, Arts Council Malta will establish a financing programme for beneficiaries following negotiations on the proposed budgetary plans. The choice of funding allocation as well as the ceiling established lies at the discretion of Arts Council Malta.

Proposals will first be screened in terms of technical and artistic eligibility. Ineligible proposals in terms of the points below shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

The timeframe to implement the project is 36 months.

3.1 Who can apply?

The Investment in Cultural Organisations - Malta is open for voluntary organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and that have a registered address in Malta.

3.2 Who cannot apply?

- Applicants whose profile is not verified due to it being an incomplete profile for not having the below mandatory documents:
 - A copy of your Maltese ID card (including the front and back side), or your Maltese residence permit, or your Maltese citizenship certificate, or your Maltese passport;
 - A signed statute of the voluntary organisation.
- Applicants who do not qualify under the definition of applicant for this specific scheme;
- Beneficiaries who did not submit or complete at least one final report related to a previous grant funded by Arts Council Malta within the established timeframes.
- Beneficiaries who have not honoured previous funding commitments;
- Organisations/activities receiving local public funds through established government line-votes;
- Voluntary organisations which are:
 - not enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations;
 - which have not presented their updated accounts to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and are not compliant by the date of application;
 - which do not have a registered address in Malta.

3.3 What costs can be covered?

The yearly grant may cover up to 80% of the total costs up to a maximum of EUR30,000 per organisation (whichever is the lowest), subject to the availability of government funds, depending on the voluntary organisation and the initiative proposed. Arts Council Malta reserves the right to award grants to beneficiaries based on a fixed allocation every year, without exceeding the 80% co-funding threshold or the maximum allocation depending on the project.

The amount to be awarded is at the discretion of the Evaluation Board set up by Arts Council Malta.

Eligible costs will be the following:

- artistic fees;

- contingency, 10% of the total cost;
- health & safety measures;
- hire/purchase of equipment (purchase of equipment will only be considered if deemed necessary to the project);
- indirect costs, not exceeding 5% of the total cost (examples — Servicing: electricity, water, cleaning; telephone / fax / Internet connections; postage and mailing; paper, ink / cartridge, stationery, etc.);
- insurance;
- marketing, PR and communication, not exceeding 10% of project total;
- other fees directly related to project implementation (including, but not limited to: service providers, mentors, digital consultancy services, legal, participation or enrolment, linguistic fees, surtitling, etc.);
- project management fees (including, but not limited to: administration, coordination, development);
- production;
- rental of spaces;
- standard accommodation, excluding long-term accommodation or part of;
- subsistence, catering and hospitality not exceeding 5% of the total expenditure;
- travel (economy class) including but not limited to: public transport, air travel, car/vehicle rental);
- travel VISA.

For more information about presenting your budget, refer to our General Budget Guidelines available on <https://artscouncilmalta.gov.mt/funding-and-grants/general-budget-guidelines/>.

3.4 What costs cannot be covered?

- Budgets exceeding 80% of the project expenditure.
- Contributions in kind exceeding 15% of the total expenditure.
- Costs already covered by public cultural organisations, or another public funding programme/scheme managed or co-managed by Arts Council Malta or other public agency, government department or ministry.
- Costs declared by the beneficiary and already covered by another grant of the Government of Malta.
- Costs which are already covered through usual operational budgets (space which is owned by the applicant or the partner/supporting organisation/individual).
- Debt and debt service charges.
- Doubtful debts.
- Exchange losses.

- Expenditure deemed excessive or reckless.
- Fees for services provided by other public entities, government department or ministry.
- Funding for the creation or upholding of contests, bursaries, prizes or scholarships.
- Interest owed.
- Provisions for losses or debts.
- Recoverable VAT, where applicable.
- Reimbursement of salaries or part of.
- Retroactive costs.
- Return on capital.
- Subsistence, catering and hospitality exceeding 5% of the total expenditure.

3.5 What applications are not eligible?

The following activities are **not** eligible under this programme:

- Activities of an intrinsically self-sustainable nature;
- Activities which are not related to culture, the arts and the creative industries;
- Activities whose objective is fundraising or political propaganda;
- Applications for funding the creation or upholding of contests, bursaries, prizes, or scholarships
- Applications submitted after noon (12:00) of the respective day of deadline;
- Applications submitted by public entities with or without a line vote;
- costs for traditional activities and festivities;
- Events held on a regular basis, including school/annual shows, regular training programmes, and/or repeated events;
- Incomplete applications (refer to application check list in section 5.1);
- Individual modules credited as part of an educational course or research as part of established academic programmes;
- Initiatives eligible under Screen Malta, TV Production and Content Fund, Annual Cultural Activities Scheme, VOPS, Għaqda Każini tal-Banda, National Book Council, Valletta Cultural Agency, Malta Arts Scholarships or any other State-funded programme dedicated to Maltese arts and/or culture
- Projects of an intrinsically self-sustainable nature;
- Projects that would have already started and/or taken place before the result is notified to applicant(s);
- Projects whose duration does not entirely fall within the eligible timeframe.

Any other activity which may be developed outside the scope of the *Investment in Cultural Organisations – Malta – Strand 2* is not eligible for support.

Applicants can submit more than one application under the same call; however, only one of the applications can be funded per session.

4 Evaluation

The Evaluation Board will base its decision upon the following criteria:

4.1 Criterion 1 — The Proposal (40 marks)

The proposal must include a clear outline of the what, the why, and the how of this request for funding. The project's aims and objectives including the proposed strategic benefits for the organisation must be clearly defined. The proposal must be aligned with the objectives of this programme as outlined in Section 1 of these guidelines and regulations.

This section must also include details about all key partners and collaborators of the organisation together with the envisaged strategic outcomes and long-term impact of these collaborations. The application may also refer to any plans for professional development and capacity building that form part of the proposal. Thus, the following questions are to be addressed:

- What are the objectives that inform your proposed programme of activities? How is the proposal relevant to ACM's overall strategic goals? What methods will be adopted to enable the organisation to develop knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to flourish in the cultural and creative sectors? Provide detailed information about the proposed collaborations necessary for the successful implementation of the project. (10 marks)
- What impacts do you foresee on the organisation and its main collaborators? The track records of the organisation and that of the collaborators are required. (5 marks)
- What are the anticipated and desired outcomes of your proposal? How will you determine whether these outcomes are likely to be achieved or not? Refer to the priorities in section 1.1. (5 marks)
- Provide a strategic plan for the years covered by the programme. This should include the vision behind the artistic programme and its specific goals. State how the organisation intends to ensure high levels of excellence and, where relevant, innovation. A detailed programme of activities for year 1 and a broader plan for years 2 and 3 are required (20 marks)

4.2 Criterion 2: Project Management (20 marks)

This project management must include a clear outline of the who, the when, and the where. The funding proposal should present a well thought out plan of action based on background research. It must include a clear timeline highlighting the key milestones of the project. The application needs to identify the potential threats that may hinder the project's successful implementation. In this section, the following guiding questions should be addressed:

- How are you planning to deliver the proposed programme / plan? (e.g. timeframes, workplans, responsibilities, skills and track record of people managing projects, logistics plan) Are there any necessary permits, copyright issues and other legal, ethical and administrative matters to be addressed? (5 marks)
- What is the degree of flexibility in the planning, given the risks and uncertainties? What are the mitigation measures envisaged in view of the identified risks? (e.g. contingency plans, risk assessments, health and safety measures, possible adjustments that may take place) (5 marks)
- What sustainable development practices will be adopted throughout the implementation of the programme? Refer to the priorities in section 1.1. (10 marks)

4.3 Criterion 3: Audience Engagement (20 marks)

This criterion considers the engagement and development of all stakeholders. This may include the organisation's existing staff and members, established clients and audiences as well as other stakeholders and audiences that the organisation may be aspiring to reach. Engagement refers to the role, the nature of involvement in the programme and the experience offered to the stakeholders. This criterion emphasises the level of engagement based on what is being proposed by the applicant/s in line with the following questions:

- Who are your target audiences (whether that is internal and/or external) and how will these audiences be reached? (5 marks)
- What mechanisms and strategies will you adopt to communicate and promote the programme's outcomes with your stakeholders? Why did you opt for these specific mechanisms? (Note: the communications plan also includes internal dissemination which may not be at a public level) (5 marks)
- By making reference to the priorities in section 1.1, elaborate on how the audience engagement practices are fostering the organisation's commitment towards cultural rights (10 marks)

4.4 Criterion 4: Budget (20 marks)

This criterion considers how well-planned and realistic the presented annual budget plan is. It also considers efforts to secure funds from other sources. The following questions will need to be addressed:

- Provide a detailed income-expenditure budget for Year 1 and forecasts for the two consecutive years. (10 marks)
- What are the budgeted costs that are both directly and indirectly linked to the delivery of the proposed programme / plan? (e.g. fixed costs that are ongoing such as artistic fees for specific productions) What is the budgeted annual income for the proposed programme / plan? If no income is envisaged, what is the justification?

- Present a short one-page document with budget assumptions, explanations, notes, and workings. (10 marks)

5 Submitting the application

Follow these steps to apply:

1. Read these guidelines and regulations very carefully.
2. Check whether your proposed idea can be addressed by this programme.
3. Press the [link](#) that will take you to the online application system.
4. If you do not have a profile, create your profile with Arts Council Malta by clicking on 'Register Now' and filling in the details. Applicants are required to register a profile on the ACM's CRM at least two weeks prior to the deadline of the call.
5. From the open calls section, select the online application for the programme you intend to apply.
6. Follow the instructions step by step. Fill in all the required information from the online application including the budget and attach the supporting documentation.
7. Submit the application. You should be receiving an automatic acknowledgement by the system. If you do not receive such a notification, contact us on applyforfunds@artscouncil.mt.

Applicants are required to register a profile on the ACM CRM at least two weeks prior to the deadline of the call.

In case of difficulty, or if you would like to consult us regarding this fund, you can call us on 2334 7230, Monday to Friday, between 09:00 and 16:00, or email us on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt.

It is your responsibility to present a complete application form as explained in these guidelines and regulations. If you do not present all the necessary information and documentation, your application will not be processed and evaluated.

Prior to the application deadline, Arts Council Malta representatives will not be checking your application forms. It is solely at Arts Council Malta's discretion to request that applicants provide any missing mandatory documentation following the call deadline.

Upon the submission of the application, applicants accept that should the application be awarded funding, the name, the project title, short project description, and the amount awarded can be published by Arts Council Malta.

A decision on funding will be made on the strength of the submitted information, and supporting documents.

Applications handed in after 12.00 (noon) of the respective deadline cannot be accepted.

5.1 Checklist

In order to be complete, applications must be accompanied by:

- a copy of the VAT certificate of registration showing the applicable NACE code Rev. 2.1, where applicable;
- a detailed income-expenditure budget for year 1 and forecasts for the two consecutive years;
- a proposed programme of activities for the period being applied for; this may include any artistic and cultural events, productions, performances, exhibitions, festivals, development initiatives that are relevant to the objectives of the applicant (detailed programme for year 1, and forecast programme for the two consecutive years);
- a proposed detailed budget for year 1 and a forecast budget for years 2 and 3;
- applicant biography/artistic CV to be included in the applicant profile;
- audiovisuals / portfolio showing the applicant's work, as relevant to the proposal (audiovisuals up to 5MB may be uploaded directly in the application form, in the case of larger files these may be provided as a link);
- letters of intent from collaborators;
- quotes to support the income-expenditure budget for year 1;
- strategic plan;
- the track record of the applicants and collaborators — this includes the CV, artistic portfolios, and related documentation;
- a *de minimis* declaration, where applicable (refer to Section 9).

6 Evaluation process

This programme is competitive and will be evaluated by a panel of three relevant experts, according to the established criteria.

As specified above, each criterion is allocated specific marks. In order to be considered for funding, projects have to obtain an average of 60 marks or more.

Nevertheless, the evaluation session and funding decisions depend on the quality of the submitted proposals as well as the availability of the funds. Therefore, obtaining 60 marks or more does not automatically mean that your project proposal has been successful. The Evaluation Board may decide not to allocate the total funds available for a particular call if the proposed projects do not reach the required level in terms of the programme criteria.

Eligible applications will be assessed by an evaluation team selected by the Council on the basis of their professional experience. Arts Council Malta will select evaluators on the basis of

their independent and professional experience. The evaluators will present an assessment on each of the proposed projects, indicating the relevant ratings awarded.

6.1 Shortlisting

The evaluation board will meet during an initial evaluation in which all the eligible applications will be discussed. All applications will be given a score, and those scoring 60 marks and higher will be shortlisted. The shortlisted applications will attend an online pitching session. The pitching session is compulsory; a maximum of three participants may attend the pitching session.

It is solely at the evaluators' discretion to invite any applicant scoring less than 60 marks to attend a pitching session.

All applications, including those that are not shortlisted, will receive the official result notification together with a copy of the feedback form on the result date as indicated in page 3 of this document.

6.2 Pitching

The aim of the online pitching session is to create an opportunity for applicants to make a case for their projects to the evaluators. The project applications would already have been reviewed by the evaluators and the fund manager before the pitching session.

During the online session, the applicant has the opportunity to present comments, latest insights, and additions to the already submitted project description.

The pitch can be presented in a variety of formats, including, but not limited to, visual aids, power point presentations, audio, etc. that should not be longer than ten (10) minutes. During the pitch, applicants are expected to explain the project's artistic vision and communicate how the project will be implemented. This ten-minute pitch will be followed by a Q&A session with the panel of evaluators.

6.3 Communication of results

On the day indicated on page 3, you will receive your result notification from Arts Council Malta. Together with the covering letter, we will also attach a copy of the feedback form, indicating the reasons and marks leading to the evaluation board's decision, according to the programme criteria.

The order of classification of the projects, according to the marks allocated by the evaluators, will be published online. Only the names and summaries of the successful projects will be

published; in the case of projects which have not been awarded any funds, only their reference number will be published.

If you have any difficulties concerning your results, you should email us on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt within five (5) days of receiving your funding decision.

No information on the evaluation process will be released before the official result notification.

Any form of soliciting will automatically disqualify an application.

All information received by the Funding Unit, fund manager, and evaluators will be considered confidential, both during and after the evaluation process. Provisions on data protection and confidentiality for successful projects will be included in the grant agreement.

7 Project implementation and monitoring

A contract specifying the conditions of the programme will be signed. The pre-financing payment consisting of 100% of the amount allocated by the evaluation board for the year 2026 will be processed after the signing of the contract. The amount allocated for the year 2027 will be processed upon the submission and approval of the progress report for the year 2026, including certified accounts and VAT invoices and the year 2027 Action Plan. 70% of the amount awarded for the year 2028 will be processed upon the submission and approval of the progress report for the year 2027 including certified accounts and VAT invoices and the year 2028 Action Plan. The remaining 30% will be disbursed after the submission and approval of the final report for the year 2028 including certified accounts and VAT invoices.

The beneficiaries must use the Arts Council's logo on all related material and specify that the project was supported by the grant as follows: **Supported by Arts Council Malta**, in all marketing, PR, and printed material. The grant received must be used solely for the purpose for which it was awarded, in line with the submitted proposal and the contract.

Beneficiaries must notify Arts Council Malta immediately if changes affecting the nature of the project take place during implementation. Changes cannot be implemented unless approval is received. Arts Council Malta reserves the right to revise or withhold the final payment if the change in the project is not considered to be in line with the initial proposal, or if the Council is not informed of the changes within a reasonable time.

Beneficiaries must make themselves available for visits and communication with Arts Council Malta representatives for monitoring purposes both during the implementation of the project as well as after its completion.

Arts Council Malta also reserves the right to revise the final payment if the total expenditure is less than that estimated in the application form.

7.1 Report

At the end of each year, you will be required to submit a detailed report highlighting the work carried out and the project achievements, by not later than eight (8) weeks after your annual project has concluded. Arts Council Malta will provide a template for your reports. If relevant, together with this report, beneficiaries must submit copies of any relevant marketing, publicity or information material developed for the funded project. Beneficiaries will also be requested to submit evidence of the research process, which includes visual documentation (a minimum of 5 high-resolution images should be submitted), blogs, and other documentation.

Beneficiaries must provide a final detailed and certified budget breakdown. The budget must be prepared in compliance with applicable financial standards and aligned with these guidelines and regulations, and they must be certified by a warranted auditor.

The Council retains the right to request the beneficiary to submit the VAT invoices and/or fiscal receipts to support the detailed certified budget.

At the end of year 1 and year 2, you will be required to submit an action plan and a detailed budget breakdown for the following year's programme.

Arts Council Malta retains the right to make use of submitted project material.

Arts Council Malta retains the right to recover funds in case these are not being used and/or are misused and/or are not used according to the submitted budget.

8 Complaints procedure

Filing a complaint will not affect your chances of receiving support from Arts Council Malta in the future. All complaints will be treated with confidentiality.

8.1 Grounds for complaints

Applicants can make a complaint regarding procedural anomalies and irregularities during the submission and evaluation process in terms of the procedures stipulated in these guidelines and regulations. Complaints cannot be made concerning:

- The Arts Council's or the government's policies and procedures.

- The merits of the application in terms of the criteria stipulated in these guidelines and regulations. Only applicants may file complaints concerning their project.

8.2 Filing a complaint

Complaints must be made in writing and must be as clear as possible. The complaint must state the grounds and the reasons for the complaint, providing a detailed explanation and justification supported by relevant documentation or testimonials as to why the complainant deems that irregularities were committed in the procedure/s stipulated in these guidelines and regulations or in standard good governance rules and regulations governing the public sector. The decision at the end of the complaint process will be final. Complaints need to be made to the Head of Funding, Arts Council Malta within five (5) working days of receipt of your funding decision. You will normally receive a reply to your complaint within ten (10) working days.

In case you are not satisfied with the reply, Arts Council Malta will convene a board that will discuss your complaint further. If you approach our complaints procedure, then you are accepting that we can use information about your project to address the complaint. The decision of the board is final.

9 Applicability of State Aid Rules

9.1 Voluntary organisations that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU

Voluntary organisations that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU may also apply for the programme. The rules outlined in section 9.2 below are not applicable in such case.

9.2 State aid rules applicable to voluntary organisations that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU

The State Aid scheme will be implemented in line with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid.

This regulation applies to aid granted to undertakings in all sectors, with the exception of:

1. aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of fishery and aquaculture products;
2. aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of price or quantity of products purchased or put on the market;
3. aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products;
4. aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of agricultural products, in one of the following cases:
 - a. where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertakings concerned;
 - b. where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
5. aid granted to export-related activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, the establishment and operation of a distribution network or other current expenditure linked to the export activity;
6. aid contingent upon the use of domestic goods and services over imported goods and services.

The total amount of *de minimis* aid granted to a single undertaking shall not exceed the amount of €300,000 over any period of three years. This period is assessed on a rolling basis.

This maximum threshold would include all state aid granted under this aid scheme and any other State Aid measure implemented in line with the *de minimis* rule including that received from any entity other than Arts Council Malta. Any *de minimis* aid received in excess of the established threshold will have to be recovered, with interest, from the undertaking receiving the aid.

The rules on cumulation of aid as outlined in Article 5 of the *de minimis* regulation will be respected.

Applicants are to submit a *de minimis* declaration indicating any other *de minimis* aid received or applied for during the previous three years. This will ensure that the total amount of *de minimis* aid granted to a single undertaking under the *de minimis* rule will not exceed the *de minimis* threshold over the applicable three-year period.

Should a successful applicant not be eligible to receive *de minimis* aid, the said applicant will be deemed ineligible, and the next ranked applicant will be awarded.

In line with the *de minimis* regulation, records regarding *de minimis* aid shall be maintained for 10 years from the date on which the aid under the programme is granted.

Publication in Central Register

In line with Article 6(1) of the *de minimis* regulation, as of 1 January 2026, information on *de minimis* aid granted under this programme shall be made publicly available in a central register.

The following information shall be made public:

- the identification of the beneficiary,
- the aid amount,
- the granting date,
- the aid instrument, and
- the sector involved on the basis of the statistical classification of economic activities in the Union ('NACE classification').

Need advice?

ACM offers pre-submission consultation services to help secure support for your project. We are there every step of the way. We can help you determine whether the core concept and profile of your project are in line with the targeted support mechanism and provide feedback on the way you plan to present your project. Plan ahead and get in touch with us at least four weeks before the submission deadline to make the best of our services.

You are welcome to call us on 2334 7230, on weekdays, between 09:00 and 16:00, or to send us an email on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt.

Guidelines updated on 06th November 2025