

## **Call for Submissions: Maltese Short Film Showcase - Clermont-Ferrand**

### **Short Film Market 2027 Guidelines**

#### **Overview**

The Domestic Film Unit within Arts Council Malta is issuing an open call for submissions for a curated Maltese Short Film Showcase to be presented at the Short Film Market in Clermont-Ferrand, taking place in Clermont-Ferrand, France, from 1 to 4 February 2027, alongside the 49th Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival.

The Short Film Market in Clermont-Ferrand is the leading industry event for short films. Combining physical market screenings and digital industry platforms, it serves as the global marketplace for short film sales, acquisitions, co-production, and licensing across European and international territories. Its industry programme fosters creative collaboration, international circulation, and business development for short form cinema.

This initiative by Arts Council Malta aims to increase the global visibility of contemporary Maltese short filmmaking, promote local creative talent, and drive international market circulation. The selected short films will form a dedicated market screening programme presented to industry delegates, including international sales agents, buyers, television broadcasters, and festival programmers.

#### **Definitions**

- Applicant:

An Independent Audiovisual Entity, as defined in these guidelines, represented by a designated Producer. Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or involved in the management of this delegation call.

The applicant's NACE code must be one of the following at the time of application:

- o J59.11 Motion picture, video, and TV programme production activities
- o J59.12 Motion picture, video, and TV programme post-production activities

- Application:

A submission sent via the below specified email, inclusive of all the mandatory documentation detailed in the "How to Apply" section of these guidelines, made by an eligible applicant. Applications with missing documentation are considered as ineligible and will not be processed.

- Digital Cinema Package (DCP):

An unencrypted, cinema-compliant digital delivery file, meeting international technical projection standards, required for ingestion and market screening at the Short Film Market in Clermont-Ferrand.

- Eligibility:

Applications will first be screened in terms of administrative and eligibility criteria by Arts Council Malta. Proposals which are not considered eligible in terms of the set criteria will not be processed further and will not undergo evaluation.

- Evaluation:

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

- Evaluator:

Arts Council Malta appoints an independent evaluator for this call. The evaluator is selected on the basis of their professional experience in the film industry.

- Independent Audiovisual Entity:

A juridical person duly registered in Malta as a limited liability company, a partnership en Commandite, or that establishes a branch or place of business in Malta under Part XI Chapter 1 of the Companies Act (CAP 386 of the Laws of Malta), and whose principal activity consists in developing and producing audiovisual works and is a tax resident in Malta. It is considered independent if its origins, stocks, or shares are independent of the state, public and/or parastatal entities, public or private broadcasting organisations, streaming platforms, or telecom companies.

- Mandatory documentation:

Any document(s) needed to support your proposal and aid the evaluation of your project.

- Producer:

The individual representing the Independent Audiovisual Entity who holds primary creative, financial, and managerial responsibility for the development, production, and delivery of the submitted audiovisual project.

- Short Film:

For the purposes of this call, an original, fully completed short-form audiovisual work (fiction, animation, creative documentary, or experimental) with a maximum duration of thirty (30) minutes, completed between 2024 and 2026. For the avoidance of doubt, feature-length films, TV series episodes, commercials, corporate videos, music videos, and non-narrative video installations are strictly excluded under this call.

### **Timeframes and Key Dates**

Applications must be submitted in full by **Friday 13 November 2026 at 5:00pm CET**. Late submissions will not be processed under any circumstances.

Following the assessment phase, the selected applicants will be officially notified of the results by **Thursday 26 November 2026**.

Selected applicants will be required to sign an acceptance document within three (3) working days of receipt. This document formally confirms participation and grants Arts Council Malta the non-exclusive clearance and rights authorisation required to screen the short film at the Short Film Market in Clermont-Ferrand 2027, as well as the right to reproduce promotional stills, clips, credits, and loglines across market publications, publicity campaigns, and the official market booklet.

Selected applicants must submit all mandatory high-resolution promotional materials and credits for the official market booklet, and deliver a fully compliant, unencrypted Digital Cinema Package (DCP) to Arts Council Malta by **Friday 4 December 2026 at 12:00pm CET**.

Failure to meet these deadlines will result in immediate forfeiture of the selection slot, which will be reallocated to the next highest-scoring applicant on the reserve list.

## **Eligibility**

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

## **Who can apply?**

To be eligible, applicants must qualify as an Independent Audiovisual Entity as defined in these guidelines.

Furthermore, applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- At least one directorship or the majority shareholding of the juridical entity must be ultimately held by Maltese citizens or persons who hold a permanent residence status in Malta.
- Be registered with the applicable regulating body at the time of submission of their applications.
- Be in possession of a valid VAT registration certificate.
- Be the originator or primary copyright holder of the submitted short film, or hold full exclusive rights and clearances (including music, archival footage, and performance rights) required to submit the film and grant screening and promotional rights for international market platforms.

To ensure broad representation across the Maltese screen sector, a maximum of one (1) short film application may be selected per Independent Audiovisual Entity under this call.

## **Film Eligibility Criteria**

Submitted short films must meet all the following technical, creative, and premiere requirements:

- The project must be an original, completed short film (fiction, animation, creative documentary, or experimental) with a maximum duration of thirty (30) minutes, including credits.
- The short film must have been completed between 2024-2026.

Short films that have not yet undergone an international festival premiere, commercial theatrical release, or broadcast/VOD distribution outside Malta (*unreleased status*) will be given preference. This is aimed at attracting international market buyers and festival programmers who prioritise premiere titles.

Despite this, short films that have already achieved an international festival premiere remain eligible for submission and may be considered for inclusion in the showcase, at the discretion of the evaluator.

The applicant must possess, or be in a position to deliver, an unencrypted, cinema-compliant Digital Cinema Package (DCP) and high-resolution promotional materials by **Friday 4 December 2026 at 12:00pm CET**.

### **Scope of Support and Market Exposure**

Selected short films will be included in the official Maltese Short Film Showcase at the Short Film Market in Clermont-Ferrand 2027. Under this call, the Domestic Film Unit within Arts Council Malta will provide selected applicants with non-financial support across the following areas:

- Full coverage of venue fees for the dedicated Maltese market screening in Clermont-Ferrand, alongside liaison with official festival operators regarding file ingestion, technical testing, and projection setup for compliant Digital Cinema Packages (DCPs).
- Editorial design, publication, and distribution of the official showcase booklet, featuring high-resolution production stills, loglines, credits, festival track record, and direct contact details for each selected film.
- Industry profile hosting on the Shortfilmwire digital platform and Arts Council Malta online portals, accompanied by targeted press and social media promotional campaigns directed at international buyers, sales agents, and festival programmers.

**Important Notice:** Support under this call is strictly non-financial and limited to the above mentioned support. This call does not offer direct cash grants, market accreditations, travel, accommodation, or daily subsistence allowances for the selected applicants.

## How to Apply

Applications must be submitted in full via email to [filmunit.acm@artscouncil.mt](mailto:filmunit.acm@artscouncil.mt) with the subject line **Maltese Short Film Showcase Clermont-Ferrand 2027 Application**, by the official deadline of **Friday 13 November 2026 at 17:00 CET**. Application must be complete to be considered.

Applications that do not contain all the required documentation and mandatory information by this deadline will be deemed incomplete, will not be processed further, and will not undergo evaluation.

To apply, the applicant representing the Independent Audiovisual Entity must submit a complete dossier containing the following mandatory documentation:

1. **Film Dossier (PDF):** A single PDF document containing:
  - Official film title (original and English), genre, exact running time (maximum 30 minutes including credits), and date of completion (2024-2026);
  - Logline (maximum 60 words) and synopsis in English, written for booklet publication;
  - Complete cast and crew credit list;
  - Public contact email address and telephone number to be published in the official market booklet for industry delegates;
  - Festival screening history, awards list to date, or an explicit statement confirming unreleased status;
  - A secure, password-protected online link of the full short-film (Vimeo or YouTube) with English subtitles, valid until at least 20 February 2027;
  - One (1) high-resolution, publication-ready production still (landscape, 16:9 orientation, minimum 300 DPI, JPEG or PNG format);
  - A comprehensive curriculum vitae and professional biography of the individual producer and director, detailing past credits and industry track record;
  - High-resolution headshots of the Director and Producer.
2. **Declaration of Eligibility and Rights Clearance:** A completed and signed copy of the official declaration form [here](#), whereby the applicant formally confirms:
  - Ownership or exclusive licensing of all intellectual property, music, archival, and performance rights necessary for international exhibition;

- Granting Arts Council Malta non-exclusive authorisation to screen the short film at the Short Film Market in Clermont-Ferrand 2027 and publish promotional stills, credits, loglines, and excerpts in trade publications and the official market booklet;
- Full technical readiness and guarantee to deliver a compliant, unencrypted Digital Cinema Package (DCP) to Arts Council Malta by **Friday 4 December 2026 at 12:00pm CET**.

Arts Council Malta will verify the applicant's eligibility, NACE code classification, and tax residency using internal records and public registries. Arts Council Malta reserves the right to request additional supporting documentation (such as an MBR Company Registration Certificate, a most recent Good Standing Certificate [issued in 2026], or NACE classification extract) during the administrative screening phase, if required. Such additional documentation must be readily available.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Eligible applications will be evaluated by an independent external evaluator appointed by Arts Council Malta, who is an established international film expert.

Applicants acknowledge that the assessment of artistic merit and market relevance involves qualitative professional evaluation. The scoring assigned by the appointed evaluator represents their expert qualitative judgment and artistic discretion within the framework below.

The evaluator will assess all eligible proposals out of 100 total marks based on the following criteria:

#### **Criterion 1: Cinematic Quality and Artistic Merit (60 Marks)**

This criterion considers the artistic strength, original vision, and overall cinematic execution of the completed short film.

- **Narrative and Artistic Vision (30 marks):** The originality, narrative coherence, thematic strength, and clarity of the directorial voice;

- **Technical and Aesthetic Execution (30 marks):** The overall quality of cinematic craftsmanship, including visual style, cinematography, editing, sound design, score, production design, and performances.

## **Criterion 2: International Market Potential and Positioning (40 Marks)**

This criterion considers the film's suitability for international market programmers, buyers, distributors, and festival audiences at Clermont-Ferrand.

- **International Market Appeal (25 marks):** The film's potential to engage international industry delegates and programmers, taking into account universal thematic appeal, genre execution, and overall competitiveness for international market exposure;
- **Premiere Status (15 marks):** Objective benchmark scoring based on international release history:
  - **15 marks:** Unreleased / World Premiere available;
  - **10 marks:** National premiere completed, but no international market or festival release to date;
  - **5 marks:** Film has already completed an international festival, theatrical, or broadcast/VOD release.

## **Evaluation Process**

This is a competitive call which will be evaluated by the sectoral expert according to established criteria.

To ensure a fair and competitive selection process, the evaluation will assess all applications contextually, taking into account the short film's artistic vision, genre, scale, and creative approach. Criteria relating to international market potential and track record will be evaluated proportionately, ensuring that emerging directorial voices and established filmmakers are assessed equitably relative to their project's ambition.

As specified above, each criterion is allocated a specific number of marks. To be considered for selection, an application must score a minimum of 60 marks.

Eligible applications scoring 60 marks or higher will be ranked in descending order. The highest-scoring short films will be selected for inclusion in the showcase up to the maximum



total runtime capacity of 90 minutes, allocated for the dedicated Maltese market screening in Clermont-Ferrand.

Remaining qualifying applicants will be placed on a reserve list.