# Footballer of the Year Trophy

## Project Brief and Creative Guidelines for Artists

**MALTA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

In collaboration with Arts Council Malta

ARTS COUNCIL MALTA

MALTA FA 1900

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## 1. Project Background

The Malta Football Association (Malta FA), in collaboration with Arts Council Malta (ACM), is commissioning the design and production of a new, original trophy for the Footballer of the Year Award.

The aim is to create a distinctive and iconic trophy that celebrates excellence in Maltese football and symbolises individual achievement, sporting merit and the continued development of football in Malta. Through this open call, the Malta FA in collaboration with ACM seek an original artistic concept that combines creativity, craftsmanship, functionality and a strong sense of Maltese football identity.

The selected design will become an enduring part of Maltese football history. The trophy will be presented to the country's outstanding footballers, feature prominently in photographs and media coverage of the award ceremony and be preserved as part of the Malta FA Museum collection.

Applicants must submit their proposals by not later than **19/01/2027 at 12:00 noon**. Late applications will not be accepted.

The selected artist will be responsible to produce the approved trophies in accordance with the requirements outlined in these guidelines. The final trophies must be completed and delivered by **14/05/2027**. Any applicable penalties for late delivery will be established in the commission agreement.

## 2. Artistic Vision

The Footballer of the Year Trophy represents the highest individual recognition in Maltese football. It is more than an award presented at the end of a season; it is a symbol of triumph, honour and the extraordinary dedication and commitment required to reach the highest level of achievement in the sport.

The trophy should embody majesty, prestige and glorious victory. Its design should convey a sense of distinction and significance, reflecting the exceptional achievement of the footballers who receive it. It should command respect, inspire admiration and communicate the importance of the honour it represents. Artists are invited to interpret these qualities through an original and distinctive artistic expression, creating a trophy that is both visually striking and meaningful.

The design should also establish a strong connection with Maltese football. Artists are encouraged to draw inspiration from the heritage of Maltese football and the cultural identity of the Maltese islands. This may include, but is not limited to, the history and evolution of football in Malta, the national colours of red and white, local craftsmanship traditions, materials, architectural forms, or other elements that reflect the country’s identity. Such references should be incorporated through a contemporary and thoughtful artistic interpretation rather than relying on literal or purely decorative representations.

The main objective is to create a trophy that is recognisably related to Maltese football, timeless in its design and worthy of becoming an iconic symbol of excellence in Maltese football.

## 3. Scope of the Commission and Intended Use

The commission covers the design and production of two main Footballer of the Year Trophies, based on the same approved design, together with two replicas to be manufactured annually over a ten-year period, covering the 2026/27 to 2035/36 seasons.

- **Two main trophies:** Two identical main trophies must be produced
  - *Footballer of the Year (Men)*
  - *Footballer of the Year (Women)*.

  Both trophies must have identical design, materials, dimensions and finishes. The only difference will be the permanent plaque identifying the respective award category.

  The two main trophies will be presented to the respective winners during the annual awards ceremony and subsequently returned to the Malta FA for safekeeping and display at the Malta FA Museum. These trophies will be retained by the Malta FA and reused annually throughout the ten-year period.
- **Two replicas per year:** Two replicas must be manufactured annually, one for each category:
  - *Footballer of the Year (Men)*
  - *Footballer of the Year (Women)*.
- Each replica should be approximately 50% of the height of the corresponding main trophy, while retaining its essential design features and overall visual identity.
- The replicas will be presented to the respective award winners, allowing each recipient to retain their trophy as a personal keepsake. Each replica must include a plaque identifying the relevant award category and season.
- **Total production requirement.** Over the ten-year period the commission will therefore comprise:
  - *Two main trophies, to be reused annually;*
  - *Twenty replicas, comprising two replicas per year.*

## 4. Design Requirements

The proposed design must:

- Convey majesty, prestige and glorious victory, reflecting the importance of the Footballer of the Year award.
- Symbolise excellence, achievement, dedication, commitment and fair play in football.
- Reflect the identity, heritage and values of Maltese football.

- Incorporate a circular-shaped element as a mandatory feature of the design, as further described in Section 4.2(b).
- Present a distinctive and timeless appearance that will remain relevant and visually appealing throughout the ten-year period and beyond.
- Have a strong visual presence and be suitable for photographs, video and stage presentation.
- Be appropriate for presentation at a prestigious national awards ceremony and for subsequent preservation and display at the Malta FA Museum.
- Allow for the incorporation of the Malta FA logo and the relevant award identification.
- Constitute an original artistic creation and not imitate or closely resemble an existing football trophy or award.
- Artists are encouraged to explore creative interpretations of the mandatory circular element, integrating it into the overall composition in an original and aesthetically compelling manner.

## 4.1. Presence on Camera and on Stage

The trophy will feature prominently in the annual awards ceremony and in the accompanying photographs, broadcast coverage and video, social media content and press publications. The design must therefore take into consideration how it will be perceived and captured through different photographic and visual formats.

The following considerations must inform the proposed design:

- **Scale and presence:** The main trophies must have physical presence to appear substantial and prestigious when held by an adult player It should not appear disproportionately small in relation to the recipient.

  An indicative overall height of 35–40 cm is recommended for the main trophies. Artists may propose alternative dimensions provided these are justified in their submission.

- **Holding and lifting:** The trophy must be comfortable and safe for one person to hold beside their face for portrait photography and to raise it above their head with both hands.

  The weight should allow for safe handling and lifting by one person, with an indicative maximum weight of 8 kg).

The design should incorporate natural and comfortable grip points, ensuring the recipient's hands do not obstruct the plaque, Malta FA logo or the mandatory circular element.

- **Silhouette and visual recognition:** The trophy should have a distinctive and immediately recognisable silhouette remaining visually clear and identifiable when viewed from a distance, on stage, on television and at smaller image sizes on digital platforms.
- **Surface finishes and light:** The materials and finishes should interact effectively with stage and studio lighting, enhancing the trophy's visual presence. A combination of polished surfaces with satin, brushed or textured finishes is encouraged to create visual depth and contrast. Extensive use of large, flat mirror-polished surfaces, should be avoided as these may cause unwanted reflections from camera flashes, stage lighting and surrounding equipment.

- **Background compatibility:** The trophy must remain visually prominent against both dark backgrounds and the Malta FA's red and white branded backdrops.
- **Viewing angles:** The trophy must present a complete and aesthetically resolved appearance from all angles, including the rear and when viewed from above. Attention should be given to its appearance during rotating video shots and when displayed in the museum.
- **Legibility:** The award identification and the Malta FA logo must be clearly visible and legible in photographs. Engraving, relief or colour-filled lettering on a non-reflective surface is recommended.
- **Replicas:** The replicas must retain the essential visual identity and impact of the main trophies despite their smaller dimensions. Fine details that may not reproduce effectively at the reduced scale should be adapted accordingly, subject to Malta FA approval.
- **Visual presentation requirements:** Proposals must include:
    - Photorealistic renders of the proposed trophy against a dark background.
    - Photorealistic renders of the proposed trophy against a red background.
    - At least one visual representation showing the trophy being held by a person, to demonstrate its scale and proportions.

## 4.2. Technical Specifications and Functional Requirements

***a) Trophy Design and Dimensions***

The two main trophies must be produced according to the same approved design, dimensions, materials and finishes, with the respective award category identified through the permanent plaque:

- *Footballer of the Year (Men)* and
- *Footballer of the Year (Women)*.

Each replica should measure approximately 50% of the height of the corresponding main trophy, while maintaining the essential design features and proportions.

The artist must provide the following technical specifications as part of the proposal:

- Main trophy dimensions, (length × breadth × height, in cm): ____
- Height of base (cm): ____
- Height of trophy above the base (cm): ____
- Overall height (cm): ____
- Weight of each main trophy (kg): ____
- Replica dimensions, (length × breadth × height, in cm): ____
- Weight of each replica (kg): ____

***b) Mandatory Design Element***

The design must incorporate a circular-shaped element as an essential and recognisable feature of the trophy.

Artists are free to determine the form, positioning, proportions, materials and artistic interpretation of the circular element, provided that it is meaningfully integrated into the overall design and remains clearly identifiable. The circular element should contribute to the trophy's visual identity and be sufficiently prominent to be recognised in photographs and other visual representations.

The final interpretation and incorporation of this element will be subject to Malta FA approval.

***c) Materials and Finish***

The artist must provide a detailed description of the proposed materials, surface finishes, colours and manufacturing techniques.

All materials must be durable, structurally stable and suitable for repeated handling, transportation and long-term display. They must be appropriate for producing the annual replicas to a consistent standard throughout the ten-year period.

The selected materials and finishes should minimise tarnishing, fingerprint visibility, scratching and other forms of deterioration arising from normal handling and use. Where precious-metal finishes, such as gold or silver plating, are proposed, the artist must specify the type and thickness of the plating or protective coating.

Any fragile components, specialist maintenance requirements or potential risks of deterioration over time must be clearly identified in the proposal.

***d) Stability and Construction***

Each trophy must be sufficiently stable to stand securely on a flat surface without requiring additional support. The base must be designed to minimise the risk of accidental tipping during normal handling and display.

The overall construction must be robust and capable of withstanding repeated handling, transportation, presentation and lifting by the award recipients. all components must be securely and permanently and securely fixed. The design should avoid loose or detachable elemennts that could become displaced, damaged or lost during handling and celebrations.

The artist must identify any specific handling, assembly, installation or storage requirements associated with the proposed design.

## 4.3. Plaques and Identification

The plaques or engraved inscriptions on the main trophies and replicas must follow a consistent visual approach, using materials and finishes that complement the overall artistic design.

The inscriptions and the Malta FA logo may be incorporated through a separate plaque fixed to the trophy or engraved directly onto its surface. Where engraving is proposed, this may be undertaken through hand engraving, machine engraving, laser engraving or etching. The artist must specify the proposed technique and demonstrate that the resulting inscriptions will be permanent, clear and

legible, including in photographic reproductions. For the purposes of these guidelines, references to plaques shall also include inscriptions engraved directly onto the trophy.

***Main Trophies***

Each of the two main trophies must feature a permanent identification bearing one of the following inscriptions:

- *Footballer of the Year (Men)*
- *Footballer of the Year (Women)*

The Malta FA logo must also be incorporated into the design of both trophies. The logo will be provided by the Malta FA in vector format and must be reproduced faithfully, without alteration.

The plaques and the logo will be incorporated during the initial production of the trophies and will remain unchanged throughout the ten-year period.

***Replicas***

Each replica must feature an identification bearing the relevant award category and season, in the following formats:

- *Footballer of the Year 2026/27 (Men)*
- *Footballer of the Year 2026/27 (Women)*

The season must be updated annually to reflect the corresponding award year. The Malta FA logo must also feature on each replica, consistent with its presentation on the corresponding main trophy. The proposed method of incorporating the season-specific identification must be practical, durable and suitable for annual production.

The final wording, layout and method of incorporating the plaques and logo will be subject to Malta FA approval.

## 4.4. Protective Cases and Packaging

Each main trophy must be supplied with a fitted, reusable protective case to ensure its safe transportation, handling and storage between the awards ceremonies and its return to the Malta FA Museum. The protective cases must:

- Provide adequate protection against scratches, impact and accidental damage during transportation and storage.
- Be custom fitted to the shape and dimensions of the respective trophy, ensuring that it is securely held in place and cannot move during transportation.
- Be manufactured using durable materials suitable for repeated use throughout the ten-year period.
- Allow for safe and confident handling including the provision of suitable carrying handles.

Individual presentation boxes must also be provided for each annual replica. As these will be retained by the award recipients, the boxes should be of an appropriate presentation standard, reflecting the prestige and significance of the award.

The artist must specify the proposed materials and construction of the protective cases and presentation boxes. Their costs must be included in the financial proposal.

### 4.5. Durability, Preservation and Maintenance

The two main trophies must be designed for repeated annual use over a minimum period of ten years, while also being suitable for long-term preservation and display at the Malta FA Museum.

The artist must provide clear recommendations and instructions covering:

- Appropriate cleaning methods and materials.
- Routine maintenance and care.
- Safe handling and transportation.
- Suitable storage conditions.
- Any specific conservation requirements or precautions.

The proposed materials and finishes should be selected with consideration for their long-term stability and ability to retain their original appearance and quality.

Any anticipated maintenance, restoration or replacement requirements must be clearly identified in the proposal.

## 5. Production, Approval and Quality Control

Following selection, the artist must submit detailed technical drawings, confirmed dimensions, material specifications, proposed finishes and a final production plan to the Malta FA for approval.

Production of the final trophies may only commence once the Malta FA has formally approved the final design and technical specifications.

The finished trophies and subsequent replicas must correspond to the approved design, materials, dimensions, construction and finish.

The artist will be responsible for ensuring consistency in quality and craftsmanship across all items produced throughout the ten-year period.The artist must also provide a proposed production schedule, clearly indicating the anticipated delivery dates for the two main trophies and the annual pair of replicas.

Any proposed changes to the approved design, materials, dimensions or manufacturing methods must receive prior written approval from the Malta FA.

## 6. Technical documentation

For an application to be complete the applicant must provide the following documentation:

- Final design drawings and visual representations, including photorealistic renders as required in Section 4.1.
- Confirmed dimensions and weight specifications for each main trophy and replica.
- Detailed information on the materials, finishes and manufacturing techniques used.
- Instructions and recommendations for handling, cleaning, maintenance and storage.
- Specifications and instructions for the protective cases and presentation boxes.
- A production schedule, including the delivery dates for the initial trophies and subsequent annual replicas.
- An itemised financial proposal, showing separately the cost of the two main trophies, the protective cases, and the annual pair of replicas including their respective presentation boxes.

## 7. Financial considerations

The selected artist will be awarded the amount of €10,000 which will be payable as follows:

- 50% upon the signing of the agreement between the artist and the Malta FA.
- 50% upon the Malta FA's approval of the submitted technical documentation.

The manufacturing cost of each main trophy must not exceed **€15,000, excluding VAT**. This financial cap applies individually to each of the two main trophies:

- Footballer of the Year (Men) maximum €15,000 excluding VAT.
- Footballer of the Year (Women) maximum €15,000 excluding VAT.

The cost of the protective cases and the annual replicas, including their presentation boxes falls outside this cap and must be quoted separately.

The financial proposal must provide an itemised breakdown of all costs, excluding VAT, clearly identifying:

- The manufacturing cost of each main trophy.
- The cost of each protective case.
- The manufacturing cost of the annual pair of replicas.
- The cost of the presentation boxes for the annual replicas.

Proposals exceeding the maximum manufacturing cost established for the main trophies will not be considered.

## 8. Ownership of the Design and Intellectual Property

Upon selection, all intellectual property rights in the trophy design, including copyright and design rights relating to the trophy, its drawings, models, renders and any associated artwork shall be assigned to and owned exclusively by, the Malta FA.

No additional fee shall be payable for this assignment beyond the amounts agreed under this commission.

The Malta FA shall have the unrestricted right to reproduce, manufacture, photograph, publish and otherwise use the design and images of the trophy in any medium and for promotional, commercial, archival and museum purposes, without further payment to the artist.

This includes the right to commission the production of the annual replicas through another artist or manufacturer should the selected artist become unable to fulfill this obligation during the ten-year period.

The artist will be credited as the designer of the trophy and may include images of the completed trophy in their professional portfolio, subject to Malta FA approval.

## 9. How to apply?

Follow these steps to apply:

1. Read these Guidelines carefully.
2. Check whether your proposed idea can be addressed by this opportunity.
3. Access the online application system. Sign in using your email address and a verification code or password. If you do not have an account, select 'Sign up' and follow the instructions.
4. Complete your identity verification through 'My Identity'. Under 'My entities', create the entity you will apply on behalf of, or join an existing entity. Your identity must be verified and the entity approved before you can submit an application.
5. Click on 'open calls' and select 'Apply now' for the relevant scheme. Enter an application name, select the entity and application language, then select 'Start application'.
6. Complete all required information, including the budget, and upload the supporting documentation. You can select 'Save draft' to continue later.
7. Review your completed application and select 'Submit'. Check its status under 'My applications' to confirm submission. If you need assistance, use 'Help & Support' in the system or contact applyforfunds@artscouncil.mt.

Applicants are required to register a profile on the ACM's 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 the applicant's responsibility to submit a complete and accurate application, together with all the information and documentation required under these guidelines.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their application is completed in full and that all mandatory documentation is submitted by the application deadline.

Arts Council Malta representatives will not check individual application forms or supporting documentation prior to the application deadline. Applicants are therefore encouraged to carefully review their submissions against the requirements set out in these guidelines before submitting their applications.

To safeguard the principles of fairness, transparency and equal treatment, all applications will be processed in accordance with the published guidelines and regulations and the same applicable rules and procedures.

Following the application deadline, Arts Council Malta may, at its discretion, request clarifications where necessary to better understand information already provided in an application. Any such requests will be made in a consistent and impartial manner throughout the process.

Clarifications may not be used to introduce new information, substantially amend or strengthen the original proposal, or remedy the absence of mandatory documentation. Mandatory documentation must be submitted by the application deadline and cannot be provided retrospectively, including where its absence is identified during the assessment process. Applications that do not satisfy the applicable submission requirements may therefore be deemed ineligible and will not proceed to evaluation.

Upon submission of an application, applicants acknowledge and accept that, should their proposal be selected, the applicant's name, project title, a short description of the proposed project and the amount awarded may be published by Arts Council Malta.

The selection decision will be based on the information and supporting documentation submitted as part of the application.

Applications submitted after 12:00 noon on the respective deadline will not be accepted.

## 10. Evaluation process

This call is competitive and will be evaluated by a panel of relevant experts, according to established criteria. Each criterion is allocated specific marks. In order to be considered, proposals must obtain an average of 60 marks or more.

Nevertheless, the evaluation session and commissioning 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 commission any artists should the proposed projects not reach the required level in terms of the criteria.

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

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Artistic concept, originality and creativity. (30 marks)
- Relevance to the artistic vision and Maltese football identity. (20 marks)
- Quality of design, craftsmanship and aesthetic appeal. (10 marks)
- Technical feasibility, functionality and durability. (10 marks)
- Suitability for presentation, photography and museum display. (10 marks)
- Financial feasibility and value for money. (20 marks)

Results will be communicated to applicants by the 04/03/2027.

Last modified: 18th November 2026