

Micro Grant

Guidelines and Regulations 2024



ISSUED: SEPTEMBER 2024



ALLOCATIONS

SESSION BUDGET	MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER PROJECT
EUR 100,000	EUR 3,000

CO-FUNDING	DISBURSEMENT
The fund may cover up to 100% of total project costs	70% upon signing of grant agreement 30% following approval of final report

TIMEFRAMES

DEADLINE	RESULTS	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
15th October 2024	Within 20 working days from the submission of a complete application	1st January 2025 – 31st December 2025

1. Introduction

The Micro Grant is one of our tools to address and implement Arts Council Malta’s ongoing strategy, with a focus on nurturing creative potential and supporting its development into professional activity.

The grant aims at giving a support structure that encourages new applicants to access public investment; it is therefore addressed towards applicants who have not received funding through ACM’s funding portfolio in the past three years (2022 – 2024). The Micro Grant enables individual artists and creative practitioners to develop artistic work that will help the applicant to advance their practice.

The Micro Grant is a one-time grant designed to provide support for capacity-building items like supporting services, equipment, materials, and space that are directly linked to a project, activity or event that will take place during the eligible timeframe of this call.

2. Definitions

Access Support

- Access Support provides specific support that allows activities and projects to adopt the highest standards of good practice, combining equity with quality. Information and the guidelines and regulations for Access Support is available on <https://artscouncilmalta.gov.mt/pages/funds-opportunities/scheme-2024/access-support/>.

In the case that this proposal includes expenses that are eligible through Access Support the application submitted through the *Micro Grant* must include a justification for the Access Support request and the relevant quotation in the section provided.

Activities falling within the cultural and creative sector:

1. Arts (literature, visual arts, music, performing arts, interdisciplinary)
2. Creative Business Services (design, architecture, cultural tourism, and cultural services)
3. Heritage (crafts, traditional festivals and celebrations, cultural sites, antiques)
4. Media (publishing and printed material, audiovisuals, including film and video production, film servicing, television, video games, radio, online media).

Applicant

- An applicant may be an individual artist or a creative practitioner who has not benefitted from ACM funding Schemes in the past three years (2022-2024) (refer to section 3.1). Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or be involved in the management of the Micro Grant.

Application

- An application is a submission, inclusive of all mandatory documents and any annexes to the application form made by an eligible applicant (refer to section 5.1).

Beneficiary

- The beneficiary is the recipient of the grant. The beneficiary is responsible for the implementation of the proposal supported by the Scheme. 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.

Creative practitioner

- Individuals active in a creative practice 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 fund administrators and managers. Applications are screened to determine eligibility in terms of Section 3 of these guidelines. Proposals which are not considered eligible 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 evaluators.

Final artistic product

- A project, activity or event falling within the cultural and creative sector through which the beneficiary will develop artistic work to advance their practice.

Individual

- Individuals applying for a grant must be Maltese citizens; or be in possession of a Malta residence permit; or of a Maltese citizenship certificate; or of a Maltese passport.

Management and administration:

- Arts Council Malta is responsible for the implementation and management of this scheme. All official correspondence, including the online submission of applications or updates to awarded proposals, must be sent to the address indicated in these guidelines.

Mandatory documentation:

- Any document(s) needed to support your proposal and aiding the evaluation of your proposal (eg. track record, portfolio, artistic CV, official correspondence confirming rental of space, permits or other). Refer to section 5.1 for a detailed list.

Maximum funding:

- There is a ceiling amount of €3,000 per project to be allocated. Amounts awarded will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the proposal.

Public Cultural Organisations

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

Short-term rental of spaces

- The rental of a non-residential space that is directly related to the implementation of the proposed artistic work and that does not exceed a maximum of 90 days.

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) through one or more other enterprises shall also be considered to be 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 the 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. Where 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.

3. Eligibility

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

Maximum eligible timeframe to implement the project: 12 months.

3.1 Who can apply?

The Micro Grant is open to creative practitioners and/or individual artists who have not benefitted from ACM funding Schemes in the past three years (2022 – 2024). Applicants must be Maltese citizens or be in possession of a Malta residence permit, a Maltese citizenship certificate or a Maltese passport.

The Grant is open to applicants that are deemed as undertakings and that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU. Assistance will be awarded in line with the *de minimis* Regulation. Kindly refer to Section 9 of these guidelines for additional information.

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
- Applicants who do not qualify under the definition of applicant for this specific scheme.
- Applicants who benefitted from ACM funding Schemes in the past three years.
- Activities receiving local public funds through established Government line-votes.
- 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.

3.3 What costs can be covered¹

This grant may cover up to 100% of the following costs (up to a maximum of €3,000 per project, whichever is the lowest).

The eligible expenses need to lead to a final artistic product, eligible expenses may be:

- Fees for supporting services – such as script writer, digital artist, accompanying musician, recording of audio and audio-visual media, etc.
- Expenses related to digitisation and/or printing of artistic catalogue, or artwork
- Purchase of materials
- Short-term rental of spaces
- Rental or purchase of equipment

For more information about presenting your budget, refer to our General Budget Guidelines available on <https://artscouncilmalta.gov.mt/pages/funds-opportunities/schemes-2024/general-budget-guidelines/>

3.4 What costs cannot be covered?

- Applicant's own artistic fees;

¹ All costs will be considered only if these resources are not already covered/cannot be covered by the applicants or supporting/partner organisations.

- 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 which are already covered through usual operational budgets (space which is owned or already rented by the applicant or the partner/supporting organisation/individual);
- Costs which do not lead to a final artistic product;
- Fees for services provided by public cultural organisations or other public agency, government department or ministry;
- Funding for the creation or upholding of contests, competitions, bursaries, prizes or scholarships;
- Reimbursement of salaries or part of;
- Retroactive costs;
- Subsistence, catering, and hospitality.

3.5 What applications are not eligible?

- Activities that are not related to culture, arts and the creative industries;
- Activities whose objective is fundraising or political propaganda;
- Applications for funding the creation or upholding of contests, competitions, 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;
- Applications submitted by individual artists and/or creative practitioners who have benefitted from ACM's funding portfolio in the past;
- Events held on a regular basis, including annual projects, annual festivals, school/annual shows, regular training programmes;
- Incomplete applications. Refer to Section 5.1 – Checklist;
- Individual modules credited as part of an education 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 and/or culture;
- 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;
- Training programmes required to renew professional licenses or accreditations.

Any other activity which may be developed outside the scope of the *Micro Grant* is not eligible for support.

Applicants may benefit from only one application per session.

4. Evaluation

The evaluation will be based upon the following criteria:

- Does the proposed project contribute to the advancement of applicant's practice?
(Yes or No)
- Does the applicant demonstrate to have the ability to carry out the proposed artistic work?
(Yes or No)

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 scheme.
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' and filling in the details.
5. From the open calls section, select the online application for the scheme you intend to apply. Make sure that you are choosing the application for the correct Category. Refer to Section 3.1.
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'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 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 the Council'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, and the amount awarded can be published by the Council.

A decision on funding will be made on the strength of the submitted information, including documentation in support of the proposal.

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 applicant's VAT certificate of registration;
- Applicant biography/artistic CV to be included in the applicant profile;
- Quotations for expenses requested through the proposal.

If applicable, applicants may include

- Media showing the artistic ability of the applicant;
- Samples of work.

6. Evaluation process

This scheme is managed on a first-come-first-served basis and is non-competitive. It will be evaluated according to established criteria.

In order to be considered for funding, applicants are to submit a complete proposal that satisfies the parameters of the Micro Grant and that obtains two 'yes' answers during the evaluation process. Arts Council Malta reserves the right to refuse any proposal that is deemed not to be congruent with the principles and eligibility criteria outlined in this document. Arts Council Malta reserves the right to consider applications that would have obtained only one 'yes' during the evaluation process. This may be done only if there are funds available following the deadline of the call that is indicated on page 2 above.

The evaluation and funding decision depends on the quality of the submitted proposal and on the availability of the funds.

6.1 Communication of results

On the day indicated on page 2, you will receive your result notification from Arts Council Malta.

The names of the successful proposals will be published; in the case of proposals 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 fund administrators, managers, 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

Under no circumstances will the Council be in a position to increase the grant awarded.

A contract specifying the conditions of the fund will be signed between Arts Council Malta and the beneficiary. The grant may only be awarded upon completion of the above process within the established timeframe.

Seventy per cent of the total amount allocated by the Arts Council Malta will be processed after the signing of the contract. The remaining 30% will be disbursed after the submission of the final report by the beneficiary, following approval by the Council.

The beneficiaries must use the Council's official 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 the Council immediately if changes affecting the nature of the project take place during implementation. Changes cannot be implemented unless approval is received. The Council 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 the Council's representatives for monitoring purposes both during the implementation of the project as well as after its completion.

The Council 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 your project, you will be required to submit a detailed report highlighting the work carried out and the project achievements, by not later than six (6) weeks after your project is concluded. Arts Council Malta will provide a template for your report. 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, blogs and other documentation.

You will also be required to present a final updated budget together with all supporting documents.

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

The Council 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 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 Director of Funding and Strategy, Arts Council Malta on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt 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, the Council 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. State Aid rules applicable for undertakings that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU

The 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 and/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 scheme 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 scheme 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?

Arts Council Malta 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 02nd August 2024