

# Newspapers Support Scheme

**Guidelines and Regulations 2024**



ISSUED: SEPTEMBER 2024

## **ALLOCATIONS**

<b>SESSION BUDGET</b>	<b>MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER PROJECT</b>
Strand 1 – EUR 50,000 Strand 2 – EUR 125,000	Strand 1 – EUR 12,000 Strand 2 – EUR 20,000

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

## **TIMEFRAMES**

<b>DEADLINE</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME</b>
12th November 2024	19th December 2024	01st January 2025 – 31st December 2025

# 1. Introduction

The aim of the Newspapers Support Scheme is to support the quality assurance of content related to arts, culture, and heritage in print newspapers.

Fully cognisant of the sector's current situation with limited financial and human resources, the scheme seeks to support and facilitate ways and means how to address the present challenges.

The proposed scheme is divided in two strands:

Strand 1 aims at supporting linguistic services for print newspapers in the Maltese language. Newspapers published in Maltese will benefit from financial support towards linguistic development including orthography and improvement of journalistic expression in terms of style, clarity, syntax, and semantics.

Elements like conciseness, political correctness, clear articulation, and analytical thinking may be addressed professionally and in line with international standards.

Strand 2 aims at supporting expenditure for the creation of regular arts, culture, and heritage content designed to disseminate knowledge to readers about cultural aspects via features, articles and pictorial material in view of promoting events and projects to attract new audiences.

Print-based media in Malta is encouraged to feature recognition towards the importance of arts, culture, and heritage as seminal contributors to citizens' wellbeing in contemporary society.

The scheme supports the below activities:

Strand 1:

- Attendance to proofreading courses in the Maltese language;
- Attendance to refreshers instruction courses in the use of the Maltese language and its constant evolvement;
- Instruction in idiom and stylistic qualities for journalistic writing in the Maltese language for print media;
- Outsourcing of linguistic services such as subber and proofreading services.

Strand 2:

- Attendance to short courses in Maltese and/or English language studies, journalism, and creative writing for the print media;
- Publication of advertorial material promoting arts, culture, and heritage;
- Remuneration for editors and/or contributors of pages and supplements dedicated to arts, culture, and heritage content that feature on a regular basis;
- Writing of reviews and critiques of activities related to arts, culture, and heritage such as exhibitions, performances, tours, and television productions.

All beneficiaries of Strand 2 must include a minimum of 25 double-page spreads in each print newspaper, annually, costing €250 covering arts, culture, and heritage content.

Applicants are required to consider the [Right to Culture – Resource Pack](#) when developing their proposal in relation to how they engage with communities and the considerations of everyone's cultural rights in

their work. The resource pack is aimed at increasing awareness regarding inclusivity and supporting the implementation of cultural rights in our day-to-day practice.

Applicants are also required to consider the [Charter for the Status of the Artist](#) when proposing their operational and programming activities to ensure acceptable and decent working conditions for artists and creative practitioners which embraces artistic freedom, accessibility, formal/informal/non-formal skill recognition, decent socio-economic conditions, non-discrimination and equity, ethical considerations and adherence to intellectual property rights and international labour law. The Charter for the Status of the Artist is meant to provide a dynamic frame of reference for any legislation, policy, or initiative which directly or indirectly impacts artists and cultural and creative sectors, ensuring that any action is aligned with the ultimate long-term vision of elevating the status of artists in Malta in line with their tangible value to society.

## 2. Definitions

### Activities

- The scheme supports activities related to print newspapers which have a section(s) dedicated to the arts and culture.

### Applicant

- An applicant must be the legal representative of a registered company or an enrolled voluntary organisation, which is a print medium listed on the Department of Information page available [here](#).

### Application

- An application is a submission, inclusive of all mandatory documents and any annexes to the application form made by an eligible applicant. An applicant may submit only one application per strand as applicable according to the eligible criteria.

### Beneficiary

- The beneficiary is the recipient of the grant. The beneficiary is legally 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. 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.

### Company

- An entity legally established and registered in Malta. A company must be registered with the Malta Business Registry, in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act (CAP 386 of the Laws of Malta).

### 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. 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 evaluators.

### Evaluation board

- Arts Council Malta appoints an Evaluation Board for the Scheme. The appointed board may be composed of local or foreign professionals in the sector of culture and the arts.

### Management and administration

- Arts Council Malta is responsible for the 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 project (eg. track records, portfolios, artistic CVs, official correspondence confirming rental of space, permits or other documents).

### Maximum funding

- There is a ceiling amount of €12,000 per project to be allocated to Strand 1 projects and €20,000 to be allocated to Strand 2 projects. Amounts awarded will be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the 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 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.

### Voluntary Organisations

- 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 requirements of the Voluntary Organisations Act (CAP 492 of the Laws of Malta) (<http://www.maltacvs.org>). The applicant must be a legally authorised representative of the organisation.

## 3. Eligibility

Proposals will first be screened in terms of technical and artistic 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 grant is open to undertakings and voluntary organisations that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU (for which assistance will be granted in line with the de minimis Regulation), as well as those applicants that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU. (Kindly refer to Section 9 of these guidelines for additional information). Applicants must qualify as one of the following:

- Company registered with the Malta Business Registry;
- Voluntary organisation enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.

Furthermore, applicants must qualify as a print medium listed on the Department of Information page available [here](#).

### 3.2 Who cannot apply?

The following are not eligible to apply for the Newspapers Support Scheme:

- Applicants/activities receiving local public funds through established Government line-votes.
- 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 in the case of a voluntary organisation.
- Applicants who do not qualify under the definition of applicant for this specific scheme.
- Beneficiaries who have not honoured previous funding commitments;
- 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.

- Companies who have not presented the required annual documentation to the Malta Business Registry.
- In the case of voluntary organisations, voluntary organisations which are:
  - not enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations;
  - who have not presented their updated accounts to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations;
  - which do not have a registered address in the Maltese islands.

### 3.3 What costs can be covered?

This grant may cover up to 100% of the following costs (up to a maximum of €12,000 per project for Strand 1 applications and €20,000 per project for Strand 2 applications, whichever is the lowest).

The eligible costs for Strand 1 include:

- Contingency, not exceeding 10% of project total;
- Linguistic fees (such as proofreading, subbing, copywriting);
- Other fees directly related to project implementation (including but not limited to: service providers, mentors, legal, participation or enrolment);
- Printed material;
- Professional Indemnity insurance;
- Reimbursement of salaries or part thereof;
- Research fees;
- Subscriptions to virtual platforms or other digital services, where relevant;
- Training and development.

The eligible costs for Strand 2 include:

- Artistic fees (such as photographers, academics, graphic designers, illustrators, etc.)
- Attendance and participation fees (for festivals, exhibitions, showcases, networking events, conferences, artist residencies and fairs.) Attendance and participation can also take place in a digital format;
- Contingency, not exceeding 10% of project total;
- Reimbursement of salaries or part thereof;
- Research fees;
- Subscriptions to virtual platforms or other digital services, where relevant;
- Training and Development.

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

### 3.4 What costs cannot be covered?

- 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 by the applicant or the partner/supporting organisation/individual);
- Fees for services provided by Public Cultural Organisations or other public agency, Government department or Ministry;
- Funding for the creation or upholding of bursaries, contests, competitions, prizes or scholarships ;
- Recoverable VAT, where applicable;
- Retroactive costs;
- Subsistence, catering and hospitality.

### 3.5 What applications are not eligible?

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

- Activities which are not related to print media. In case of Strand 2 activities which are not related to arts, culture, and heritage content in print media;
- 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;
- Incomplete applications. Refer to application checklist in Section 5.1;
- 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 that would have already started and/or taken place before the result is notified to applicant(s)
- Projects the duration of which does not entirely fall within the eligible timeframe.

Any other activity which may be developed outside the scope of the *Newspapers Support Scheme* is not eligible for support.

## 4. Evaluation

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

### 4.1 Proposal (80 marks)

- Define the aims, objectives, and outcomes that the proposed activity will address. (30 marks)
- How is the proposed activity relevant to the development of the quality assurance of content in the print newspaper? (20 marks)
- How are you planning to deliver the proposed programme/plan? (e.g. timeframes, workplans, responsibilities, skills and track record of people involved in the activities, logistics plan). (This should also include evidence of how the proposal considers the principles within the Right to Culture – Resource Kit and the Charter for the Status of the Artist as in Section 1). (20 marks)
- Are there any necessary permits, copyright issues and other legal, ethical and administrative matters to be addressed? (10 marks)



## 4.2 Budget (20 marks)

- Please provide a clear budget breakdown including expenses directly related to the proposed project. Kindly explain the rationale for the expenses of the project. (20 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 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 for.
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](mailto: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](mailto: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, the 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;
- Applicant CV and the print newspaper portfolio related to arts and culture to be included in the applicant profile;
- If applicable, proof of the organisation's/company's legal registration;
- If applicable, a most recent Good Standing certificate of Registration. This document is renewed annually by the Malta Business Registry and is proof of compliance;
- Letters of intent from collaborators;
- When relevant, acceptance letter by institution, platform or venue.

## 6. Evaluation process

This scheme is non-competitive and will be evaluated by a panel of sectorial experts according to established criteria.

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

Nevertheless, the evaluation session and funding decisions depend on the quality of the submitted proposals and on the availability of the funds. The Evaluators' 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 fund 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.

### 6.1 Communication of results

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

If you have any difficulties concerning your results, you should email us on [fundinfo@artscouncil.mt](mailto: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

Beneficiaries must provide full documentation to support the application and budget plan within 30 days from receipt of the notification letter. Arts Council Malta will accept a variation of up to 5% from the proposed total cost. The contingency indicated in the budget plan will support any variations from the proposed total cost. **Under no circumstances will the Council be in a position to increase the grant awarded.**

Upon provision and approval of the above mandatory documentation, a contract specifying the conditions of the fund will be signed. The grant may only be awarded upon completion of the above process within the established timeframe.

70% of the total amount allocated by the Evaluation Board 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 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 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, the collaborative and co-creating components and the project achievements, by not later than six (6) weeks after your project has concluded. Your report should include reflections on how collaborative work benefited the project and vice versa, including suggestions on how to strengthen/reshape engagement with audiences and communities.

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 (a minimum of 5 high-resolution images should be submitted), 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 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 shall be final. Complaints need to be made to the Director of Funding and Strategy 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 State Aid rules applicable for undertakings 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:

- a) aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of fishery and aquaculture products;

- b) 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;
- c) aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products;
- d) aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of agricultural products, in one of the following cases:
  - i. 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;
  - ii. where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
- e) 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;
- f) 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 consecutive years.

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 applicable *de minimis* threshold over three years.

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* State Aid Regulation, records regarding *de minimis* aid shall be maintained for 10 years from the date on which the last individual aid is granted under the scheme.

## 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').

## 9.2 Applicants and applications that do not include the carrying out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU

Applicants and applications that do not include the carrying out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU may also apply for the scheme. The rules outlined in Section 9.1 are not applicable in the case of such applicants and applications.

### 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. To make the best use of our services, plan ahead and get in touch with us at least four weeks before the submission deadline.

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](mailto:fundinfo@artscouncil.mt).

**Guidelines updated on 26th August 2024**