

Theatre Spaces Support Scheme

Guidelines and Regulations 2024



ISSUED: OCTOBER 2024



ALLOCATIONS

SESSION BUDGET	MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER PROJECT
EUR 300,000	EUR 100,000

CO-FUNDING	DISBURSEMENT SCHEDULE
The scheme may cover up to 80% of total project costs	70% upon signing of agreement 30% upon submission and approval of a final report

TIMEFRAMES

DEADLINE	RESULTS	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
26th November 2024	16th January 2025	17th January 2025 – 31 st December 2026

1. Introduction

The Theatre Spaces Support Scheme is one of Arts Council Malta's funding schemes to invest in the infrastructural development of Malta's cultural and creative sectors by supporting community theatre spaces, to improve and maintain their existing infrastructure and enable artistic output, in line with ACM's Strategy2025.

The scheme addresses Strategy2025 by aiming to provide support to repurpose and upgrade existing spaces for organisations/companies/individuals in the cultural and creative sectors via collaborative frameworks with already-existing community theatre spaces.

The aims and objectives of the scheme are to:

- **Revitalize existing community spaces:** to support the repurposing and upgrading of existing theatre community spaces, transforming them into versatile, functional theatre spaces that cater to the evolving needs of the cultural and creative sectors.
- **Foster collaborative partnerships:** establish collaborative frameworks that encourage partnerships between creative individuals, groups, companies, voluntary organisations and community theatre spaces, to enable the potential of the community theatre space to become sustainable, multi-functional cultural hubs.
- **Enhance accessibility and inclusivity:** improve access to theatre and creative spaces for underrepresented and marginalized groups, ensuring that these upgraded spaces are accessible to all members of the community, including those with different abilities.
- **Sustainability in infrastructure:** promote environmentally responsible upgrades, ensuring that all space enhancements are in line with green building standards and contribute to long-term sustainability objectives.
- **Empower local creative economies:** stimulate local economies by providing opportunities for creative professionals, including freelancers, to access well-equipped spaces that enable them to develop, rehearse, and present their work.

By aligning these aims and objectives with Strategy2025, the Theatre Spaces Support Scheme will foster a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable creative ecosystem that leverages underutilized community spaces for the benefit of the wider cultural sector.

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

Applicant:

- An applicant must be a voluntary organisation enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations that is compliant for the year 2022 and that owns a community theatre space (Refer to section 3 of these guidelines and regulations).
- The applicant's NACE code must be one of the following:
 - R90.0.1 - Performing arts
 - R90.0.2 - Support activities to performing arts
 - R90.0.3 - Artistic creation
 - R90.0.4 - Operation of arts facilities
- Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or involved in the management of the *Theatre Spaces Support Scheme*.

Application:

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

Beneficiary:

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

Community:

- A group of people who share values, customs, identities, or practices.

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 the proposal's eligibility by the scheme 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 each call under 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 submission, e.g. official correspondence confirming provision of services, permits, or other (refer to section 5.1).

Maximum funding:

- There is a maximum funding allocation per project, with a ceiling amount of €100,000. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the project.

Public cultural organisations:

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

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.

Undertaking in difficulty:

- Undertaking in difficulty means an undertaking in respect of which at least one of the following circumstances occurs:
 - In the case of a limited liability company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years), where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. This is the case when deduction of accumulated losses from reserves (and all other elements generally considered as part of the own funds of the company) leads to a negative cumulative amount that exceeds half of the subscribed share capital. For the purposes of this provision, "limited liability company" refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex I of Directive 2013/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and "share capital" includes, where relevant, any share premium.
 - In the case of a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three

years), where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. For the purposes of this provision, "a company where at least some of its members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company" refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex II of Directive 2013/34/EU.

- Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors.
- Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee, or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan.
- In the case of an undertaking that is not an SME, where, for the past two years:
 - the undertaking's book debt to equity ratio has been greater than 7.5; and
 - the undertaking's EBITDA interest coverage ratio has been below 1.0.

Voluntary organisation:

- An organisation which is legally established and/or publicly registered in Malta, having a statute. Voluntary organisations must be enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act requirements (<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 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: 2 Years (2025-2026).

3.1. Who can apply?

The grant is open to undertakings for which assistance will be granted in line with the General Block Exemption regulation (kindly refer to Section 9 of these guidelines for additional information). Applicants must be the owners of a community theatre space. Furthermore, applicants must qualify as a:

- Voluntary organisation enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations that is compliant for the year 2022.

3.2. Who cannot apply?

The following are not eligible to apply for the Scheme:

- Applicants/activities receiving local public funds through established government line-votes.
- Applicants who do not own a Community Theatre Space.

- Applicants whose profile is not verified due to it being an incomplete profile for not having the below mandatory documents:
 - a copy of their Maltese ID card (including both front and back); or Maltese residence permit; or Maltese citizenship certificate; or 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.
- 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 80% of the following costs (up to a maximum of €100,000 per project, whichever is the lowest). The remaining 20% of the total project cost cannot be covered through other funding programmes managed by Arts Council Malta.

- costs for the construction, upgrade, conservation or improvement of infrastructure;
- costs for the services provided by an architect or an architects' firm;
- costs for safeguarding, preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of tangible cultural heritage, including extra costs for storage under appropriate conditions, special tools, and materials;
- costs for improving the accessibility of the community theatre space to the public, including costs for digitisation and other new technologies, costs to improve accessibility for persons with special needs (in particular, ramps and lifts for disabled persons, braille indications and hands-on exhibits) and for promoting cultural diversity with respect to setup, presentations, and stakeholders;
- operating costs directly relating to the community theatre space or activity, materials and supplies directly related to the project or activities, architectural structures for exhibitions and stage sets, software and equipment, costs for access rights to copyright works and other related intellectual property rights protected contents;
- costs for promotion and costs incurred directly as a result of the project or activity;
- costs for advisory and support services provided by consultants and service providers, incurred directly as a result of the project.

For more information about presenting your budget, refer to our General Budget Guidelines available [on this link](#).

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;
- Debt and debt service charges.
- Doubtful debts.
- Exchange losses.
- Expenditure deemed excessive or reckless.
- Funding for the creation or upholding of bursaries, prizes or scholarships;
- Interest owed.
- Provisions for losses or debts.
- 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:

- Applications submitted after noon (12:00) of the respective day of deadline;
- Applications submitted by applicants who are not the owners of the community theatre space;
- Applications submitted by public entities with or without a line vote;
- Applications the duration of which does not entirely fall within the eligible timeframe
- Incomplete applications. Refer to application checklist in Section 5.1;
- Applications for activities that do not include the restoration, conservation and/or preservation of a community theatre space;
- 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.

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

Applicants can submit only one application under the same call.

4. Evaluation

The evaluation board will base its decision upon the following criteria:

4.1. Criterion 1: The Upgraded Space (40 marks)

This criterion evaluates the proposed improvements of the community theatre space and how these will enhance the accessibility, inclusivity and sustainability of the space and foster collaborative partnerships.

Questions for the application:

- a. Provide a strategic plan for the improvements of the community theatre space during the period covered by the scheme. This should include the vision and goals related to the proposed improvements. (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).
- b. How will the proposed improvements:
 - i. align with the overall goal of upgrading the community theatre space?
 - ii. improve the safety, accessibility, or functionality of the space?
 - iii. promote environmentally responsible upgrades?
 - iv. contribute to long-term sustainability objectives?
- c. How do you plan to collaborate with other creative practitioners to engage the local community in your use of the community theatre space?

4.2. Criterion 2: The Benefits (30 marks)

This criterion evaluates the benefits of the proposed improvements to the community theatre space and its' users whilst considering the viability of the project.

Questions for the application:

- a. How will the improvements significantly benefit the users of the space?
- b. Will these improvements offer long-lasting benefits? What are the long-term maintenance needs of the improvements?
- c. Are the proposed improvements technically viable given the current condition of the space?
- d. How will the applicant ensure that the improvements will be completed within the eligible timeframe?

4.3. Criterion 3: Project Management (15 marks)

This criterion considers the level of commitment and preparation prior to the proposal as well as the proposed plan to deliver and achieve aims and targets. It assesses the applicant's ability to effectively manage the allocated funds, including financial accountability, transparent reporting, and responsible resource allocation. It looks for a well-structured plan to ensure the sustainable and efficient use of the fund's resources.

Questions for the application:

- a. Are there any necessary permits, and other legal, ethical, and administrative matters to be addressed?
- b. What is the degree of flexibility in the planning, given the risks and uncertainties? What are the mitigation measures envisaged in view of the identified risks? (e.g. contingency plans, risk assessments, health and safety measures, possible adjustments that may take place).
- c. What strategies will you implement to maximize the impact of the upgraded space and ensure its long-term sustainability?

4.4. Criterion 4: Budget (15 marks)

This criterion considers how well-planned and realistic the presented budget plan is.

Questions for the application:

- a. Please provide a clear budget breakdown including expenses directly related to the proposed project. Kindly explain the rationale for the expenses of the project.

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.
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 Arts Council Malta's discretion to request that applicants provide any missing mandatory documentation following the call deadline.

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

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

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

5.1. Checklist

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

- A copy of the VAT certificate of registration;
- A detailed breakdown budget and/or a bill of quantities to support the budget;
- Applicant biography/artistic CV to be included in the applicant profile;
- Track record of the applicant;
- An architectural plan of the proposed space *tale quale*;
- Existing site plan of the space;
- A proposed drawing/3D rendering of the space;
- Letters of intent from collaborators;
- If applicable, insurance policy document;
- Proof of the ownership of the Community Theatre Space.

6. Evaluation process

This scheme is competitive and will be evaluated by a panel of sectorial experts according to the 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. Therefore, obtaining 60 marks or more does not automatically mean that you will be awarded the funds. The evaluation board may decide not to allocate the total funds available for a particular call if the proposed projects do not reach the required level in terms of the project criteria.

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

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. Together with the covering letter, we will also attach a copy of the evaluation form, indicating the reasons and marks leading to the evaluation board's decision, according to the project criteria.

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

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

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

Any form of soliciting will automatically disqualify an application.

All information received by the administrators, managers, and evaluators of this scheme will be considered confidential, both during and after the evaluation process. Provisions on data protection and confidentiality for successful projects will be included in the grant agreement.

7. Project implementation and monitoring

A contract specifying the conditions of the project will be signed.

The pre-financing payment consisting of 70% of the amount allocated by the Evaluation Board will be processed after the signing of the contract.

The final payment will be disbursed after the submission and approval of the final report for the project including certified accounts, fiscal receipts and VAT invoices.

The beneficiaries must use the Council's logo on all related material and specify that the project is 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.

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 the 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 has concluded. Arts Council Malta will provide a template for your reports. If relevant, together with this report, beneficiaries must submit copies of any relevant marketing, publicity, or information material developed for the funded project. Beneficiaries will also be requested to submit evidence of the research process, which includes visual documentation (a minimum of 5 high-resolution images should be submitted), blogs, and other documentation.

You will also be required to present an updated budget together with all supporting documents. Arts Council Malta 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:

- Arts Council Malta'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 proposal.

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 Chief Operations Officer 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 proposal to address the complaint. The decision of the board is final.

9. Applicability of State aid rules

This scheme is applicable to voluntary organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations that are compliant for the year 2022 and that own a community theatre space.

For the purposes of State aid rules, such applicants are deemed as undertakings that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU. The terms and conditions set out in these guidelines will be implemented in line with *Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty*, as amended by *Commission Regulation (EU) No 2017/1084 of 14 June 2017 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards aid for port and airport infrastructure, notification thresholds for aid for culture and heritage conservation and for aid for sport and multifunctional recreational infrastructures, and regional operating aid schemes for outermost regions and amending Regulation (EU) No 702/2014 as regards the calculation of eligible costs*, by *Commission Regulation (EU) 2020/972 of 2 July 2020 amending Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 as regards its prolongation and amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 as regards its prolongation and relevant adjustments*, by *Commission Regulation (EU) 2021/1237 of 23 July 2021 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty*, by *Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023 amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty and Regulation (EU) 2022/2473 declaring certain categories of aid to undertakings active in the production, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty*, and as may be subsequently amended [hereinafter referred to as the General Block Exemption Regulation].

This scheme is not applicable to the following:

- a. Activities listed in Article 1 (2), (3), (4) and (5) of the General Block Exemption Regulation [where applicable].
- b. Undertakings in difficulty are in principle excluded from the scope of this scheme, unless the undertaking was not in difficulty on 31 December 2019 but became an undertaking in difficulty in the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021.

Furthermore, assistance may not be granted if the aid is:

- a. Related to export activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution network, or to other current expenditure linked to export activity.
- b. Contingent upon the use of domestic in preference to imported goods.
- c. In favour of a beneficiary which is subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid granted by Malta illegal and incompatible with the internal market.

For the purposes of calculating the aid intensity and eligible costs, all figures used will be taken before any deduction of tax or other charge. The eligible costs shall be supported by documentary evidence which will be clear, specific, and contemporary.

Rules on cumulation of aid will be in line with Article 8 of the General Block Exemption Regulation.

Need advice?

Arts Council Malta offers pre-submission consultation services to help secure support for your proposal. We are there every step of the way. We can help you determine whether the core concept and profile of your proposal are in line with the targeted support mechanism and provide feedback on the way you plan to present your proposal. To make the best 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.

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