

OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE MUSIC CITIES CONVENTION 2026

In collaboration with Sound Diplomacy

Guidelines and Regulations

ISSUED: MARCH 2026



**ARTS
COUNCIL
MALTA**

1. Introduction

1.1. About Sound Diplomacy

Arts Council Malta announces an official partnership with Sound Diplomacy Events and Education for bringing a delegation of local music advocates to the upcoming Music Cities Convention in Kingston upon Hull, United Kingdom.

Sound Diplomacy is a global music, culture and creative economy consultancy. They use research and data to demonstrate the economic and social value of creative industries, and provide strategic planning for cities, places, and communities to maximize their impact. Their work unlocks new opportunities, fosters sustainable development, and builds more dynamic, inclusive environments.

Comprised of consultants and experts worldwide, Sound Diplomacy has advised over 150 clients in over 30 countries, including the public sector such as cities, municipalities, governments, and international governmental organizations, and private entities in the real estate, investment and cultural and creative sectors.

Sound Diplomacy is creating the global standard demonstrating how investing in culture - and the people who make it - is the best path to economic and social growth. They provide world-class data and evidence so that culture, in all its forms, is incorporated into how they build, govern, and make decisions to invest in ourselves and our communities.

Sound Diplomacy owns and operates world-leading business conferences on music, culture and policy and produces insights and thought leadership with renowned partners.

Forming a multicultural team of economists, analysts, researchers, and consultants, with staff in the UK, Europe, North America, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, Sound Diplomacy bring a wealth of experience and expertise in the cultural economics, creative ecosystems, public policy, urban planning, and placemaking sectors.

1.2. Hull Music Cities Convention 2026

From the 9th to the 11th of June 2026, the Music Cities Convention will take place in Kingston upon Hull, United Kingdom.

Hull 2026 is presented as a “homecoming” edition - bringing together a global network focused on the importance of music in cities and places.

The Music Cities Convention is the largest conference exploring the transformational power of music for cities. The Music Cities Events brand organizes the biggest international conferences on music cities, music policy, and music tourism. It produces the leading international awards ceremony on music cities, the Music Cities Awards, and runs the Music Cities Community, the first-ever platform for professionals in all industries using music to create more value in towns, cities, and places.

This will be a three-day event which will include panels, presentations, workshops, networking events and live music performances exploring best practices and latest trends at the crossroads of music with Diversity,

Youth, Education, Health, Environmentalism, Economic Development, Nighttime Economy, Real Estate and Technology.

Additionally, the Convention will host the Music Cities Awards Ceremony, which is a consolidated platform that rewards the best use of music in cities.

This is an event that will gather profiles such as City Mayors, Executives from the Music Industry, Grassroots Music Advocates, Musicians, Ministers of Culture, Festival Directors, NGO CEOs, University Researchers, Investment Directors, Heads of Programming, Economic Development Office Directors and more.

1.3. Apply to be part of a delegation attending the Convention

As part of its strategy for professional development and sector support, Arts Council Malta is putting together a delegation to represent Malta's music ecosystem at the event. Bringing a cohort of music advocates to the Music Cities Convention will be a significant step towards future proofing the benefits that music brings to our city.

Arts Council Malta is offering two places for delegates from the local music ecosystem to attend the event and participate in several activities that will help them discuss the latest trends in music cities topics and bring back that knowledge to their local and regional context (preference will be given to those applicants who have not attended in the past). Additionally, the delegation will be accompanied by an Arts Council Malta representative, Executive (Partnerships, Advocacy, and Collaborations).

The below costs are to be supported by Arts Council Malta:

- Travel expenses
- Accommodation
- Entrance to the convention

1.4. Aims of attendance

By attending the Music Cities Convention, selected applicants will have an opportunity to:

- Actively contribute towards Sound Diplomacy's programme of activities by bringing fresh perspectives to the dialogues within the network and contributing to the long-term development of the global music sector;
- Expand their international network and find new collaborators and partners across all diverse sectoral contexts;
- Allow the opportunity for international visibility of alternative and/or innovative working models, practices and ideas developed in their professional local context and communities;
- Develop new skills and knowledge through peer-to-peer learning;
- Become inspired in their professional lives, which they can and will be expected to share with their local communities.

2. Eligibility

2.1. Application requirements

- Applicants should have a minimum of three years of professional experience in creative practice within the music sector.
- Be actively involved in the music sector (such as producers, performers, DJs, composers, conductors, music educators, sound designers, promoters, music therapists, recording engineers and/or music directors);
- It would be desirable if applicants also have experience and knowledge engaging with policymakers, local councils, authorities or community stakeholders in the context of their music-related practices;
- Applicants must be able to travel during the timeframe stipulated in section 1.2 of these guidelines.

2.2. Applicants are requested to submit the following documentation:

i. Letter of interest, indicating the following:

- Motivation, expectations and reasons for applying for attendance to the Music Cities Convention;
- Relevance of their practices in their local context and willingness to share it with the international scene;
- How their attendance to this event will impact their career and personal development;
- Background, skills and relevant experience of the applicant's professional career.

ii. Curriculum Vitae

iii. An audio or audiovisual file not exceeding 5 minutes in which the applicant provides a short declaration, a rationale and/or motivation for submitting this proposal

ii. Any additional supporting documentation such as online portfolio etc.

Note: Failing to submit all necessary documents will make the application ineligible. Ineligible applications will not be processed.

3. Outcomes

Following attendance to the Music Cities Convention, selected delegates will be asked to:

- Present a detailed final report of their experience/s and how these will be applied to their individual, professional practice as creative practitioners locally; providing comprehensive insight into the contributions of CCSs to regional development and revitalisation, thereby acting as catalysts for social cohesion and cultural identity, attesting to their role in uniting diverse communities within the Maltese islands.

- Contribute to and engage with the perpetuation of creative knowledge economies locally in relation to regional growth and governance; whilst incorporating an attempt to capture the multiplicity of realities concerning the structure, dynamism and pedagogy of creative economies locally;
- Take part in a series of sessions with ACM's Sectoral Representative Working Group (SRWG), alongside other independent representatives of the Cultural and Creative Sector (CCS), during which attendees will be able to share expert advice on the development and implementation of Arts Council Malta's strategic goals and actions, in line with their professional remits.

4. Evaluation Criteria

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

This criterion considers the merit of the applicant as well as their long-term objectives, professional development, applicability, in relation to the opportunity to attend the Music Cities Convention. This may also include experience in previous projects and/or productions and/or events etc., whether they are regular or new, relevant background information on the applicant/s, and envisaged impacts of their attendance to the Music Cities Convention. The application will also need to refer to any plans for professional development and capacity building in the letter of interest. Thus, the following questions are to be addressed in not more than 700 words:

- What are the specific objectives that inform the applicant's letter of interest? How will their attendance at the convention contribute towards their career development in the music sectors? (20 marks)
- What are the anticipated and desired outcomes of the applicant's attendance at the event? (20 marks)
- Are the applicant's qualifications and experience relevant to the outcomes of attendance stipulated in the open call? (20 marks)
- Has the applicant demonstrated the impact of their work for communities over time? (20 marks)
- How has the applicant expressed a long-term interest in providing feedback to Arts Council Malta based on the experience from the Music Cities Convention? (20 marks)

5. Submitting the application

Follow these steps to apply:

1. Read these guidelines and regulations carefully.
2. Check whether you are eligible to apply and available to travel during the dates indicated in section 1.2 of these guidelines.
3. Press the [link](#) that will take you to the online application system.
4. Use your existing profile to apply. If you do not have a profile, create your profile with Arts Council Malta by clicking on Register Now and filling in the details.
5. From the open calls section, select the online application for this call.

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 receive an automatic acknowledgement by the system. If you do not receive such a notification, contact us on gorg.vella@artscouncil.mt / hello@artscouncil.mt .

Deadline to apply: 09th April 2026 at 12:00 CET.

Late applications will not be accepted.

6. Evaluation Process

This scheme is competitive and will be evaluated by a panel of relevant experts, according to established criteria.

As specified above, each criterion is allocated specific marks. In order to be considered, applications must obtain an average of 60 marks or more.

Applications will be evaluated according to the criteria established in these guidelines.

Applicants should be available to travel around the 8th and 12th of June 2026 (including travel days).

You will receive your result notification from Arts Council Malta via email on 08th May 2026.

Need help?

Arts Council Malta is the point of contact for this Open Call.

Please refer any queries by sending an email to: gorg.vella@artscouncil.mt / hello@artscouncil.mt

Or by calling us on +356 2334 7212 on weekdays between 09:00 to 16:00

More information on Sound Diplomacy and the Music Cities Convention can be found through these links:

- <https://www.sounddiplomacy.com/about-our-events>
- <https://www.musiccitiesevents.com/hull>

Guidelines updated on 06th March 2026.