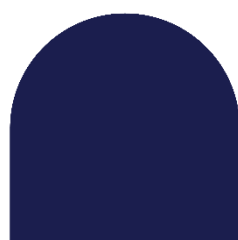


**CREATIVE INNOVATORS
AND PLATFORMS FUND
GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS 2025**



**ARTS
COUNCIL
MALTA**

ISSUED: NOVEMBER 2025

ALLOCATIONS

SESSION BUDGET	MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER PROJECT
<p>Phase 1: EUR 50,000</p> <p>Phase 2: EUR 50,000</p> <p>Phase 3: EUR 600,000</p>	<p>Phase 1: EUR 2,000 per project</p> <p>Phase 2: EUR 5,000 per beneficiary. The amount will be granted to support capacity building and as an incubation programme</p> <p>Phase 3: EUR 150,000 per project The amount will be granted for a period of three consecutive years. Subject to the availability of government funds.</p>

CO-FUNDING	DISBURSEMENT
<p>Phase 1: The Fund may cover up to 100% of total project costs</p> <p>Phase 2: To support 100% of the costs related to capacity building and as an incubation programme</p> <p>Phase 3: The Fund may cover up to 80% of total project costs</p>	<p>Phase 1: 100% upon the signing of contract and approval of final report</p> <p>Phase 2: Assistance will be provided through supported assistance by third party experts engaged by ACM</p> <p>Phase 3: 100% of payment applicable to the 1st year as pre-financing and upon signing of contract. 100% of the 2nd year payment upon approval of the 1st year progress report and the 2nd year action plan. 70% of the 3rd year payment upon approval of the 2nd year progress report and the 3rd year action plan. 30% of the 3rd year payment upon approval of final report.</p>

TIMEFRAMES

Phase 1

APPLICATION DEADLINE	RESULTS	PROJECT DURATION	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
18 th December 2025 or when 25 participants are selected	Within 20 working days from the submission of a complete application	2 months	02 nd February 2026 – 27 th March 2026

Phase 2

RESULTS	MENTORSHIP DURATION	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
30 th April 2026	1 month	01 st May 2026 – 31 st May 2026

Phase 3

APPLICATION DEADLINE	RESULTS	PROJECT DURATION	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
22 nd July 2026	20 th August 2026	36 months	01 st September 2026 – 31 st August 2029

1. Introduction

Arts Council Malta's strategy for the Culture and Creative Industries (CCIs) recognises the need to help create an environment where cultural and creative enterprises can find targeted support to help them grow in a sustainable manner. To this end, the fund for Creative Innovators and Platforms is designed to promote innovation and growth across the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS).

The CIP fund is part of ACM's ongoing endeavours to promote a healthy ecosystem for CCS operators by incentivising operators to engage in research and development initiatives. This fund acknowledges the fundamental need for creatives to incorporate research and development in their business practice as an essential part of their growth and sustainability strategy.

The fund is composed of three phases: seed funding, capacity building, three-year funding.

Phase 1

- Is open to operators requiring seed support to research and develop ideas. This is intended to catalyse innovation within CCS businesses at all levels, irrespective of the level of experience. It awards the first 25 eligible applicants a lump sum of €2,000 of seed support to initiate research work contributing to innovation, improved practices and development in the applicant's practice. Applicants are to fill in an application on ACM's CRM clearly detailing their ideas and outlining the objectives and methods of their research proposal. Examples of the chosen methods could be preliminary business planning, SWOT or internal capacity analysis, value chain analysis, pre-incubation research, innovation canvas, product research, market and competition analysis, among others. The first 25 eligible applicants will be given two months to work on their research, adopting their selected methods to work on their business idea. At the end of these two months, the applicants will submit a report on ACM's CRM.
- The 25 eligible applicants will receive a grant of €2,000 each; 10 of the eligible applicants will be shortlisted and will proceed to the second phase of this fund.

Phase 2

- Is open to the applicants who were shortlisted through Phase 1. It refers to a capacity building and incubation programme designed to support a maximum of ten beneficiaries to continue to develop their research and ideas. Beneficiaries will be chosen following an evaluation process based on the quality of the reports they present following phase 1. Throughout the second phase, beneficiaries will be able to benefit from the support of industry experts to improve their plans. At the end of this process, they will be invited to pitch their ideas to a board of evaluators. Applicants will be given the opportunity to progress to phase 3 and receive funding for three consecutive years to support their operations.

Phase 3

- Will support four beneficiaries who will receive funding covering three years of activities, including qualifying operational costs.

The fund is in line with ACM's commitment to empower cultural entrepreneurs to act as agents of change and resourceful visionaries generating cultural, economic and social capital through their activities. Furthermore, through this fund ACM continues to support artists to establish sustainable economic practices.

The objectives of the fund are:

- to create an environment that supports and creates new opportunities for businesses, organisations, and individuals working in the cultural and creative sectors.
- to incentivise cultural and creative operators to embark on new innovative ventures that lead to new or improved business operations, and creative services and products.
- to alleviate part of the costs and risks associated with research and development.
- to incentivise development of technical capacities that lead to improved competitiveness and sustainability within CCS businesses.
- to enhance opportunities for professionalisation of the cultural and creative sectors with the aim of developing a stronger entrepreneurial culture within an increasingly competitive and dynamic creative ecology.
- to foster an environment where CCI clusters can come together and grow.

Requirements in line with ACM's Strategy 2025

In line with its commitment to supporting the arts through its sustainable and accountable approach to public investment, ACM draws applicants' attention to the following in line with its Strategy 2025:

Applicants are required to consider the principles expressed through its [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. This charter 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

For the scope of this call for proposals, the following term definitions apply:

Activities falling within the cultural and creative sector:

- Arts (literature, visual arts, music, performing arts, interdisciplinary arts)
- Creative Business Services (design, architecture, cultural tourism and cultural services)
- Heritage (crafts, traditional festivals and celebrations, cultural sites, antiques)
- 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, a cooperative, a registered entity or an organisation whose main activity forms part of the cultural and creative sectors. Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or be involved in the management of the Creative Innovators and Platforms Fund.

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 responsible for the implementation of the proposal supported by this fund. The beneficiary of the grant may not be changed throughout the duration of the funded project, and/or when progressing through the three phases of the fund, 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.

Capacity building and incubation programme

- Dedicated and targeted sessions leading towards tangible improvements in the operations, services and products of cultural operators. The programme will have a maximum value of €50,000.

Cooperatives

- Cooperatives must be registered with the Cooperatives Board. For more information visit <https://maltacooperativefederation.coop/coops/bord-tal-koperattivi>.

Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs)

- The economic sectors based on individual and collective creativity, skills and talent that are better able to create wealth and jobs as well as intellectual property. The following sub-sectors are eligible areas under this fund: architecture, audiovisual, design, performing arts (either separately or collectively), publishing, visual arts, crafts, video game development, and music.

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 programme administrators and managers. Proposals which are not considered eligible in terms of the set criteria shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

Evaluation

- Applications deemed compliant and eligible are evaluated against the criteria established in these guidelines by the appointed evaluators.

Evaluators

- Arts Council Malta appoints an evaluation team for the fund. The Arts Council may appoint both local and foreign professionals in the sector of culture and the arts.

Incubator

- An organisation designed to accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial undertakings through an array of business support resources and services that could include physical space, capital, coaching, common services, and networking connections.

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.

Innovation

- For the scope of the Creative Innovators and Platforms Fund, innovation is the development of new ideas, practices, products, or methods where they have not been used before.
 - A product innovation is the introduction of a new or a significantly improved activity.
 - A process innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved production practice(s), process, distribution method, or support activity.

Management and Administration

- Arts Council Malta is responsible for the management of this programme. All official correspondence, including the online submission of applications, must be sent to the address indicated in these guidelines.

Mandatory documentation

- Any document(s) needed to support your proposal and aid the evaluation of your project (e.g. track records, portfolios, artistic CVs, official correspondence confirming rental of space, permits or other); please refer to section 5.1 of these guidelines for a list of mandatory documents.

Maximum Funding

- There is a ceiling amount of €2,000 per project to be allocated in Phase 1, a ceiling amount of €5,000 per beneficiary to be invested in Phase 2, and a ceiling amount of €150,000 per project to be allocated in Phase 3. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the project.

Platform

- Refers to the beneficiary of this fund which can be a cluster, a foundation, an association, incubator, shared services centre, a consortium or a formal collaboration between promoters from the sector providing services to undertakings specifically in the creative and cultural industries. Such platforms typically perform activities that support the collective development and growth of undertakings within a specific sector. Such activities include, but are not limited to, advocacy, business development services, networking and participatory opportunities, information gathering, establishing industry standards, and promotion of the business interests of a specific sector. The overall aim should be to achieve common objectives that are expected to support growth, creativity, innovation, and development of the members being represented.

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 Performing Arts.

Registered entities

- An entity legally established and registered in Malta. Registered entities must be registered with the Malta Business Registry, in accordance with the Companies Act requirements in the case of a company or a partnership, and in accordance with the Civil Code in the case of a foundation and an organisation/association. Eligible entities must be active in the cultural and creative industries.
 - A company and/or a partnership is a juridical person duly registered in Malta, as a limited liability company, a partnership en Commandite or that establishes a branch or place of business in Malta under Part XI Chapter 1 of the Companies Act (CAP 386 of the Laws of Malta), and whose principal activity forms part of the

cultural and creative sectors, and is a tax resident in Malta. It is considered independent if its origins are independent of the state, or public and/or parastatal entities. The entity's stocks or shares may not belong to the state, public and/or parastatal entities, and public or private organisations.

- An Organisation/Association is a membership-based organisation engaged in promoting the capacity building and business interests of a specific sector. An Association must be registered with the Malta Business Registry. Associations aim to achieve common objectives that are expected to support growth, innovation and development of their member undertakings.

Business Associations should have:

- i. Specific targets that address the development needs of the relevant sector.
- ii. An open membership policy allowing all entities in the relevant sector to become members.

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 will be considered 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 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. When 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 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 (CAP 492 of the Laws of Malta) 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 and artistic eligibility. Ineligible proposals in terms of the points below shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

The timeframe to implement Phase 1 is 2 months.

The timeframe to implement Phase 2 is 1 month.

The timeframe to implement Phase 3 is 36 months.

3.1. Who can apply?

This scheme supports proposals aimed at boosting artistic development, nurturing experimentation and innovation, engaging and developing audiences as well as attracting new audiences, while creating experiences based on principles of excellence. This scheme also encourages community-based projects.

The State aid scheme is available to undertakings 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. Kindly refer to Section 9 of these guidelines for additional information.

Furthermore, applicants must qualify as one of the following:

- Creative professionals/individual artists
- Entities registered with the Malta Business Registry (including companies, partnerships, foundations, and organisations/associations)
- Groups, collectives and consortia
- Registered cooperatives
- Voluntary organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU.

Furthermore, applicants must fulfil the following conditions to be eligible to apply:

- i. Applicants must submit a complete application by the deadline established on page 3.
- ii. Applicants who are interested in Phase 2 and Phase 3 must start their process and submit an application for Phase 1. In Phase 2 and Phase 3 the fund will not be accepting any new applicants.

- iii. Applicants must propose activities that are clearly within the scope of Research and Development and that carry the potential to lead to strategically important developments within the applicant's practice and business.

3.2. Who cannot apply?

The following are not eligible to apply:

- Applicants/activities receiving local public funds through established Government line-votes.
- Applicants who do not qualify under the definition of applicant for this specific scheme.
- 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 the front and back side), or their Maltese residence permit, or their Maltese citizenship certificate, or their Maltese passport;
 - a signed statute in the case of a voluntary organisation.
- 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.
- In the case of registered entities, entities who have not presented the required annual documentation to the Malta Business Registry.
- In the case of the second and third phases, applicants who did not submit an application under phase 1 or applicants whose application was not approved under phase 1.
- In the case of voluntary organisations, voluntary organisations:
 - which are not enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations;
 - which 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?

Phase 1 of this fund covers a lump sum of €2,000 per project for the first twenty-five (25) eligible applications.

The grant will support any of the below activities or similar activities in line with the objectives of this fund:

- a. SWOT analysis
- b. Skills gap analysis
- c. Portfolio benchmarking (portfolio vs market needs)
- d. Stocktake, resource and value mapping, innovation canvas and golden circle

- e. Industry & ecosystem mapping
- f. Market trends analysis (cultural, technological, environmental, and policy shifts affecting your sector)
- g. Value chain analysis
- h. Customer and audience research including competitor audience analysis
- i. Surveys & focus groups
- j. Competition analysis
- k. Sales plan and strategies
- l. Sustainability and longevity audit
- m. Social impact assessment – inclusivity, fair labour, cultural sensitivity
- n. Certification pathways – B Corp, Fair Trade, FSC, Creative Climate Leadership
- o. Product or service feasibility analysis
- p. Risk mapping
- q. Scalability potential research

Phase 2 of this fund will provide a capacity building and incubation programme support to ten (10) applications that are shortlisted from Phase 1. This support will include training and development activities aiming at capacity building designed to support the development of the ideas that were researched in Phase 1.

More information on this phase will be provided following the result notification at the end of Phase 1.

Phase 3 of this fund will provide a grant that may cover up to 80% of the total costs up to a maximum of €50,000 per year for a period of three consecutive years, per beneficiary (whichever is the lowest), subject to the availability of government funds.

Eligible costs will be the following:

- rental of spaces
- professional fees
- operational costs
- training and development of active members in the organisation
- business development (market research, sales, testing, fees or salaries for human resources and administrative expenses).

The eligible costs for Phase 3 may be revised when the call for applications will be opened.

For more information about presenting your budget, refer to our General Budget Guidelines available on <https://artscouncilmalta.gov.mt/funding-and-grants/general-budget-guidelines/>.

3.4. What costs cannot be covered?

- Budgets exceeding 80% of the project expenditure (in the case of Phase 3)
- Contributions in kind exceeding 15% of the total expenditure
- 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 declared by the beneficiary and already covered by another grant of the Government of Malta
- Costs which are already covered through usual operational budgets (space which is owned by the applicant or the partner/supporting organisation/individual)
- Debt and debt service charges
- Doubtful debts
- Exchange losses
- Expenditure deemed excessive or reckless
- Fees for services provided by other public entities, government department or ministry
- Funding for the creation or upholding of contests, bursaries, prizes or scholarships
- Interest owed
- Provisions for losses or debts
- Recoverable VAT, where applicable
- Retroactive cost
- Return on capital
- Subsistence, catering, and hospitality

3.5. What applications are not eligible?

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

- Activities of an intrinsically self-sustainable nature
- Activities which are not directly related to culture, the arts, and the creative industries
- Activities whose objective is fundraising or political propaganda
- Applications for funding the creation or upholding of contests, 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
- Costs for traditional activities and festivities
- Events held on a regular basis, including school/annual shows, regular training programmes, and/or repeated events
- Incomplete applications (refer to application checklist in section 5.1)
- Individual modules credited as part of an educational 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/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.

Any other activity which may be developed outside the scope of the *Creative Innovators and Platforms Fund* is not eligible for support.

Applicants can submit only one application under Phase 1.

Phase 2 and Phase 3 are restricted to applicants who are selected in Phase 1.

4. Evaluation

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

4.1. Phase 1

- Does the application include a clearly defined research and development idea? (Yes or No)
- Is the proposed idea proposing innovation, improved practices within the cultural and creative sector and/or the applicant's practice? (Yes or No)
- Does the proposal explain the methods that will be adopted to carry out the research and development exercise? (Yes or No)
- Does the applicant demonstrate the ability to carry out the proposed research and development exercise? (Yes or No)

Applicants need affirmative replies to all of the above to be considered.

Only the first 25 applicants will be accepted.

4.2. Phase 2

- The submitted report following Phase 1 is clear and reflects the original proposal. It also provides a simple analysis of the processes, methods, challenges and achievements of the exercise embarked on in Phase 1. (40 marks)
- The report and work carried out in Phase 1 demonstrate a degree of innovation and a strong assessment of risk and feasibility. (See definition of innovation in Section 2 above). (40 marks)
- What is the potential for development and growth for the applicants and/or their organisations following the implementation of their R&D exercise? (20 marks)

A minimum score of 60 marks is required for applicants to be considered for the next phase. Only the first top ten ranked applicants will pass onto the third and final phase.

4.3. Phase 3

Following a pitching session, applicants will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Originality, novelty, and relevance of the concept to the CCS and market. Does it push boundaries or introduce new models, services, or practices? (30 marks)
- Cultural, social, and economic impact. How will the project benefit the sector, community, or audience? (30 marks)

- Sustainability, viability, scalability, and strategic planning. Is the project built to last and grow? (20 marks)
- Budget clarity, cost-effectiveness, and funding strategy. Is the financial plan realistic and aligned with the project goals?

A minimum score of 60 marks is required for applicants to be considered for the next phase. A maximum of 4 applicants will be funded after this evaluation cycle.

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 programme.
3. Click 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 Now' and filling in the details. Applicants are required to register a profile on the ACM's CRM at least two weeks prior to the deadline of the call.
5. From the open calls section, select the online application for the programme for which 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 receive an automatic acknowledgement by the system. If you do not receive such a notification, contact us on applyfor-funds@artscouncil.mt.

Applicants are required to register a profile on the ACM 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 showing the applicable NACE code Rev. 2.1
- Applicant biography/artistic CV to be included in the applicant profile
- Audiovisuals / portfolio showing the applicant's work, as relevant to the proposal (audiovisuals up to 5MB may be uploaded directly in the application form. In the case of larger files, these may be provided as a link.)
- Letters of intent from collaborators, if applicable
- The track record of the applicants and collaborators—this includes the CV, artistic portfolios, and related documentation
- A filled in and signed *de minimis* declaration (refer to Section 9)

6. Evaluation process

Phase 1 of this fund is non-competitive. It will be evaluated according to the established criteria. The first twenty-five eligible applications that will score four yeses will be accepted and will be participating in this fund.

Ten applicants will participate in Phase 2. They will be selected during a shortlisting session that will be evaluated by a panel of experts, based on the reports submitted through Phase 1 and according to the established criteria.

Phase 3 is competitive and will be evaluated by a panel of relevant experts, according to the established criteria. As specified above, each criterion is allocated specific marks. In order to be considered for funding, funding proposals have to obtain an average of 60 marks or more.

Nevertheless, the evaluation session and funding decisions depend on the quality of the submitted proposals as well as the availability of the funds. Therefore, obtaining 60 marks or more does not automatically mean that your project proposal has been successful. The Evaluation Board may decide not to allocate the total funds available for a particular call if the proposed projects do not reach the required level in terms of the programme criteria.

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

their independent and professional experience. The evaluators will present an assessment on each of the proposed projects, indicating the relevant ratings awarded.

6.1. Pitching

Phase 3 will include a live pitching session whereby the participants will present their ideas to the evaluation board. The aim of the pitching session is to create an opportunity for applicants to make a case for their projects to the evaluators. The project applications would already have been reviewed by the evaluators and the fund manager before the pitching session.

During the online session, the applicant has the opportunity to present comments, latest insights, and additions to the already submitted material.

The pitch can be presented in a variety of formats, including, but not limited to, visual aids, PowerPoint presentations, audio, etc., that should not be longer than ten (10) minutes. During the pitch, applicants are expected to explain the project's vision and communicate how the project will be implemented. This ten-minute pitch will be followed by a Q&A session with the panel of evaluators.

6.2. Communication of results

On the day indicated on page 3, you will receive your result notification from Arts Council Malta. Together with the covering letter, we will also attach a copy of the feedback form indicating the reasons and marks leading to the evaluation board's decision, according to the programme criteria.

The order of classification of the projects, according to the marks allocated by the evaluators, will be published online. Only the names and summaries 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 Funding Unit, fund manager, 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. Implementation and monitoring

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

Beneficiaries of Phase 1 will be allocated €2,000 each within 30 working days from the signing of the agreement.

Beneficiaries of Phase 2 will participate in a capacity building and incubation programme supported by ACM with a maximum value of up to €50,000 (up to €5,000 per participant).

Following the result notification of Phase 3, a contract specifying the conditions of the fund will be signed.

Beneficiaries of Phase 3 will receive the payment consisting of 100% of the amount allocated for by the evaluation board for the first year of the grant. The payment will be processed within 30 working days from the signing of the agreement. The amount allocated for the second year will be processed upon the submission and approval of the progress report for the first year, including certified accounts signed by a warranted auditor. 70% of the amount awarded for the third year will be processed upon the submission and approval of the progress report for the second year, including certified accounts signed by a warranted auditor. The remaining 30% will be disbursed after the submission and approval of the final report for the third year including certified accounts signed by a warranted auditor.

Arts Council Malta reserves the right to discontinue this collaboration should it deem that the funding was misused, proved ineffective, or the project did not reach its deliverables and objectives.

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

Arts Council Malta also reserves the right to revise the payments if the total expenditure is less than that estimated in the application form.

7.1. Report

At the end of each funding year, you will be required to submit a detailed report highlighting the work carried out and the project achievements, by not later than eight (8) weeks after your annual 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.

Beneficiaries must provide a final detailed and certified budget breakdown. The budget must be prepared in compliance with applicable financial standards and aligned with these guidelines and regulations, and they must be certified by a warranted auditor.

The Council retains the right to request the beneficiary to submit the VAT invoices and/or fiscal receipts to support the detailed certified budget.

At the end of year 1 and year 2, you will be required to submit a progress report.

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

Arts Council Malta 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 will be final. Complaints need to be made to the Director of Funding and Strategy, Arts Council Malta 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

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:

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 onto 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 programme 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 programme 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?

ACM 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 8th May 2026