



Ref. No.: ESF+.03.243/Training Grants/2/Artistic Community/v2

Call for Applications

Training Grants for the Artistic Community

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For Independent Cultural and Creative Professionals and Employees of Private-Sector or Non-Government Cultural Organisations

ESF+.03.243 – Strengthening Malta’s Cultural and Creative Sectors through Lifelong Learning

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Contents

1	Definitions.....	3
2	Introduction	5
3	Objectives	6
4	Eligibility Criteria.....	6
5	Types of Grants	12
6	Areas Addressed	13
7	Application Process.....	14
8	Awarding.....	16
9	Financial details and Reimbursement	16
10	Reservations	22
11	Further Information	22
	ANNEX I – Eligible NACE Codes for the CCS	24

1 DEFINITIONS

1.1 Cultural and Creative Sectors

The **Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS)** include all individuals, organisations and enterprises engaged in the creation, production, development, presentation, management, preservation and promotion of artistic, cultural and creative goods, services, or experiences.

Within the scope of the ESF+.03.243 project, eligible activities and professional roles fall under the following twelve areas:

- Cultural production
- Exhibition practices
- Theatre, festivals and front-of-house services
- Cultural heritage and historic buildings
- Marketing for the cultural sector
- Festivals and cultural events management
- Cultural policy and strategy development
- Performing arts
- Media arts
- Literary arts
- Visual arts
- Crafts

1.2 Artistic Community

For the purposes of this Call, the **Artistic Community** refers to individuals and organisations whose primary professional activity is rooted in the CCS. This includes:

- **Independent cultural and creative professionals** (self-employed individuals, freelancers and sole traders);
- **Employees of private-sector entities** whose principal activity is within the CCS;
- **Employees of non-government cultural organisations** whose primary mission is within the CCS.

1.3 Independent cultural and creative professionals

For the purposes of this scheme, **Independent Cultural and Creative Professionals** refers to individuals who are self-employed, freelancers or sole traders actively engaged in artistic, cultural or creative economic activity within Malta's CCS. These professionals operate on an independent basis, outside of permanent employment contracts and contribute to the creation, production, management or promotion of cultural and creative content.

1.4 Private-Sector Employees

For the purposes of this Call, **Private-Sector Employees** are defined as individuals formally engaged by a private entity whose principal economic activity falls within the CCS. Eligible

employment arrangements include employment under a Contract of Service, whether on an indefinite (permanent) or definite (fixed-term) basis.

1.5 Non-Government Cultural Organisations

For the purposes of this Call, **non-government cultural organisations** are legally established organisations in Malta whose primary mission, as stated in their statute or registration, is the delivery of cultural and artistic activities for the benefit of the public.

Eligible organisations include:

- **Voluntary Organisations (VOs)** registered with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations under the Voluntary Organisations Act (CAP 492 of the Laws of Malta) and holding active status;
- **Foundations or associations** registered with the Malta Business Registry (MBR) under the Second Schedule of the Civil Code (CAP 16 of the Laws of Malta);
- **Other non-profit cultural entities** duly registered in line with national regulatory requirements.

1.6 NACE Codes

NACE Codes (Rev. 2.1) are the official European classification system for economic activities, each identifying a specific professional or business sector (e.g. performing arts, film production, graphic design, cultural heritage management).

Under this ESF+.03.243 scheme, applicants must indicate their registered NACE code(s) as declared on their VAT certificate or business registration. An annex of eligible codes (Annex I) is provided to ensure consistency with the scheme's objectives and covers activities directly rooted in the CCS.

Applicants must be registered under a NACE code listed in Annex I and demonstrate that their primary professional activity is embedded in the CCS. Training may be pursued in any of the twelve eligible areas listed in Section 6, provided it is relevant to the applicant's CCS practice and clearly justified.

1.7 De minimis Aid

De minimis aid refers to State aid granted to an undertaking which does not exceed a total of €300,000 per single undertaking over a period of three years, in line with the *de minimis* Regulation. Aid falling within this threshold is deemed not to distort competition or affect trade between Member States and therefore does not require prior notification to the European Commission.

For the purposes of this scheme, applicants are required to declare any other *de minimis* aid received and/or applied for during the relevant three-year period, to ensure that the *de minimis* threshold is not exceeded.

1.8 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.

1.9 Single Undertaking

This means 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.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 A Call for Applications is being issued, offering Training Grants under the ESF+.03.243 "*Strengthening Malta's Cultural and Creative Sectors through Lifelong Learning*", a project managed by Arts Council Malta (hereinafter referred to as ACM). This Call is open to:

- **Strand 1** – Independent Cultural and Creative Professionals (self-employed individuals, freelancers and sole traders);
- **Strand 2** – Employees of Private-Sector and Non-Government Cultural Organisations.

2.2 These Grants are co-financed by the European Social Fund+ 2021-2027, addressing Priority 3 "Quality and inclusive education and enhanced lifelong learning for Growth", and the Specific Objective 4.7 "Lifelong learning and career transitions".

2.3 Eligible applicants may apply for funding to participate in short courses, master classes, conferences, seminars, workshops or networking opportunities, delivered **online** or taking place

abroad in any of the other European Union Member States (i.e. excluding Malta), the EEA/EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) or the United Kingdom.

2.4 Training must occur between 23rd March 2026 and 31st December 2026. Applications for training that is partly or entirely taking place outside the eligible period will not be accepted. This is a rolling Call, and applications shall be accepted from the date of issue of the Call until 30th November 2026. Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted.

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 The Training Grants aim to:

- Support the professional growth of individuals active in Malta's CCS, whether as independent cultural and creative professionals or as employees of private-sector and non-government cultural organisations;
- Promote continuous learning and targeted upskilling to address technical, digital and transversal skills gaps relevant to the CCS;
- Strengthen the international outlook of the CCS by enabling participation in structured training experiences abroad and online;
- Enhance the organisational capacity, sustainability and competitiveness of cultural operators and practitioners through knowledge, innovation and strategic development;
- Encourage transnational cooperation through the exchange of best practices and the creation of international professional networks;
- Embed a culture of lifelong learning across the CCS, contributing to a more resilient, innovative and inclusive sector.

3.2 Applications will be accepted as per eligibility requirements specified under Section 4 of this Call for Applications.

4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

4.1 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

4.1.1 **STRAND 1 – Independent Cultural and Creative Professionals**

(a) Applicants eligible for a Grant under **Strand 1** must:

- Be actively engaged in professional practice within the CCS;
- Be registered as self-employed with Jobsplus, including freelancers and sole traders;
- Hold a valid VAT number; and

- Be registered under a relevant NACE code(s) associated with the CCS, as outlined in **Annex I** of this Call. The NACE code must reflect the applicant's declared economic activity within the CCS.
- The proposed training does not need to correspond directly to the applicant's registered NACE Code. Training may be pursued in any of the eligible areas listed in Section 6, provided that the applicant clearly demonstrates its relevance to their current professional practice within the CCS or to their professional development within the sector.

4.1.2 **STRAND 2 – Employees of Private-Sector and Non-Government Cultural Organisations**

(a) Applicants eligible for a Grant under **Strand 2** must:

- Be engaged in duties or responsibilities that are directly linked to the CCS;
- Be formally engaged within either:
 - (i) the **private sector**, i.e., by an entity whose principal economic activity falls within the CCS; or
 - (ii) a **non-government cultural organisation**, such as a Voluntary Organisation (VO), foundation or association, whose primary mission is the delivery of cultural activities.

- For **private-sector employers** and for **non-government cultural organisations that are VAT-registered and engaged in economic activity**, the entity must hold a valid VAT registration linked to an eligible NACE code as listed in **Annex I**.

The proposed training does not need to correspond directly to the employer's registered NACE Code. Training may be pursued in any of the eligible areas listed in Section 6, provided that the applicant clearly demonstrates its relevance to their current professional practice within the CCS or to their professional development within the sector.

- For **non-government cultural organisations that are not VAT-registered and that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU**, eligibility will be established through the documentation listed in Section 4.2.2, including:
 - the organisation's governing document (e.g. statute, constitution, deed of foundation or memorandum & articles), duly signed; and

- an official declaration¹ signed by the organisation’s legal representative explaining the reason for non-registration, and confirming that the organisation’s core operations are within the CCS and the organisation does not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU, therefore **falling outside the scope of State Aid**.
- Be formally engaged through one of the following contract arrangements:
 - **Indefinite** (permanent) employment contract;
 - **Definite** (fixed-term) employment contract.

4.1.3 General eligibility conditions

- (a) Applicants must be Maltese citizens, or hold a valid Maltese residence permit, or a Maltese citizenship certificate, or a Maltese passport.
- (b) Applicants must be at least 18 years old at the time of application.
- (c) Applicants who are already receiving a grant or sponsorship from other financial mechanisms for the same training are **not** entitled to assistance under this Call.

4.2 APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

4.2.1 STRAND 1 – Independent Cultural and Creative Professionals

Applicants under Strand 1 must submit the following:

A. Completed Online Application Form, including:

- (i) A short professional biography outlining the applicant’s background, professional experience and key achievements within the CCS;
- (ii) A description of the applicant’s professional activity within the CCS, clearly justifying how the applicant’s primary professional practice is directly rooted in the CCS and how the proposed training aligns with the objectives of this scheme;
- (iii) Indication of the applicant’s registered NACE Code(s), as declared on the VAT certificate;
- (iv) Full details of the proposed training activity, including title, organiser, country (where applicable), type of training, area addressed, and start and end dates;
- (v) Where applicable, a declaration by the applicant confirming that the transport of a musical instrument requiring the purchase of an extra seat is strictly necessary for participation in the training activity.

For in-person training abroad, the start date and end date must correspond to the **official training dates**, as shown on the organiser’s programme or agenda. **Travel**

¹ The signatory shall assume full responsibility for the accuracy of the declaration, including any consequences arising from false or misleading information.

dates (date of departure from Malta and date of return to Malta) will be requested at reimbursement stage, based on the booked flight itinerary.

B. Mandatory Supporting Documentation:

- (i) Official agenda or programme of activities, showing evidence of a participation or registration fee (unless waived);
- (ii) Proof of acceptance by the organiser (such as a formal invitation, booking confirmation or acceptance letter). Where no formal confirmation is issued due to the nature of the activity, a written justification must be provided;
- (iii) Copy of the applicant's VAT certificate, including the NACE Code(s) (Rev. 2.1);
- (iv) Copy of self-employed Jobsplus employment history;
- (v) Verifiable evidence demonstrating that the applicant's professional practice is rooted within the CCS. Such evidence may include, as applicable:
 - A portfolio of creative work;
 - Links to performances, productions, exhibitions, publications or artistic outputs;
 - A website or professional page showcasing CCS activity;
 - Project documentation, programme booklets, catalogues, posters, recordings or similar;
- (vi) Completed and signed *de minimis* Aid Declaration, using the template provided by Arts Council Malta;
- (vii) Completed and signed ESF+ Participant Data Collection Form;
- (viii) Completed and signed Applicant's Declaration.

Verification of Eligibility:

Eligibility under Strand 1 shall be verified by Arts Council Malta on the basis of:

- The registered NACE Code(s) (Rev. 2.1);
- The VAT certificate;
- Self-employed Jobsplus employment history;
- The professional biography and description provided;
- The supporting documentation submitted.

Arts Council Malta reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarifications where necessary to verify compliance with the eligibility requirements of this Call.

Failure to provide mandatory documentation or to remedy identified deficiencies within the timeframe established by Arts Council Malta may result in the application being deemed ineligible.

4.2.2 STRAND 2 – Employees of Private-Sector and Non-Government Cultural Organisations

Applicants under Strand 2 must submit the following:

A. Completed Online Application Form, including:

- (i) A short professional biography outlining the applicant's background, professional experience and key achievements within the CCS;
- (ii) A description of the applicant's professional activity within the CCS, clearly justifying how the applicant's primary professional practice is directly rooted in the CCS and how the proposed training aligns with the objectives of this scheme;
- (iii) Indication of the employer's registered NACE Code(s), as declared on the employer's VAT certificate (where applicable);
- (iv) Full details of the proposed training activity, including title, organiser, country (where applicable), type of training, area addressed, and start and end dates.

For in-person training abroad, the start date and end date must correspond to the **official training dates**, as shown on the organiser's programme or agenda. **Travel dates (date of departure from Malta and date of return to Malta) will be requested at reimbursement stage, based on the booked flight itinerary.**

B. Mandatory Supporting Documentation:

- (i) Official agenda or programme of activities, showing evidence of a participation or registration fee (unless waived);
- (ii) Proof of acceptance by the organiser (such as a formal invitation, booking confirmation or acceptance letter). Where no formal confirmation is issued due to the nature of the activity, a written justification must be provided;
- (iii) Copy of the applicant's Jobsplus employment history;
- (iv) Verifiable evidence demonstrating that the applicant's professional practice is rooted within the CCS. Such evidence may include, as applicable:
 - An official job description or role statement;
 - A portfolio of creative work;
 - Links to performances, productions, exhibitions, publications or artistic outputs;
 - A website or professional page showcasing CCS activity;
 - Project documentation, programme booklets, catalogues, posters, recordings or similar;
- (v) Completed and signed ESF+ Participant Data Collection Form;
- (vi) Completed and signed Applicant's Declaration;
- (vii) Organisational Endorsement signed by the CEO, Director or Head of Entity, confirming that:
 - The organisation approves the applicant's participation in the proposed training; and
 - The training is considered relevant and beneficial to the applicant's role and consistent with the objectives of this Call.

The endorsement must be signed by the authorised representative and stamped with the organisation's official seal where applicable.

(viii) Where applicable, written confirmation issued by the applicant's employer (e.g. CEO, Director or Head of Organisation), stating that the transport of a musical instrument requiring the purchase of an extra seat is strictly necessary for participation in the training activity.

C. Additional Documentation Based on Employer Status:

(i) Where the employer is VAT-registered and engaged in economic activity:

- Copy of the employer's VAT certificate, including the NACE Code(s) (Rev. 2.1);
- Completed and signed *de minimis* Aid Declaration, using the template provided by Arts Council Malta.

(ii) Where the employer is a non-government cultural organisation that is not VAT-registered and does not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU:

- The organisation's governing document (e.g. statute, constitution, deed of foundation or memorandum and articles), duly signed;
- An official declaration signed by the organisation's legal representative explaining the reason for non-registration and confirming that:
 - The organisation's core operations are within the CCS; and
 - The organisation does not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU and therefore falls outside the scope of State Aid rules.

Verification of Eligibility:

Eligibility under Strand 2 shall be verified by Arts Council Malta on the basis of:

- The employer's registered NACE Code(s) (Rev. 2.1), where applicable;
- VAT documentation, where applicable;
- Jobsplus employment history;
- The professional biography and description provided;
- The supporting documentation submitted;
- The organisation's endorsement.

Arts Council Malta reserves the right to request additional documentation or clarifications where necessary to verify compliance with the eligibility requirements of this Call.

Failure to provide mandatory documentation or to remedy identified deficiencies within the timeframe established by Arts Council Malta may result in the application being deemed ineligible.

Note:

Applicants who hold their own VAT number registered under a CCS-relevant NACE code shall apply under **Strand 1**.

Applicants who are formally registered with Jobsplus as employees of a private-sector or non-government cultural organisation shall apply under **Strand 2**.

4.3 CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO THE TRAINING ACTIVITY

4.3.1 **Training Dates:** Eligible training is to take place between **23rd March 2026** and **31st December 2026**.

4.3.2 **Deadline to apply:** 30th November 2026.

4.3.3 Training taking place **abroad** may only be held in:

- the other countries within the European Union² (i.e. excluding Malta),
- the **EEA/EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway)**, or
- the **United Kingdom**.

The duration of in-person training abroad must **not exceed two weeks**.

4.3.4 **Online training** must **not exceed 80 contact hours** and can be distributed over multiple weeks, provided it is completed within the eligible period specified in 4.3.1.

4.3.5 Training must align with one of the twelve eligible areas listed in Section 6.

5 TYPES OF GRANTS

5.1 The following grant types are available:

- (i) **Short courses:** Structured programmes, typically lasting a few days to a few weeks, focusing on specific skills or knowledge.
- (ii) **Master classes:** Intensive, expert-led sessions for advanced skill development.
- (iii) **Conferences:** Events for networking, knowledge sharing and industry updates.

² Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

- (iv) **Seminars:** Interactive sessions with presentations and discussions on specific topics.
- (v) **Workshops:** Hands-on, practical training sessions to develop specific skills.
- (vi) **Networking:** Opportunities to build professional connections, such as cultural exchange programmes.

6 AREAS ADDRESSED

6.1 Applicants must select training related to one of the following twelve areas that reflect their specific work and capacity-building needs:

No.	Area	Description
1	Cultural Production	Covers the technical and backstage elements that support cultural productions, including stage management, set design and construction, scenic art, sound and lighting operations, stage rigging, wardrobe and costume.
2	Exhibitions	Includes curating, design and management of exhibitions within cultural venues, including the artistic and creative processes that shape how works are presented to audiences.
3	Theatre, Festivals, Galleries and Front of House	Focuses on visitor engagement and front-of-house services that enhance the audience experience in theatres, festivals, galleries and other cultural venues.
4	Cultural Historic Buildings	Covers the conservation, management and interpretation of historic buildings and sites, with emphasis on safeguarding heritage and enriching visitor experiences.
5	Marketing	Focuses on arts-specific marketing and communication, including audience engagement, promotion and outreach strategies that support the visibility and sustainability of cultural and artistic initiatives.
6	Festivals / Cultural Events Management	Covers the planning, coordination and delivery of festivals, cultural events and traditional celebrations, including organisational, financial and logistical aspects of cultural programming.
7	Cultural Policy and Strategy	Covers cultural management, sustainability, creative entrepreneurship, cultural rights, diversity and community development, strengthening the long-term development of the CCS.
8	Performing Arts	Covers theatre, dance, music and performance-based disciplines, with a focus on artistic practice and performance development.

9	Media Arts	Covers film, television, digital media, sound recording and other practices that combine artistic expression with audiovisual technology.
10	Literary Arts	Covers literature and creative writing across diverse forms, including poetry, prose, drama and other original written works, focusing on the artistic development, expression and dissemination of literary works.
11	Visual Arts	Covers visual artistic practices such as painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, illustration and graphic design.
12	Crafts	Covers traditional and contemporary craft practices, including ceramics, textiles, woodworking and jewellery making, emphasising the cultural and artistic value of handmade creation

7 APPLICATION PROCESS

7.1 SUBMISSION METHOD

7.1.1 Applications must be submitted online through Arts Council Malta's CRM. Follow these steps to apply:

- (i) Read this Call for Applications carefully.
- (ii) Check whether your proposed training is eligible under this scheme.
- (iii) Access the online application through [this link](#).
- (iv) If you do not already have a profile, create one by clicking on 'Register' and completing the required details.
- (v) From the 'Open Calls' section, select the application form for the correct strand of this scheme (refer to Section 4).
- (vi) Complete the online application by filling in all required information and upload all the necessary supporting documentation.
- (vii) Submit the application through the CRM. An automatic acknowledgement will be sent to the applicant's registered email address. If you do not receive such notification, contact us at esf.acm@artscouncil.mt.

7.1.2 It is the applicant's responsibility to submit a complete application as outlined in these guidelines.

7.2 TIMING OF APPLICATIONS

7.2.1 Applications must be submitted **before** the start of the proposed training activity. Applications received after the training has started will not be considered.

- 7.2.2 To ensure sufficient time for processing and eligibility checks, applicants **must** submit their application **at least fifteen (15) working days prior to the start date of the training**.

Applications submitted less than fifteen (15) working days before the start date of training will be automatically deemed ineligible and will not be processed.

- 7.2.3 Applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis from **2nd March 2026** until **30th November 2026**, or until funds are exhausted. Only training activities taking place within the eligibility period specified in 4.3.1 will be considered.

7.3 EVALUATION

7.3.1 Eligibility Screening

All applications will first undergo an eligibility screening to verify compliance with:

- the eligibility requirements set out in Section 4 of this Call;
- the training eligibility conditions;
- the application and submission requirements;
- the applicable State Aid provisions, where relevant.

Applications that fail to meet any mandatory eligibility requirement shall be deemed **ineligible** and will not proceed to further consideration.

7.3.2 Grounds for Ineligibility

An application shall be deemed ineligible where, including but not limited to:

- the applicant does not satisfy the eligibility criteria under Section 4;
- the application is submitted less than fifteen (15) working days prior to the start of the training;
- the training falls outside the eligible time period or geographic scope;
- the proposed training does not align with the objectives of this Call;
- the applicant does not satisfy applicable State Aid conditions, where relevant.
- mandatory supporting documentation required to establish eligibility is not submitted and is not remedied following a request for clarification by Arts Council Malta.

Ineligible applications shall be rejected.

7.3.3 Eligible Applications

Applications that satisfy all eligibility requirements will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.

An application that is deemed eligible may nevertheless not be awarded funding if the allocated budget for this Call has been fully committed.

7.3.4 Clarifications

Arts Council Malta reserves the right to request clarifications or additional documentation during the evaluation process to verify eligibility or compliance.

Where clarification is requested, the applicant shall provide the requested information within the timeframe established by Arts Council Malta.

Failure to provide the requested clarification within the stipulated timeframe may result in the application being deemed ineligible.

8 AWARDING

8.1 Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing.

8.2 Applicants are advised not to commence their training until they have received written confirmation from ACM that their application has been approved. Any costs incurred prior to such confirmation are at the applicant's own risk.

8.3 Each eligible applicant may be awarded **only one grant** under this ESF+.03.243 Training Grant scheme, regardless of the strand or Call for Applications. Multiple applications from the same individual across different strands or Calls within this scheme **will not** be considered for funding.

8.4 Grants are awarded on a **first-come, first-served** basis, subject to the availability of funds.

9 FINANCIAL DETAILS AND REIMBURSEMENT

9.1 ELIGIBLE COSTS

9.1.1 Eligible expenses include:

(i) **Registration / Participation fees:**

Reimbursement is based on real costs, supported by an invoice, including VAT. Reimbursement shall be limited to the actual amount paid and supported by proof of payment.

(ii) **Flight costs (for in-person training abroad):**

Reimbursement is based on the Erasmus+ Distance Calculator (available at <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/resources-and-tools/distance-calculator>), up to the maximum band corresponding to the calculated distance as published in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide.

(iii) **Subsistence Allowance (for in-person training abroad):**

Based on the Government Per Diem Allowance for Overseas Duty Travel, as published by MFIN No 3/2024 Letter Circular dated 30th December 2024 (available at <https://finance.gov.mt/resources/per-diem-rates/>).

(iv) **Instrument Extra Seat (where applicable):**

In duly justified cases where participation in an eligible training activity requires the transport of musical instruments and necessitates the purchase of an instrument extra seat, such cost shall be considered an eligible expense under this Call.

This requirement must be strictly necessary for the applicant's participation in the training activity and must be supported by appropriate written confirmation. Such confirmation shall state that the transport of the musical instrument is strictly necessary for participation in the training activity.

- For applicants under Strand 1, this may be provided by the applicant.
- For applicants under Strand 2, the confirmation shall be issued by the applicant's employer (e.g. CEO, Director or Head of Organisation), as applicable.

This must be supported by booking confirmation and/or an invoice clearly indicating the extra seat. In line with Section 9.3, applicants shall also provide boarding passes or equivalent proof of travel for all flights. Where available, these should reflect the extra seat booked for the instrument.

9.1.2 **Per Diem Coverage:** The subsistence allowance (per diem) for in-person training abroad will be reimbursed on the basis of a **unit cost per person per night spent abroad** and will only cover the official duration of the training.

For the purposes of this section, the official duration refers to the training dates indicated on the organiser's programme/agenda and evidenced by the participation or attendance documentation.

As a general rule:

- participants shall **not arrive earlier than one (1) day prior** to the commencement of the training; and
- shall **not depart later than the day of its conclusion**, provided that flight arrangements can reasonably be made.

Where flight availability or timing makes same-day arrival or departure impracticable, reimbursement may include up to one (1) additional night before and/or after the training, provided that such additional night is strictly necessary and duly justified.

Any extension of stay abroad for personal reasons shall not be eligible under this Call. Any additional costs arising from such extension shall be borne entirely by the applicant, and no subsistence allowance shall be payable for such extended period.

9.1.3 **Per Diem Composition and Reductions:**

The per diem rate comprises the following components:

- Accommodation – 50%
- Breakfast – 10%
- Lunch – 10%
- Dinner – 10%
- Sundry expenses – 20%

Where meals (including breakfast, lunch and/or dinner) are provided free of charge by the organiser or host institution as part of the official programme, a **deduction of 10%** of the applicable per diem rate shall apply **for each meal provided**.

Where **accommodation and breakfast** are provided free of charge, a **reduction of 60%** of the per diem rate shall apply.

Applicants shall declare any meals and/or accommodation provided as part of the training programme in the **Statement of Expenditure** submitted at reimbursement stage.

9.1.4 For **online training**, only registration/participation fees are eligible.

9.1.5 **Ineligible costs:**

The following costs are **not** eligible for reimbursement under this Call:

- (i) Any charges beyond the standard participation/registration fee, including late payment fees, penalties or optional extras.
- (ii) Contingency or unforeseen costs, such as insurance add-ons, personal expenses or other costs not directly related to the training.

9.1.6 **Maximum Grant Contribution:**

The maximum contribution that may be awarded under this Call shall be capped at **€2,000 per applicant**.

In exceptional cases, where requests are approved under Section 9.1.1 (iv) (Instrument Extra Seat), an additional allocation may be granted exclusively to cover the cost of the extra seat required for the transport of musical instruments. This allocation shall be granted separately and in addition to the maximum grant contribution of €2,000 per applicant.

The additional allocation shall be calculated using the Erasmus+ Distance Calculator, in line with the methodology applied for international travel under Section 9.1.1 (ii) of this Call.

The additional allocation shall be limited to one (1) instrument extra seat per applicant. Any costs exceeding both the maximum grant contribution and the additional allocation provided under this section shall be borne by the applicant (for Strand 1) or the applicant's employer (for Strand 2).

- 9.1.7 Following approval, Arts Council Malta will communicate in writing the **maximum eligible amount** approved for reimbursement, based on the documentation submitted and in line with the applicable unit costs and ceilings under this Call. This amount does not represent an upfront payment and reimbursement will only be made for costs that are eligible under this Call and supported by the required documentation.

9.2 PAYMENT PROCESS

- 9.2.1 Expenses must be paid upfront by the applicant (or by the organisation they represent, as applicable) and will be reimbursed upon the submission of all eligible documentation.
- 9.2.2 ACM will reimburse costs upon submission of a Reimbursement Request Form (provided by ACM), together with the required supporting documentation.
- 9.2.3 The Applicant must submit the reimbursement form within **10 working days** from:
- The date of return (for in-person training abroad), or
 - The date of completion (for online training).

9.3 REIMBURSEMENT DOCUMENTATION

- 9.3.1 For **in-person training abroad**, the following documents must be attached when requesting reimbursement:
- (i) Copy of invoice for participation/registration fees (if applicable).
 - (ii) Proof of payment, such as receipt, bank SEPA credit transfer report or bank debit advice (if applicable).
 - (iii) Copy of the official training programme, agenda or course description.
 - (iv) Copy of the Certificate of Participation or Attendance. Where such a certificate is not issued, the applicant must provide alternative evidence of attendance, such as email confirmation, registration confirmation, entry pass or other documentation issued by the organiser demonstrating participation in the activity.
 - (v) Copies of boarding passes or other evidence of online check-in for all flights.

- (vi) Statement of expenditure form for subsistence allowance, signed by the applicant using the template provided by ACM (required only when claiming a subsistence allowance).
- (vii) Where applicable, booking confirmation and/or invoice clearly indicating the instrument extra seat.

9.3.2 For **online training**, the following documents must be attached when requesting reimbursement:

- (i) Copy of invoice for registration/participation fees (if applicable);
- (ii) Proof of payment (e.g. receipt, bank SEPA credit transfer report or bank debit advice, as applicable);
- (iii) Copy of the official training programme, agenda or course description;
- (iv) Copy of the Certificate of Participation or Attendance. If such a certificate is not issued, the applicant must provide either an email confirmation or an endorsement letter signed by the tutor or organiser, verifying their attendance.

9.4 APPLICABILITY OF STATE AID RULES

9.4.1 State aid rules applicable to applicants 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:

1. aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of fishery and aquaculture products;
2. aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of price or quantity of products purchased or put on the market;
3. aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products;
4. aid granted to undertakings active in the processing and marketing of agricultural products, in one of the following cases:
 - a. where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertakings concerned;
 - b. where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
5. aid granted to export-related activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, the establishment and

- operation of a distribution network or other current expenditure linked to the export activity;
6. aid contingent upon the use of domestic goods and services over imported goods and services.

The total amount of *de minimis* aid granted to a single undertaking shall not exceed €300,000 over any period of three years, assessed on a rolling basis.

This maximum threshold includes all *de minimis* aid granted under this scheme and any other State Aid measure implemented in line with the *de minimis* Regulation, 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 applicable rules on cumulation of aid as outlined in Article 5 of the *de minimis* Regulation will be respected.

Applicants (including self-employed individuals, private-sector entities and non-government organisations that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU) are required to submit a *de minimis* declaration indicating any other *de minimis* aid received and/or applied for during the applicable three-year period. This ensures that the total amount of *de minimis* aid granted to a single undertaking under the *de minimis* rule does not exceed the applicable threshold.

Should a successful applicant not be eligible to receive *de minimis* aid, the said applicant shall be deemed ineligible and the application shall be rejected.

In line with the *de minimis* Regulation, records regarding *de minimis* aid shall be maintained for 10 years from the date on which the aid under the scheme is granted.

Publication in Central Register

In line with Article 6(1) of the *de minimis* Regulation, as of 1st January 2026, information on *de minimis* aid granted under this scheme shall be made publicly available in a central register on *de minimis* aid. The following information shall be made public:

- 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).

9.4.2 Non-Government Cultural Organisations that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU

Non-Government Cultural Organisations that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU may also apply for this scheme. However, the rules outlined in Section 9.4.1 above are not applicable in such cases.

Such organisations will be required to provide supporting documentation confirming the non-economic nature of their operations, as established in Section 4 of this Call.

10 RESERVATIONS

- 10.1 Arts Council Malta shall not be held liable for any losses, damages or liabilities incurred by the applicant as a result of their participation in the training activity, including any misconduct or failure to fulfil obligations towards the organiser.
- 10.2 Arts Council Malta shall not be held responsible for any changes to the training activity made by the organiser, including cancellations, interruptions or the applicant's removal from the programme.
- 10.3 If the applicant withdraws from the training for any reason, the related costs will be deemed ineligible and will not be reimbursed. In exceptional cases of *force majeure*, reimbursement may be considered only for non-refundable eligible costs, provided these are fully documented and approved by Arts Council Malta.
- 10.4 Applicants who provide false or misleading information or who withhold relevant details that could have influenced the outcome of the application, will be disqualified and required to refund the entire grant awarded.
- 10.5 Arts Council Malta reserves the right to refuse reimbursement if the applicant is found to be in breach of any conditions of this Call or where participation cannot be evidenced or does not correspond to the approved training activity.
- 10.6 Applications will no longer be accepted once the allocated budget for this Call has been fully committed.
- 10.7 Arts Council Malta reserves the right to publish the names of successful applicants on its official website and/or through any of its communication channels.

11 FURTHER INFORMATION

- 11.1 Further information may be obtained from Arts Council Malta by phone on **2334 7201/2** or by e-mail at esf.acm@artscouncil.mt.

11.2 **Data Protection:** Personal data collected through this application will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and relevant national data protection legislation. All data will be handled confidentially and used solely for the purposes of project administration, monitoring, evaluation and reporting under the ESF+ programme.

ANNEX I – ELIGIBLE NACE CODES FOR THE CCS

This list of eligible NACE codes is aligned with the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community, **NACE Rev. 2.1** (adopted by the European Commission in October 2022 and applicable for European statistics from 2025 onwards).

- For **Strand 1** (Independent Cultural and Creative Professionals), the NACE code refers to the applicant’s own registered economic activity.
- For **Strand 2** (Employees of Private-Sector and Non-Government Cultural Organisations), the NACE code refers to the registered economic activity of the applicant’s employer.

The requirement to hold a registered NACE Code listed in this Annex applies to applicants and employers that carry out an economic activity. Non-government cultural organisations that do not carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU are not required to hold a registered NACE Code, provided they demonstrate that their primary mission falls within the CCS through the documentation required under Section 4.2 (Application Requirements – Strand 2).

NACE Code	Short Description	Full Description
59.11	Motion picture, video and television programme production activities	Production of films, videos and television programmes, including artistic and creative content (covers streaming and online productions).
59.12	Motion picture, video and television programme post-production activities	Post-production services such as editing, dubbing, special effects, animation, subtitling, etc.
59.20	Sound recording and music publishing activities	Recording of music, sound design, music publishing, rights management, including digital distribution.
90.11	Literary creation and musical composition activities	Creation of literary works (e.g. prose, poetry, drama) and composition of musical works.
90.12	Visual arts creation activities	Creation of visual art works such as painting, drawing, sculpture, photography and similar artistic expression.
90.13	Other arts creation activities	Artistic creation not elsewhere classified, including choreography and multidisciplinary arts.
90.20	Activities of performing arts	Live performances in theatre, dance, music, opera, circus and other performing arts.
90.31	Operation of arts facilities and sites	Operation and management of theatres, concert halls, galleries, exhibition spaces and other cultural venues.
90.39	Other support activities to arts creation and performing arts	Technical and production support such as stage design, lighting, costume, set construction and backstage services.

For detailed descriptions of each NACE Rev. 2.1 code, applicants may refer to the official Eurostat classification: [NACE Rev. 2.1 – Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European](#)

[Community](#). Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their registered NACE code corresponds to the official classification in force.