

# Screen Support Scheme Strand 6: International Guidelines and Regulations 2026



ARTS  
COUNCIL  
MALTA

ISSUED: MARCH 2026

**ALLOCATIONS**

SESSION BUDGET	MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER PROJECT
€110,000	Promotional Support: EUR 20,000* International Festival Participation: EUR 5,000* International Festival Submissions: EUR 2,500 *In the case of an 'A-List' Festival, the maximum amount may be EUR 40,000 and EUR 10,000 respectively

CO-FUNDING	DISBURSEMENT
The scheme may cover up to 100% of total project cost	70% upon signing of the grant agreement 30% following approval of the final report

**TIMEFRAMES**

DEADLINE	RESULTS	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
18 <sup>th</sup> November 2026, or when funds are fully disbursed	Within 20 working days from the submission of a complete application	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2026 – 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2028

# 1. Introduction

The aim of the Screen Support Scheme – Strand 6: International is to support the promotion stage of cultural and creative audiovisual productions that have been completed not more than 18 months before the submission of a complete application or that are in an advanced development stage. The Strand will be limited to the following productions that meet the eligible cultural criteria: animation, documentaries, and fiction.

The strand provides financial support in the form of a grant to individual audiovisual professionals and independent audiovisual entities to:

1. assist producers who intend to self-distribute a qualifying production (finished) and/or seek sales agents or distributors or similar service providers to distribute and reach out to international audiences with a qualifying film (finished)
2. participate with a selected film (not in competition), selected short film (only if in competition), or participation at a market (on condition that the applicant has been selected)
3. support costs related to festival submissions of qualifying productions to recognised international festivals (Refer to Section 10 Appendices for a list of approved festivals)

In the event that the applicant is a minority co-producer, the support may cover only a percentage of the costs, equivalent to the percentage of the copyright in the film held by the applicant (for promotional support and international festival submissions) and the costs sustained by the persons indicated in Section 3.5 of these guidelines and regulations (for international festival participation).

Applicants are encouraged to give due consideration, as appropriate, to the principles explained in the [Right to Culture – Resource Pack](#) when developing their proposal in relation to how they engage with communities and the considerations of everyone's cultural rights in their work. This 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 expected to give due consideration, as appropriate, to the main principles outlined in the [Charter for the Status of the Artist](#) when proposing their operational and programming activities to ensure fair and just working conditions for artists. These include the right to artistic freedom, improved accessibility, formal/informal/non-formal skill recognition, decent socio-economic conditions, non-discrimination and equity, ethical considerations, and adherence to intellectual property rights and international labour law. The Charter for the Status of the Artist is meant to provide a dynamic frame of reference for any legislation, policy, or initiative which directly or indirectly impacts artists and cultural and creative sectors, ensuring that any action is aligned with the ultimate long-term vision of elevating the status of artists in Malta in line with their tangible value to society.

## 2. Definitions

Applicant:

- An applicant must be an individual audiovisual professional as defined or an independent audiovisual entity. Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or involved in the management of the *Screen Support Scheme – Strand 6: International*.

The applicant's NACE code must be one of the following:

- J59.11 Motion picture, video, and TV programme production activities

- J59.12 Motion picture, video, and TV programme post-production activities
- J59.13 Motion picture and video distribution activities

### 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 the scheme. The beneficiary of the grant may not be changed throughout the duration of the funded project and until the final disbursement is issued. The disbursement of the grant may only be issued on behalf of the beneficiary. The beneficiary is responsible to ensure that any VAT invoices are issued on behalf of the beneficiary and include the beneficiary's VAT information.

### Audiovisual production/project:

- An audiovisual production/project may be a work of fiction, documentary, or animation.

### Chain of title:

- All of the agreements/documentation that evidences the sequence of transfers of title to a work.

### Difficult audiovisual work:

- This includes audiovisual works by first-time and second-time directors, short films, documentaries, low budget productions (i.e. the total production budget does not exceed €1,500,000), works whose original version is in the Maltese language (or in a language with a limited distribution territory, population or language area), or otherwise commercially difficult works.

### Documentary:

- A production that takes a real-life subject as its starting point but requires substantial original writing and sets out an author's and/or director's point of view from a historical and/or contemporary perspective. A documentary should contain a certain "timeless" element and should contain significant original filming (unless it is a documentary based on archival or an animation) and does not merely convey information. A documentary with a length of 52 minutes or more shall be considered a feature-length work for the purposes of these guidelines.

### Eligibility:

- Applications will first be screened in terms of technical and artistic eligibility by the fund administrators and managers. Proposals which are not considered eligible in terms of the set criteria will not be processed further and will not undergo evaluation.

### Evaluation:

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

### Evaluators:

- Arts Council Malta appoints an evaluation team for each call under the scheme. The Arts Council may appoint both local and foreign professionals in the film sector. The Arts Council will ensure

that the board is balanced and will include both local and/or foreign professionals with a minimum of five years' experience in this strand.

### Independent Audiovisual Entity:

- An independent audiovisual entity 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 consists in developing and producing audiovisual works. It is considered independent if its origins are independent of the state, or public and/or parastatal entities, public or private broadcasting organisations, streaming platforms or telecom companies. The entity's stocks or shares may not belong to the state, public and/or parastatal entities, public or private broadcasting organisations, streaming platforms or telecom companies.

### Individual audiovisual professionals

- Natural persons applying for a grant must be Maltese citizens or be in possession of a Malta permanent residence permit, or of a Maltese citizenship certificate, or of a Maltese passport. Natural persons must be audiovisual professionals active in the eligible NACE activities.

### Management and administration:

- Arts Council Malta is responsible for the management of this scheme. All official correspondence, including the 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.

### Maximum funding:

- There is a maximum funding allocation per project, with a ceiling amount as follows:
  - Promotional Support: EUR 20,000\*
  - International Festival Participation: EUR 5,000\*
  - International Festival Submissions: EUR 2,500

\*In the case of an 'A-List' Festival [refer to section 10 of these guidelines and regulations], the maximum amount may be EUR 40,000 and EUR 10,000 respectively.

This will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the project.

### Mood board:

- A visual tool intended to communicate the filmic concepts of a particular project. It is a well-thought-out and planned arrangement of images, materials, pieces of text, etc. that is intended to evoke or project a particular style or tonality.

### Period of eligibility of costs:

- The period of eligibility of costs is established on page 2 of this document and will be indicated in the agreement.

### Producer:

- The person responsible for finding and launching an audiovisual project. This includes being responsible for the creative, financial, and managerial aspects of the making of a film or TV

production. A producer oversees all elements of pre-production, production, and post-production, right up to release.

### 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.

### Resubmitted proposals

- A project/proposal that was submitted through a previous call can be re-submitted only if the project/proposal has undergone considerable changes or if new elements have been developed since the last submission. On re-submission, the applicant is to present a report/statement clearly highlighting the changes that have been effected.

### Short films:

- May be a work of fiction, documentary, or animation, of a maximum duration of 69 minutes in the case of fiction and 51 minutes in the case of documentary. Short films are considered difficult audiovisual works.

### Small or medium-sized enterprise:

- The term refers to an undertaking which fulfils the criteria laid down in Annex I of Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, as amended.
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### Start of works:

- Means the earlier of either the commencement of the period of eligibility of costs or the signing of a legally binding agreement for the acquisition of any products or services relating to the project, that makes the project irreversible. Preparatory works are not considered start of works.

### Treatment:

- A detailed summary which normally lays out the structure of the whole story and communicates the world, the characters, important scenes, sequences, and story points, working as a roadmap for the reader, producer and writer.

### Undertaking:

- An undertaking is defined as an entity engaged in an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU (i.e. any activity consisting in offering goods and services on a market), regardless of its legal status and the way in which it is financed. The classification of a particular entity as an undertaking depends entirely on the nature of its activities. The application of the State aid rules does not depend on whether the entity is set up to generate profits. Non-profit entities can also offer goods and services on a market. Where this is not the case, non-profit entities remain outside the scope of State aid. Furthermore, the classification of an entity as an undertaking is always relative to a specific activity. An entity that carries out both economic and non-economic activities is to be regarded as an undertaking only with regard to the former.

## Undertaking in difficulty:

- Undertaking in difficulty means an undertaking in respect of which at least one of the following circumstances occurs:
  - In the case of a limited liability company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years), where more than half of its subscribed share capital has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. This is the case when deduction of accumulated losses from reserves (and all other elements generally considered as part of the own funds of the company) leads to a negative cumulative amount that exceeds half of the subscribed share capital. For the purposes of this provision, “limited liability company” refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex I of Directive 2013/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and “share capital” includes, where relevant, any share premium.
  - In the case of a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company (other than an SME that has been in existence for less than three years), where more than half of its capital as shown in the company accounts has disappeared as a result of accumulated losses. For the purposes of this provision, “a company where at least some members have unlimited liability for the debt of the company” refers in particular to the types of company mentioned in Annex II of Directive 2013/34/EU.
  - Where the undertaking is subject to collective insolvency proceedings or fulfils the criteria under its domestic law for being placed in collective insolvency proceedings at the request of its creditors.
  - Where the undertaking has received rescue aid and has not yet reimbursed the loan or terminated the guarantee, or has received restructuring aid and is still subject to a restructuring plan.

## 3. Eligibility

Projects will first be screened in terms of eligibility. Ineligible proposals in terms of the points below will not be processed further and will not undergo evaluation.

Maximum eligible timeframe to implement the project: 24 months

### 3.1 Who can apply?

The grant is open to undertakings (for which assistance will be granted in line with the General Block Exemption Regulation), within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU [kindly refer to Section 9 of these guidelines for additional information].

Applicants must qualify as either of the following:

- Independent audiovisual entities as defined in these guidelines;
- An Individual audiovisual professional as defined in these guidelines.

Furthermore, applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- Is a small or medium-sized enterprise
- At least one directorship or the majority shareholding of the juridical entity must be ultimately held by Maltese citizens or persons who hold a permanent residence status in Malta.
- Registered with the applicable regulating body at the time of submission of their applications.
- Be in possession of a VAT registration certificate.
- Where applicable, have majority rights (unless the applicant is a minority co-producer) relating to the project for which support is being requested.
- Submit a complete application under this Strand before the start of works.

- Be in possession of a complete chain of title. The chain of title documents shall be required when submitting the application. If the chain of title is incomplete, ACM will have the right to withdraw any support given.

In the case of more than one producer, the application must be filled by one entity. The producers participating in the co-production must reach an agreement on this point and include a joint declaration which should be included in the application.

### 3.2 Who cannot apply?

- Applicants shall be excluded from applying for support if they, or, where applicable, the shareholders or persons having powers of representation or decision-making:
  - i. have been convicted by final judgement of any of the following offences: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, child labour, human trafficking;
  - ii. are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or subject to a procedure of the same kind; or
  - iii. have been convicted by final judgement of serious professional misconduct or any other offence relating to professional integrity.
- Applicants whose profile is not verified due to it being incomplete for not having the below mandatory documents:
  - a copy of their Maltese ID card (including both front and back); or Maltese residence permit; or Maltese citizenship certificate; or Maltese passport.
- Applicants who do not qualify under the definition of applicant for this specific Strand.
- 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.
- Entities who have not presented the required annual documentation to the Malta Business Registry.
- Organisations/activities receiving local public funds through established government line-votes.

### 3.3 What costs can be covered?<sup>1</sup>

Screen Support Scheme – Strand 6: International may cover up to 100% of the below indicated eligible costs capped as follows:

- up to €20,000 in the case of Promotional Support. This may be increased to a maximum of €40,000 in the case of an ‘A-List’ Festival;
- up to €5,000 in the case of International Festival Participation. This may be increased to a maximum of €10,000 in the case of an ‘A-List’ Festival; and
- up to €2,500 in the case of International Festival Submissions

The eligible direct costs for promotional support and for the marketing, PR, and communications of the qualifying production are limited to the following directly linked specific costs:

- Accreditation fees, rental of screening rooms and equipment at recognised international markets and festivals which attract press, the general public and buyers (see Section 10 of these guidelines and regulations for an exhaustive list);
- Censorship rating;

- Creation and production of marketing material including design and printing (e.g.: posters, adverts, website);
- DCP dispatch/tracking costs;
- Dubbing to any other European language;
- Engagement of a marketing executive/company with appropriate experience in carrying out such duties;
- Film sales professional or company;
- Hosting in conjunction with any screening activities, capped at €1,000 (in the case of an ‘A-List’ Festival, the capping may increase to €20,000)’
- Translation from original language to any other European language;
- Media advertising (TV, press, radio, print, online);
- Mobility – limited to one producer and the director
  - Economy accommodation
  - Insurance
  - Travel (economy class), including, but not limited to, public transport, air travel, car/vehicle rental;
  - Travel VISA;
- Non-recoverable value added tax (VAT), where applicable;
- Subtitling;
- Virtual Print Fee (VPF)

The eligible direct costs linked to International Festival Participation are limited to the following:

- Festival (or event) participation fees;
- Mobility – limited to one producer and the writer/director
  - Economy accommodation
  - Insurance
  - Travel (economy class), including, but not limited to, public transport, air travel, car/vehicle rental;
  - Travel VISA;

The eligible direct costs linked to International Festival Submissions are limited to the following:

- Festival (or event) submission fees;
- Film sales professional or company
- Mobility – limited to one producer and the Writer/Director
  - Economy accommodation
  - Insurance
  - Travel (economy class), including, but not limited to, public transport, air travel, car/vehicle rental;
  - Travel VISA.

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

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

### 3.4 What costs cannot be covered?

- Costs already covered by public cultural organisations, or another public funding programme managed or co-managed by Arts Council Malta or other public agency, government department, or ministry;
- Costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another grant of the Government of Malta or the European Union: Financial support awarded under this scheme may be awarded in addition to financial support granted by other granting authorities (under multiple support schemes), provided that this is not explicitly excluded by the guidelines or regulations of the other granting authorities and provided that such cumulative support does not surpass the actual costs incurred and the intensity aid limits, as applicable;
- Costs incurred before submission of application;
- Costs incurred before the start of works ;
- Costs incurred by a co-producer who will not be a co-beneficiary of an agreement in case of selection;
- Costs that are not directly linked to the project;
- Debt and debt service charges;
- Doubtful debts;
- Excessive or reckless expenditure;
- Exchange losses;
- Fees for services provided by public cultural organisations or other public agency, government department, or ministry;
- Fuel expenses;
- In-Kind contributions;
- Indirect producers' [ fees and contingencies;
- Interest owed;
- Provisions for losses or debts;
- Purchase of equipment of any kind;
- Purchase of land and real estate;
- Recoverable VAT, where applicable;
- Retroactive costs;
- Return on capital;
- Service charges arising on leases, hire purchase agreements, depreciation, loan charges, debit interest, charges for financial transactions, foreign exchange commissions and losses, fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation, bad debts and other purely financial expenses.

All costs eligible for funding under this scheme must be necessary and reasonable for the promotion of the audiovisual project and consistent with the principles of sound financial management and accounting practices.

### 3.5 What applications are eligible for support?

Projects must satisfy at least TWO of the following criteria:

- Producer/s is a Maltese citizen or holds a permanent residence status in Malta;
- Writer/s is a Maltese citizen or holds a permanent residence status in Malta;
- Director/s is a Maltese citizen or holds a permanent residence status in Malta.

Internationalisation support for the following fiction, animation, and documentary projects are eligible:

- Feature-length intended for theatrical, festivals, TV, VOD;
- TV series (pilot episode, new series, continued series);

- 52 minutes version in the case of creative documentary;
- Short film intended for festivals, TV, VOD (not applicable in the case of Promotional Support).

Moreover, support shall only be granted to audiovisual projects that are cultural products.

Projects shall be considered cultural products if they:

- make a contribution to Maltese and/or European culture; or
- make a contribution to the development of the film and TV industry in Malta and/or Europe; or
- be considered cultural in light of their content.

The evaluators shall verify the above in accordance with the parameters of eligibility as established by the ACM for each of the above cultural criteria. Projects declared non-cultural shall not be awarded any aid. Click [here](#) to download the Cultural Test; applicants are required to fill it in and upload it in the appropriate field when submitting the application through the ACM's CRM.

### 3.6 What applications are not eligible for support?

- Activities that are not related to culture, arts, and the creative industries;
- Activities whose objective is fundraising or political propaganda;
- Advertising, corporate, training and/or promotional films or infomercials;
- Applications submitted after noon (12:00) of the respective day of deadline;
- Applications submitted by public entities with or without a line vote;
- Applications which do not qualify under the definition of audiovisual production for this specific strand;
- Applications which do not qualify under the definition of difficult audiovisual work for this strand;
- Incomplete applications (refer to application checklist in section 5.1);
- Initiatives eligible under Festivals Malta, Annual Cultural Activities Scheme, VOPS, National Book Council, Valletta Cultural Agency, or Malta Arts Scholarships;
- Projects including and/or promoting political propaganda;
- Projects of which costs entirely fall outside the eligible timeframe;
- Projects promoting violence, racism, and pornographic content and content violating the Maltese Constitution;
- Projects that would have been finished before the result is notified to applicant(s);
- Reality shows, magazine and lifestyle programmes, culture programmes, discussion programmes, quizzes and game shows, advertorials, light entertainment;
- Resubmitted proposal that does not include considerable changes or new elements when compared with a previous submission or that does not include a report/statement clearly highlighting the changes that have been effected.

Any other activity that falls outside the scope of Screen Support Scheme – Strand 6: International is not eligible for support.

Applicants can submit more than one application under the same call, however, only one of the applications can be funded per strand.

## 4. Evaluation

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

### 4.1 Criterion 1: Concept (50 marks)

This criterion considers the quality, strength, and originality of the film/work and the potential to reach an international audience. The following points will be assessed:

- Film/work that shows originality (theme, perspective, visual approach – concept and treatment in the case of Participation in International Festival (This should also include evidence of how the proposal considers the principles within the Right to Culture – Resource Kit and the Charter for the Status of the Artist as in Section 1);<sup>2</sup> (15 marks)
- Vision and style; (10 marks)
- Strong proposal with potential to reach an international audience; (10 marks)
- The quality of the event(s). (10 marks)
- The plans beyond the implementation of this proposal. (5 marks)

### 4.2 Criterion 2: Project Management (15 marks)

This criterion considers the level of commitment and preparation prior to the proposal as well as the proposed plan to deliver and achieve the aims targeted. The following points will be assessed:

- The relevant experience of the applicant (including at international level) [In the case of Participation in International Festivals the evaluation board will also consider - The quality of the creative team's previous work(s), and potential to undertake and manage the proposed project]; (10 marks)
- Financial and legal reputation of the creative team. (5 marks)

### 4.3 Criterion 3: Audience Engagement and Circulation Potential (25 marks)

This criterion considers the engagement and the development of established and new audiences. Engagement refers to the role, the nature of involvement, and the experience offered to the audience.

Circulation potential refers to potential for festival participation (and recognition) and international distribution, as well as the potential to stimulate interest from sales agents, distributors and/or broadcasters/platforms.

For the purpose of this strand, international exposure is expected to be linked to concrete circulation, sales, or professional market engagement. Festival participation or international attendance will be assessed positively only where it is supported by a clear strategy to engage with distributors, sales agents, broadcasters, platforms, or other industry professionals. Demonstrated intent and strategy to exploit international exposure through sales, distribution, or professional market engagement, beyond symbolic or visibility-only festival participation.

The following points will be assessed:

- Define the target audiences and explain how these audiences will be reached. Provide an outline of the marketing, PR, and communications plan as deemed relevant to the proposed programme/s of activities. Explain the reasons for the chosen methods. (10 marks)

- Screening, festival, and market potential; the level of distribution in different territories. Provide letter(s) of interest from distributors and other industry players. (15 marks)

#### 4.4 Criterion 4: Budget and Financing Plan (10 marks)

This criterion considers the quality and viability (industry standard) of the budget and the financing plan (where applicable). The following points will be assessed:

- Provide a clear budget breakdown including expenses directly related to the promotion of productions that have been completed not more than 18 months before the submission of a complete application. (10 marks)
- Provide a financing plan (overall quality and viability of the financing strategy; level of confirmed financing - evidenced by signed agreements and/or letters of intent).

## 5. Submitting the application

Follow these steps to apply:

1. Read these guidelines and regulations very carefully.
2. Check whether your proposal can be addressed by this scheme.
3. Press the [link](#) that will take you to the online application system.
4. If you do not have a profile, create your profile with Arts Council Malta by clicking on 'Register Now' and filling in the details.
5. From the open calls section, select the online application for the strand you intend to apply for
6. Follow the instructions step by step. Fill in all required information from the online application, including the budget, and attach the supporting documentation.
7. Submit the application. You should be receiving an automatic acknowledgement by the system. If you do not receive such a notification, contact us on [applyforfunds@artscouncil.mt](mailto:applyforfunds@artscouncil.mt).

Applicants are required to register a profile on the ACM's CRM at least two weeks prior to the deadline of the call.

In case of difficulty, or if you would like to consult us regarding this fund, you can call us on 2334 7230 Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 16:00, or send an email on [fundinfo@artscouncil.mt](mailto:fundinfo@artscouncil.mt).

It is your responsibility to present a complete application form as explained in these guidelines and regulations. If you do not present all the necessary information and documentation, your application will not be processed and evaluated.

Prior to the application deadline, Arts Council Malta representatives will not be checking your application forms. It is solely at Arts Council Malta's discretion to request that applicants provide any missing mandatory documentation following the call deadline.

Upon submission of the application, applicants accept that should the application be awarded funding, the name, the project title, 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 complete chain of title.
- A copy of the Maltese VAT certificate of registration;
- The most recent good standing certificate of registration – This document is renewed annually by the Malta Business Registry and is proof of compliance (in the case of an entity);
- Copy of applicant’s (or applicant's majority shareholder or director) Maltese ID card, Maltese residence permit, Maltese citizenship certificate or Maltese passport;
- Bio notes of key contributors to the project;
- Work Plan together with Marketing/Publicity strategy, International Markets/Festivals applicant intends to participate in including dates, fees, deadline and link to official websites, (in the case of Promotional Support);
- Acceptance letter by the event organiser (in the case of International Festivals Participation);
- Festival Strategy including a list of festivals the applicant intends to apply for including dates of festival, fees, deadline, and link to official website (in the case of International Festival Submissions)
- A declaration signed by a warranted accountant/auditor indicating that the applicant does not qualify as an undertaking in difficulty as defined in these guidelines;
- An audio or audiovisual file not exceeding 5 minutes in which the applicant provides a short description, a rationale and/or motivation for submitting this proposal;
- Creative project package:
  - i. Logline
  - ii. Synopsis
  - iii. Copy of film (open link valid for a minimum period of 30 days from the submission of a complete application)
  - iv. Trailer (optional)
  - v. Treatment – maximum 10 pages (optional and only in the case of participation at a market through Participation at International Festivals);
- Budget (summary top sheet and detailed – clearly indicating the net amount and the VAT amount);
- Financing plan (if budget exceeds maximum funding);
- Applications with a co-production agreement in place will only be considered if the applicant can provide the duly signed co-production agreement or deal-memo. The agreement or deal-memo should include industry standard clauses including, amongst other things, clauses which regulate the sharing of rights and the creative input of each producer.

Optional documentation (if available):

- A copy of a document issued by the Office of the Commissioner for Revenue showing that the applicant is a taxpayer in Malta;
- Letter(s) of intent, deal-memos or agreements from financing partners and buyers;
- Co-development and/or co-production agreement(s), deal-memos, or letter(s) of interest;
- Previous works;
- Producer’s statement; brief description of the characters; storyboard; mood board.

N.B. Documents that require a minimum or maximum number of pages are meant to be written using the font Times New Roman, with font size 12.

Files up to 5MB may be attached directly in the application form; larger files may be provided as a link that does not expire and does not require identity verification.

## 6. Evaluation process

This scheme is managed on a first-come-first-served basis and is non-competitive; it will be evaluated by a panel of sectoral experts according to established criteria.

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

Nevertheless, the evaluation session and funding decisions depend on the quality of the submitted proposals and on the availability of the funds. Therefore, obtaining 60 marks or more does not automatically mean that you will be awarded the funds. The Evaluation Board may decide not to allocate the total funds available for a particular call if the proposed projects do not reach the required level in terms of the fund criteria.

Eligible applications will be assessed by an evaluation team selected by the Council on the basis of their professional experience in the film industry. 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 eligible projects, indicating the relevant ratings awarded.

### 6.1 Communication of results

On the day indicated on page 2, you will receive your result notification from Arts Council Malta. Together with the covering letter, we will also attach a copy of the evaluation form, indicating the reasons and marks leading to the Evaluation Board's decision, according to the fund criteria.

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

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

No information on the evaluation process will be released before the official result notification. Any form of soliciting will automatically disqualify an application.

All information received by the Senior Fund Executive, 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. Project implementation and monitoring

The Council will accept a variation from the proposed total budget. The contingency indicated in the budget plan will support any variations from the proposed total budget. Under no circumstances will the Council be in a position to increase the grant awarded.

A contract specifying the conditions of the fund will be signed. The grant may only be awarded upon completion of the above process within the established timeframe.

70% of the total amount allocated by the Evaluation Board will be processed after the signing of the contract. The final payment of 30% after the submission of the final report by the beneficiary, following approval by Arts Council Malta.

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. Arts Council Malta shall also be accorded a screen credit. 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. It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to justify changes, such changes shall not be withheld if these are customarily accepted in the international film industry. The core concept and creative intention of the project must remain consistent throughout the funded period.

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 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 final payment if the total expenditure is less than that stated in the signed agreement.

## 7.1 Report

At the end of your project, you will be required to submit a detailed report highlighting the work carried out and the project achievements, by not later than 6 months after your project is concluded. Arts Council Malta will provide a template for your report.

If relevant together with this report, beneficiaries must submit copies of any high resolution photos and videos, relevant marketing, publicity, or information material developed for the funded project.

- In the case of promotional support, the report must include:
  1. A list of events the beneficiary participated in and the achievements of the project (maximum 3 pages);
  2. Final EPK;
  3. Publicity and advertising material (including evidence of Media exposure obtained).
- In the case of participation in international festivals, the report must include an outline of the outcome after participating in the festival or other event and, if applicable, the achievements of the project/film.
- In the case of an international festival submission, the report must include a list of festivals applied for together with an indication of whether the film was accepted or rejected.

You will be required to present a final detailed and certified income expenditure breakdown. The income expenditure breakdown must be prepared in compliance with applicable financial standards and aligned with these guidelines and regulations, and they must be certified by a warranted accountant or auditor

In all cases, beneficiaries must demonstrate that international support was used to actively promote, circulate, or commercially exploit the project. Participation in festivals or events without demonstrable efforts to engage in sales, distribution, or professional market activity may be considered insufficient in meeting the objectives of this Strand.

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

The Council retains the right to request the Beneficiary to submit the VAT invoices or and/or fiscal receipts to support the detailed certified income expenditure breakdown.

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 or the rules set in these guidelines and regulations.

## 8. Complaints procedure

Filing a complaint will not affect your chances of receiving support from Arts Council Malta in the future. All complaints will be treated with confidentiality.

### 8.1 Grounds for complaints

Applicants can make a complaint regarding procedural anomalies and irregularities during the submission and evaluation process in terms of the procedures stipulated in these guidelines and regulations. Complaints cannot be made concerning:

- Arts Council Malta's or the government's policies and procedures, and/or,
- 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 Funding, 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, you are consequently 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

This scheme is applicable to:

- Independent audiovisual entities as defined in these guidelines.
- Individual audiovisual professionals as defined in these guidelines.

For the purposes of State aid rules, such applicants are deemed as undertakings that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU.

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

This scheme is not applicable to the following:

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

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

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

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

Aid payable in the future, including aid payable in several instalments, shall be discounted to its value at the moment it is granted. The eligible costs shall be discounted to their value at the moment the

aid is granted. The interest rate to be used for discounting purposes shall be the discount rate applicable at the moment the aid is granted.

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

## 10. Appendices

### International Festivals

#### A-List Festivals accredited by FIAPF “Competitive Feature Film Festivals”

- Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) – Berlin, Germany (February)
- Cannes Film Festival – Cannes, France (May)
- Shanghai International Film Festival – Shanghai, China (June)
- Karlovy Vary International Film Festival – Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic (July)
- Locarno Film Festival – Locarno, Switzerland (August)
- Venice Film Festival – Venice, Italy (September)
- San Sebastián International Film Festival – San Sebastián, Spain (September)
- Warsaw Film Festival – Warsaw, Poland (October)
- Tokyo International Film Festival – Tokyo, Japan (October)
- Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival – Tallinn, Estonia (November)
- Mar del Plata International Film Festival – Mar del Plata, Argentina (November)
- Cairo International Film Festival – Cairo, Egypt (November)
- International Film Festival of India (Goa) – Goa, India (November)
- Fajr International Film Festival – Tehran, Iran (February)

#### Non A-List Festivals

- All Academy Awards Qualifying Festivals
- All festivals supported by Creative Europe
- All European Film Festival Qualifying Festivals (EFA)
- Academy Awards
- AFI International Film Festival
- Antalya IFF
- Busan International Film Festival
- Edinburgh International Film Festival
- European Film Awards
- FEST – New Directors/New Films Festival
- Golden Globe Awards
- International Film Festival Rotterdam
- Istanbul IFF
- Krakow Film Festival
- London BFI Film Festival
- Les Arcs European Film Festival
- Moscow International Film Festival – Moscow, Russia
- Raindance Film Festival

- Rome IFF
- Sarajevo Film Festival
- Sundance Film Festival
- South by Southwest
- Torino IFF
- Toronto International Film Festival
- Thessaloniki International Film Festival
- Tribeca Film Festival
- World FF (Montreal)

## TV

- Berlin International TV Series Festival
- Cannes International Series Festival
- Sarajevo Film Festival SeriesFest
- Series Mania

## Creative Documentary

- Academy Awards
- AFI International Film Festival
- Beldocs
- Berlin International Film Festival
- Biografilm
- Busan International Film Festival
- CPHDOX
- DocAviv
- DocsBarcelona
- DocLisboa
- DOK Leipzig
- Dokfest Munich
- European Film Awards
- Edinburgh International Film Festival
- Festival dei Popoli
- FID Marseille
- IDFA
- Jihlava
- Karlovy Vary International Film Festival
- MakeDox
- One World
- Raindance Film Festival
- San Sebastian Film Festival
- Sarajevo Film Festival
- Sundance Film Festival
- Sunny Side of the Doc
- Berlin
- Sheffield DocFest

- Tribeca Film Festival
- Toronto Hot Docs
- Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival
- Venice International Film Festival
- Zagreb Docs

## Short Film

- Academy Awards
- Academy Awards Qualifying Festivals
- Berlin International Film Festival
- Cannes Film Festival
- Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival
- European Film Awards
- European Film Festival Qualifying Festivals

## Need advice?

ACM offers pre-submission consultation services to help you 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 use 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](mailto:fundinfo@artscouncil.mt).

Guidelines updated on 02<sup>nd</sup> March 2026