ALLOCATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION BUDGET</th>
<th>MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER PROJECT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>€300,000</td>
<td>€20,000</td>
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CO-FUNDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DISBURSEMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The fund may cover up to 80% of total project costs</td>
<td>70% upon signing of grant agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30% following approval of final report</td>
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TIMEFRAMES

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<tr>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME</th>
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<tr>
<td>11th October 2021</td>
<td>3rd December 2021</td>
<td>4th January 2022 – 4th July 2023</td>
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1. Introduction

The role of digital technology within artistic and cultural practice is an increasingly central one, with the changing cultural landscape making knowledge and application of digital tools and approaches indispensable in contemporary practice. In particular, digital tools are now integral in the production of artistic works, as well as in nurturing collaborations, engaging audiences, developing business models, and generating new knowledge across the arts.

In light of this, it is necessary for artists, practitioners and organisations to operate effectively using digital tools and to have the skills and resources necessary to do so. The aim of this fund is to provide the opportunity for artists to develop these skills and engage with digital technology through their work by means of research, development and practice. The fund will encourage stronger intersectionality between technology, research and the arts, encouraging artists and practitioners to explore digital technology as a means to develop their creative practice, reach new audiences and broaden their horizons.

This fund seeks to increase the digital capacity in creative and cultural practitioners and organisations by developing greater knowledge of what is possible with digital and how to apply digital technology in practice.

The fund will comprise of three (3) main areas of focus:

1. Artistic practice
   - Exploring innovative uses of digital technology in the conception, creation, and development of artistic work.
   - Using digital technology to preserve and present Malta’s artistic and creative heritage in an innovative, open or sustainable manner.

2. Audience engagement
   - Exploring how digital technology can be used to deepen engagement with new or existing audiences.
   - Using digital technology to create greater experiential engagement with audiences.
   - Using digital tools to improve access for audiences and promote inclusive participation within the arts.

3. Capacity building, development & innovation
   - Building digital literacy and developing skills in the application of digital technology within the arts.

Applicants may choose to focus on one or more of these areas within their projects.

The scheme will provide a stable support for the cultural and creative sector to plan, grow, develop and deliver ACM’s strategic goals primarily addressing creative professionals and communities, namely:

1. Nurture creative potential and support its development into professional activity;
2. Invest in artistic excellence;
3. Connect Malta to the international artistic community;
4. Provide more opportunities for people to engage in creativity.
2. Definitions

Activities falling within the cultural and creative sector:
1. Arts (literature, visual arts, music, performing arts, interdisciplinary);
2. Creative Business Services (design, architecture, cultural tourism and cultural services);
3. Heritage (crafts, traditional festivals and celebrations, cultural sites, antiques);
4. Media (publishing and printed material, audiovisuals, including film and video production, film servicing, television, video games, radio, online media).

Applicant
• An applicant may be a creative professional, an individual artist, an entity registered with the Malta Business Registry, groups, collectives, a consortium, a registered cooperative, a Voluntary Organisation enrolled with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations. Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or involved in the management of the Digital Research and Development Scheme.

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

Beneficiary
• The beneficiary is the recipient of the grant. The beneficiary is responsible for the implementation of the proposal supported by the Scheme.

Cooperatives
• Cooperatives must be registered with the Koperattivi Board and enlisted on the Cooperatives directory.

Creative professionals
• All artistic and creative individuals professionally active in the cultural and creative sectors.

Eligibility
• Applicants are screened by the Senior Fund Executive in terms of eligibility. Applications are screened to determine eligibility in terms of section three (3) of these guidelines. Applications that are not eligible shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

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

Evaluators
• Arts Council Malta appoints an evaluation team for each call under the Scheme. The Arts Council may appoint both local and foreign professionals in the sector of culture and the arts.

Group
• A number of persons with or without legal personality may form a group. One of the persons involved must take the leading role and have the main legal responsibility for managing the
Digital Research and Development Guidelines

project and the grant. This person must be a Maltese citizen or be in possession of a Malta residence permit or of a Maltese citizenship certificate or of a Maltese passport.

Individual

• Individuals applying for a grant must be Maltese citizens or be in possession of a Malta residence permit or of a Maltese citizenship certificate or of a Maltese passport.

Management and Administration:

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

Mandatory documentation:

• Any document(s) needed to support your proposal and aid the evaluation of your project (eg. Track records, portfolios, artistic CVs, official correspondence confirming rental of space, permits or other)

Maximum Funding:

• There is a ceiling amount of €20,000 per project to be allocated. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis depending on the project.

Practice-based artistic research

• Practical creative research led by a creative professional which aims at developing creative concepts.

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, MICAS, Festivals Malta, Kor Malta and ŻfinMalta.

Registered Entities

• An entity legally established and registered in Malta. Registered entities must be registered with Malta Business Registry, in accordance with the Companies Act requirements in the case of a company or a partnership, and in accordance with the Civil Code in the case of a Foundation and an Organisation/Association.

Single Undertaking

• Includes all enterprises having at least one of the following relationships with each other:
  a. One enterprise has a majority of the shareholders’ or members’ voting rights in another enterprise;
  b. One enterprise has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another enterprise;
  c. One enterprise has the right to exercise a dominant influence over another enterprise pursuant to a contract entered into with that enterprise or 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 shall be considered to be a single undertaking.

Undertaking

- An undertaking is defined as an entity engaged in an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU (i.e. any activity consisting in offering goods and services on a market), regardless of its legal status and the way in which it is financed. The classification of a particular entity as an undertaking depends entirely on the nature of its activities. The application of 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.

Voluntary Organisation

- An organisation which is legally established and/or publicly registered in Malta, having a statute. Voluntary organisations must be enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act requirements (http://www.maltacvs.org). The applicant must be a legally authorised representative of the organisation.

3. Eligibility

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

Maximum eligible timeframe to implement the project: 18 months

3.1 Who can apply?

Applicants must be Maltese citizens or be in possession of a Malta residence permit or of a Maltese citizenship certificate or of a Maltese passport.

- Creative professionals/individual artists;
- Entities registered with the Malta Business Registry (including companies, partnerships, foundations and organisations/associations);
- Groups, Collectives and Consortia;
- Registered Cooperatives;
- Voluntary Organisations enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.

3.2 Who cannot apply?

- Applicants whose profile is not verified due to it being an incomplete profile for not having the below mandatory documents:
  - A copy of your Maltese ID card (including the front and back side) or your Maltese residence permit or your Maltese citizenship certificate or your Maltese passport
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- A signed statute in the case of a Voluntary Organisation.
- Beneficiaries who have not honoured previous funding commitments;
- Organisations/Activities receiving local public funds through established government line-votes;
- In the case of registered entities, entities who have not presented the required annual documentation to the Malta Business Registry;
- In the case of Voluntary Organisations, Voluntary Organisations which are:
  - not enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations;
  - who have not presented their updated accounts to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations;
  - which do not have a registered address in the Maltese Islands.

### 3.3 What costs can be covered?

This grant may cover up to 80% of the following costs (up to a maximum of €20,000 per project, whichever is the lowest). The remaining 20% of the total project cost cannot be covered through other funding programmes managed by Arts Council Malta or any other Maltese state-funded programme dedicated to arts and culture.

- Artistic fees;
- Contingency, not exceeding 10% of the total cost;
- Fees related to training and development;
- Health & safety measures;
- Hire/Purchase of equipment (purchase of equipment will only be considered if deemed necessary to the project);
- Insurance;
- Marketing, PR and communication, not exceeding 10% of project total;
- Project management fees (including, but not limited to: administration, coordination, development);
- Other fees directly related to project implementation (including, but not limited to: service providers, mentors, digital consultancy services, legal, participation or enrolment, linguistic fees, surtitling, etc.);
- Rental of spaces;
- Standard Accommodation, excluding long-term accommodation or part of;
- Subscriptions to virtual platforms or other digital services, where relevant;
- Travel (economy class) including but not limited to: public transport, air travel, car/vehicle rental)
- Travel VISA.


### 3.4 What costs cannot be covered?

- Budgets exceeding 80% of the project expenditure;
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- Costs already covered by public cultural organisations, or another public funding programme managed or co-managed by Arts Council Malta or any other public agency, Government department or Ministry;
- Costs which are already covered through usual operational budgets (space which is owned by the applicant or the partner/supporting organisation/individual);
- Fees for services provided by Public Cultural Organisations or any other public agency, Government department or Ministry;
- Funding for the creation or upholding of bursaries, prizes or scholarships;
- Reimbursement of salaries or part of;
- Retroactive costs;
- Subsistence, catering and hospitality.

3.5 What applications are not eligible?

- Activities whose objective is fundraising or political propaganda;
- Initiatives eligible under the Malta Film Fund, VOPS, Malta Arts Scholarship, Ghaqda Każini tal-Banda, National Book Council, Valletta Cultural Agency or any other state-funded programme dedicated to Maltese arts/culture;
- Activities that are not related to culture, arts and the creative industries;
- Events held on a regular basis, including annual projects, annual festivals, school/annual shows, regular training programmes;
- Applications submitted by public entities with or without a line-vote;
- Individual modules credited as part of an education course or research as part of established academic programmes;
- Projects that would have already taken place before the result is notified to applicant(s);
-Incomplete applications (refer to application checklist in section 5.1);
- Projects whose duration does not fall within the eligible timeframe;
- Applications submitted after noon (12:00) of the respective deadline.

Any other activity which may be developed outside the scope of the Digital Research & Development Scheme is not eligible for support.

Applicants can submit more than one application under the same call; however, only one (1) of the applications can be funded per session.
4. Evaluation

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

4.1 Criterion 1: Concept (40 marks)

This criterion considers the concept idea(s) of the proposal, the collaborators involved, the relevance of the concept as well as the longer-term contribution towards the beneficiary, collaborators and participants.

- How strong is the conceptual plan for the proposed project? (9 marks)
- How does this project contribute to developing new knowledge and expertise, and in pushing new boundaries within the applicant’s practice? (7 marks)
- How strong is the project’s engagement with digital technology? Is this form of engagement encouraging innovation within the field? (9 marks)
- How strong are the collaborations proposed within the project? Do they provide additional knowledge and value to the project? If no collaborators are proposed, does the proposal clearly outline why this is the case? (6 marks)
- Does the proposal support the long-term sustainability of the project or of its outcomes, even beyond the scheme’s end date? (9 marks)

4.2 Criterion 2: Project Management (20 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.

- Does the application present a detailed plan of action, with clearly identifiable goals? (6 marks)
- How realistic are the timeframes proposed? Does the project allocate sufficient time for each phase, as well as to achieve its final stated goals? (6 marks)
- Are the roles of collaborators clearly defined? Are there clear channels of communication amongst all involved in the project? (5 marks)
- Do the applicants and collaborators have a suitable track record in terms of managing projects of a similar nature? (3 marks)

4.3 Criterion 3: Audience Engagement (20 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.
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- What is the project’s target audience? How strong are the arguments presented for the selection of this specific audience? (7 marks)
- Does the project present a realistic plan through which to connect with its target audience? (6 marks)
- Will the outcomes of this project be shared in a clear and transparent manner? Does the project’s dissemination plan use channels that ensure the widespread access and longevity of project outcomes? (7 marks)

4.4 Criterion 4: Budget (20 marks)

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

- How detailed is the proposed budget plan? Does the proposed budget cater for all project activities? Are there activities and collaborations clearly outlined and reflected in the budget? (8 marks)
- Does the budget encourage and incentivise the sustainability of the project? (6 marks)
- Has the applicant explored other potential sources of funding to complement this scheme? (6 marks)

5. Submitting the application

Follow these steps to apply:

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

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

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

Prior to the application deadline, Arts Council Malta representatives will not be checking your application forms. It is solely at the Arts Council Malta’s discretion to request that applicants provide any missing mandatory documentation following the call’s deadline.
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Upon submission of the application, applicants accept that, should the application be awarded funding, the name, the project title, a short project description and the amount awarded can be published by Arts Council Malta.

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

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

5.1 Checklist:
- A copy of the VAT certificate of Registration;
- A most recent Good Standing certificate of Registration – This document is renewed annually by the Malta Business Registry and is proof of compliance;
- A copy of your Maltese ID card (including the front and back side) or your Maltese residence permit or your Maltese citizenship certificate or your Maltese passport;
- Conditional letter of acceptance from the respective educational institution or organisation (if applying to enter a training course);
- Letters of intent from collaborators and potential venues (where applicable);
- Proof of organisation’s legal registration (if applying as an organisation);
- The track record of the applicants and collaborators – this includes the CV, artistic portfolios and related documentation.

6. Evaluation process

This scheme is competitive and will be evaluated by a panel of three (3) sectorial 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 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. Arts Council Malta will select evaluators on the basis of their independent and professional experience. The evaluators will present an assessment on each of the proposed projects, indicating the relevant ratings awarded.
6.1 Shortlisting

The evaluation board will meet during an initial evaluation in which all the eligible applications will be discussed. All applications will be given a score, and those scoring 60 marks and higher will be shortlisted. The shortlisted applications will be invited to attend a pitching session. The pitching session is not compulsory and it is up to the applicant to accept to attend the pitching session.

Shortlisted applicants who opt out from attending a pitching session will not be penalised. It is solely at the evaluators’ discretion to invite any applicant scoring less than 60 marks, to attend a pitching session.

All applications, including those that are not shortlisted, will receive the official result notification together with a copy of the feedback form on the result date as indicated on page 2 of this document.

6.2 Pitching

The aim of the pitching session is to create an opportunity for applicants to further present their projects to the evaluators. The project applications would already have been reviewed by the evaluators and the Fund managers before the pitching session.

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

The pitch can be presented in a variety of formats, including but not limited to, visual aids, power point presentation, audio, etc., and should not be longer than five (5) minutes. During the pitch, applicants are expected to explain the project’s artistic vision and communicate how the project will be implemented. This five-minute pitch will be followed by a Q&A session with the evaluation panel.

6.3 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 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

Beneficiaries must provide full documentation to support the application and budget plan within 30 days from receipt of the notification letter. The Council will accept a variation of up to 5% from the proposed total cost. The contingency indicated in the budget plan will support any variations from the proposed total cost. **Under no circumstances will the Council be in a position to increase the grant awarded.**

Upon provision and approval of the above mandatory documentation, 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 remaining 30% will be disbursed 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. The grant received must be used solely for the purpose for which it was awarded, in line with the submitted proposal and the contract.

Beneficiaries must notify Arts Council Malta immediately if changes affecting the nature of the project take place during implementation. Changes cannot be implemented unless approval is received. Arts Council Malta reserves the right to revise or withhold the final payment if the change in the project is not considered to be in line with the initial proposal, or if the Council is not informed of the changes within a reasonable time.

Beneficiaries must make themselves available for visits and communication with Arts Council Malta representatives for monitoring purposes, both during the implementation of the project as well as after its completion.

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

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 six (6) weeks 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 relevant marketing, publicity or information material
developed for the funded project. Beneficiaries will also be requested to submit evidence of the research process, which includes visual documentation, blogs and other documentation.

You will also be required to present a final updated budget together with all supporting documents.

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

Arts Council Malta retains the right to recover funds in case these are not being used and/or are misused and/or are not used according to the submitted budget.

8. Complaints procedure

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

8.1 Grounds for complaints

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

- The Arts Council’s or Government’s policies and procedures;
- The merits of the application in terms of the criteria stipulated in these guidelines and regulations. Only applicants may file complaints concerning their project.

8.2 Filing a complaint

Complaints must be made in writing and must be as clear as possible. The complaint must state the grounds and the reasons for the complaint, providing a detailed explanation and justification supported by relevant documentation or testimonials as to why the complainant deems that irregularities were committed in the procedure/s stipulated in these guidelines and regulations or in standard good governance rules and regulations governing the public sector. The decision at the end of the complaint process shall be final. Complaints need to be made to the Director of Funding and Strategy, Arts Council Malta within five (5) working days of receipt of your funding decision. You will normally receive a reply to your complaint within ten (10) working days.

In case you are not satisfied with the reply, Arts Council Malta will convene a Board that will discuss your complaint further. If you approach our complaints procedure, then you are accepting that we can use information about your project to address the complaint. The decision of the Board is final.
9. State aid rules

9.1 State Aid rules applicable for undertakings that carry out an economic activity within the meaning of Article 107 TFEU


This Regulation applies to aid granted to undertakings in all sectors, with the exception of:

a) aid granted to undertakings active in the fishery and aquaculture sector, as covered by Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000;
b) aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products;
c) aid granted to undertakings active in the sector of processing and marketing of agricultural products, in the following cases:
   i. 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;
   ii. where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;
d) aid to export-related activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution network or to other current expenditure linked to the export activity;
e) aid contingent upon the use of domestic over imported goods.

The total amount of de minimis aid granted to a single undertaking shall not exceed the amount of €200,000 over any period of three consecutive fiscal years.

This period covers the fiscal year concerned as well as the previous two (2) fiscal years. ‘Fiscal year’ means the fiscal year as used for tax purposes by the undertaking concerned.

This maximum threshold would include all State aid granted under this aid scheme and any other State aid measure granted under the de minimis rule including that received from any entity other than Arts Council Malta. Any de minimis aid received in excess of the established threshold will have to be recovered, with interest, from the undertaking receiving the aid.

The rules on cumulation of aid as outlined in Article 5 of the de minimis Regulation will be respected.

Applicants are to submit a de minimis declaration indicating any other de minimis aid received or applied for during the previous two (2) fiscal years and the current fiscal year. This will ensure that the total amount of de minimis aid granted to a single undertaking under the de minimis rule will not exceed the applicable de minimis threshold over three (3) fiscal years.
Should a successful applicant not be eligible to receive *de minimis* aid, the said applicant will be deemed ineligible and the next ranked applicant will be awarded.

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

**Need advice?**

ACM offers pre-submission consultation services to help secure support for your project. We are there every step of the way. We can help you determine whether the core concept and profile of your project are in line with the targeted support mechanism, and provide feedback on the way you plan to present your project. Plan ahead and get in touch with us at least four weeks before the submission deadline, to make the best of our services.

You are welcome to call us on 2334 7230, on weekdays, between 09:00 and 16:00, or send us an email on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt.

**Guidelines updated on 30th July 2021**