

DIGITAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Guidelines and Regulations - 2020



ISSUED: 9th November 2020



ALLOCATIONS

SESSION BUDGET	MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE AMOUNT PER PROJECT
EUR 200,000	EUR 20,000

CO-FUNDING	DISBURSEMENT
The fund may cover up to 80% of total project costs	70% upon signing of grant agreement 30% following approval of final report

TIMEFRAMES

DEADLINE	RESULTS	ELIGIBLE TIMEFRAME
29th January 2021	17th March 2021	18th March 2021 – 18th March 2022

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, resources and opportunities 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 through research, development and practice. The fund will encourage stronger intersectionality between technology, research and the arts.

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 main areas of focus:

1. Artistic practice
 - Exploring innovative uses of digital technology in the conception, creation, and development of artistic work.
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.

2. Definitions

Applicant

- An applicant may be an individual, a group or an organisation. Applicants cannot be employees of Arts Council Malta or involved in the management of the Digital Research and Development Fund (Digital R&D).

Application

- An application is a submission, inclusive of all mandatory documents and any annexes to the Digital R&D application form made by an eligible applicant.

Evaluation

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

Beneficiary

- The beneficiary is the recipient of the grant. The beneficiary is responsible for the implementation of the proposal supported by the Digital Research and Development Grant.

Creative professionals

- All artistic and creative individuals professionally active in the cultural and creative sectors.

Digital Research and Development

- Creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase knowledge within the fields of digital technology and creative practice.

Eligibility

- Compliant applications will first be screened in terms of eligibility by the appointed evaluators. Proposals which are not considered eligible in terms of the set criteria shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

Evaluators

- Arts Council Malta appoints an evaluation team for each call under the Digital Research and Development Fund. 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 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.

Higher Education Institutions

- Educational Institutions offering post-secondary and tertiary education (MQF Level 4 and higher).

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 fund. All official correspondence, including the submission of applications, must be sent to the address indicated in these guidelines.

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.

Organisation

- An organisation legally established and/or publicly registered in Malta, having a statute. Voluntary organisations must be registered 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. Cooperatives must be registered with Koperattivi Board (<https://economy.gov.mt/en/coops/pages/coops.aspx>).

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.

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.

3. Who can apply?

The Grant is open to individuals, groups and/or organisations.

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.

4. 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: 12 months

Eligible period: 12 months from result notification date

4.1 Eligible costs¹

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
- Rental of spaces
- Rental or purchase of equipment
- Course fees (for courses up to 12 weeks in duration)
- Retrospective costs incurred after 1st March 2020.

Any other activity which may be developed outside the scope of the digital research and development project are 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 session.

For more information about presenting your budget, refer to our General Budget Guidelines (<http://www.artscouncilmalta.org/funds/malta-arts-fund/research-support-grant/budget-guidelines>)

4.2 Non-eligible costs/ Non-eligible beneficiaries/Non-eligible projects²

¹ All costs will be considered only if these resources are not already covered/cannot be covered by the applicants or supporting/partner organisations.

² Creative practitioners employed by Higher Education Institutions or Public Cultural Organisations are eligible to apply for a grant as independent creative practitioners. If the research and development

- Costs which are already covered through usual operational budgets (salaries, space which is owned/rented by the applicant or the partner/supporting organisation/individual).
- Events held on a regular basis, including annual projects, annual festivals, school/annual shows, regular training programmes.
- Reimbursement of salaries or part of.
- Organisations which do not have a registered address in the Maltese islands.
- Activities which are not related to culture, arts and the creative industries.
- Beneficiaries who have not honoured previous funding commitments. In the case of Voluntary Organisations, organisations which have not presented their updated accounts to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.
- Activities whose objective is fundraising or political propaganda.
- Initiatives eligible under the Malta Film Fund.
- Initiatives eligible under any other state-funded programme dedicated to Maltese arts/culture.
- 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.
- Projects submitted by public entities with or without a line vote.
- Funding for the creation or upholding of bursaries, prizes or scholarships.
- 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).
- Retrospective costs incurred prior to 1st March 2020.
- Incomplete applications as explained under the section 'Mandatory Documentation'.
- Projects with a duration of more than twelve (12) months.
- Budgets exceeding 80% of the project expenditure.

4.3 Mandatory documentation

The documents below are mandatory and required for the pre-evaluation assessment, conducted by Arts Council Malta. Failure to present any of the below documents will render the application non-compliant, and will not be evaluated by the Board

- A complete application form, including quotes for each budget item comprising your total project cost;
- 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.

Kindly note that it is your responsibility to submit all the necessary documentation, as outlined above, before the indicated call deadline, in order to facilitate the evaluation process.

project constitutes part of their employment, only costs related to the project presented and not covered by the employer are eligible for support.

Prior to 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 deadline.

Applications submitted after noon of the respective day of deadline cannot be accepted.

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

5. Evaluation

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

5.1 Criterion 1: Relevance of the digital research and development project to the creative professional/s or organisations involved (40 marks)

This criterion considers the relevance of the project to the creative professionals and organisations involved and to all collaborators. To make your case in terms of this criterion, you will be required to:

- provide your track record and a clear explanation of how this project will be beneficial in terms of your artistic, professional or organisational development. What value will the project add to your current creative practice? How will the project impact your future development?
- explain how the proposed project is innovative and how the grant would help to develop new knowledge/expertise and push boundaries in terms of the work being proposed and the collaborations involved.
- explain the steps being taken to ensure artistic excellence is achieved. Explain your commitment to make sure that the research would lead to fulfilling the goals of your project.

5.2 Criterion 2: Methodology/Plan of action (20 marks)

This criterion considers the proposed plan in terms of process to be followed throughout the project, as well as the rationale for the selected plan. Where applicable, the level of commitment from partners and/or collaborators is considered. To make your case in terms of this criterion, you will be required to:

- provide a clear plan of action which will be followed throughout the project. Provide the rationale for the selected plan. Include timeframes, workplan with collaborators involved and a step-by-step plan on how the project will be developed.
- outline whether you will be involving any relevant partners and/or collaborators or not. In either case you are to explain the choice made by referring to the methodological approach. If partners/collaborators are to be involved specify them and their commitment to the project. Collaborators may include creative practitioners, Higher Education Institutions, Public Cultural Organisations, private organisations, amongst others.

5.3 Criterion 3: Presentation and dissemination of the project (20 marks)

This criterion considers how the project will be presented and disseminated amongst the selected audience. If the project does not include any public engagement, the audience can be made up of individuals with whom you would like to communicate the research.

To make your case in terms of this criterion, you will be required to provide information about

- What the outcome of the project will be.
- What benefit will it have in terms of creating new knowledge within the sector.
- How the research will be presented to the selected audience.
- How you intend to document the process and disseminate the information about the research project.

5.4 Criterion 4: Management (20 marks)

This criterion considers how well-planned the proposed project is and takes into consideration the budget provided, as well as the clarity of the application submitted and of the timeframe proposed.

6. SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION FORM

Follow these steps to apply

1. If you have not done so already, create your profile with Arts Council Malta by clicking on Register and filling in the details.
2. Read these guidelines and regulations very carefully.
3. Check whether your proposed idea can be addressed by this fund.
4. Click on the 'Apply for the fund' button on the fund's page and start the online application process.
5. Follow the online application step by step. Fill in all the required information from the online application including the budget and attach the supporting documentation.
6. 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@artscouncilmalta.org.

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, then your application will not be processed and evaluated.

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

7. Evaluation process

This fund is competitive and will be evaluated 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 made up of independent evaluators. 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; a pitching session will also be organised for shortlisted candidates.

7.1 Pitching

Only the shortlisted applications during the initial evaluation will be requested to attend a pitching session.

Shortlisted applicants are those scoring 60 marks or above during initial evaluation. It is solely at the evaluators' discretion to invite any applicant scoring less than 60 marks, to attend a pitching session.

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 of presenting comments, latest insights and additions to the already submitted project description.

The pitch can be presented in a variety of formats but should not be longer than five (5) minutes. During your pitch, you will be expected to explain the artistic vision of your project and communicate how you plan to implement it. This five-minute pitch will be followed by a Q&A session with the evaluation panel.

7.2 Communication of results

On the day indicated, 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 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.

8. Project implementation and monitoring

If your application is approved and funded, you will be requested to sign a contract specifying the conditions of the fund at Arts Council Malta. When accepting the grant, applicants accept that their name, the project title and the amount awarded can be published by Arts Council Malta.

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 fund's logo on all related material and specify that the project was supported by the grant as follows: **Supported by the Digital Research and Development Grant, managed 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 an 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.

8.1 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.

9. 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.

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

10. STATE AID

The Digital Research and Development Fund will be implemented in line with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid, OJ L 352/1 of 24 December 2013, as amended 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, OJ L 215/3 of 7 July 2020.

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 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 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 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.

Contact us

For more information you may call us on 2334 7230 or send us an email on fundinfo@artscouncil.mt

Guidelines updated on 12th November 2020