



MINISTRY FOR  
THE ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

# Sustainable Development Fund Support Scheme for Voluntary Organisations

**Fund Guidelines**

**2017**

**[www.environment.gov.mt](http://www.environment.gov.mt)**

# Sustainable Development Fund: Support Scheme for Voluntary Organisations

## *Fund Guidelines 2017*

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Through the **Sustainable Development Fund Support Scheme for Voluntary Organisations**, the Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Climate Change, on behalf of the Government, is offering financial support to non-Government, not-for-profit organisations engaged in activities and initiatives related to the Society, the Environment and the Economy and its promotion, in recognition and support of the valid and effective effort and contribution they make in the sector, and to incentivise further sustainable development beneficial initiatives.

### 2.0 Objectives

2.1 The Sustainable Development Fund Support Scheme for Voluntary Organisations is aimed to support non-Government, non-profit voluntary organisations to undertake tangible sustainable development projects and initiatives that have the potential to cover activities and initiatives in line with the Sustainable Development Goals as indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1 - Sustainable Development Goals.**

| Sustainable Development Goals |           |  |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--|
| SD Pillars                    | SDG Goals |  |
| Social                        | Goal 1    | End poverty in all its forms everywhere  |
|                               | Goal 2    | End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture         |
|                               | Goal 3    | Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages                                      |
|                               | Goal 4    | Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all |
|                               | Goal 5    | Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls  |

|                    |         |  |
|--------------------|---------|--|
|                    | Goal 16 | Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels            |
| <b>Environment</b> | Goal 6  | Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all   |
|                    | Goal 7  | Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all   |
|                    | Goal 12 | Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns   |
|                    | Goal 13 | Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts  |
|                    | Goal 14 | Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development   |
|                    | Goal 15 | Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss |
| <b>Economy</b>     | Goal 8  | Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all   |
|                    | Goal 9  | Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation  |
|                    | Goal 10 | Reduce inequality within and among countries   |
|                    | Goal 11 | Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable   |

### 3.0 Targeted Actions

3.1 The Ministry for the Environment, Sustainable Development, and Climate Change notes that the projects which merit support through this funding instrument to fund projects and initiatives related to the three main pillars of sustainable development which are the society, the environment and the economy . Actions and initiatives should fall within the scope of the list of indicators as referred to in **Annex IV- Final list of proposed Sustainable Development Goal indicators** General **Assembly resolution 68/261**. For more information kindly refer to the following [link](#);

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11803Official-List-of-Proposed-SDG-Indicators.pdf>

## **4.0 Management and administration of the Scheme**

4.1 The grant support scheme will be managed by the Sustainable Development Fund Support Scheme for Voluntary Organisations Committee, composed as follows:

- (i) The Ministry's Director for Sustainable Development as Chair;
- (ii) Representative of the Ministry's Directorate for the Environment and Climate Change as member;
- (iii) Representative of the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector as member; and
- (iv) Representative of the Office of the Permanent Secretary as member.

In the exercise of its functions, the Committee shall be assisted as necessary by the Office of the Permanent Secretary, which shall also provide secretarial support. The Committee may also request additional expert advice as may be relevant, particularly in relation to any specialised case merits (e.g. methodological specifications).

4.2 The Committee shall be entrusted with:

- (i) managing the scheme on an ongoing basis in an effective and efficient manner in accordance with the established objectives and criteria, and in line with good sustainable development management practices;
- (ii) establishing requirements, procedures, and ancillary documentation and application forms;
- (iii) ensuring fair, transparent and equitable selection procedures, and ensure compliance with all applicable National, European and International regulations and good practice standards;
- (iv) assessing applications against the objectives, parameters and criteria set out herein and prioritise them accordingly, and request any required clarifications from applicants for purposes of assessment;
- (v) submitting recommendations to the Minister for approval including, in special circumstances, any recommendations for any specific waiver of administrative limitations where this would be in the interest of sustainable development in the field of the society, environment and the economy. The Committee shall also have the prerogative to retain (and not allocate) part of the Fund for contingency purposes;
- (vi) informing applicants with the outcome of their application, and liaising with successful applicants for signing of the grant agreement;
- (vii) authorising payments in respect of approved grants;
- (viii) monitoring the implementation of funded projects to ensure compliance with the grant conditions and with sustainable development in the field of the society, environment and the economy, as well as to ensure full accountability by applicants for their initiatives, actions and deliverables; and
- (ix) ensuring compliance with these guidelines, and taking any initiative or action in line with these guidelines.

## 5.0 Eligibility for fund

### 5.1 Pre-requisites

- (i) Applicants must be non-Government, non-profit voluntary organizations intending to address any of the activities as outlined in section 2 of this document. At the date of application, applicants must be duly enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organizations and must also be compliant with the Voluntary Organizations Act, (Cap 492 of the Laws of Malta) and its subsidiary legislation.
- (ii) Funds shall only be granted for projects that are in line with the terms of these guidelines.
- (iii) The project deliverables should have a definite completion timeframe of not more than 24 months from the date of the grant agreement, subject to **clause 4.2(v)** above.
- (iv) Applicants involved in any relevant breach of any activity related to regulations within the scope of sustainable development or other relevant infringements, shall not be eligible for funding.
- (v) Projects which explicitly or implicitly involve or entail any endorsement, sanctioning or facilitation of any malpractice or any breach or circumvention of relevant permits or existing relevant sustainable development obligations shall be ineligible for funding.
- (vi) A past beneficiary organisation to this scheme would not be eligible for support if any past project is still not completed and is similar to a new application proposal by the same beneficiary.

### 5.2 Fund limitations

- (i) Funding shall only cover costs that are reasonably necessary for the implementation of the chosen project and unless otherwise authorised included in the proposed budget for the project. Eligible costs must be identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance and implementation of the project.
- (ii) The grant shall not exceed 80% of the total estimated cost of the project, and the maximum allocation for each project shall not exceed €10,000 (inclusive of VAT) unless otherwise deemed advisable by the Committee and approved by the Minister.
- (iii) No double financing of any intervention, work, activity or purchase is allowed. In the interest of encouraging complementarities with other sustainable development programmes, projects that have already been granted Government or European Union funds may be eligible for funding as long as such funding is not directed to any project component in respect of which any such grant has been issued.
- (iv) Funding may be granted to finance projects that also involve commercial elements which, in the Committee's opinion, are of a reasonable and limited nature, are strictly ancillary to the overriding sustainable development deliverables of the project and do not constitute the primary consideration behind the project.
- (v) Funding may not be awarded retrospectively for already-completed projects, unless otherwise deemed appropriate by the Committee in line with the overriding sustainable development objectives of this funding scheme.
- (vi) Funding may not be awarded for an already-started project. However, funding may be awarded for a project which is part of a larger project which has already started, depending on whether the nature, quality and extent of the already initiated larger project are considered acceptable by the Committee and the Committee shall not be bound to retroactively endorse or sanction any fait accompli.

### 5.3 Non-eligible costs

The following projects/interventions and their costs shall *not* be considered as eligible for funding:

- (i) Projects designed for personal or commercial profit;
- (ii) Return on capital, debt, debt service charges, as well as any interest owed or paid;
- (iii) Provision for losses or potential future liabilities, provisions for doubtful debts, exchange rate losses, as well as insurance premium against risk of such losses;
- (iv) Costs declared in connection with another activity or programme receiving grants from other National or European Union schemes, as well as indirect costs declared by any organisation receiving an operating grant from the National or EU budget;
- (v) Indirect costs exceeding the percentage or value agreed in the grant agreement, as well as costs in any budget heading that exceed the respective budgeted amount, and any expenditure of whatever nature that is excessive, reckless or unjustified;
- (vi) Costs incurred in relation to activities not foreseen in the project or in modifications of the action, which are not approved by the Committee;
- (vii) Recreational activities, travel, gifts and presents;
- (viii) Costs incurred on education campaigns or communication material (including notice boards and websites) which are wholly or partly political in nature, or which fail to acknowledge the funding obtained through this Scheme;
- (ix) Expenditure that is illegal per se, or which is in any way connected with activities, practices, processes or interventions that are in breach of law or which infringe the terms, conditions or approved specifications of any permit or licence;
- (x) Extension of built structures, topographical alterations in the countryside or on the coast, new or extended roads, site formalisation on undeveloped rural/coastal land and hard-surfacing of rural tracks/pathways; and
- (xi) Anything which, in the Committee's opinion, would: constitute a misuse of public funds, entail a net negative impact on the sustainable development goals, or be in conflict with or irrelevant to the sustainable development objectives and purpose of the scheme.

### 5.4 Other terms and conditions

- (i) Applicants are to ensure that they have stable and sufficient resources and finances to sustain the portion of the project that is not supported by the grant, such that the integrity and viability of the project can be guaranteed. Applicants must also have the necessary operational capacity, expertise, competence and motivation to undertake and complete the project within the proposed time frame whilst meeting the appropriate technical, sustainable development and administrative standards.
- (ii) Projects, interventions and activities must be covered by all necessary regulatory and other permits and must be carried out in full conformity with all applicable laws and permits. The Committee shall have the right to withhold or cancel any letter of acceptance or grant agreement, or to impose additional terms and safeguards, if the applicant fails to obtain any required authorisation within a reasonable timeframe as decided by the Committee. Potential eligibility for funding under this scheme shall not per se constitute sufficient justification for: the granting of any permit which would otherwise not be issued; circumventing or influencing any assessment; or non-application or relaxation of any appropriate conditions or quality standards.

- (iii) Wherever relevant the beneficiary must provide sufficient evidence of ownership, title, right of use or consent to intervene, and must subsequently keep any structural/physical improvements in good order for a minimum period of 3 years from completion.
- (iv) Non-disclosure of any required information (including any details required for processing of the application or for subsequent administration, verification or monitoring), or submission of misleading information, shall invalidate the application and may also constitute grounds for judicial or other proceedings against the applicant.

## 6. Proposal evaluation process

Each application shall be assessed by the Committee against the following criteria:

- 6.1 Applications received by the closing date for applications shall be evaluated using a two-stage procedure, first involving eligibility screening and administrative compliance assessment, and then, technical evaluation in terms of definite criteria.
- 6.2 The first stage of the evaluation procedure involves eligibility screening checks and administrative compliance assessment. At this stage, proposals will be checked for completeness (e.g. whether all relevant sections of the application forms were filled in correctly, whether all requested accompanying documentation was enclosed, whether the forms are duly endorsed by an authorised representative of the organisation, etc), as well as for compliance with the eligibility criteria. Checks will be made to ascertain that the Voluntary Organisation submitting such proposals are duly enrolled with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, in line with the provisions of the Voluntary Organisations Act (Cap 492 of the Laws of Malta) and its subsidiary legislation, and having, amongst their primary aims and fields of activity, sustainable development related activities as per Table 1 and its promotion. Any incomplete or administratively non-compliant proposals, or proposals from ineligible organisations, shall not be evaluated further. In the case of incomplete submissions only, the Sustainable Development Fund Support Scheme for Voluntary Organisations Committee may request an applicant Voluntary Organisation to rectify administrative non-compliance (e.g. submit missing documentation) within 5 working days. Failure to comply with such instruction shall render the application for project grant support ineligible for further evaluation and the applicant shall be informed in writing accordingly.
- 6.3 After eligibility screening checks and administrative compliance assessment are completed, the proposal undergoes technical evaluation stage, according to the following criteria:
  - Relevance of the proposed project to the priorities of the Fund:
    - extent to which the project meets the objectives, parameters, requirements and criteria, and addresses **one Sustainable Development goal from one of the three Sustainable Development pillars as per Table 1**, as set out in these guidelines and in the call for applications;
    - demonstrated need, appropriate feasibility, effectiveness, reliability and sustainability of the proposal in meeting and addressing sustainable development needs and providing tangible sustainable development benefits, as well as possibly being complementary with other sustainable development I projects and deliverables;

- the wider implications of the project, particularly any other benefits, adverse impacts or consequences on the sustainable development;
- strategic value in achieving the longer-term purposes of the Fund, and the extent to which the project can act as a catalyst for further sustainable development improvement or for the uptake of good sustainable development practices.

This criterion carries 100% out of the total of 300% weighting score that can be granted.

- Quality of the proposal:

- presentation, structure and comprehensiveness of the project plans;
- clarity of focus on achieving the declared outcomes in the most effective;
- soundness of budget and value for money, securing net long-term benefit;
- the suitability, effectiveness and reliability of proposed methodologies, including any associated safeguards;
- compatibility of any site-specific interventions with their sustainable development context;

This criterion carries 100% out of the total of 300% weighting score that can be granted.

- Capacity of applicant organisation to carry out the proposed project

- sufficiency of resources of the organisation to carry out the proposed project;
- demonstrated ability, competence and experience and capacity of the organisation to successfully and lawfully implement the project in a timely and effective manner;
- the organisation's track record to meet appropriate sustainable development standards in the society, the environment and the economy .

This criterion carries 100% out of the total of 300% weighting score that can be granted.

A technical evaluation pass mark of 65% for each criterion is set. Proposals scoring less than the pass mark for each criterion shall not be considered further. Those proposals scoring above the pass mark for each individual criterion shall have their total score computed and shall be shortlisted for support in the order of priority.

- 6.4 Wherever more than one eligible proposal is received from a single applicant organisation, and such proposals obtain the pass mark stipulated above and are thus shortlisted for fund support, the Committee shall, in its final ranking decision, have regard to the overall number of applicant organisations participating in a given call for applications, the number of eligible proposals per applicant organisation, and the availability of funds under the call, so however as to ensure a balanced allocation of fund support across beneficiary organisations participating in a given call.
- 6.5 Proposals may be approved wholly or partly, or rejected, on the basis of the above criteria. The Committee shall also have the prerogative to request further information, amendments or clarifications as it deems appropriate at any stage, and/or to leave as reserved matters any details that may be premature vis-a-vis the in-principle decision on the project but which would need to be addressed at a later stage before implementation. Qualifying proposals shall be awarded fund support, subject to availability of funds.



## **7.0 Post-selection procedures**

### **7.1 Fund agreement**

- 7.1.1 Successful applicants shall enter into a fund agreement with the Committee (acting on behalf of Government). The fund agreement shall be subject to the conditions set out in these guidelines as well as those contained in the call for applications, and shall also include any specific conditions and arrangements as necessary to ensure proper governance and enforcement of the grant conditions as well as effective implementation, achievement and durability of sustainable development benefits.
- 7.1.2 In cases where project implementation requires subcontracting or procurement contracts, grant beneficiaries shall award the contract to the bidders who offer best value for money, and shall adopt all reasonable safeguards to avoid any conflict of interest and other risks to the project and its deliverables as well as to the social, the environment and the economy in general. Any purchasing and expenditure requirements are to be submitted in line with the public procurement regulations. The Committee shall have the right to review any documentation pertaining to the beneficiary organization with regards to sub-contracting and/or procurement contracts, and to take any action as it considers appropriate in the event that the relevant procedures and safeguards are not observed.
- 7.1.3 In accepting a grant, a beneficiary is expected to:
- (i) Ensure that the project commences promptly and progresses steadily;
  - (ii) Submit performance reports to the satisfaction of the Committee;
  - (iii) Provide due acknowledgement to the Fund in all publications and reports, all informative signage, and all public communications relating to the approved project; and
  - (iv) Ensure that all funds are used in line with the grant conditions.
- 7.1.4 50% of the grant will be given to the beneficiary upon signing of the grant agreement, and the remaining 50% will be given upon certified completion of the project to the Committee's satisfaction. For this purpose the beneficiary shall, within one month following project completion, submit to the Committee a final progress report and a completion certificate, also including documentary evidence and photographs to confirm that all project components have been successfully implemented to the required standards.
- 7.1.5 Any unspent funds of the approved grant may be used for another purpose that fits within the fund guidelines, subject to the prior approval of the Committee. Otherwise, any unspent funds shall be returned back within one month of project completion, failing which these will be considered as a public debt (due to the Fund) on which commercial interest will be charged.
- 7.1.6 Should an organisation benefitting from a grant wish to dispose, within a period of 5 years from such grant, of any asset that had been purchased through such grant funds and had a value exceeding €2,000 at that time, it must submit a written application to the Committee requesting consent to the disposal. The Committee shall have sole and final discretion on the matter.

## **7.2 Auditing, monitoring, and enforcement**

- 7.2.1 Grant beneficiaries may be subjected to auditing, monitoring and/or inspection by the Committee or its delegates.
- 7.2.2 Beneficiaries will be required to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly and in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement. Beneficiaries must also retain all documentation pertaining to the funded project, as well as original fiscal invoices and receipts, and submit them to the Committee or its delegate when and as requested.
- 7.2.3 If the beneficiary does not meet all requirements set out in the grant agreement, or is found to have defaulted on the conditions of the grant, the Committee may decide to recover the entire grant, or any proportionate amount, at its sole discretion. The beneficiary shall repay any such amount within 15 days from being intimated by the Committee. Monies due shall be deemed to constitute public debt and the applicable measures may be taken or enforced to recover such debt.
- 7.2.4 The Committee reserves the right to rescind any fund agreement at any time if any of the conditions set out therein are not properly observed. Furthermore, if at any point it results that an application, or any terms of agreement (or the inclusion or omission of any such terms), were vitiated or influenced by incorrect, misleading or fraudulent information or assurance, or by a breach of rules or regulations, the Committee shall have the right to revoke the agreement or parts thereof, or to amend its terms, as it deems appropriate, as well as to recover any funds or seek any other appropriate redress. The Committee shall not be liable for any ensuing damage or inconvenience suffered by the beneficiary. The Committee shall also have the right to take further action in the event of fraud or other malicious circumstance.

## **8 Procurement Regulations**

- 8.1 In all cases beneficiaries shall abide fully with Public Procurement Regulations as indicated in Table 2.
- 8.2 In all cases the beneficiaries are obliged to allocate a specific bank account solely for the use of the grant award.
- 8.3 In those cases where the implementation of the project requires sub-contracting or the award of procurement contracts, beneficiaries of grants shall award the contract to the tender offering best value for money, that is to say, to the tender offering the best price-quality ratio, while taking care to avoid any conflict of interest.
- 8.4 In those cases where the implementation of the project requires the engagement of personnel external to the voluntary organisation, the remuneration/salary package shall be pegged to the salary scales as issued by the Ministry of Finance, referred to Schedule of Grades, for 2018.

**Table 2: Summary of Public Procurement Regulations**

| PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES<br>SUPPLIES & SERVICES |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| RANGES  | MADE THROUGH                               | REQUIREMENTS   |
| Under EUR<br>EUR 5,000                        | Request for<br>Quotations                  | Call for Quotes - Minimum of 3 quotations  |
|   |  | Publication <b>not</b> mandatory   |
| EUR 5,000 –<br>EUR 9,999                      | Published call for<br>Quotations           | Call for Quotes - Minimum of 3 quotations  |
|   |  | Publication of call for quotes <b>mandatory</b>                                  |
|   |  | Internal Evaluation of Quotes  |
|   |  | Notification of results to bidders   |
|   |  | Agreement/Contract with successful bidder  |
| EUR 10,000 –<br>EUR 135,000                   | Public<br>Tender/Expression<br>of Interest | Call for Tender  |
|   |  | Publication of call for quotes/tender <b>mandatory</b>                           |
|   |  | Internal Evaluation of Tender/Expression of Interest                             |
|   |  | Publication of Results & communication to bidders                                |
|   |  | Agreement / Contract with successful bidder inclusive of Addenda where necessary |

**NOTE:** *ALL figures are NET [excl.] of VAT*

- *The minimum time limit (Publication period) for Tenders shall be twenty (20) days;*
- *Objection period for all published calls with an estimated value over €5,000 is to be ten (10) calendar days;*

## 9.0 How to apply

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <p><b>Where to apply?</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Online e-applications must be submitted to the Malta Council of the Voluntary Sector on line and can be found on the MCVS home page <a href="http://www.vofund.org.mt">www.vofund.org.mt</a></li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>When to apply?</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The e-application may be submitted as of:</li> <li>• 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017 The deadline to submit e-applications is: 7th December 2017</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>How to apply?</b></p>   | <p><b><u>Step One: Access Website</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Access the link: <a href="http://www.vofund.org.mt">www.vofund.org.mt</a></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Step Two: Register the Voluntary Organisation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Click on the register button (top right)</li> <li>✓ Fill in details (important to include the official email address of your organisation e.g. <a href="mailto:info@mcvs.com">info@mcvs.com</a>)</li> <li>✓ Click on submit</li> <li>✓ A message stating <i>“Thank you for registering. Your registration will be validated within one (1) working day. Following validation, you may proceed with the online e-application”</i></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Step Three: Validation of Registration</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ After registering kindly wait for validation issued by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector since we need to confirm that the details inputted are congruent to our database.</li> <li>✓ Once your registration is approved the email address that you would have submitted will be used for all sort of correspondence related to the various fund schemes.</li> <li>✓ The validation will be granted by a maximum of one WORKING day after registering.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Step Four: E-application form</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Access the e-application form of the specific fund scheme.</li> </ul> |

For further guidance to potential beneficiaries, an information session will be held and details shall be made available on MCVS Official Website ([www.maltacvs.org](http://www.maltacvs.org)). It is highly recommended that interested e-applications attend this meeting.

- 9.1 A Call for Applications will be issued and advertised in the media. The respective application form will be available only online in electronic format, either from the webpage [www.vofund.org.mt](http://www.vofund.org.mt) or from the webpage link [www.environment.gov.mt](http://www.environment.gov.mt) . To be enabled to apply, applicants must first be registered with the VO Fund Portal. Any related enquiries can also be communicated via the e-mail address [sustainablefunding.mesdc@gov.mt](mailto:sustainablefunding.mesdc@gov.mt) or by calling telephone number 22926283.
- 9.2 Applicants are to submit a fully completed application, conforming to these guidelines, on the prescribed e-form, and are to append there to the documentation stated on the prescribed e-form application.
- 9.3 Applications are to be sent by not later than, online via the webpage [www.vofund.org.mt](http://www.vofund.org.mt) or from the webpage link [www.environment.gov.mt](http://www.environment.gov.mt)

