Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme

This scheme is designed to assist applicants looking for funding on projects that can ***make a real difference to their local communities****.*

Guidelines for Applicants

2027 PROJECTS
(SEPTEMBER 2026 CALL)

A SCHEME MANAGED BY

MALTA COUNCIL FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

SUPPORTED BY

GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR INCLUSION
AND THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

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PART A

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE VOPS

1. Introduction

The **Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme (VOPS)** is managed and administered by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) and supported by the Ministry for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector (MIV).

The Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme has an allocated fund of €800,000.00.

The call for e-applications is issued by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector under the Voluntary Organisations Projects Scheme herein referred to as VOPS. The guidelines for the VOPS (2027) are also published on the MCVS website www.maltacvs.org and the VO Funding Portal www.vofunding.org.mt. The guidelines constitute an integral part of the call for proposals.

The **Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme (VOPS)** is designed to assist applicants looking for funding on projects that can make a real difference to their local communities.

1.1 Objectives

The general objectives of the VOPS Scheme are the following:

a) To stimulate co-operation and networking between voluntary organisations.
b) To provide a consultative forum that can effectively address issues related to the Voluntary Sector.
c) To support the work of voluntary organisations as an integral part of civil society.
d) To enhance the capacity building of voluntary organisations.
e) To provide a platform from which to develop co-operation between voluntary organisations and the Government.
f) To promote and encourage a culture of volunteering and the participation in volunteer activities among people, especially children and youths, as an aspect of personal and social development.
g) To foster co-operation in the volunteer sector with local and international bodies, entities or other persons for the encouragement and promotion of the development of volunteering programmes, initiatives, and activities.
h) To encourage, in furtherance of the principle of subsidiary, non-governmental bodies and private entities or persons and local councils to contribute to the promotion of volunteering in Malta.

1.2 Priorities

In addition to the objectives, the general priorities of the VOPS are the following:

• Volunteering
This priority is intended to encourage projects aimed at raising awareness of the value and importance of volunteering as a form of active engagement and as a tool to develop or improve competences for personal, social and professional development.

• Poverty and Social Inclusion
This priority is intended to encourage projects addressing the issues of Poverty, marginalisation and hate speech by focusing on actions such as enhancing awareness and commitment amongst the Maltese society to make it more inclusive. In this context, special emphasis shall be placed on the inclusion of migrants, disabled young people and other marginalised minorities in fulfilling their potential.

• Good Health and Wellbeing
This priority is intended to encourage projects addressing the issues of Health and Disability ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all persons by focusing on actions such as creating awareness, supporting patients, promote early warning and risk reduction.

• Education
This priority is intended to encourage projects addressing the issues related to education with special focus on the support of marginalised and more challenged groups in the Maltese society.

1.3 Funding Actions and Budgets –

Enrolled Voluntary Organisations can submit to one of the following Actions and specific budgets:

Action 1: Supports ***Project Based Initiatives*** - **€400,000**

Action 2: Supports ***Infrastructural Projects*** - **€200,000**

Action 3: Supports ***Research Projects*** - **€40,000**

Action 4: Supports ***Inclusion - Health and Disability*** - **€160,000**

An enrolled Voluntary Organisation may only submit one application in only one of the listed actions until the deadline.

1.4 Action Procedures

Action 1 – *Project Based Initiatives*: The projects should address the aims of the Voluntary Organisation and is in line with the objectives and priorities of the Scheme addressed. The organisation must also demonstrate that through this project, a sustainable and innovative programme will be created to address the needs of both the volunteers and the organisation. The project shall not be a one-off event but a project-based initiative that the organisation may sustain on its own initiative for at least two more years, having an identified date of commencement and date of termination.

Action 2 – *Infrastructural Projects*: The project should have infrastructural priorities with a clear date of commencement and date of termination, whereby the infrastructural needs of the voluntary organisation are addressed through a complete and safe project. It is important that the Voluntary Organisation demonstrates the following:

- That the premises are their property or have a leasing agreement of at least ten (10) calendar years from date of application.
- Must have applied to and received approval of any permits that pertain to the project by the Planning Authority prior to the signing of the agreement.
- They also must guarantee that safety measures are taken within the implementation of this project.

It should also be demonstrated that these changes will be implemented in their completeness also keeping in mind that the co-financing element could be more than 20% of the total amount granted. Infrastructural projects may include masonry works, utility installations and fixed equipment which improves or creates a service for the voluntary organisation.

Action 3 – *Research Projects*: The project should have research priorities intended to encourage projects addressing research to complement other priorities addressed in this call. Research can be carried out regarding all aspects of the organisation such as capacity building, services, training and volunteering. The sector is constantly seeking to identify innovative approaches through an evidence-based approach which will induce the organisations to become more effective and relevant towards societal needs.

Action 4 – *Inclusion - Health and Disability*: The projects should have the main priority addressing at least one of the areas in health and/or disability. The focus should be primarily to mostly invest the allocated funds to support the voluntary organisation in its mission. The organisation must also demonstrate that through this project a sustainable and innovative programme will be created to address the needs of both the volunteers and the organisation. The projects shall not be a one-off event but a project-based initiative that the organisation may sustain on its own initiative for at least two more years, having an identified date of commencement and date of termination.

1.5 Grant request per Action

The amount requested by a beneficiary organisation shall be as follows:

Action	Minimum requested	Maximum requested	Funding mechanism	Comments
Action 1	€5,000	€20,000	80% (€20,000) covered by VOPS, 20% (€5,000) covered by VO	Total project costs need to be €25,000 if requesting the maximum €20,000 from VOPS
Action 2	€5,000	€20,000	80% covered by VOPS, 20% covered by VO	Total project costs need to be €25,000 if requesting the maximum €20,000 from VOPS Under this Action, where structural or electrical modifications are to be undertaken, applicants shall submit detailed plans by architect or other technical person in relation to the works. In the case where Planning Permits are required, these should be submitted to MCVS prior to signing of the agreement
Action 3	€4,000	€10,000	80% covered by VOPS, 20% covered by VO	Total project costs need to be €12,000 if requesting the maximum €10,000 from VOPS
Action 4	€5,000	€20,000	80% covered by VOPS, 20% covered by VO	Total project costs need to be €25,000 if requesting the maximum €20,000 from VOPS

2. Implementation of the Projects

- The period of implementation should commence on the **1st of March 2027** and terminate by not later than the **29th of February 2028**.
- Projects should be implemented **over a maximum period of twelve (12) consecutive months**.

The Voluntary Organisations Project Selection Committee may decide to increase the projects assigned in the case of residual funds. Should this procedure be implemented, the amount on the residual fund will be allocated to the projects that were deemed eligible but were not benefiting according to the ranking list. The Voluntary Organisations Project Selection Committee reserves the right not to allocate all the funds available should projects fall under the established quality benchmark of 65% mark. The decision of the Voluntary organisations Project Selection Committee is final and indisputable.

Projects are to be implemented by the voluntary organisation benefitting from the funds. Third parties cannot be enlisted to fully implement the project themselves.

3. Implementation of the Scheme

The Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme Selection Committee is appointed and chaired by the CEO of the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector. The Selection Committee shall monitor and approve the general implementation, follow-up, and evaluation of the Scheme.

The Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme Selection Committee tasks are to:

- Oversee and monitor a transparent and equitable selection process for project e-applications to be funded through the VOPS.
- Provide and/or monitor effective and efficient administrative processes in the evaluation process and in the implementation of the VOPS.
- Agree on the final list of projects to be awarded a grant.

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector tasks are to:

- Provide appropriate information on the VOPS.
- Manage the application process.
- Provide support to project applicants and beneficiaries throughout the project life cycle.
- Monitor the implementation of the VOPS.
- Evaluate VOPS project reports.
- Improve the visibility of the VOPS.
- Promote the dissemination and exploit the results of the VOPS at national level.

4. Application and Evaluation Process

All e-applications received by the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee will undergo a selection procedure.

4.1 The selection procedure

All e-applications are checked against the eligibility criteria, the financial capacity, and the exclusion criteria by MCVS Officials. Those e-applications which have successfully passed these checks are evaluated by independent external evaluators and ranked accordingly.

4.2 Decision

Once the evaluation, including the verification of financial conditions, is completed, the Fund Officer prepares a ranking list of the final mark of each project according to the final marks issued by the External Evaluators.

The Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee shall review the final marks and may decide to approve or question any of the results. The Evaluation Committee decides on the projects to be granted funding, based on the final ranking order list and the budget available.

4.3 Notification of award decisions

Applicants should be notified with the results, and these will be available online on www.maltacvs.org.

All successful applicants will be informed in writing. On termination of the e-application procedure the documents including the e-application form and the scoring documents will not be returned to the applicant.

4.4 Appeal

Unsuccessful applicants have a right to appeal within five working days of the issue of the official results on the funding portal. Appeals are to be addressed to the Funding Senior Manager of MCVS. An Appeals Board shall be appointed by the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee to decide on the appeals. The decision of the Appeals Board is final and indisputable.

PART B
Information About the Scheme

5. What are the criteria used to assess the Scheme?

5.1 Eligibility Criteria	
Eligible applicants	• The applicant must be a voluntary organisation which is enrolled and compliant with the Office of the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector by the deadline of the submission of e-applications. • The project should be innovative and not be a repeat of previously approved projects by the same organisation. • Have no pending MCVS projects from previous years. • The applicant must show that they have stable and sufficient financial resources **to support the co-financing element** (Bank Statement) • As according to the eligibility criteria/marking scheme Annex I to IV. • The proposed project should be sustainable for at least 3 years.
Number of e-applications	• Only one e-application per voluntary organisation shall be submitted in this deadline. • This implies that an organisation may only benefit from one action that falls under the same call.
Duration of project	• Maximum of 12 consecutive months (including preparatory phase) which fall between **1st March 2027** and **29th February 2028.**
Timetable of events	• An overview of the activity must be submitted as part of the e-application for under section project calendar.

Where to apply?	• E-applications must be submitted to the MCVS home page www.vofunding.org.mt
When to apply?	• The e-application shall open on the: **23rd September 2026** • The e-application must be submitted by the following deadline: **21st October 2026 till NOON**
How to apply?	**Step One: Access Website** ✓ Access the link: www.vofunding.org.mt **Step Two: Register the voluntary organisation** ✓ Click on the register button (top right) ✓ Fill in details (important to include the official email address of your organisation e.g., info@mcvs.com) ✓ Click on submit ✓ A message stating *"Thank you for registering. Your registration will be validated within one (1) working day. Following validation, you may proceed with the e-application"* **Step Three: Validation of Registration** ✓ 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. ✓ 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 funding schemes. ✓ The validation will be granted by a maximum of one working day after registering. **Step Four: E-application form** ✓ Access the e-application form of the specific funding scheme.

Safety procedures of project	• The applicant must guarantee that appropriate measures are implemented as part of the project proposal, to ensure the safety and protection of participants directly involved in the project.

5.2 Exclusion criteria

Exclusion criteria	• The project proposal is or has been granted through another EU/national fund. • The project is purely a fundraising event and/or for-profit making purposes. • The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously awarded projects by the same organisation • If the organisation has any pending MCVS project which has not been finalised in full following the end date of the grant Agreement • If the applicant falls under any situation as per article 8.1.b of these guidelines: Exclusion criteria • Does not observe any of the eligible criteria.

5.3 Selection Criteria

Financial capacity	• The applicant must show that they have stable and sufficient financial resources to support the co-financing element and the second, and final payments of the amount granted until they are reimbursed following successful evaluation of the interim/final report and financial documentation.
Operational capacity	• The applicant must show that they have the adequate operational capacity that is the necessary people, skills, competencies, and motivation to complete the proposed project.

5.4 Award criteria

Refer to Annex I, II, III and IV - Eligibility Criteria/Marking Scheme

6. What are the funding rules?

Overview of funding rules
The budget of the project must be drafted according to the following funding rules:

	Eligible costs	Financing mechanism	Amount	Rule of allocation	Reporting obligations
Activity costs	Any cost directly linked to the implementation of the project.	Lump sum	80% of eligible costs	Provided that it is consistent with the budget presented in the e-application.	Full justification of the costs incurred (including quotations where applicable), original invoices, cash sales, VAT receipts. Achievements to be described in final report.
Costs for additional dissemination and exploitation of results	Costs linked to additional dissemination and exploitation of project's results.	Lump sum	80% of eligible costs	Conditional: additional dissemination and exploitation activities must be clearly outlined in the e-application form.	Full justification of the costs incurred (including quotations where applicable), original invoices, cash sales and VAT receipts. Achievements to be described in final report.

7. How to develop a good project?

The 'Award criteria' table referred to in article 5.1 lists the criteria against which the quality of a project will be assessed.

Here is some advice which may help you to develop a good project.

7.1 Quality of project design

a) Quality of the preparation phase

The preparation phase is of crucial importance for the success of a project. During this phase, the organisation should choose and commonly agree on a theme relevant to the organisation itself and to the local community. They should look at creating a well-structured programme of the activities by presenting a timetable, including working methods and the benefits of their project for the local community.

b) Quality of the activity programme

The activity programme should be linked to the objectives of the project, to the project outcomes and it should be clearly defined, realistic and balanced.

c) Quality of the marketing of the programme

The marketing programme should be linked to the activity programme and each activity should be communicated to the target population of the project and the Maltese public (if possible). The disclaimer and logos as per latest marketing guidelines should be included on all project material.

d) Quality of project content and methodology

- **Theme of the project**

The project should have a clearly identified theme and should reflect the interests and needs of participants. Some examples of potential project themes are art and culture, social exclusion, environment, heritage protection, youth information, European awareness, rural/urban development, health in the community, anti-racism/xenophobia, disability, support for the elderly, homelessness, migrants, equal opportunities, peer education, unemployment, sports, leisure, media, and communications, etc. The theme must be translated into the concrete activities/outcomes.

- **Innovative creativity and entrepreneurship**

Within the context of the VOPS, the emphasis is put on promotion of innovative elements in the project. The project should aim at introducing, implementing, and promoting innovative approaches. These innovative aspects may be

related to the contents and objectives of the activity, the involvement of promoters from different backgrounds, creative and unexplored way of solving problems related to the community, experimentation with new methodologies and project formats or dissemination of the project results. The project should be innovative and not be a repeat of previously awarded projects by the same organisation.

- **Active involvement of participants in the project**

The activity programme and working methods should aim to have an impact on the members of the organisation and on the Maltese community. The project should engage the active involvement of the members of the organisation and Maltese citizens possibly identified as target population of the activity. Participants should also be actively involved in the preparation and evaluation phases of the project as one of the project outcomes.

e) Quality of infrastructural projects

In the case of infrastructural projects an organisation must submit any related architectural and/or engineering supporting documentation (Architect Report / Damage Report / Bill of quantity). Where applicable, permits from the relevant authorities must be sought prior to application and presented at application stage.

f) Quality of project reach

- **Impact, multiplier effect and follow-up**

The impact of VOPS should not be limited to the participants in the activity. Applicants should, as much as possible, involve other people (from the neighbourhood, local area, from fewer opportunities etc.) in the activity. It is important that the impact is quantified in the e-application 'Summary of the Project' section.

- **Visibility of the project visibility of Voluntary Organisation Project Scheme**

Promoters should reflect together on measures aimed at enhancing the visibility of their project and the visibility of the VOPS. This measure is also linked to the marketing action of each activity. The creativity of applicants in offering additional potential whilst disseminating information about the planned activity, and the opportunities offered by the VOPS will be highly scored in the evaluation process. Visibility measures mainly occur before and during the implementation of the initiative. Such measures can be divided into two broad categories:

- **Visibility of the project**

  Beneficiaries and participants should 'publicise' the project - as well as its aims and objectives. To raise awareness of the project, the beneficiary could for example develop information material; send a mail shot or SMS mailing; prepare posters, stickers, promotional items (t-shirts, caps, pens, etc.); invite journalists to observe; issue 'press releases' or write articles for local papers, develop websites or newsletters; engage in social network activities such as creating a Facebook page; a web space, a photo-gallery or blog on the Internet.

- **Visibility of the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme**

  The compulsory use of the official logo of the VOPS, MCVS and the Ministry should be included in all the project material used for communication purposes (internal and external).

  The communication objectives should include a description of the multiplier effect of the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme on the Maltese society, whilst also outlining the opportunities offered through the Scheme.

g) Impact and long-term sustainability

Funded projects are to have a well-defined impact & long-term sustainability plan in place. Sustainability means the continuation of project deliverables and sustenance of project outcomes after the initial/primary grant expires. The voluntary organisation is to devise a strategy to continue to perform and deliver project benefits to the primary target group for at least 3 years after the funding from MCVS has been consumed and project has been successfully terminated.

PART C

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

All applicants who intend to submit a project to be considered for financial support from the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme are invited to carefully read this section.

8. What do you have to do to submit a Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme?

To submit a project proposal under the VOPS you must perform the following three steps:

1. Check that your project complies with the Scheme criteria.
2. Check that you present a detailed budget proposal.
3. Fill in and submit your e-application form without leaving any missing Annexes that are required.

8.1 Check compliance with the Scheme criteria

As an applicant and potential beneficiary, you must verify and ensure that your project meets; the eligibility criteria, it does not include any exclusion criteria, it is aligned to the selection criteria and outlines the award criteria.

a) Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria relate to the project type, the target group, and the conditions for submitting a grant request under the VOPS. If your project does not meet the eligibility criteria, it will be rejected and considered ineligible without being further evaluated (as stated in Annex I - IV – Eligibility Criteria/Marking Scheme). To be deemed eligible, the project must meet all the eligibility criteria. For details of the eligibility criteria please consult Part B of this Guide.

b) Exclusion criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the VOP Scheme if they are in any of the following situations:

- They are bankrupt or being wound up.
- They are having their affairs administered by the courts, and/or are having entered an arrangement with creditors, and/or have suspended business activities, and/or are the subject of proceedings concerning

those matters, and/or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations.

- They are under investigation by the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.
- They have not submitted their financial returns to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations according to S.L 492.01 of the Laws of Malta.
- They have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of *res judicata*.
- They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify.
- They have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority.
- They have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector's financial interests.
- They are following another procurement disciplinary procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector or any other Government Agency; they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

Applicants will not be granted financial assistance if, on the date of the signing of the grant award, they:

- Are subject to a conflict of interests.
- Are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or fail to supply this information.

To comply with these provisions, applicants must sign a 'declaration of honour' certifying that they are not in any of the situations mentioned above. This 'declaration of honour' constitutes a specific section of the e-application form.

c) Selection criteria

The selection criteria enable the assessment of the applicant's financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed project.

d) Financial capacity

This means that the applicant has stable and sufficient sources of funding, to maintain its activity throughout the project.

The applicant must submit with the e-application:

- A copy of the Bank Statements of the **organisation's main account** dated no earlier than June of the year of the opening of the call. The Bank Statement shall clearly indicate the name of the voluntary organisation, the date and balance. The account presented shall be the same account presented to the Commissioner for the Voluntary Organisations in the organisations Financial Returns to the same Commissioner.
- The applicant must show that they have stable and sufficient financial resources to support the co-financing element and the second (40%) and final payments (≤20%) of the amount granted until they are reimbursed following successful evaluation of the interim/final report and financial documentation.

If, on the basis of these documents, the Evaluation Board concludes that the required financial documentation has not been provided or is not satisfactory, then they shall reject the e-application and it will be considered ineligible.

e) Operational capacity

This means that the applicant must show that it has the necessary people, skills competencies, and motivation to complete the project. This constitutes a specific section of the e-application form.

f) Award criteria

The award criteria are indicators/outcomes that allow the Evaluation Committee to evaluate the quality of projects submitted for grants. Based on these criteria, grants will be awarded to those projects which are maximising and aligned to the overarching objectives of the VOPS.

Note:

- Training should be conducted locally and not abroad. However, the voluntary organisation may have the option to bring in an expert from abroad to conduct the training in Malta/Gozo. For events/conferences/ other, only local events and conferences are eligible under the VOPS funds. The award criteria indicated in Part B of these Guidelines describe exactly which elements will be taken into consideration to assess the quality of the project.

8.2 Check the financial conditions

a) Types of grants

The grant under the VOPS is of a lump sum (fixed amounts) approach. The amount granted (contracted grant) is equivalent to a maximum of the 80% of the total amount of the project and shall not exceed the maximum amounts stated in section 1.5 of these guidelines. 40% of the contracted grant will be given to the beneficiary on signing of the agreement, 40% will be given on the submission and verification of a satisfactory interim report and the final balance of 20% will be given to the beneficiary on closure of the project with submission of a satisfactory final report.

b) Co-financing

Co-financing implies that the VOPS grant may not finance the entire costs of the project because the total sum requested is greater than the maximum possible fund allocation by the VOPS.

The VOPS grant shall finance 80% of the project costs to the maximum indicated in Article 1.5 of these guidelines. Should the total cost of the project exceed the 100% amount as indicated in Article 1.5 of these guidelines the applicant may complement the sum granted through the voluntary organisation's own financial resources or by seeking private assistance.

Contributions in kind are considered an eligible source of co-financing. The value calculated for such contributions must not exceed:

- The costs actually borne and duly supported by accounting documents of the third parties who made these contributions to the beneficiary free of charge but bear the corresponding costs.
- The costs generally accepted on the market in question for the type of contribution concerned when no costs are borne.

c) No double-financing

A project supported under the VOPS Scheme may not be in receipt of any other Government or European Union funding.

To avoid the risk of double-financing, the applicant must indicate in the relevant section of the e-application form, the sources and the amounts of any other funding received or applied for in the same financial year.

8.3 Fill in and submit the e-application form

a) E-application procedure

The eligibility criteria to be met regarding the procedure to be followed for the submission of a project are described in Part B of this Guide. Furthermore, the applicants must respect the provisions described below.

An e-application will be accepted only if:

1. Submitted via the correct e-application form which is completed in full.
2. It shows a budget in conformity with these Guidelines.
3. It is accompanied by all the requested additional documentation.
4. It is delivered by the stipulated deadline.

Please note that applicants are eligible to apply for one action only falling under the same call.

No changes can be made to the e-application past the deadline

b) Use the official e-application form

E-applications must be submitted only online through the following link: www.vofunding.org.mt

c) Legal status

The successful applicants must be enrolled and compliant with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Organisations.

d) Estimated budget

E-applications must include a detailed estimated budget (included in the e-application form) in which all prices are given in Euro (€).

Any e-application which exceeds the maximum limits will not be automatically excluded but will be scaled down within the limits set by the Guidelines.

9. What happens once the e-application is submitted?

All e-applications received under the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme will undergo a selection procedure as per article 4 of these Guidelines.

10. What happens if your e-application is approved?

10.1 Deliverables and Detailed Budget

Once results are issued, and the list of projects is published, the applicant will be contacted to provide the following:

- The deliverables and any criteria that need to be adhered to according to these Guidelines. Deliverables should include approximate number of participants/ beneficiaries to the project, where applicable.
- Any further documentation required by MCVS
- Any changes to the budget must be Communicated to MCVS prior to signing of the Grant Agreement

The above are to be provided prior to signing of the Grant Agreement.

10.2 Grant agreement

In the event of definitive approval by the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee, a grant agreement is drawn up between the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector and the beneficiary. The agreement is drawn up in Euros (€) with the details of the conditions and funding amount. The grant decision is a unilateral act awarding a subsidy to a beneficiary.

For projects approved by the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee, it is intended that beneficiaries should receive the agreements for signature by the first quarter of 2027. This agreement must be signed and returned to the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector.

10.3 Grant amount

Acceptance of an e-application does not necessarily constitute an undertaking to award funding equal to the amount requested by the applicant (this funding could be reduced). The awarding of a grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

It should be noted that the grant amount foreseen by the agreement is to be considered as a maximum which cannot be increased in any circumstances.

Furthermore, the amount allocated may not exceed the amount requested.

10.4 Eligible costs

In order to be eligible under this VOPS, costs must:

- Be necessary for the implementation of the project.
- Costs must support the deliverables of the project
- Be consistent with the principles of sound financial management, in terms of value for money and cost-effectiveness.
- Be incurred during the lifetime of the project as defined in the agreement.
- Be truly and actually incurred by the beneficiary.
- Be recorded in the beneficiary's accounts in accordance with applicable accounting principles.
- Be deposited in a standalone account.
- Be declared in accordance with the requirements of the applicable tax and social security legislation.
- Be identifiable and verifiable and be backed up by original supporting documents.
- Be innovative and not a repeat purchase of previously awarded projects by the same organisation.

10.4.1 Eligible direct costs

Eligible direct costs are costs which, with due regard for the conditions of eligibility set out above, are identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance of the project and which can therefore be booked to it directly. The following are the parameters to follow whilst preparing the costs for the VOPS project:

- Staff costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 10% of the allocated total direct cost. Staff costs may be applicable when:
- The VO has staff employed on its payroll
- If the person is an external provider (not employed with the VO), a VAT receipt must be provided and abide by the public procurement regulations.
- If the VO is utilising its own members/employees beyond Project Management (services), they need to pre-inform MCVS and give evidence that the person has competencies in the specific area of the deliverable.
- Infrastructural costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 25% of the total allocated direct costs under Action 1 and Action 4.
- Research costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 40% of the total allocated direct costs under Action 1 and Action 4.

- Events costs part of the Activity costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 20% of the total allocated direct costs.
- Hospitality (catering) costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of the following ceilings:

  1. Up to 10% of the allocated total direct cost if the funds approved are up to €10,000.00.
  2. Up to 5% of the allocated total direct cost if the funds approved are between €10,001.00 up to €20,000.00.
  3. Catering is only approved if distributed during project launching, conferences and formal meetings and activities related to the project.

- Marketing costs such as newspaper, leaflets, posters, banners, roll ups, Facebook, radio, and television advertisement are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 15% of the allocated total direct cost.
- Indirect costs should amount to a maximum of 5% of the total amount requested. The indirect costs represent the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the project such as postage, photocopying etc. Indirect costs may not include costs already entered under another budget heading.

Important to note that if Budget parameters are not respected throughout the e-application form the project will not be deemed eligible in the final ranking list.

10.5 Payment procedures

a) Procedure with one pre-financing instalment

The projects supported under the VOPS will be subject to a payment procedure consisting of one pre-financing payment, an interim payment, and a final payment/recovery of the balance due, as described below:

b) Pre-financing payment

A pre-financing payment of 40% will be transferred to the beneficiary once Grant agreement is signed. Pre-financing is intended to provide the beneficiary with a float.

c) Interim payment

An interim payment of 40% will be transferred to the beneficiary following the satisfactory delivery of the interim report.

d) Payment or recovery of the balance

The amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary will be established on the basis of a final report to be submitted within one month following the end date of the project.

e) Documentation to be presented with reports

The beneficiary must provide documents giving evidence that the activities organised with the support of the VOPS funding effectively took place. These shall include:

a. The report on the implementation of the project.
b. A final detailed financial statement of eligible costs actually incurred, following the structure of the estimated budget, which justifies the funding requested expressed as a percentage of the eligible costs actually incurred.
c. A full summary statement of the actual receipts and expenditure of the project.
d. Full justification of the costs incurred (including quotations where applicable), invoices, cash sales, copy of cheques and original VAT receipts.
e. Achievements to be described in the report.
f. Where applicable, in the case of Action 2 (Infrastructural) an engineer's/architect's work certification.

If the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary during the project are lower than the pre-financing payment, the beneficiary will be required to refund excess amounts already transferred under the pre-financing payments.

11. Other main contractual provisions

11.1 Non retroactivity

1. No grant may be awarded retrospectively for projects already completed.
2. Expenditure eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of commencement of the project in the e-application form.
3. A grant may be awarded for a project which has already begun following the publication of the results and only where the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the project before the agreement has been signed.
4. Starting the project before signing the grant agreement is done at the risk of the beneficiary.

11.2 Finance, Sub-contracting, and award of procurement contract

1. In all cases beneficiaries shall abide fully with the Public Procurement Regulations.
2. The beneficiaries are to allocate a specific bank account solely for the use of the grant award, unless otherwise specified and approved by MCVS.
3. 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 2027
4. When undergoing the project under the VOP Scheme, beneficiaries must abide with the procurement thresholds and relevant requirements to guarantee transparency and accountability as per *Table 1 (page 26)*.

11.3 Applicable Procurement Regulations

Grant beneficiaries are required to abide by the Public Procurement thresholds and relevant requirements to ensure transparency and accountability as outlined in the table below.

In the case of Direct orders (under €500 excluding VAT) the beneficiary may only utilise this for:

- SIS Projects - A total of €1,000 (excluding VAT). This rule appertains strictly to the funding scheme and is applied per project.
- VOPS Projects - A total of €2,000 (excluding of VAT). This rule appertains strictly to the funding scheme and is applied per project.

After using the direct order amount (allocated to SIS/VOPS), a minimum of three quotations must be provided. If the direct order amount is to be exceeded in exceptional circumstances, a request must be submitted to the MCVS prior to the financial procedure along with a detailed justification.

All requests for Direct Order approval are to be exclusive of VAT and in the Euro currency.

Proof of payments (bank statements) are to be provided for all direct project payments. Cash Payments exceeding €100 for direct project costs will not be reimbursed unless permission is sought from MCVS prior to the transaction.

With regards to quotations and tenders the Price/Cheapest mechanism is utilised. However, if a VO publishes a Call for Tender utilising the Best-Price-Quality-Ratio (BPQR) award mechanism, this must be first be channelled through the Department of Contracts (DoC), to obtain the approval of the BPQR Evaluation Criteria and the corresponding scoring.

NOTES:

- To publish in the Government Gazette, VOs are to provide the advert (call for tender) in Word format, both in English and Maltese. The fee will be deducted from the final payment of the approved grant. A template will be provided by MCVS.
- In the case of tenders, the postal address for prospective bids is to be addressed to the VO. In circumstances where the VO does not possess a registered address, they are to get in contact with MCVS.
- All items are to be purchased according to the respective EU Health and safety regulations within the mandate of the organisation.

Table 1: Outline of the procurement procedures that should be respected whilst implementing the project

PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES SUPPLIES, SERVICES & WORKS		
THRESHOLDS	**MADE THROUGH**	**REQUIREMENTS**
Under EUR 500	Direct Order	May only be used for a total of €2,000 in VOPS and €1,000 in SIS (exclusive of VAT). A minimum of 3 quotations are to be obtained once the direct order amount is reached.
EUR 500.00 – EUR 4,999.99	Obtain Quotations	Obtaining Quotes - Minimum of 3 quotations OR Published Call for Quotation/ Open Call
EUR 5,000 – EUR 9,999	Published Call for Quotations (Open Call)	- Call for Quotations/Open Call - Publication of call for quotes **mandatory** on VOs Website/ social media - Evaluation of Quotes by Beneficiary Organisation - Letter of Commitment/Agreement with successful bidder
EUR 10,000 – EUR 144,000	Public Tender/Expression of Interest	- Call for Tender/Open Call - Publication of call for tender **mandatory** on Government Gazette and VOs Website/ social media - Tenders should be addressed to the Beneficiary Organisation - Evaluation of Tenders by Beneficiary Organisation - Communication to all bidders - Letter of Commitment and Agreement with successful bidder
**The minimum time limit (Publication period) for Tenders shall be twenty-one (21) days; The Objection/Appeal period for all published calls with an estimated value over €10,000 is to be ten (10) calendar days.*		

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

11.4 Information on the grants awarded

Grants awarded in the course of a financial year must be published on the website of the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector during the first half of the year following the closure of the financial year for which they were awarded. The information may also be published in any other appropriate medium. The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector will publish the following information:

- Name of the beneficiary.
- Purpose of the grant.
- Amount awarded and rate of funding.

11.5 Publicity

Apart from the measures foreseen for the visibility of the project and for the dissemination and exploitation of its results (which are the award criteria), beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector, the VOPS and of the respective Ministry in all communications or publications, in whatever form or whatever medium, including the Internet, or on the occasion of activities for which the grant is used.

This must be done according to the latest Marketing Guidelines issued by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector. The Marketing Guidelines form an integral part of these Guidelines.

If these provisions are not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced.

11.6 Audits and monitoring

A granted project may be subject to monitoring visits. The beneficiary will undertake, with the signature of its legal representative, to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly. The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector may itself check or appoint an authorised delegate to audit the implementation procedures of the grant at any time during the term of the agreement. Such audits may be carried out up to 24 months from the date of the signing of the Grant Agreement. Consequently, all documentation pertaining to this project including copies of invoices and fiscal receipts (VAT) should be retained for audit purposes up to 5 years. Original invoices and fiscal receipts (VAT) shall be submitted to MCVS with the final report.

11.7 Recovery of Funds

The audit conclusions may necessitate that the Grant Award, in full or in part, be recovered from the applicant voluntary organisation due to a failure to honour one or more of the conditions stated in the Grant Agreement.

Recovery may also be applied in the case of underutilisation/wrong utilisation of the previously advanced funds.

11.8 Data protection

All personal data contained in the e-application forms and grant agreement shall be processed in accordance with the latest Data Protection Act as per local legislation.

This data will be processed solely in connection with the implementation and evaluation of the VOPS, without prejudice to the possibility of transferring such data to the bodies responsible for inspection and audit appointed by the Ministry for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector, and/or the Ministry of Finance, through whom the funds for the VOP Scheme are made available.

Contact details

Malta Council for the Voluntary sector
E-mail- mcvs.miv@gov.mt
Tel: +356 2248 1110
Website: www.maltacvs.org

Funding Support Team

Email: funding@maltacvs.org
Tel no.: 22481119

Annex I: Eligibility Criteria/Marking scheme application for Action 1 supporting the "*Project Based Initiatives*"

Project Code		
Yes/No	One complete e-application form	
Yes/No	Not in any situation which would prevent the applicant from receiving a grant as per Part C of this Guide	
Yes/No	Project remit within the mandate of the applicant	
Yes/No	The applicant is enrolled and compliant with the Office of the Commissioner for VOs by the deadline of the funding scheme	
Yes/No	The applicant has applied for only one project under the VOPS of the same year	
Yes/No	The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously awarded projects by the same organisation	
Yes/No	Maximum of project duration is 12 months including preparatory period	
Yes/No	Do not have pending MCVS projects from previous years	
Yes/No	Proof of financial capacity to support implementation of the project (Vo's Bank Statement)	
5	Clarity of E-application Form	
10	Previous project experience	
10	Relevance towards objective of VOPS	
10	Relevance towards the priorities of the VOPS	
10	Project overview and programme of events	
10	Budget Breakdown	
10	Impact and long-term sustainability of project	
5	Operational capacity of applicant to implement project	
5	Involvement of people with fewer opportunities (Inclusion, Diversity and Equity)	
25	The Overall quality of project - content and methodology	
100	**Total Marks:**	
	Ranking:	

Annex II: Eligibility Criteria/Marking scheme application for Action 2 supporting the "*Infrastructural Projects*"

Project Code		
Yes/No	Complete e-application form	
Yes/No	Not in any situation which would prevent the applicant from receiving a grant as per Part C of this Guide	
Yes/No	Project remit within the mandate of the applicant	
Yes/No	The applicant is enrolled and compliant with the Office of the Commissioner for VOs by the deadline of the funding scheme	
Yes/No	The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously awarded projects by the same organisation	
Yes/No	Maximum of project duration is 12 months including preparatory period	
Yes/No	Do not have pending MCVS projects from previous years	
Yes/No	Technical documents describing any specific structural changes are submitted *	
Yes/No	Premises are their property or have a leasing agreement of at least ten (10) calendar years	
Yes/No	Proof of financial capacity to support implementation of the project (Bank Statement)	
5	Clarity of E-application Form	
10	Previous Project Performance	
10	Relevance towards objective of VOPS	
10	Relevance towards the priorities of the VOPS	
5	Operational capacity of applicant to implement project	
10	Budget Breakdown	
10	Impact and long-term sustainability of project	
10	Safety procedures implemented through the project	
10	Facilitating Accessibility	
20	The quality of project - content and methodology	
100	**Total Marks:**	
	Ranking:	
	**In such case where Planning Permits are required, these should be in hand prior to signing of the agreement.*	

Annex III: Eligibility Criteria/Marking scheme application for Action 3 supporting the "*Research Projects*"

Project Code		
Yes/No	Complete e-application form	
Yes/No	Not in any situation which would prevent the applicant from receiving a grant as per Part C of this Guide	
Yes/No	Project remit within the mandate of the applicant	
Yes/No	The applicant is enrolled and compliant with the Office of the Commissioner for VOs by the deadline of the funding scheme	
Yes/No	The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously awarded projects by the same organisation	
Yes/No	Maximum of project duration is 12 months including preparatory period	
Yes/No	Do not have pending MCVS projects from previous years	
Yes/No	Proof of financial capacity to support implementation of the project (Bank Statement)	
5	Clarity of E-application	
10	Previous project experience	
10	Relevance towards objective of VOPS	
10	Relevance towards the priorities of the VOPS	
10	Project overview and programme of events	
5	Operational capacity of applicant to implement project	
10	Budget Breakdown	
10	Impact and long-term sustainability of project	
30	The Overall quality of project - content and methodology	
100	**Total Marks:**	
	Ranking:	

Annex IV: Eligibility Criteria/Marking scheme application for Action 4 supporting the "*Inclusion, Health and Disability*"

Project Code		
Yes/No	Complete e-application form	
Yes/No	Not in any situation which would prevent the applicant from receiving a grant as per Part C of this Guide	
Yes/No	Project remit within the mandate of the applicant	
Yes/No	The applicant is enrolled and compliant with the Office of the Commissioner for VOs by the deadline of the funding scheme	
Yes/No	The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously awarded projects by the same organisation	
Yes/No	Maximum of project duration is 12 months including preparatory period	
Yes/No	The applicant has applied for only one project under the VOPS of the same year	
Yes/No	Do not have pending MCVS projects from previous years	
Yes/No	Proof of financial capacity to support implementation of the project (Bank Statement)	
5	Clarity of E-application Form	
10	Previous project experience	
10	Relevance towards objective of VOPS	
10	Relevance towards the priorities of the VOPS	
10	Project overview and programme of events	
5	Operational capacity of applicant to implement project	
10	Budget Breakdown	
10	Impact and long-term sustainability of project	
10	Involvement of people with fewer opportunities (Health and Disability)	
20	The Overall quality of project - content and methodology	
100	**Total Marks:**	
	Ranking:	