COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme

Skema ta' Għajnuna fil-Komunita'

Guidelines for Applicants

2027 PROJECTS
(2026 CALL)

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

Community Support Scheme

1. Introduction

The **Community Support Scheme** (**CSS**) is intended to compliment the LEADER Programme which is financed through the **Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan**. LEADER is recognised widely as being a successful tool supporting local development in rural areas.

2. Rationale of the Scheme

Over the past years LEADER Programme has been widely recognised as having been a successful and innovative pilot instrument to mobilise local stakeholders in a bottom-up, territorial and integrated approach to pursue local development in rural areas. The **COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme** is intended to support those organisations which either, have a registered address within, localities not eligible under the LEADER Programme, as well as organisations that have a premises registered in their name in one of the eligible locations listed in **Annex 1**.

LEADER has demonstrated a uniquely strong element of the community's need to establish its identity, on a regional as well as on a local scale, through cultural and social investments, and a strong emphasis on the need to invest in projects that develop this cultural heritage of the rural community. In respect this Scheme intends to extend this opportunity to the other localities in Malta not eligible under LEADER.

The **COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme** intends to support the development and strengthening of cultural and social investments in their diverse forms, as these activities represent the people's way of life within their community. The rationale of the Scheme is to encourage a very wide scope of actions with a cultural dimension, arising from the wide spectrum of cultural heritage within our communities, with the intention to further expand on it. With this reasoning, the

aim of this Scheme is two-fold: to ensure that no group or sector coming from other localities in Malta and which do not fall under the present LEADER programme is excluded, however small or under represented it is, as long as it has a genuine intent to engage in the creation and development of cultural investments with true links to the local community in which it operates, and to stimulate the further development and growth of this rich cultural and social fabric of the community.

This Scheme is also built on the premise that without the necessary investment in the infrastructure, these cultural and social activities would not be possible. This need is more evident when one considers that most of the functions in question are run by local voluntary organisations, with little or no access to alternative sources of funding. The intention of the COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme is therefore to compliment the LEADER fund and provide support for the necessary initial infrastructure to be put in place, such that the activity/investment can be sustained in the longer term.

The **COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme** shall be managed and administered by Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) with budget allocation of **€ 800,000**.

The call for the **CSS** e-applications shall be published in the VO Funding Portal www.vofunding.org.mt managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS). The guidelines for the **CSS** are published on same portal and constitute an integral part of the call for proposals.

3. Funding Actions and Budgets

Eligible applicants can submit to **only one** of the following Actions and specific budgets:

Action 1: Major Investments - **€480,000**
Action 2: Smaller Scale Investments - **€200,000**
Action 3: Organisation of events **- €120,000**

4. Scope and Objectives

The **COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme** is intended to provide support for the setting up and/or quality improvement of activities, events, experiences and sessions of cultural and social value, that have a strong link to the historical, social and cultural development of the locality or the region, build on the heritage of the particular locality/areas, and that are aimed to provide a means of entertainment and recreation, social space and expression for members of the community.

Support under this Scheme shall be provided for the investments in any one or a combination of the following areas: culture, arts and crafts (including performing arts, dance, film, literature and theatre productions; trades and artisanal crafts and products), music, sports, adventure (including outdoor adventure and scouting), life skills (including survival and leadership skills), gastronomy and culinary experiences, agrarian traditions and heritage, and trades and traditional practices.

This Scheme supports interventions that are aimed to invest in the infrastructure for new or improved cultural and social investments to take place within the indicated localities excluded from the existing LEADER Programme (Annex 1). Such investment includes improvements to immovable property/premises from which the group operates, and other related ancillary investments in equipment and facilities that are necessary for the activity or event.

This Scheme shall not support the maintenance of existing/on-going cultural and social activities that are already being organised on a regular basis.

5. Focus Areas

Actions supported under COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme shall contribute to the promoting of social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in the community.

The contribution of this Scheme shall also support the cross-cutting objectives of climate and the environment which are to be promoted through the requirements for environmental sustainability embedded in the selection criteria, whereby preference is given to investments that demonstrate how the environmental/climate impact is being reduced (e.g. the project has sound waste-management and/or green transport arrangements) and investments that incorporate an element of education and communication on the local environment.

These elements in turn contribute towards the innovative aspect of the measure, moving away from the more 'traditional' way of doing things on a single discipline, but rather striving to combine different aspects of the local culture.

For a breakdown of Focus Areas by Action, including project examples, please refer to Annex 3.

6. Eligible Actions

The applicant is required to demonstrate that the proposed action shall result in the creation of new cultural and social investments/events and/or the significant improvement of existing ones.

6.1 Eligible investments supported under the **CSS** are the following:

i. Direct project costs associated with the development and/ or creation of the cultural or social activity, including professional fees, leasing of space and equipment, purchase of small instruments and activity equipment.

ii. Improvements to immovable property (construction costs/enhancement of premises), that are necessary for the development/ creation of the

activity and without which the activity could not take place, as well as infrastructure as a direct and standalone project.

6.2 The following is an indicative list of the **Direct Project Costs** that may be supported under this Scheme when these relate to the development/creation of the activity (activities which already form part of the annual calendar will not be funded):

i. Expenses related to knowledge capacity building of historical, geographical, traditional/folkloristic documentary evidence.
ii. Costs of procurement of specialist services, including experts' fees (such as historians, artists, designers, chefs, etc.) and area-specialists (literature, art, music, theatre, sports, nutrition, outdoor adventure, etc.). The costs of these specialists shall only be supported for the duration of the projects and upon demonstration of evidence of their direct contribution to the implementation of the action. Additionally, such costs will be capped at a maximum of 20% of the total cost of project cost.
iii. Purchase of new equipment, machinery and instruments that are to be used for the realisation of the cultural activity, such as equipment for the high-quality delivery of the cultural activity/event/experience, including audio-visual equipment, and instruments that are either necessary for the delivery of the activity/event/experience, or that are to be transmitted to the participants to enable them to engage in the activity including musical instruments, sports equipment, etc.
iv. Procurement of durable activity aids and accessories including traditional costumes, props, designs, printed material, graphical aids, training resources (such as compasses, torches, maps, guidebooks, etc.), artifacts, antiques, collectable items, apparatus etc.
v. Leasing of temporary facilities and infrastructure, such as leasing of premises, mobile toilets, tents, exhibition stands, information panels, among others, which are needed for the organisation of the proposed events will be capped at 20% of project cost.
vi. Project Publicity costs (refer to Marketing guidelines issued by MCVS) will be capped at 5% of project cost for Action 1 and Action2, and 10% of project cost for Action 3. In the case of Action 3, the capping does not

apply if the project is specifically focused on the dissemination of information.

vii. Hospitality (catering) costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 5% of project cost for Action 1 and Action2, and 10% of project cost for Action 3. In the case of Action 3, the capping does not apply when hospitality is an integral part of the project, such as in the case of conferences or similar events.

viii. Catering is only approved if distributed during project launching, conferences and formal meetings and activities related to the project.

ix. 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.

x. Equipment will be capped at 25% of project cost.

6.3 The following are indicative **Eligible Costs relating to the Investments in Infrastructure**:

i. The improvement of immovable property.

ii. The purchase of new equipment up to the market value of the asset capped at 25% of project cost.

iii. General costs linked to expenditure referred to in points (i) and (ii), such as architect, engineer and consultation fees. This cost is eligible up to 10% of the total eligible costs of the project.

Only Projects covered by a valid Planning Authority permit and those which are in the process of a permit application are eligible under this Action. Projects should have a Planning Authority number or DNO number. Projects with a tracking number (not approved yet) will be rejected at application stage.

An eligible applicant must demonstrate that the premises are their property or have a leasing agreement of at least ten (10) calendar years

from date of application, otherwise application will be rejected at application stage.

7. Non-Eligible Actions

The following is an indicative list of non-eligible investment under the **CSS**:

i. Purchase of land and buildings.
ii. Currency exchange losses.
iii. Purchase of means of transportation.
iv. Provisional installations that are not directly related to the investment (e.g. warehouses for keeping materials for the construction).
v. Activities which already form part of the annual calendar will not be funded, if there is no improvement on the existing ones.
vi. Expenditures made before the signing of the grant agreement arising from the call for application.
vii. Income Tax and/or other operational costs of the entity applying for the project, including provisions for possible future losses or debts.
viii. Bank Interest.
ix. Inputs which are the subject of a contribution in kind.
x. Administration fees (salaries, insurance obligations and running costs).
xi. Second-hand equipment.
xii. Value Added Tax (except where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation).
xiii. Provision of bar.
xiv. Work in kind.
xv. Statutory fines and penalties.
xvi. Planning Authority fees.
xviii Contingency Fees

8. Eligible Applicants (open to localities as per Annex 1)

Support under the CSS is to **Voluntary Organisations (VOs)** enrolled and compliant with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations as per the Voluntary Organisations Act 2018 (Chapter 492 of the Laws of Malta). Sport voluntary organisations must also be registered with the Authority for Integrity in Maltese Sports (AIMS).

Voluntary Organisations under the Second Register (generating a Gross Annual Income of less than €5,000) cannot apply for this scheme.

9. Funding Assistance and Budget

A beneficiary will be granted 80% of the total eligible expenditure should the proposed application be successfully selected. The other 20% of the total eligible expenditure must be borne by the beneficiary.

The VAT element must be borne by the applicant (except where it is non-recoverable under National VAT legislation). Grant assistance may be provided in respect of non-recoverable VAT. VAT Certificate must be presented at application stage.

The **maximum grant support** for each project is capped as per below Actions:

Action 1 - Major Investments - **€40,000.**
Action 2 - Smaller Scale Investments - **€20,000**
Action 3 - Organisation of events - **€10,000**

The **minimum grant support** for each project is capped as per below Actions:

Action 1 - Major Investments- **€20,000.**
Action 2 - Smaller Scale Investments - **€10,000**
Action 3 - Organisation of events - **€5,000**

10. Implementation of the Projects

The period of implementation should commence on the **1st June 2027** and terminate by not later than the **31st May 2029**. Projects should be implemented over a maximum period of twenty-four (24) consecutive months.

Projects are to be implemented by the Voluntary Organisation, Local Councils & Regional Committees benefitting from the funds. Third parties cannot be enlisted to fully implement the project themselves.

11. Implementation of the Scheme

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

The COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme Selection Committee tasks are to:

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

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector Officials tasks are to:

- Provide appropriate information on the Scheme.
- Manage the application process.
- Provide support to project applicants and beneficiaries throughout the project life cycle.
- Monitor the implementation of the Scheme.
- Evaluate Scheme project reports.
- Improve the visibility of the Scheme.

- Promote the dissemination and exploit the results of the Scheme at national level.

The 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 COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme Project Selection Committee reserves the right not to allocate all the funds available should projects fall under the established quality benchmark of 65% mark.

12. Application and Evaluation Process

All e-applications received by the COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme Evaluation Committee will undergo an evaluation and selection procedure.

12.1 The selection procedure

All e-applications are checked against the eligibility criteria, the financial capacity, and the exclusion criteria as per Part B Section 13. Those e-applications which have successfully passed these checks are evaluated by independent external evaluators and ranked accordingly.

12.2 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 COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme 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.

12.3 Notification of award decisions

Applicants should be notified with the results, which results shall also be made public online on www.vofunding.org.mt.

All successful applicants will be informed in writing.

12.4 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 Support Manager of MCVS. An Appeals Board shall be appointed by MCVS to decide on the appeals. The decision of the Appeals Board is final and indisputable.

PART B

Information About the Scheme

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

13.1 Eligibility Criteria	
Eligible applicants	• The applicant must be a voluntary organisation, Local Council or Reginal Committee. VOs are to be enrolled and compliant with the Office of the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector by the deadline of the submission of e-application. Sports Voluntary Organisations must also be registered with the Authority for Integrity in Maltese Sport (AIMS). • Have no pending MCVS projects from previous years.

	• Projects undertaken by the applicant either that have a registered address within, localities not eligible under the LEADER Programme, as well as organisations that have a premises registered in their name in one of the eligible locations listed in **Annex 1**. • Projects undertaken by the applicant must be physically undertaken in any of the localities listed in Annex 1. • Only Projects covered by a valid Planning Authority permit and those which are in the process of a permit application are eligible under infrastructural projects, as per article 6.3. • An eligible applicant must demonstrate that the premises are their property or have a leasing agreement of at least ten (10) calendar years from date of application, as per article 6.3. • Applicant must show that they have stable and sufficient financial capacity, as per article 13.3.
Number of e-applications	• Only one e-application per eligible applicant 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	• Twenty-four (24) calendar months (including preparatory phase).
Timetable of events	• An overview of the activity must be submitted as part of the e-application form under section project calendar.
Where to apply?	• E-applications must be submitted to the Malta Council of the Voluntary Sector online and can be found on the

	MCVS home page www.vofunding.org.mt
When to apply?	• The e-application shall open on the: **VO Funding Portal** • The e-application must be submitted by the following deadline: **25th November 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.
13.2 Exclusion criteria	
Exclusion criteria	• The project proposal will not be considered if it is or has already been granted through another EU/national fund. • The project is purely a fundraising event and/or for-profit making purposes. • If the organisation proposes the same or similar project as per previously awarded years. • If the Organisation has any pending MCVS project which do not adhere to the Grant Agreement timeline. • As per Article 15.1.b of these guidelines: Exclusion Criteria • Does not observe any of the Eligible criteria.
13.3 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, third and final payments of the amount granted until they are reimbursed following successful evaluation of quarterly/interim/final report and financial documentation, as per annex 15.1.d

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.
13.4 Award criteria Refer to Annex II - Marking Scheme	

14. How to develop a good project?

The 'Award criteria' table 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.

14.1 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 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 the participants and the community. The theme must be translated into the concrete activities/outcomes.

- **Innovative creativity and entrepreneurship**

Within the context of the Scheme, the prerequisite 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.

- **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 community at large. 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 (Planning Authority (PA) permit, or an Architect's Report confirming that no PA permit is required and the 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 the Scheme 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 'Summary of the Project'

Visibility of the project and of the Community Support Scheme

Promoters should reflect together on measures aimed at enhancing the visibility of their project and the visibility of the Scheme. 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 Scheme 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 Community Support Scheme

The compulsory use of the official logo of the Scheme 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 Community Support 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.

PART C

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

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

15. What do you have to do to submit a Community Support Scheme?

To submit a project proposal under the COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme one must perform the following three steps:

1. Check that the project complies with the Scheme criteria.
2. Check that a detailed budget proposal is presented.
3. Complete and submit the e-application form without leaving any missing Annexes that are required.

15.1 Check compliance with the Scheme criteria

As an applicant and potential beneficiary, one must verify and ensure that the project proposal meets the eligibility criteria, does not include any exclusion criteria, and 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 **CSS**. If your project does not meet the eligibility criteria, it will be rejected and considered ineligible without being further evaluated. To be deemed eligible, the project must meet all the eligibility criteria. For details of the eligibility criteria please consult Part B Annex 13 of this Guide.

b) Exclusion criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme if they fall within any of the following:

- Article 6 of these guidelines.
- 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 Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.
- They have not submitted their financial returns to the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations according to LN 379 of 2012.
- 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 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 Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector 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** as of the last month prior to the opening of the call (September bank statement). The bank Statement shall clearly indicate the **name of the Voluntary Organisation, date, and balance** as on the end of month of the indicated month, which should at least correspond to the 20% co-financing sum. 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, third and

final payments of the amount granted until they are reimbursed following successful evaluation of quarterly/interim/final report and financial documentation.

If, on the basis of these documents, the Project Evaluation Committee 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 Project 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 COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme.

The award criteria indicated in Annex 2 of these Guidelines describe exactly which elements will be taken into consideration to assess the quality of the project.

15.2 Check the financial conditions

a) Type of grant

The grant under the COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme 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 Article 9 of these guidelines. 20% of the contracted grant will be given to the beneficiary on submitting a satisfactory Budget Breakdown and the signing of the agreement, 40% will be given on the

submission and verification of a satisfactory quarterly report, 20% 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

The **CSS** grant shall finance 80% of the project costs to the maximum indicated in Article 9 of these guidelines. Should the total cost of the project exceed the 100% amount as indicated in Article 9 of these guidelines the applicant may complement the sum granted through the voluntary organisation's own financial resources or by seeking private assistance.

c) No double-financing

A project supported under the COMMUNITY SUPPORT 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.

15.3 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.

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

In the case of Voluntary Organisations, successful applicants must be enrolled and compliant with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Organisations (OCVO). Sports Voluntary Organisations must also be registered with the Authority for Integrity in Maltese Sport (AIMS).

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.

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

All e-applications received under the **CSS** will undergo a selection procedure as per article 12 of these Guidelines.

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

17.1 Deliverables and Detailed Budget

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

- Any further documentation required by MCVS.
- To submit a detailed budget breakdown.

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

17.2 Grant agreement

In the event of definitive approval by the CSS 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.

17.3 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.

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.

17.4 Payment procedures

a) Procedure with one pre-financing instalment

The projects supported under the Scheme will be subject to a payment procedure consisting of one pre-financing payment, a quarterly 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 20% will be transferred to the beneficiary once satisfactory Budget Breakdown is submitted. Pre-financing is intended to provide the beneficiary with a float.

c) Quarterly payment

A quarterly payment of 40% will be transferred to the beneficiary following the submission and verification of a satisfactory quarterly report.

d) Interim payment

An interim payment of 20% will be transferred to the beneficiary following the submission and verification of a satisfactory interim report.

e) Payment or recovery of the balance

The amount of 20% will be transferred to the beneficiary as final payment to be made to the beneficiary and will be established on the basis of a final report to be submitted within one month following the end date of the project. In the event that there is either under spending or irregular spending, a recovery may be undertaken.

f) Documentation to be presented with reports

The beneficiary must provide documents giving evidence that the activities organised with the support of the COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme 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 (comparative bid analysis including quotations where applicable), invoices, cash sales, copy of

cheques, original fiscal (VAT) receipts and proof of payment (bank statement).

e. Achievements to be described in the report.
f. In the case of infrastructural projects an engineer's/architect's work certification both at interim and final report.

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.

18. Other main contractual provisions

18.1 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. Starting the project before signing the grant agreement is done at the risk of the beneficiary.
4. Starting the project before signing the grant agreement is done at the risk of the beneficiary.

18.2 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 2025.

18.3 Applicable Procurement Regulations

When undergoing the project under this Scheme, beneficiaries must abide with the procurement thresholds and relevant requirements to guarantee transparency and accountability as per table here below.

1. In the case of Direct orders (Under €500 exclusive of VAT) the beneficiary may only utilise this for a total of €2,000 (exclusive of VAT). (This rule appertains strictly to the funding scheme and is applied per project)
2. After using the direct order amount allocated, 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.
3. Proof of payments (bank statements) – Cash Payments over €100 are not accepted and will not be reimbursed due to lack of audit trail. Should payments necessitate being undertaken in cash or otherwise permission should be sought from MCVS prior to the undertaking of the same transaction.
4. With regards to quotations and tenders the Price/Cheapest mechanism is utilised. However, in the eventuality that an organisation publishes a Call for Tender utilising the Best-Price-Quality-Ratio (BPQR) award mechanism, prior to publication, this must 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 quotes/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.

• All items are to be purchased according to the respective EU Health and safety regulations within the mandate of the organisation.

• For Local Councils, financial obligations arise from the relevant legal framework governing their operations, including applicable protocols and their respective legislation

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 utilise this for a total of **€2,000** (exclusive of VAT). 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	-Call for Quotations/Open -Call-Publication of call for quotes **mandatory** on Organisation's 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, MCVS Website or Organisation's 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

18.4 Information on the grants awarded

Grants awarded in a financial year must be published on the VO Funding Portal managed by 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.

18.5 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 COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme 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.

18.6 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.

18.7 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.

18.8 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 Scheme, without prejudice to the possibility of transferring such data to the bodies responsible for inspection and audit appointed by the responsible Ministry, and/or the Ministry of Finance, through whom the funds for the COMMUNITY SUPPORT 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.: 22481125

Annex 1

List of Localities eligible under the COMMUNITY SUPPORT Scheme.

1. Balzan
2. Birgu (Vittoriosa)
3. Birkirkara
4. Bormla (Cospicua)
5. Fgura
6. Furjana
7. Gzira
8. Ħamrun
9. Isla (Senglea)
10. Marsa
11. Msida
12. Pembroke
13. Pietà
14. Raħal Ġdid (Paola)
15. San Ġiljan (St.Julian's)
16. San Ġwann
17. Santa Venera
18. Sliema
19. Tarxien
20. Ta' Xbiex
21. Valletta

Annex 2

Selection Criteria and Scoring Parameters

The following is a list, together with maximum scoring, of selection criteria applicable to the measure. The maximum total marks that can be obtained by fulfilling these selection criteria is 100%.

Action 1 and Action 2

1. Relevance to the objective of the Scheme (max. 15 marks)		
1a	Evidence of the cultural value of the activity (evidence of significance of activity in terms of the cultural and social heritage of the locality/area). (max. 5 marks)	High marks will be given to interventions with a high cultural value.
1b	Evidence of the tourism potential of the Cultural activity (to attract non-residents). (max. 5 marks)	High marks will be given to interventions with a tourism value.
1c	Evidence that the investment encourages the participation and increases the regular organization of events (such as exhibitions) that may become part of the annual calendar of events. (max. 5 marks)	The applicant should show how the investment will contribute to the daily running of the organisation leading to increased cultural activity.
2. Link to the locality (max.15 marks)		
2a	Evidence that the cultural project has a historical and social link to the cultural heritage and traditions of the area.	The applicant should provide details of the historical and social background of the investment related to the culture/traditions of the locality.

	(max. 5 marks)	
2b	Evidence that the cultural activity is geographically linked to the territory. (max. 5 marks)	The applicant should provide details of the investment's geographical link with other sites/assets found in the locality.
2c	Evidence that the cultural project is linked to other activities of cultural and/or touristic value in the same area. (max. 5 marks)	The applicant should provide details how the project is with sites/assets which are popular among tourists in the locality.
3. Type of project (max.15 marks)		
3a	The project is an integrated project in that it incorporates the achievement of more than one objective. (max.10 marks)	The applicant should identify which objectives the intervention will be targeting from the following: (cultural exchange, enhancing of life quality, leisure & entertainment and skills building). Here the applicant is not obliged to achieve all objectives but is required to provide details how the objective/s will be reached.
3b	The project involves local stakeholders emanating from different sectors of arts, crafts and popular culture. (max.5 marks)	High marks are given to applicants involving other stakeholders which are involved in the above-mentioned sectors. Projects with at least another partner apart from the lead partner will be given full marks. Partners may contribute financially to the project

4. Social impact on the Community (max.10 marks)		
4a	The project's information and education components are targeted to children and youths, elderly and persons with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. (max.10 marks)	Marks are given to applicants describing the direct social impact towards the identified target group. These can include any promotional/dissemination actions taken.
5. Preparedness (max. 10 marks)		
5a	Evidence that the necessary arrangements have been made with local stakeholder that are to be involved in the development and delivery of the activity. (max.5 marks)	Applicants are awarded points according to the level of preparedness with regards to quotations, bill of quantities and any consent provided. The documents to be requested are applicable according to the type of applicant and/or project.
5b	Evidence that the necessary permits (PA/ Development Notification Order permits) in case of improvement to immovable property and/or other relevant permits are in hand. (max. 5 marks)	Maximum marks are given to applicants that already have the PA permit in hand or for projects which do not need a PA permit.
6. Sustainability of the Project (max.15 marks)		
6a	Sustainability of the project following 5 years from its completion. (Max.5 marks)	Maximum points will be given to those projects which will still have an impact on the community following a five-year period.
6b	Evidence that the project has a neutral or positive impact on the environment and the climate. (max. 5 marks)	Maximum points will be given to those projects which will have a positive environmental impact or at least avoid any negative environmental impact.

6c	Evidence that the project has a neutral or positive impact on gender and other forms of non-discrimination policies. (max. 5 marks)	Maximum points are awarded on the basis that the proposed intervention/s contribute towards the promotion of equal opportunities equality, non-discrimination and improved accessibility whilst targeting sustainable development in the areas of economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection. Consideration will be taken whether the applicant has a gender mainstream strategy and an adequate policy on equality.
7. The Overall Quality of project – content and Methodology (max.20 marks)		

Action 3

1. Relevance to the objective of the Scheme (max. 15 marks)		
1a	Evidence of the cultural value of the activity (evidence of significance of activity in terms of the cultural and social heritage of the locality/area). (max. 5 marks)	High marks will be given to activities with a high cultural value.
1b	Evidence of the tourism potential of the Cultural activity (to attract non-residents). (max. 5 marks)	High marks will be given to activities with a tourism value.

1c	Evidence that the activity encourages participation and increases the regular organization of events that may become part of the annual calendar of events. (max. 5 marks)	The applicant should show how the activity will contribute to an increased cultural activity.
2. Link to the locality (max.15 marks)		
2a	Evidence that the cultural project has a historical and social link to the cultural heritage and traditions of the area. (max. 5 marks)	The applicant should provide details of the historical and social background of the activity related to the culture/traditions of the locality.
2b	Evidence that the cultural activity is geographically linked to the territory. (max. 5 marks)	The applicant should provide details of the activity's link with other activities/events/sites found in the locality.
2c	Evidence that the cultural project is linked to other activities of cultural and/or touristic value in the same area. (max. 5 marks)	The applicant should provide details how the project is line with activities/events/sites which are popular among tourists in the locality.
3. Type of project (max.15 marks)		
3a	The project is an integrated project in that it incorporates the achievement of more than one objective. (max.10 marks)	The applicant should identify which objectives the activity will be targeting from the following: (cultural exchange, enhancing of life quality, leisure & entertainment and skills building). Here the applicant is not obliged to achieve all objectives but is required to provide details how the objective/s will be reached.

3b	The project involves local actors emanating from different sectors of arts, crafts and popular culture. (max.5 marks)	High marks are given to applicants involving other stakeholders which are involved in the above-mentioned sectors. Projects with at least another partner apart from the lead partner will be given full marks. Partners may contribute financially to the project
4. Social impact on the Community (max.15 marks)		
4a	The project's information and education components are targeted to children and youths, elderly and persons with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. (max.15 marks)	Marks are given to applicants describing the direct social impact towards the identified target group. These can include participation and promotional/dissemination actions taken.
5. Preparedness (max. 5 marks)		
5a	Evidence that the necessary arrangements have been made with local stakeholders that are to be involved in the development and delivery of the activity. (max.5 marks)	Applicants are awarded points according to the level of preparedness with regards to quotations, bill of quantities and any consent provided. The documents to be requested are applicable according to the type of applicant and/or project.
6. Sustainability of the Project (max.15 marks)		
6a	Sustainability of the project following 3 years from its completion. (Max.5 marks)	Maximum points will be given to those projects which will still have an impact on the community following a three-year period.

6b	Evidence that the project has a neutral or positive impact on the environment and the climate. (max. 5 marks)	Maximum points will be given to those projects which will have a positive environmental impact or at least avoid any negative environmental impact.
6c	Evidence that the project has a neutral or positive impact on gender and other forms of non-discrimination policies. (max. 5 marks)	Maximum points awarded on the basis that the proposed activities contribute towards the promotion of equal opportunities, equality, non-discrimination and improved accessibility whilst targeting sustainable development in the areas of economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection. Consideration will be taken whether the applicant has a gender mainstream strategy and an adequate policy on equality.
7. The Overall Quality of project – content and Methodology (max.20 marks)		

Annex 3

Focus Areas by Action (with Project Examples)

Action 1 – Infrastructure

Scope: Projects that create or significantly enhance physical infrastructure necessary for long-term cultural and social engagement in the community.

• Construction of New Community Facilities
Example: Building a cultural hall with multipurpose rooms for local arts, dance rehearsals, and community gatherings.

• Structural Modifications for Accessibility and Inclusion
Example: Installing ramps, accessible toilets, and an elevator in a historic community centre to accommodate persons with reduced mobility.

• Upgrading Utilities to Enable Cultural Use
Example: Installing climate control and acoustic systems in a local music rehearsal space to meet performance standards.

• Permanent Outdoor Structures
Example: Developing a covered outdoor stage in a public square for seasonal cultural performances.

• Establishment of Community Archives or Exhibition Hubs
Example: Converting a room within a local building into a digital archive and museum of local history and artifacts.

Action 2 – Restoration and Maintenance

Scope: Projects focused on the preservation, restoration, and minor refurbishments of cultural and social facilities already in use.

• Restoration of Heritage Spaces for Community Use

Example: Restoring a traditional stone room (għar) to be used as a venue for folklore storytelling and local history tours.

• Maintenance of Cultural Facilities

Example: Repairing damaged masonry and waterproofing the roof of a community-run theatre.

• Refurbishment of Cultural Tools and Fixtures

Example: Restoring historic furniture, stage backdrops, or signage used in annual festivals.

• Conservation of Local Cultural Artifacts or Displays

Example: Cleaning and conserving a set of old paintings or statues traditionally exhibited during feasts.

• Preservation of Community Gardens or Open-Air Sites

Example: Maintaining an ethnobotanical garden used for cultural education and traditional medicine workshops.

Action 3 – Conferences, Research, and Training

Scope: Knowledge-driven projects that include conferences, training programmes, and research initiatives aimed at strengthening local cultural identity, skills, and awareness.

• Organisation of Local or Regional Conferences
Example: Hosting a conference ex: 'Safeguarding Intangible Heritage" featuring expert panel discussions and presentations of local case studies.

• Community-Based Research Projects
Example: Documenting oral histories from elderly residents and publishing the results as a booklet and public exhibit.

• Training Workshops for Skill Development
Example: Offering a training series in traditional Maltese crafts such as lacemaking or woodcarving for youth and unemployed adults.

• Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building
Example: Organising peer-training sessions between cultural groups on topics such as project management, sustainability practices, and volunteer engagement.

• Academic or Policy-Oriented Studies
Example: Conducting a study on the socio-economic impact of community feasts in Malta and Gozo, with findings shared through a formal seminar.

General Requirements for All Actions:

- All projects must demonstrate a clear benefit to the community and have strong links to local cultural or social heritage.

- Preference will be given to projects that promote social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and intergenerational engagement.