# Small Initiatives Support Scheme

**The Small Initiatives Support Scheme (SIS)** *is designed to assist applicants looking for funding for small projects that* ***can make a real difference to their local communities****.*

# Guidelines for Applicants

## 2027 PROJECTS
## September 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

# GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME

## 1. Introduction

The **Small Initiatives Support Scheme (SIS)** is an initiative managed and administered by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS) and supported by the Ministry for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector (MIV).

This call for e-applications is being issued by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector, herein referred to as MCVS, under the Small Initiative Support Scheme, herein referred to as SIS. The guidelines for the SIS (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 **Small Initiatives Support Scheme (SIS)** is designed to assist applicants looking for funding for small projects that can make a real difference to their local communities.

### 1.1 Objectives

The general objectives of the SIS Scheme are the following:

a. To stimulate cooperation 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 provide a platform from which to develop cooperation between voluntary organisations and the Government.
e. To promote and encourage a culture of volunteering and participation in volunteer activities among people, especially children and youths, as an aspect of personal and social development.
f. To foster cooperation 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.

g. To encourage collaboration of non-governmental bodies with private entities or persons and local councils to contribute towards the promotion of volunteering in Malta in furtherance of the principle of subsidiarity.

## 1.2 Priorities

In addition to the objectives, the general priorities of the SIS Scheme 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 competencies 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 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.

- **Education**

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

- **Arts, Culture and Sports**

This priority is intended to encourage projects to address enhancements of awareness in artistic and cultural heritage amongst Maltese society. The projects should also encourage local initiatives aimed at raising people's awareness of the sports sector, highlighting its contribution to a healthy lifestyle and social development through an inclusive approach to fulfil the potential of the Maltese citizens.

- **Research**

This priority is intended to encourage projects addressing research to complement other priorities addressed in this call. Research can be carried out in

regard to 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 organisations to become more effective and relevant towards societal needs.

### 1.3 What is the budget?

The budget allocated for the SIS Scheme 2027 will be **€180,000**. The Grant Requested for each project shall not be less than €2,000 and not more than €5,000.

## 2. Implementation of the Projects

To apply under the SIS Scheme:

- The Project is to be initiated **not earlier than the 1st of March of 2027 and finalised by the 29th of February of 2028**.
- The Project must be **completed in 12 consecutive months**.
- The Project must contain all information required at the point of e-application (including annexes).
- The proposal must **not be a continuation, a repetition, or an extension** of an existing or past project.
- The beneficiary shall **not request less than €2,000** and **not more than €5,000**.

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

Projects are to be implemented by the Voluntary Organisation benefiting from the funds. Third parties cannot be enlisted to fully implement the project themselves.

## 3. Implementation of the Scheme

The MCVS is ultimately responsible for the running of the SIS Scheme. It manages the budget and sets priorities, targets, and criteria for the SIS Scheme

on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow-up, and evaluation of the SIS Scheme. The MCVS bears overall responsibility for the supervision and monitoring of the ongoing projects.

The MCVS's tasks are to:

- Provide appropriate information on the SIS Scheme.
- Manage the application process.
- Provide support to project applicants and beneficiaries throughout the project life cycle.
- Provide effective and efficient administrative processes in the evaluation process and the implementation of the SIS Scheme.
- Evaluate and monitor the implementation of the SIS Scheme.
- Evaluate SIS project reports.
- Improve the visibility of the SIS Scheme.
- Promote the dissemination and exploit the results of the SIS Scheme at a national level.

## 4. Application and Evaluation Process

All e-applications received by the SIS Project Evaluation Committee will undergo a selection procedure as per Annex II.

### 4.1 The Selection Procedure

The selection of e-applications is as follows:

1. All e-applications are checked against the eligibility criteria, the financial capacity, and the exclusion criteria by MCVS officials.
2. Those e-applications which have successfully passed these checks are evaluated by two independent external evaluators and ranked accordingly.
3. For a project to be considered for financial support, a minimum benchmark of 65% marks is to be achieved.

***The process is described in Annex I titled Eligibility Criteria/ Marking Scheme.***

### 4.2 Decision

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

The SIS 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 of the results, and these will also be available online at www.maltacvs.org.

All successful applicants will be informed in writing. Upon 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 Support Manager of MCVS. An Appeals Board shall be appointed by the SIS Project Selection 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 applicants must be a Voluntary Organisation which is enrolled with and in compliance with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector by the deadline for submission of e-applications. Sports Voluntary Organisations must also be registered with the Authority for Integrity in Maltese Sport (AIMS).<br>• The project should be innovative and not be a repeat of previously approved projects by the same organisation.<br>• The proposed project should be sustainable for at least 3 years.<br>• Voluntary Organisations that fall in the first two financial brackets under the Voluntary Organisations Act (Chapter 492 of the Laws of Malta), as amended by Act XXXVI of 2018 (annual turnover under €250,000).<br>• **Have no pending MCVS projects from previous years.** |
| **Number of e-applications** | • Only one e-application per Voluntary Organisation shall be submitted by this deadline. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | • This implies that an organisation may only benefit from one e-application. |
| **Duration of project** | • **Maximum of 12 consecutive months which fall between 1st March 2027 and 29th February 2028.** |
| **Project Calendar** | • An overview of the activity must be submitted as part of the e-application form under the section Project Calendar. |
| **Where to apply?** | • E-applications must be submitted to the MCVS online, accessed via: **vofunding.org.mt** |
| **When to apply?** | • The e-application shall open on ***9th September 2026***<br>• The deadline for submission of e-applications:<br>***7th October 2026 till NOON*** |
| **How to apply?** | **Step One: Access Website**<br>✓ Access the link: www.vofunding.org.mt<br><br>**Step Two: Register the Voluntary Organisation**<br>✓ Click on the register button (top right)<br>✓ Fill in details (important to include the official email address of your organisation, e.g., info@mcvs.com)<br>✓ Click on submit<br>✓ 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"<br><br>**Step Three: Validation of Registration**<br>✓ After registering, kindly wait for the validation issued by the MCVS since we |

| | |
|---|---|
| | need to confirm that the details inputted are consistent with our database.<br>✓ Once your registration is approved, the email address that you submitted will be used for all sorts of correspondence related to the various funding schemes.<br>✓ The validation will be granted within a maximum of one working day after registration.<br><br>**Step Four: E-application form**<br>✓ Access the e-application form of the specific funding scheme. |
| **Safety procedures of the 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.<br><br>• The project is purely a fundraising event and/or for-profit-making purposes.<br><br>• If the organisation proposes the same project as in previously awarded years.<br><br>• If the organisation has any pending MCVS projects which are not finalised in full following the end date of the Grant Agreement.<br><br>• Also, as per Article 9.1.b of these guidelines – Exclusion criteria<br><br>• Does not observe any of the eligibility criteria. |

| 5.3 Selection Criteria | |
|---|---|
| **Financial capacity** | • The applicant must show that they have stable and sufficient financial resources to support the second and final payments of the amount granted until they are reimbursed following a successful evaluation of the interim/final report and financial documentation. |
| **Operational capacity** | • The applicant must show that they have 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 – 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 | 100% of eligible costs | Provided that it is consistent with the budget presented in this e-application. | Full justification of the costs incurred **(including quotations where applicable), original invoices, cash sales and VAT receipts**. Achievements to be described in the final report. |
| **Costs for additional dissemination and exploitation of results** | Costs linked to additional dissemination and exploitation of the project's results. | Lump sum | 100% 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 the final report. |

## 7. How to develop a good project?

The 'Eligibility Criteria/Marking Scheme' table in Annex I lists the criteria against which the quality of a project will be assessed.

*Here is some advice which may help you 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 the local community. They should look at creating a well-structured programme of 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 and 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).

### 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 concrete activities/outcomes.

- **Innovative creativity and entrepreneurship**

Within the context of the SIS scheme, the emphasis is put on the 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 content and objectives of the activity, the involvement of promoters from different backgrounds, creative and unexplored ways of solving

problems related to the community, experimentation with new methodologies and project formats, or dissemination of the project results. The project should not be a continuation, repetition, or extension of a project that was previously supported by the SIS scheme.

- **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 the Maltese community. The project should engage the active involvement of the members of the organisation and Maltese citizens possibly identified as the 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 project reach**

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

The impact of the SIS 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, etc.) in the Activity.

- **Visibility of the project/ Visibility of the Scheme**

Promoters should reflect together on measures aimed at enhancing the visibility of their project and the visibility of the SIS Scheme. The creativity of applicants in offering additional potential whilst disseminating information about the planned activity and the opportunities offered by the SIS 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. In order 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; create an e-group, a web space, a photo-gallery or blog on the Internet.

- **Visibility of the SIS Scheme**

The compulsory use of the official logos of the SIS Scheme, 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 SIS Scheme on Maltese society, whilst also outlining the opportunities offered by the MCVS through the Scheme.

**f. Impact and long-term sustainability**

Funded projects are to have a well-defined impact and a 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 after the funding from MCVS has been consumed and the 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 SIS Scheme are invited to carefully read this section.**

## 8. What do you have to do to submit a SIS project?

To submit a project proposal under the SIS Scheme, 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, does not include any exclusion criteria, is aligned with 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 SIS Scheme. If your project does not meet the eligibility criteria, it will be rejected without being further evaluated (as stated in Annex I – Eligibility Criteria/Marking Scheme). To be deemed eligible, your 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 SIS 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, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended

business activities, 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.
- Sport Voluntary Organisations that are not registered in accordance with the framework established under the Sports Governance and Integrity Act (Chapter 626 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 that 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 MCVS's financial interests.
- They are following another procurement disciplinary procedure or grant award procedure financed by the MCVS 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 interest.
- Are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in the grant award procedure or failing 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 External Evaluators to assess 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 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*** and the date. The account presented shall be the same account presented to the Commissioner for the Voluntary Organisations in the organisation's Financial Returns to the same Commissioner.

If, on the basis of these documents, the 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 proposed 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 with the overarching objectives of the SIS Scheme.

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 SIS Scheme is a fixed-amount approach. The amount granted is equivalent to a maximum of 100% of the total amount of the project and shall not exceed the maximum amounts stated in section 2 of these guidelines. 60% of the contracted grant will be given to the beneficiary on the signing of the agreement, 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

Co-financing implies that the SIS Scheme 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 SIS Scheme. In this case, 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 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 SIS 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 submitted by the stipulated deadline.

***Please note that not more than <u>one project</u> can be submitted by the same applicant organisation.***

***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 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 Sector. 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 Euros (€).

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 SIS Scheme will undergo a selection procedure as per Article 5 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 the 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 before signing of the Grant Agreement

The above is to be provided before the signing of the Grant Agreement.

### 10.2 Grant agreement

In the event of definitive approval by the SIS Project Evaluation Committee, a grant agreement is drawn up between the MCVS 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 SIS Project Evaluation Committee, it is intended that beneficiaries should receive the agreements for signature by the first quarter of 2025. This agreement must be signed and returned to the MCVS. The MCVS will be the last party to sign.

### 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 under any circumstances.

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

### 10.4 Eligible costs

In order to be eligible under this SIS Scheme, 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 backed up by original supporting documents.
- Be innovative and not a repeat purchase of previously approved projects by the same organisation.

#### 10.4.1 Eligible direct costs

Eligible direct costs are costs which, with due regard to 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 SIS project:

- **Staff costs** are eligible but are limited to a **maximum of 10% of the allocated total direct cost** (only applicable for Project Management). 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.

- **Hospitality (catering) costs** are eligible but are limited to a **maximum of 10% of the allocated total direct cost.**

- **Marketing costs** such as newspapers, leaflets, posters, banners, roll-ups, Facebook, radio, and television advertisements are eligible but are limited to a **maximum of 15% of the allocated total direct cost.**

- **Infrastructural costs** are eligible but are limited to a **maximum of 25% of the allocated total direct cost**.

### 10.4.2 Eligible indirect costs (administrative costs)

A flat rate amount **not exceeding 5% of the eligible direct costs** of the project is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs, which can be regarded as chargeable to the project, such as postage, photocopying, transport, 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 with one pre-financing instalment

The projects supported under the SIS Scheme will be subject to a payment procedure consisting of one pre-financing payment, an interim payment halfway through the project (or when the first payment is exhausted) and a final payment/recovery of the balance due, as described below:

### a. Pre-financing payment

A pre-financing payment of 60% will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date on which the last of the two parties signs the agreement. Pre-financing is intended to provide the beneficiary with a float.

### b. Interim payment

An interim payment of 20% will be transferred to the beneficiary following the satisfactory delivery of the interim report.

### c. 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 the complete final report, which is to be submitted within 30 working days following the end date of the project.

### d. Documentation to be presented with reports

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

i. The interim/final report on the implementation of the project.
ii. 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.
iii. A full summary statement of the actual receipts and expenditures of the project.
iv. Full justification of the costs incurred (including quotations where applicable), invoices, cash sales and VAT receipts.
v. Achievements to be described in the 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.

# 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 before 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 by 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. If the beneficiary Voluntary Organisation does not have a bank account, this needs to be opened before the project start date.
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 as the Schedule of Grades, for 2027.
4. When undergoing the project under the SIS Scheme, beneficiaries must abide by the procurement thresholds and relevant requirements to guarantee transparency and accountability as per Table 1 (page 27).

## 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 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 before the financial procedure along with a detailed justification.

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

With regard 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 first be channelled through the Department of Contracts (DoC) to obtain the approval of the BPQR Evaluation Criteria and the corresponding scoring.

***NOTES:***

***NOTE: Government Gazette***

- *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.*

***NOTE: Local Funding***

- *Local funding is to be used locally to foster community growth*

***NOTE: Training***

- *Training should be conducted locally and not abroad. However, the Voluntary Organisation may have the option to bring an expert from abroad to conduct the training in Malta/Gozo.*

***NOTE: Events and Conferences/Other***

- *Only local events and conferences are eligible under the SIS funds*

***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 | Request for Quotes - Minimum of 3 quotations<br>*OR*<br>Published Call for Quotation/ Open Call |
| **EUR 5,000 – EUR 9,999** | Published Call for Quotations (Open Call) | - Call for Quotations/Open Call<br>- Publication of call for quotes mandatory on VOs Website/Social media - Evaluation of Quotes by Beneficiary Organisation<br>- Letter of Commitment/Agreement with successful bidder |

***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 MCVS 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 MCVS will publish the following information:

- Name of the beneficiary.
- Name of project.
- 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 (the award criteria), there is an obligation of minimal publicity to be followed for each granted project. Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the MCVS, the SIS and the Ministry's support 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.

1. This must be done according to the latest Marketing Guidelines issued by the MCVS. 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 MCVS may itself check or appoint an authorised delegate to audit 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, may be recovered from the applicant's 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 Data Protection Act as per local legislation.

This data will be processed solely in connection with the implementation and evaluation of the SIS Scheme, 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 SIS Scheme are made available.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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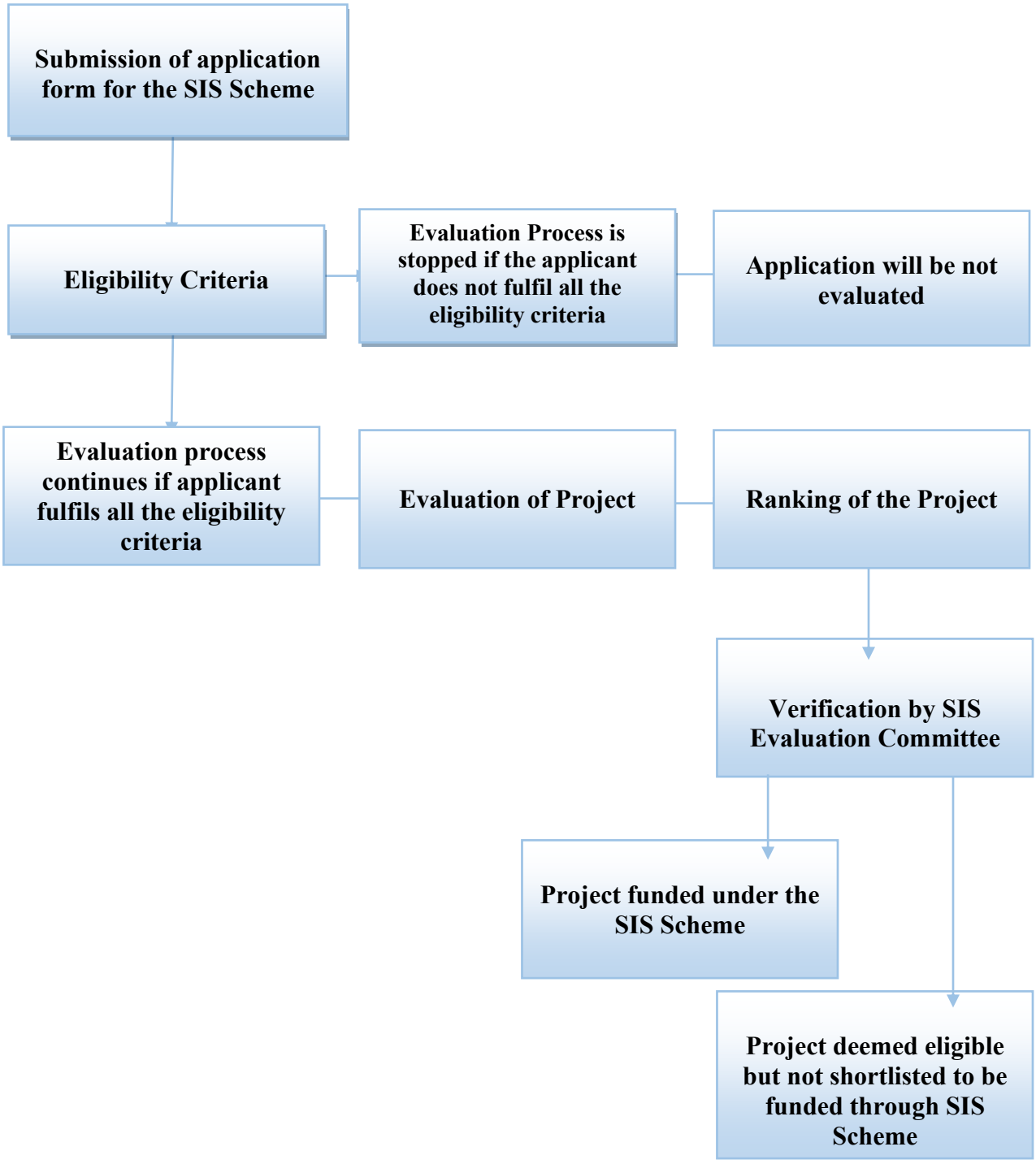
## Annex I: Eligibility Criteria/Marking application supporting the "*Project-Based Initiatives*"

| Project Code | |
|---|---|
| Yes/No | One complete e-application form |
| Yes/No | The project fits within one or more of the focus areas of the SIS objectives |
| Yes/No | The applicant is not in any of the situations which would prevent it from receiving a grant, as per Part C of this Guide |
| Yes/No | The Project remit falls within the mandate of the applicant |
| Yes/No | Voluntary Organisations that fall in the first two financial brackets under the Voluntary Organisations Act (Chapter 492 of the Laws of Malta) – Not under Category 3 |
| Yes/No | The applicant is enrolled with the Commissioner for VOs and compliant by the deadline of the funding scheme. Sport voluntary organisations must also be registered with the Authority for Integrity in Maltese Sports (AIMS). |
| Yes/No | The applicant has applied for only one project under the SIS of the same year |
| Yes/No | The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously approved projects by the same VO |
| Yes/No | Maximum project duration is 12 months (including the preparatory phase) |
| Yes/No | Proof of financial capacity to support implementation of the project (VO's Bank Statement dated no earlier than June of the year before the opening of the call, including VO name) |
| Yes/No | Do not have pending MCVS projects from previous years |
| 10 | Clarity of E-application Form |
| 15 | Relevance towards objectives and priorities of SIS |
| 10 | Project overview and programme of events |
| 25 | The quality of the project (Content and methodology) |
| 5 | Budget Breakdown |
| 10 | Impact and long-term sustainability |
| 5 | The operational capacity of the applicant to implement the project |
| 10 | Involvement of people with fewer opportunities (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) |
| 10 | Previous Project Performance |
| **100** | **Total Marks:** |
| | **Ranking:** |

## Annex II: Evaluation Process