



Guidelines for Applicants

**Managed by the Ministry for Social
Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil
Liberties**

October 2016

INDEX

| Table of Contents | Page |
|---|-------------|
| PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS PROJECT SCHEME | 2 |
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. What is the budget? | 4 |
| 3. What is the structure of the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme? | 4 |
| 4. Who implements the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme? | 5 |
| 5. Who can participate in the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme? | 6 |
| PART B - INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME | 7 |
| 6. What are the criteria used to assess a Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme? | 7 |
| 7. What are the funding rules? | 10 |
| 8. How to develop a good project? | 11 |
| PART C - INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS | 14 |
| 9. What do you have to do in order to submit a Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme | 14 |
| 10. What happens once the application is submitted? | 18 |
| 11. What happens if your application is approved? | 19 |
| 12. Other main contractual provisions | 23 |
| ANNEX I – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA | 28 |
| ANNEX II – EVALUATION PROCESS | 29 |

PART A

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme

1. Introduction

The Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme is an initiative which falls under and is managed¹ the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MSDC), and administered² on its behalf by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector (MCVS).

The Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme is an allocated fund of €700,000.00.

The call for applications is issued by the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties under the Voluntary Organisations Projects Scheme herein referred to as VOPS. The guidelines for the VOPS are published on the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector website www.maltacvs.org and the New Funding Portal www.vofunding.org.mt . The guidelines constitute an integral part of the call for proposals.

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

1.1 Objectives

The general objectives establishing the VOPS Scheme are the following:

- a) To stimulate co-operation and networking between voluntary organisations.
- b) To provide a consultative forum that can effectively address issues related to the Voluntary Sector.
- c) To support the work of voluntary organisations as an integral part of civil society.
- d) To enhance the capacity building of voluntary organisations.
- e) To provide a platform from which to develop co-operation between voluntary organisations and the Government.

¹ The legal and financial responsibility Scheme lay with the MSDC.

² The administrative work, including the logistics, monitoring of projects and evaluation of reports is undertaken by MCVS.

- f) To promote and encourage a culture of volunteering and the participation in volunteer activities among people, especially children and youths, as an aspect of personal and social development.
- g) To foster co-operation in the volunteer sector with local and international bodies³, entities or other persons for the encouragement and promotion of the development of volunteering programmes, initiatives and activities.
- h) To encourage, in furtherance of the principle of subsidiary, non-governmental bodies¹ and private entities¹ or persons¹ and local councils¹ to contribute to the promotion of volunteering in Malta.

1.2 Priorities

In addition to the above mentioned general priorities, annual priorities may be fixed for the VOPS.

For 2017, the annual priorities are the following:

- Volunteering

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

- Poverty and Social Inclusion

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

- Education

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

- Arts, Culture and Sports

³ The international organisations, European organisations, private entities, public entities, local councils and persons are considered to be silent partners on the project and therefore do not influence the eligibility of the total amount granted as the active partners who should be enrolled Voluntary Organisations with a letter of compliance issued on satisfactory evaluation of the 2014 annual report.

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

- **Research**

This priority is intended to encourage projects addressing research to compliment 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 the organisations to become more effective and relevant towards societal needs.

2. What is the budget?

The fund for 2017 is €700,000.00 to be distributed to implement projects. The period of implementation should commence on the 1st January 2016 and terminate by not later than the 31st March 2018. Projects should be implemented over a maximum period of twelve (12) consecutive months. The Voluntary Organisations Project Selection Committee may decide to increase the projects assigned in the case of residual funds. Should this procedure be implemented the amount on the residual fund will be allocated to the projects that were deemed eligible but were not benefiting according to the ranking list. The Voluntary Organisations Project Selection Committee reserves the right not to allocate all the funds available should projects fall under the established quality benchmark. The decision of the Voluntary Organisations Project Selection Committee is final and indisputable.

3. What is the structure of the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme?

3.1 Eligible Projects

In order to achieve its objectives, the VOPS foresees projects which fall under the established priorities.

3.2 Co-Financing Aspect

As from this deadline VOPS shall operate with a co-financing model. The grant allocation shall support 80% of the project while the beneficiary shall support the other 20%.

3.3 Criteria

To apply under the VOPS your project should be:

- Initiated not earlier than the 1st January of 2017.
- Completed in 12 months.
- Containing all information required at the point of application (including annexes).
- The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously approved projects by the same organisation.

3.4 Grant request

The amount requested by a beneficiary shall:

- Not be less than €4,000 and not more than €20,000 in the case of one organisation applying. When requesting the maximum amount of €20,000 the project presented by the beneficiary shall amount to at least €25,000 which includes the amount of €5,000 as the 20% co-financing amount supported by the beneficiary.
- Not less than €4,000 and not more than €48,000 in the case of more than one organisation applying. When requesting the maximum amount of €48,000 the project presented by the beneficiary shall amount to at least €60,000 which includes the amount of €12,000 as the 20% co-financing amount supported by the beneficiary.

4. Who implements the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme?

The Voluntary Organisations Project Selection Committee, which falls under the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties and is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the same Ministry, manages the budget and sets priorities, targets and criteria for the VOPS on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, it guides and monitors the general implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the VOPS. The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector implements the scheme on behalf of the MSDC. The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector is also delegated with the responsibility for the supervision and monitoring of the ongoing projects.

The Voluntary Organisations Project Selection Committee (MSDC) tasks are to:

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

The Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector tasks are to:

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

5. Who can participate in the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme?

5.1 Eligible applicants

Voluntary Organisations submitting applications must:

- Be enrolled with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector.
- Be in compliance with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector by the signing of the grant agreement.

PART B - INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME

6. What are the criteria used to assess a Voluntary Organisation Projects Scheme?

| 6.1 Eligibility Criteria | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Eligible applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicants must be non-profit and non-governmental organisations which are enrolled with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector • Voluntary organisations in compliance with the Commissioner for the Voluntary Sector by the signing of the grant agreement • The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously approved projects by the same organisation. |
| Number of applications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one application per Voluntary Organisations shall be submitted in this deadline. This implies that an organisation may only benefit from one application, both as a direct applicant, a partner and as a project beneficiary. |
| Duration of project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum of 12 consecutive months (including preparatory phase) which fall between 1st January 2017 and 31st March 2018. |
| Timetable of events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the activity must be annexed to the online application form. |
| Where to apply? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Online applications must be submitted to the Malta Council of the Voluntary Sector on line and can be found on the MCVS home page www.vofunding.org.mt |
| When to apply? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application must be submitted by the following deadline: 18th November 2016 till noon |

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| <p>How to apply?</p> | <p><u>Step One: Access Website</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access the link: www.vofunding.org.mt <p><u>Step Two: Register the Voluntary Organisation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 <i>“Thank you for registering. Your registration will be validated within one (1) working day. Following validation, you may proceed with the online application”</i> <p><u>Step Three: Validation of Registration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. <p><u>Step Four: Application form</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Access the application form of the specific funding scheme. |
| <p>Safety procedures of project</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |

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| 6.2 Exclusion criteria | |
| Exclusion criteria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project proposal is or has been granted through another EU/national fund. • The project is a purely a fundraising event. • As per Article 9.1.b of these guidelines - Exclusion criteria |
| 6.3 Selection Criteria | |
| Financial capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant must show that they have stable and sufficient financial resources to support the co-financing element and also the second and final payments of the amount granted until they are reimbursed following successful evaluation of interim/final report and financial documentation. |
| Operational capacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |
| 6.4 Award criteria Refer to Annex 2 - Eligibility Criteria/Marking Scheme | |

7. What are the funding rules?

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

8. How to develop a good project?

The 'Award criteria' table on page 6-8 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.

8.1 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 general public (if possible). The disclaimer of the project should be included on all project material stating *“This project is funded through the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme managed by the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties”*.

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 has to be translated into the concrete activities/outcomes.

- **Innovative creativity and entrepreneurship**

Within the context of the VOPS, the accent 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 Maltese community. The project should engage the active involvement of the members of the organisation and Maltese citizens possibly identified as target population of the activity. Participants should also be actively involved in the preparation and evaluation phases of the project as one of the project outcomes.

e) Quality of project reach

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

The impact of VOPS should not be limited to the participants in the activity. Applicants should, as much as possible, involve other people (from the neighbourhood, local area, etc.) in the Activity.

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

Promoters should reflect together on measures aimed at enhancing the visibility of their project and the visibility of the VOPS. This measure is also linked to the marketing action of each activity in Annex 2. The creativity of applicants in offering additional potential whilst disseminating information about the planned activity, and the opportunities offered by the VOPS will be highly scored in the evaluation process. Visibility measures mainly occur before and during the implementation of the initiative. Such measures can be divided into two broad categories:

- **Visibility of the project**

Beneficiaries and participants should 'publicize' 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 Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme**

The compulsory use of the official logo of the VOPS should be included in all of the project material used for communication purposes (internal and external). The communication objectives should include a description of the multiplier effect of the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme on the Maltese society, whilst also outlining the opportunities offered through the Scheme.

PART C - INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

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

9. What do you have to do in order to submit a Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme?

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

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

9.1 Check compliance with the Scheme criteria

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

a) Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria relate to the project type, the target group and the conditions for submitting a grant request under the VOPS. If your project does not meet the eligibility criteria, it will be rejected without being further evaluated (as stated in Annex III – 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 VOPS if they are in any of the following situations:

- They are bankrupt or being wound up.
- They are having their affairs administered by the courts, and/or are having entered into an arrangement with creditors, and/or have suspended business activities, and/or are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, and/or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations.
- They are under investigation by the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.

- They have not submitted their financial returns to the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations according to 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 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 Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties as well as the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector's financial interests.
- They are following another procurement disciplinary procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties as well as the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector or any other Government Agency; they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

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

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

These exclusion criteria apply to VOP Scheme. 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 application form.

c) Selection criteria

The selection criteria enable the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee 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 application:

- A copy of the financial statements for the last closed financial year for which accounts have been closed as presented to the Commissioner for the Voluntary Organisations.

If, on the basis of these documents, the Evaluation Board concludes that the required financial documentation has not been provided or is not satisfactory, then they may:

- Ask for further information and/or documentation.
- Reject the application.

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 application form.

f) Award criteria

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

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

9.2 Check the financial conditions

a) Types of grant

The grant under the VOPS is of a lump sum (fixed amounts) approach. The amount granted (contracted grant) is equivalent to a maximum of the 80% of the total amount of the project and shall not exceed the maximum amounts stated in section 3.4 of these guidelines. 40% of the contracted grant will be given to the beneficiary on the signing of the agreement, 40% will be given on the submission and verification of a satisfactory interim report and the final balance of 20% will be given to the beneficiary on closure of the project with submission of a satisfactory final report, and after verification of receipts of declared expenditure and other relevant documentation is verified.

b) Co-financing

The VOPS grant shall finance 80% of the project costs to the maximum indicated in Article 3.2 and 3.4 of these guidelines. Should the total cost of the project exceed the 100% amount as indicated in Article 3.4 of these guidelines the applicant may complement the sum granted through the voluntary organisation's own financial resources or by seeking private assistance.

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

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

c) No double-financing

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

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

9.3 Fill in and submit the application form

Once the application form is submitted online, it is forwarded to the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee.

In case of a group of Voluntary Organisations collaborating and consequently presenting one application form for a project, it is important that the application form outlines the leading Voluntary Organisation which has the role of the coordinator. The application is then forwarded to the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee for the whole project on behalf of all the Voluntary Organisations. If the application is positively assessed and selected, the applicant established as coordinator will be the beneficiary of a single grant agreement proposed by the VOPS for the funding of the project.

Any Voluntary Organization can apply as project coordinator or project partner in **ONLY** one project application per yearly deadline.

a) 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 application will be accepted only if:

1. Submitted via the correct online 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 not more than one project can be submitted by the same applicant organisation.

b) Use the official application form

Applications must be submitted only online through the following link:
www.vofunding.org.mt

c) Provide proof of your legal status

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

d) Estimated budget

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

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

No changes can be made after the application has been submitted.

10. What happens once the application is submitted?

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

10.1 The selection procedure

The selection of applications is as follows:

1. All applications are checked against the eligibility criteria, the selection criteria and the exclusion criteria.
2. Those applications which have successfully passed these checks are evaluated by two independent external evaluators and ranked accordingly.
3. In case of a 15% or more variant between the final marks of the two External Evaluators, a third External Evaluator shall be asked to evaluate the project application.

The process is described in Annex III titled Evaluation Process.

10.2 Decision

Once the evaluation, including the verification of financial conditions, is completed, the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee will publish a ranking list in order of final mark of each project according to the final marks issued by the External Evaluators.

The Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee shall endorse the final marks and prepare a ranking list. The Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee shall decide on the projects to be granted funding, based on the ranking list and the budget available. The Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee decision is final and indisputable.

10.3 Notification of award decisions

Applicants should, be notified in the outcome of the selection procedure during the first month after the application deadline.

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

11. What happens if your application is approved?

11.1 Grant agreement

In the event of definitive approval by the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee, a grant agreement is drawn up between the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties and the beneficiary. The agreement is drawn up in € (Euros) and details the conditions and funding amount. The grant decision is a unilateral act awarding a subsidy to a beneficiary.

For projects approved by the Voluntary Organisations Project Evaluation Committee, it is intended that beneficiaries should receive the agreements for signature by the 31st May 2017. This agreement must be signed and returned to the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector on behalf of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties where the latter will be the last party to sign.

11.2 Grant amount

Acceptance of an application does not necessarily constitute an undertaking to award funding equal to the amount requested by the applicant (this funding could be reduced).

The awarding of a grant does not establish an entitlement for subsequent years.

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

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

11.3 Eligible costs

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

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

11.3.1 Eligible direct costs

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

- Staff costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 15% of the allocated total direct cost.
- Infrastructural costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 25% of the total allocated direct costs.
- Hospitality (catering) costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of the following ceilings:
 1. Up to 10% of the allocated total direct cost if the funds approved are up to €10,000.00;
 2. Up to 5% of the allocated total direct cost if the funds approved are between €10,001.00 up to €40,000.00;
 3. Up to 3% of the allocated total direct cost if the funds approved are between €40,001.00 up to €60,000.00.
- Marketing costs are eligible but are limited to a maximum of 5% of the allocated total direct cost.

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

11.3.2 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 etc. Indirect costs may not include costs already entered under another budget heading.

11.4 Payment procedures

a) Procedure with one pre-financing installment

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

b) Pre-financing payment

A pre-financing payment of 40% will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date when the last of the two parties signs the agreement. Pre-financing is intended to provide the beneficiary with a float.

c) Interim payment

An interim payment of 40% will be transferred to the beneficiary within 30 days of the date of the satisfactory delivery of the interim report.

d) Payment or recovery of the balance

1. The amount of the final payment to be made to the beneficiary will be established on the basis of a final report to be submitted within one month following the end date of the project.
2. The beneficiary must provide documents giving evidence that the activities organised with the support of the VOPS funding effectively took place. These shall include:
 - i. A 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 expenditure of the project.
 - iv. Full justification of the costs incurred (including quotations where applicable), original invoices, cash sales and VAT receipts.
 - v. Achievements to be described in final report.
3. 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.

12. Other main contractual provisions

12.1 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 1st January 2017.
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.

12.2 Finance, Sub-contracting and award of procurement contract

1. In all cases beneficiaries shall abide fully with Public Procurement Regulations.
2. In all cases the beneficiaries are obliged to allocate a specific bank account solely for the use of the grant award.
3. In those cases where the implementation of the project requires sub-contracting or the award of procurement contracts, beneficiaries of grants shall award the contract to the tender offering best value for money, that is to say, to the tender offering the best price-quality ratio, while taking care to avoid any conflict of interest.
4. In those cases where the implementation of the project requires the engagement of personnel external to the voluntary organisation, the remuneration/salary package shall be pegged to the salary scales as issued by the Ministry of Finance, referred to Schedule of Grades, for 2017.

When undergoing the project under the VOPS, beneficiaries must abide with the below procurement thresholds and relevant requirements so as to guarantee transparency and accountability:

12.3 Information on the grants awarded

| PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| RANGES | MADE THROUGH | REQUIREMENTS |
| Under EUR 250 | Direct Order | Justification for direct order |
| EUR 251 – EUR 6,000 | Request for quotations | Minimum of 3 quotations |
| | | Receipt and Filing of Quotations |
| | | Adverts (not mandatory) |
| | | Reference / Notification to selected bidder |
| EUR 6,001 – EUR 25,000 | Public Tender/Expression of Interest | Agreement with bidder |
| | | Tender Document |
| | | Adverts & Publication of Tender/ Expr. of Interest |
| | | Evaluation of Tender/Expression of Interest |
| | | Publication of Results & communication to bidders |
| | | Agreement / Contract and Addenda where necessary |
| PROCEDURES for ENGAGEMENT of PERSONNEL* | | |
| EUR 251 – EUR 6,000 (through the whole project) | Request for quotations | Minimum of 3 quotations |
| | | Receipt and Filing of Quotations |
| | | Adverts (not mandatory) |
| | | Reference / Notification to selected bidder |
| EUR 6,001 - EUR 25,000 (through the whole project) | Public Call | Agreement with applicant |
| | | Public Call Document |
| | | Adverts & Publication of Call for Application |
| | | Evaluation of applicants |
| | | Publication of Results & communication to applicants |
| | | Agreement / Contract and Addenda where necessary |
| <p>* This includes, project managers, project coordinators and staff employed to render services for project implementation purposes. The procedures for engagement of personnel shall not apply to VOs who already have the designated staff on their payroll and thus such VOs may utilise the said staff for these purposes.</p> | | |

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

Grants awarded in the course of a financial year must be published on the website of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties and 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 Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties and the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector will publish the following information:

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

12.4 Publicity

Apart from the measures foreseen for the visibility of the project and for the dissemination and exploitation of its results (which are award criteria), there is an obligation of minimal publicity for each granted project. Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector and the VOPS 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 following instructions:

1. Use of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector and of VOPS logos (as shown in the image below).
2. Use of disclaimer stating the following: *“This project is funded through the Voluntary Organisations Project Scheme managed by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector on behalf of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties”*. The font Arial must be used when quoting this sentence.

Official logos of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties, the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector and of VOPS (compulsory)



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

12.5 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 on behalf of the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties 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. Original of invoices and fiscal receipts (VAT) shall be submitted to MCVS with the final report.

12.6 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 underutilization/wrong utilization of the previously advanced funds.

12.7 Data protection

All personal data contained in the 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 VOPS, without prejudice to the possibility of transferring such data to the bodies responsible for inspection and audit appointed by the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties and/or the Ministry of Finance, through whom the funds for the VOP Scheme are made available.

CONTACT DETAILS

Maria-Louisa Busuttil

Voluntary Organisations Fund

Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector

Volunteer Centre, 181, Melita Street,

Valletta, VLT 1129, Malta

Tel: +356 22481115/0

E-mail: maria-louisa.busuttil@gov.mt / mcvs.msdc@gov.mt

Website: www.maltacvs.org

Annex I – Eligibility Criteria/Marking Scheme

| Project Code | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| Yes/No | Complete application form | |
| Yes/No | Project fits within one or more of the focus areas of intervention | |
| Yes/No | The applicant is not receiving funding from other sources for the same project | |
| Yes/No | Not in any situation which would prevent the applicant from receiving a grant as per Part C of this Guide | |
| Yes/No | Project remit within the mandate of the applicant | |
| Yes/No | The applicant is enrolled with the Commissioner for VOs and has presented a letter of compliance issued at least month before the call for the funding scheme | |
| Yes/No | The applicant has applied for only one project under the VOPS of the same year | |
| Yes/No | The project should be innovative and not a repeat of previously approved projects by the same organisation | |
| Yes/No | Maximum of project duration is 12 months including preparatory period | |
| Yes/No | Submitted supporting financial documentation | |
| 10 | Financial Capacity to support implementation of the project | |
| 15 | Relevance towards objective and priorities of VOPS | |
| 10 | Clarity of Application Form | |
| 10 | Project sustainability | |
| 10 | Operational capacity of applicant to implement project | |
| 25 | The quality of project (content and methodology) | |
| 10 | The extent of project reach | |
| 10 | Involvement of people with fewer opportunities | |
| 100 | Total Marks: | |
| | Ranking: | |

Annex III – Evaluation Process

