



WRITERS' GRANT

Guidelines for Applicants

Issued: 14th February 2018

THESE GUIDELINES MUST BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GENERAL MALTA FILM FUND GUIDELINES FOUND ON THE MALTA FILM FUND / MALTA FILM COMMISSION WEBSITE.

The Malta Film Fund administrator/s reserves the right to request further information or clarification on any aspect of any application.

THE SCHEME - ACTION 1 – WRITERS’ GRANT

This grant is to help scriptwriters to develop their projects to a stage where it can then be considered for further development funding. Projects seeking support under this scheme must have been developed to treatment stage. If you are applying for the Writers’ Grant, you need a Producer attached to your project. VAT registration is obligatory for applicants applying for this scheme.

The Malta Film Fund will offer a grant of up to €5,000 to be utilised towards the development of a script. The period of eligibility of costs begins from the date of the result notification and ends 12 months after the signing of contract.

The Fund Administrator reserves the right to grant a recipient a smaller amount of funding than applied for; subject to the number of projects recommended for support and the quality of the applications received, prospects for the film and the budget provided. Eligibility and compliance with award criteria alone does not guarantee receipt of funding if demand for funding exceeds available resources or if the proposed projects do not reach the required level in terms of the fund criteria. The Fund Administrator is not required to make any minimum number of awards. Awarding of previous funds does not bind the fund administrators to support further funding of the project.

WHO CAN APPLY?

According to the relevant Grant, applications may be made by an individual or through a Independent Audiovisual Company that has audiovisual production as its main purpose and activity and a company that is duly registered as an audiovisual production company in Malta/Europe, having at least one director or a major shareholder of the company who is a Maltese/European citizen.

Applicants must satisfy at least **ONE** of the following eligible criteria:

- 1) Producer/s is a Maltese citizen or holds a permanent residence status in Malta;
- 2) Writer/s is a Maltese citizen or holds a permanent residence status in Malta;
- 3) Director/s is a Maltese citizen or holds a permanent residence status in Malta;

And **ONE** of the following criteria:

- 1) Content and location of story is based completely or partially in Malta;
- 2) Language to be used is Maltese;
- 3) Likely location of the development, production and/or post production is Malta.

ELIGIBLE QUALIFYING PRODUCTIONS

We welcome applications for the following eligible qualifying productions aimed for local and international distribution:

- Feature Films of a total duration of minimum 80 minutes.
- Creative Documentaries of a total duration of minimum 60 minutes.

- High Quality International TV Series aimed for an international market.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Ineligible Activities means the following types of funding are not eligible for any support:

- **NO TELEVISION PROGRAMS OR SERIES** including reality shows, magazine and lifestyle programmes, discussion programmes, quizzes and game shows, serials/soap operas, advertorials, light entertainment.

NOTE FOLLOWING EXCEPTION: High Quality International television series aimed for an International market are eligible.

- Corporate communications, training and/or promotional films.
- Projects promoting violence, racism and pornographic content. The contents of the proposed audiovisual work may not violate the Maltese Constitution.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Malta Film Fund is a competitive process and eligible applications will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. **The quality of the creative team previous work/s, their relevant experience and their potential to undertake and manage the proposed project.**
 - The relevant previous experience of the creative team in development, production and distribution on a National and International level.
 - The creative team's potential to undertake and manage the proposed project.
 - Performance on previous projects developed and / or produced by the creative team which were granted funding and and the creative team's ability to deliver the proposed project in a timely manner.
 - Financial reputation of the creative team based on a due diligence exercise on all qualifying applicants.
2. **The strength and originality of the Treatment and the potential to reach both a national and international audience as cultural products.**
 - Treatment shows originality (theme, adaptation, perspective, visual approach) and is fully developed;
 - Strong proposal with potential to reach both a national and international audience as a cultural product;
 - Storyline or underlying material deals with contemporary or historical Maltese, Mediterranean or European issues of political and socio-cultural relevance;
 - Project features a Maltese or a Maltese related story and/or setting or Maltese characters, contemporary and/or historical personalities or Malta's diverse urban and rural heritage and landscapes or makes use of the Maltese language to reflect the Maltese cultural context.
3. **The quality, viability and professional, industry standard treatment of the proposed budget, financing plan and implementation plan (development schedule).**
 - Realistic development budget
 - Financing Plan
 - Realistic development schedule
 - Letter(s) of interest of co-development, co-production, or other agreement(s), if available.

4. **Potential for local and international distribution, as well as the potential to stimulate interest from sales agents, distributors and/or broadcasters.**
- Distribution Strategy (local and international) including:
 - Audience Research and Strategy
 - Screening, Festival and Market Strategy

The beneficiary will be required to enter into an agreement with the Malta Film Fund. The contract will set out the full terms and conditions tied to the funding of the project. Below is a brief overview of the expected deliverables, eligible and ineligible costs.

DELIVERABLES, ELIGIBLE COSTS, INELIGIBLE COSTS

Deliverables

- Script
 - Feature Films: Advance draft script approaching market-readiness.
 - High Quality International Television series: Pilot script/s together with character bible.
 - Creative documentary: Script/thorough treatment.
- Final treatment
- Producers' and Writers' report on development process
- Script consultant/assessor feedback and the team's written response
- If a Script Workshop has been attended – a report including outcome
- Next stage development plan (outline the strategy employed or intended to employ to move the project to the next stage).
- Cost report on expenditure with supporting invoices/receipts
- 3 to 5 minute teaser trailer for Creative Documentaries; the intention is to demonstrate style and treatment.
- 3 to 5 minute teaser sequence for Animation projects (**pre-visualisation/proof of concept** as a detailed animatic [i.e. animated storyboard, typically used to establish key element such as posing, timing, composition, style, mood and concept] or block test or sequences that can illustrate component parts of the film).
- For animation projects, an **INITIAL Animation Pack** (which includes key pictures/drawings that can demonstrate visual approach and style to be taken; concept art can include environmental and character based work with evidence of early character design (including characters in pose or action); storyboard (reproduction in a size that fits in the notebook).

Indicative List of Eligible Costs

1. Writers' fees (note if the Writer is the same person as the Director - only one fee will be eligible)
2. Producers' attachment fee (this does not mean a salary)
3. Directors' attachment fee (if applicable – this does not mean a salary) (note if the Director is the same person as the Writer - only one fee will be eligible)
4. Researchers' fees (i.e. Historians)
5. Research costs (including archive research)
6. Script Workshop Travel costs for Writer/Producer (including economy flights, economy accommodation, workshop fees, travelling costs, per diems – not exceeding €70 per person per night).
7. Script consultant/script reader/script editor fee

8. Mentoring costs
9. Acquisition of rights – including option fee if script is based on Novel or play (capped at €1,000)
10. Production costs of a 3 to 5 minute teaser trailer (only applies for Creative Documentaries and Animation – the intention is to demonstrate style and treatment).
11. Animation projects: Costs in preparing Animation Pack.

Ineligible Costs

1. Purchase of equipment of any kind
2. Production costs are not eligible for development supported projects (excluding teaser trailer for Creative Documentaries and Animation projects).
3. VAT and other taxes and charges
4. Contributions in kind
5. Interest owed and doubtful debts
6. Any costs paid outside the eligible period of the operation, including costs paid prior to the official date of approval for assistance through the Scheme.
7. Any costs which have been claimed under a previous grant or is considered as ‘double dipping’.
8. Service charges arising on leases, hire purchase agreements, depreciation, loan charges, debit interest, charges for financial transactions, foreign exchange commissions and losses, fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation, bad debts and other purely financial expenses
9. The purchase of land and real estate
10. Fuel Expenses
11. Food (other than that claimed as per diem expenses in relation to international travel).
12. Office overheads
13. Telecommunications (i.e. mobile, phone and internet expenses).

Grants awarded under the Malta Film Fund cannot be accumulated with any other government funded scheme for same costs. Should it become apparent that any project has been awarded separate funds for same costs, i.e. double dipping, this will result in funds having to be reimbursed. Cumulative state aid is only possible for approved schemes and that abides and is in accordance to the aid intensities set out in the rules attached to such schemes.

All costs eligible for funding under the Film Fund must be necessary and reasonable for the completion of the project and consistent with the principles of sound financial management and accounting practices.

MANDATORY DOCUMENTATION

Applications are to be made online and are to be submitted before the given deadline, as outlined in the general guidelines. The documents below are mandatory and are necessary for the evaluation panel to assess your application for a funding grant. Failure to present any of these documents may render your application as non-compliant and ineligible.

- Completed official **application E-form**
- A copy of your **Maltese ID card** or your Maltese residence permit or your Maltese citizenship certificate or your Maltese passport.
- A copy of your **VAT Certificate**.
- **Application Declaration**: Completed and signed (to be printed, signed, scanned and uploaded).
- **Annexe Form 1**: Completed and signed ‘DeMinimis’ Declaration Form (**even if NIL**) (to be printed, signed, scanned and uploaded).

- **Annexe Form 2:** Financial Details Form
- **Annexe Form 3:** Other Information (to be printed, signed, scanned and uploaded).
- **List of team members** (together with profile, filmography, CV (one page) – detailing previous experience and previous works in the role listed for this application – include title of works, type of works, duration (running time), year of completion, evidence of distribution i.e. proof of cinema release or broadcast, proof of exhibition at festivals etc).
- **Company Industry Profile** and track record (last year) [applies for Co-Development or Co-Production partners], if applicable. Not more than 1 page long.
- **Author's statement of intent**
- **Producer's Statement** – Please submit an overview/strategy from the Producer on the project, the team and the intended outcomes of the project.
- Example(s)/samples of **previous work/s** on DVD or provide a URL link to show reel /previous works which can be assessed for each creative team member. **Evidence** of any distribution of works.
- **Writers' / Producers' Agreement**
- **Synopsis** – One page
- **TREATMENT** (Feature Film: max 15-20 pages; Creative Documentary: max 10 pages; High Quality International TV Series : max 15 pages. *NOTES: Page numbers must be on all pages. A three line logline noting the central conflict must be on the front page. All written work must be in 12 point 1.5 space).*
- **Visual Style References** (that convey the look and feel of the film you wish to develop or produce)
- For animation projects:
 - **Samples** of previous animation work.
- For Creative Documentary projects:
 - **Research Material** should be provided (research footage and materials concerning the main characters of the film or at least photos).
- **FULL BUDGET** breakdown (*supporting quotes, if available, should be attached with your application*).
- **Financing Plan**
- **Development Schedule**
- **Distribution Strategy** (local and international) including:
 - Audience Research and Strategy
 - Screening, Festival and Market Strategy
- **Travel Assistance to attend a script workshop.** Please present outline of which workshop you intended to consider and why.
- If you intend to attach a **Script consultant/script reader/script editor** you are kindly requested to give their name together with their industry profile.

The Malta Film Fund administrator/s reserves the right to request further information or clarification on any aspect of the above.