

CO-FINANCING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS - 2010

1. Background

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) may, during the Year 2010, benefit from the amount of €280,000 which the Government has allocated to support them in project grants under EU funding programmes and require a co-financing commitment. A vast array of EU Funding opportunities exist and it is vital for Malta to benefit and exploit fully such funding initiatives. Within this field, Government is seeking to establish co-financing funds having a clearly defined purpose, in that they may be utilised to provide assistance and facilitate project activities funded by the EU.

Purpose: To provide successful applicants with financial assistance in relation to the co-financing element of projects they submit and that are approved under any of the EU Funded Programmes. The co-financing fund will support and sustain the beneficiaries in projects of greater financial altitude thus empowering CSOs to be more pro-active in terms of participating in EU Funded programmes.

The Committee responsible for allocating funds shall award funds for co-financing on the basis of the merits of the proposal.

The co-financing element will enable funding resources to be made available more easily to beneficiaries which are often well placed to respond to specific project development issues or project realisation but not necessarily well equipped to deal with the demands of the required financial element stipulated under the respective EU Funded Programme that the beneficiary is applying for. The co-financing fund is intended to create and provide an additional source of funding and shall not replace financial support from other sources. The co-financing fund should complement and must not replace existing activities supported by EU funding and other financial sources.

The co-financing fund is also intended to facilitate the development of promising project ideas and to support the preparation of applications that are to be submitted under an EU Funded Programme in particular to support innovative approaches, complex project themes and the establishment of new partnerships created for the purpose of designing new projects.

2. Definition of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Civil Society Organisations include:

Voluntary, self-governing organisations not subject to direction by public authorities, independent of political control or Social Partners Organisations (such as employers organisations and trade-unions having official recognition and regulated by Maltese law or regulation or administrative act).

3. Eligible Applicants

- i. CSOs that intend to submit a project under any of the EU Funded Programmes during 2010 with approval of funds upon receipt that acknowledgement that their project has been accepted and financed;
- ii. CSOs which have already submitted a project under any of the EU Funded Programmes, have acknowledgement that their project has been accepted and financed and for which the project was effected in 2009.

Proviso

- a. Provided that the CSOs are established for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest or in the interest of their mission statement and not having an industrial or commercial character. Supporting documents that show this should be attached to the application form.
- b. Applicants are to have a proper financial management and the necessary administrative and technical capacity for implementing the project.
- c. Beneficiaries which actively and regularly participate, or immediately commit themselves to do so in the MEUSAC consultation structures (Core Group and Sectoral Committees) are eligible whereby they undertake to collaborate with MEUSAC in the organisation of various activities including making available facilities for seminars and meetings related to both MEUSAC and to the respective organisation's roles and functions.
- d. Beneficiaries are to enter into a written grant agreement with the CSO Co-financing Evaluation Committee

4. Co-financing Rate

The funds available under this policy will cover a percentage of the co-financing element that is not covered by the EU Funded Programme¹. The selected applicant is expected to provide own resources and/or involve other donors to cover the additional percentage of the co-financing element. The co-financing rate will be determined by the Evaluation Committee and such decision shall be final.

The applicant is to submit a copy of the complete project proposal (including any annexes and supporting documents) being presented to the Managing Authority of the EU Funded Programme being applied for.

¹ The co-financing fund is applicable to the 'Europe for Citizens 2007-2013' programme. The latter's budget criteria differs to other EU funded programmes and is capped at a fixed amount. Eligible applicants applying for this funding programme are to submit a separate budget form within the application form indicating the overall expenses being borne from the beneficiary.

5. Evaluation and Selection of Applications

The application must be fully transparent in terms of the financing of the project. The applicant must state the provenance of all sources of co-financing in the application and should attach a confirmation from the/these source/s regarding the availability of these funds. **All applications will be reviewed independently.** The co-financing rate offered will be set on a case-by-case basis by the Evaluation Committee and the latter can set a lower grant rate than that requested in the application. All applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

(1) Administrative Compliance

Verification that the application is complete in accordance with the checklist.

(2) Eligibility of the applicants

Verification that the applicant meets the requirements in accordance with Section 2 - Eligible Applicants

(3) Evaluation of the quality of the proposals and financial evaluation

An evaluation will be undertaken by the Committee of the quality of the proposal that is to be submitted to the respective EU Funded Programme and the project priorities that are being focused upon. The proposed budget will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the Evaluation Grid set out in Annex 1. A selection criterion is intended to help the Committee evaluate the applicants' financial and operational capacity to ensure that they have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the period of the project that includes competences required to successfully complete the proposed project. Award criteria will allow the quality of the proposal that will be submitted to be evaluated by the Committee in relation to the objectives and priorities set and the consistency with the respective call for proposal that is being applied for under the EU Funded Programme together with the quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

6. Processing of Applications

The co-financing rate grant given to the applicant shall be finally determined by the Evaluation Committee based upon a set of criteria as outlined in Annex 1. A minimum pass mark of 55% is required for the project to benefit from the co-financing fund.

Applicants will be notified of the co-financing rate being allotted to the beneficiary and a block-fund will be committed on receipt of acknowledgement that the project submitted under the specific EU Funded Programme has been accepted by the Managing Authority in charge of the respective EU Funded programme. A verified true copy of the letter of approval and the grant agreement are to be submitted to the Evaluation Committee. Following this a memorandum of understanding (“**MOU**”) is signed by the relevant Government authority (the CSO Evaluation Committee) and

the respective beneficiary for the allocation of resources under the co-financing fund as established by the Evaluation Committee.

In the case of projects that have not been accepted by the Managing Authority of the respective EU Funded Programme, the funds allocated under the block-fund system are released.

Beneficiaries interested in applying for the co-financing fund for 2010 are required to submit their application form prior to the 1st December, 2010. Any applications received after that day shall not be processed.

7. Disbursements

After signing of the 'MOU' and submitting the letter of approval and grant agreement of the project as approved by the Managing Authority, the beneficiary shall receive 50% of the grant. The remaining amount will be disbursed upon submission of the final report and the financial report accompanied by verified copies of fiscal receipts.

The beneficiary will be responsible for the correct use of these funds and guarantee the authenticity of proof of expenditure within the financial report that is to be submitted to the Evaluation Committee. Should for any reason the Managing Authority of the EU Funded Programme withdraw or terminate funding for the applicant organisation, the Evaluation Committee will act accordingly with the agreement set out by the Managing Authority responsible for the programme and, consequently, withdraw or terminate the co-financing accordingly. Once the project has been terminated, under no circumstances may the applicant organisation generate profit or have excess funding. Should such a case arise, the Evaluation Committee will automatically withdraw and terminate the co-financing rate allocated to the applicant organisation.

8. Submission of applications

The applicants shall fill in the Application Form which is available on MEUSAC's website: www.meusac.gov.mt Supporting documents are to be attached to the application where applicable. The application (including any annexes and supporting documents) are to be submitted in 2 hard copies (1 original and 1 copy), as well as one copy in electronic format (CDs) that must be identical to the hard copy.

Applications are to be submitted in a sealed, intact envelope by mail or in person and addressed to: The CSOs Co-Financing Committee, Parliamentary Secretariat for Consumer Affairs, Fair Competition, Local Councils, and Public Dialogue, Office of the Prime Minister, Auberge De Castille, Valletta.

The envelope containing the application shall be marked "CSO Co-Financing Fund." Applications sent by any other means (e.g. by fax or by e-mail) or delivered at other addresses will not be accepted or deemed eligible. Upon receipt of an application a letter of acknowledgment will be sent to the applicant organisation within 5 working days.

Applicants should keep strictly to the format of the application and are to complete the application form carefully and as clearly as possible.

Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

9. The Evaluation Committee

An Evaluation Committee will evaluate applications and will allocate a co-financing rate according to the established criteria. The EC shall ensure that decisions are taken in a transparent manner.

The Evaluation Committee will receive and process application forms, ensure reporting from the selected applicants, and oversee the monitoring and evaluation process of the selected applicants. The Evaluation Committee will verify the management of funds, including financial accounting, verification of financial documents and payment requests as well as on-the-spot-checks. The Evaluation Committee shall ensure collection and review of project completion reports and the archiving of all documents relevant to the Co-Financing Fund. The Evaluation Committee shall also be responsible in defining disbursement and accounting arrangements, including advance payments where necessary.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring arrangement for a block-grant shall be stipulated within the MoU. The Evaluation Committee shall ensure that these arrangements are implemented in a satisfactory manner and, if needed, take steps to strengthen them. Selected applicants that have qualified and have secured funds for their projects are to provide the Evaluation Committee with a progress report that is to include monitoring and sustainable development factors.

The Evaluation Committee may draw upon the services of a monitoring agent to undertake external monitoring of the projects as well as on-the-spot checks.

Upon completion of the project the beneficiary is to provide the final and financial/technical report approved by the Managing Authority of the EU Funded Programme together with any other supporting document related to the project to the Evaluation Committee.

Annex 1 - EVALUATION GRID

	Maximum Score
Financial and Operational Capacity	
Does the applicant have sufficient experience in project management?	5
Does the applicant have sufficient technical expertise? (knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
Does the applicant have sufficient management capacity? (including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the project)	5
Does the applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
Is the applicant in a state of readiness to implement the project?	5
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>25 points</i>
Relevance	
How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals?	10
How clearly described and coherent are the applicant's development objectives?	5
How coherent is the overall design of the proposed project?	5
How relevant is the project to the National Priorities and to the target groups that are being proposed?	10
What impact does the project have on the target groups?	5
Does the proposal contain specific elements of added value, such as innovative approaches, models for good practice, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, environmental protection?	10
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>45 points</i>
Methodology	
Are the activities proposed in the project consistent with the objectives and expected results of the EU Funding	5

Programme being applied for?	
What is the level of international partnership?	5
Is the project clear and feasible?	5
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>15 points</i>
Sustainability	
Results achieved by the project have multiplier effects? (outcome of the project and sustainability)	5
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>5 points</i>
Budget	
Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the expected results satisfactory?	5
Other co-financing resources	5
TOTAL SCORE	100

Annex 2 - Exclusion Criteria

Potential applicants may not participate in call for proposals or be awarded funds if:

- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, or are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning professional conduct by a judgement which is *res judicata* (i.e. against which no appeal is possible);
- (c) they are guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the European Commission can justify;
- (d) 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 Maltese Law.
- (e) they have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to Malta's or to the Communities' financial interests;
- (f) they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations in connection with a procurement or other grant award procedure financed by the Community budget;
- (g) the CSOs are profit making organisations or political parties or organisations affiliated to such profit making organisations or political parties;
- (h) they are constituted bodies and civil society organizations not recognized by law **or** enrolled under the Voluntary Organisations Act,
- (i) the entities are presenting an application for funding not related to EU Funded Programmes.