



**Malta**  
Tourism Authority

# MAJOR TOURISM EVENTS SUPPORT SCHEME (MTESS)

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## 2.1 Background

Malta's tourism landscape has changed drastically over the last ten years, and today we can safely say that our tourism product is by far more than just sun, sand and sea.

Malta offers a wide array of activities and interests, ranging from our wonderful landscapes, to rural walks, authentic Mediterranean culinary experiences, our rich and diversified culture, and our archaeological gems, including the world's oldest free-standing structures.

We truly believe that Malta is the place to visit.

Malta believes that the attraction and hosting of high profile, well-timed quality events in our country is key to our objectives in maintaining that competitive "quality" edge, particularly with the younger generations. This is also in line with the MTA Tourism Strategy.

This document is intended to guide the Applicants in submitting proposals for events that help position Malta as the best destination in the Mediterranean.

## 2.2 Incentive Overview

The Major Tourism Events Support Scheme (MTESS) aims to provide assistive funding, in part or in full, for the development of major events intended to boost Malta's touristic offering and attractiveness. An event is classified as "major" if it satisfies the criteria in Section 5.1.2.

MTESS is administered through a competitive application process run by the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA). Applications are reviewed by a specifically set up evaluation committee and assessed against the criteria in these guidelines. Compliance with the criteria is mandatory for eligibility but does not guarantee funding.

The MTESS 2020 will offer potential funding to eligible events taking place during the period indicated in the Call for Proposals.

## 2.3 Objectives of the Scheme

The objectives of the scheme are primarily to attract to Malta those events which will enhance the standard of Malta's uniqueness in the tourism offer and the visitors' experience and which, directly or indirectly, attract tourists to the Maltese Islands, lead to an increase in bed nights, help to prolong the tourist season, and generate as much as possible international marketing.

## 2.4 Principles

Funding under MTESS is guided by three key principles:

### 1. *Additionality*

This means the minimum level of government assistance which will allow the event or elements of the event to take place. In some cases without government intervention events would be unlikely to happen or would take place at a reduced size or scale. When 'additionality' occurs in an event, usually the event has been able to increase its ability to enhance the visitor experience and has improved the opportunities to grow visitor spend.

## 2. *Leverage of other funding*

The event should demonstrate an ability to generate growth in the industry by ensuring maximum financial buy-in from other sources. The leverage of other funding will support the long-term sustainability of your event. The MTA is not a core funder of events but will support the development of events.

## 3. *Significance*

The Event must be at least of “national significance” in order to maximise the value of support from MTA.

### **2.5 Duration of the Incentive**

These Guidelines are effective from the date indicated in the Call.

### **2.6 Budget Available**

The approximate available budget is indicated in the Call.

### **2.7 Designated Authority**

The MTESS is administered by the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA).

### **2.8 Contact Information:**

#### **Major Tourism Events Support Scheme**

Malta Tourism Authority  
Suites 301-306, Building SCM 01  
SmartCity Malta,  
Ricasoli SCM 1001  
Kalkara - MALTA  
Email: [sponsorships.mta@visitmalta.com](mailto:sponsorships.mta@visitmalta.com)

'Authority' is the Malta Tourism Authority (MTA).

'Call' or 'Call for Proposals' refers to the communication issued by the MTA, announcing the publication of the competitive application process, and inviting interested operators to submit their applications by a set deadline.

'Committee' refers to the Evaluation Committee of the MTESS.

'Malta' includes Malta, Gozo and Comino.

'Maltese Islands' include Malta, Gozo and Comino.

'Ministry' is the Ministry for Tourism and Consumer Protection of Malta.

'Low-season' consists of the months of January, February and November.

'Mid-season' October and between March till 15th June (also referred to as 'shoulder months').

'Peak season' is between 16th June and the end of September.

#### 4.1 Context

MTA's role is to work collaboratively with our partners to accelerate growth of the Maltese tourism industry. We do this through supporting tourism businesses, the development of world-class products, experiences and events and promoting the Maltese Islands as a must-see destination to those markets which offer the greatest potential for growth.

Events have the potential to play a role in the overall visitor experience and economic benefit for Malta. They present visitors with the opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture, heritage and tradition.

International tourism events shall be as much as possible authentically unique to Malta and shall act as demand generators to attract international visitors whilst enhancing Malta's international reputation. It is important that these events have content or are an experience which is strong enough to make people want to travel to Malta, generating economic return through visitor bednights and spend.

MTA will seek to provide assistive funding for events which best meet the interests of our visitor segments. The events must demonstrate how they will attract international visitors, ensure bednights and generate international marketing.

#### 4.2 Definition of Events

A 'Tourist-related event' is defined as an event occurring on 1 day or over a period of several consecutive days. It will attract visitors to travel to and stay in Malta and offer an authentic Maltese experience. The event will attract additional visitor and participant spend, increase the occupancy rate of local accommodation, provide a positive image of the Maltese Islands, give the visitor a true Maltese experience and leave a lasting legacy.

In principle, a Major Tourism Event is an event that attracts international visitors to Malta, where the event has played the key role in attracting them to visit. An event of this nature also showcases Malta on a global stage as a unique tourism destination. This would include generating significant international media coverage (e.g. TV, print, digital) pre-event, during and post-event. The coverage would showcase Malta's people and places, in an authentic manner highlighting our iconic landscapes and visitor attractions.

### 5.1 Eligibility Criteria

All applications need to satisfy the eligibility conditions under this section before proceeding to the proposal evaluation stage.

#### 5.1.1 Eligible Applicants: Who can apply?

Natural or legal persons operating within the private sector and registered voluntary organisations, may apply.

An applicant may submit one or more applications for different events under the same call. However, there cannot be more than one application, by the same applicant, for the same event.

#### 5.1.2 Eligible Activities

An event is considered eligible under MTESS if:

- i. The total cost of the event is at least €200,000;  
and
- ii. The value of the eligible component (taking into account only eligible costs listed under Section 5.5) is at least €100,000.

In principle, an eligible activity must:

- Generate substantial economic benefit for Malta through increased visitor and participant numbers, including bednights and increased numbers of international visitors;
- Enhance Malta's opportunities to host further major events;
- Be backed by a viable Financial Plan and realistic planning;
- Possess measurable outcomes .

#### 5.1.3 Ineligible Activities

The following types of events are **NOT** eligible for funding:

- Meetings
- Annual General Meetings
- Promotional/business exhibitions
- Exhibitions
- Expos (an expo is defined as an event which showcases products/services in a business to business environment. This also includes trade fairs, showings/demonstrations etc.)
- Trade Shows

#### 5.1.4 Ineligible Applications

Applications with the following will be deemed ineligible:

- Applications that are not submitted using the proper Application Form and Annexes
- Unsigned applications
- Applications received outside the dates mentioned in the Call
- Applications with incomplete sections and annexes.

#### 5.2 Selection Criteria

Applications which fulfil the eligibility criteria specified above will proceed to the MTESS Proposal Evaluation Stage.

**Ten (10) essential criteria will be used in the evaluation of the proposals received. These are:**

1. Uniqueness of event and visitor experience
2. Economic Estimation
  - Direct Visitor and Participant Numbers (the event's ability to directly attract international tourists)
- AND/OR*
  - The impact of the event on the country's exposure in the international media as a top tourism destination.
- AND/OR*
  - The ability of the event to enhance the tourism experience of visitors in Malta and increase their spending
3. Ability to attract tourism in the low- and mid-season months.
4. Proposed Media and Marketing Activity
5. Event Management, Viability and Budget Transparency
6. Additionality and Sustainability of the event within the budgets and resources available
7. Replicability of the event (multi-annual events are preferred)
8. Environmental Sustainability and Green Tourism
9. Social Impact
10. Equality of Opportunity and Accessibility

### 5.3 The Scoring Plan

The financial award given will depend on the funds available and on the number of applications received that have achieved a pass mark. Awards will be based on how the event scores against criteria (not the funding gap). Therefore, the request will consider the additional tourism benefit that will be delivered.

	Maximum 200 points Pass (120 points)
Timing of the Event vis-à-vis MTA's objectives to increase tourists in the off-peak months	Up to 20 points
The generation of additional tourism arrivals exclusively for the event to the Maltese Islands	Up to 30 points
Uniqueness of Event and Visitor Experience	Up to 20 points
Economic benefits including return on investment associated with the Event	Up to 20 points
The international media exposure generated by the Event: pre, during and post Event	Up to 30 points
The tourism source market to which the Event will target vis-a-vis the airline availability/capacity	Up to 10 points
The international standard of the artist or brand proposed in the Event	Up to 20 points
Replicability of the Event	Up to 10 points
Equality of Opportunity and Accessibility	Up to 10 points
Social and Environmental Considerations	Up to 10 points
Financial considerations as per Financial Plan submitted	Up to 10 points
Presentation Quality and Delivery	Up to 10 points
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>200 points</b>

### 5.4 Key Funding Conditions

#### I. Co-financing

The level of financing by MTA under the MTESS is dependent on a number of case-by-case factors, namely the extent and form of the event, the risks involved, potential revenue, the uniqueness of the event, and the estimated attraction of foreign visitors. Due consideration will be also given to the timing of the event; that is if the event is held in the low- or mid-season months.

#### II. Forms of Funding

Depending on the type of event and the assessment of the proposals, the Committee may recommend funding in either or a combination of these two forms:

- Form of financing 1:** a global sum  
**Form of financing 2:** a unit cost, based on a per capita payment for each incoming tourist generated by the event, as confirmed by actual bookings through the MTA online ticketing platform or other sources which the MTA would need unhindered access.

#### III. Business Plan

- The business plan must demonstrate the capacity of a potential economic return on investment;

#### IV. Presentation

- As part of the evaluation process, applicants will be invited to deliver a 10-minute presentation of their proposed event strictly to the Evaluation Committee.



## 5.5 Eligible Costs

The following is a non-exhaustive list of costs which are considered eligible under MTESS:

- Marketing Costs (international marketing only)
- Performance Costs – Performance fees / Appearance fees
- Accommodation Costs and Rider Costs
- Travel e.g. flights, car hire, transport etc.
- Promotor Fees / Event Management Fees / Accountancy Fees
- Hospitality
- Health & Safety Costs
- Venue Costs – Venue hire / Venue preparation / Venue restoration / Marquee hire
- Production Costs
- Audit Fees
- Security Costs
- Freight Costs

## 5.6 Ineligible Costs

The following is a non-exhaustive list of ineligible costs:

- Staff Salaries – including all consultancy fees, casual staff, staff/crew etc.
- Prize Money / Awards / Trophies / Medals / Ceremonial Costs
- Local Licence Fees / Permit Fees
- Stationery / Postage
- Gifts – (including goodie bags)
- Legal Fees
- Bank Fees / Bank Charges / Interest Charges
- Capital Repayments
- Corporation Tax
- Capital Expenditure / Assets – e.g. computers / digital cameras
- Rates / Fuel Costs / Electricity / Rent
- Membership Fees
- Organisation / Premise Insurance
- Phone Bills
- Charitable Donations
- VAT Repayments – where applicants are VAT registered and reclaiming VAT
- Insurance Costs (compulsory anyway) Vehicle Insurance
- Commission (Sales / Bonus)

Cash payments are deemed ineligible and will not be accepted.

## 6.1 Submission of the Applications

### 6.1.1 Dates of Submission

Refer to the Call for Proposals for the opening and closing dates and times. No applications received outside these dates will be considered.

MTA may amend the dates at its own discretion.

### 6.1.2 Content of Submissions

An application cannot cover more than one different event but can contain a series of the same event over a span of time. Same applicants may also submit more than one application for separate events.

Submissions must include the following documents:

- Application Form (Annex 1)
- Marketing Plan (Annex 2)
- Budget (Annex 3)
- Economic Impact Calculator (Annex 4)

Applicants must substantiate, by example and evidence, how their event meets the 10 key criteria in section 5.2 and any other criteria specified in the respective Call for Proposals.

Only typed and non-editable type format applications will be accepted.

Applicants may be also asked to submit further information and/or documentation.

Post-event, applicants will have to submit an economic report outlining the targets achieved and the economic impact of the event on the economy. This has to be submitted within 60 days of the last day of the event.

### 6.1.3 Declarations by the Applicant

In the application form, applicants are to state if:

- i. they have ever been declared bankrupt,
- ii. they have pending direct or indirect taxation, or social security contribution dues,
- iii. they have any unspent criminal or civil convictions, or

If an applicant answers 'Yes' to any of these areas, they will be required to provide further information.

### 6.1.4 Method of Submission

The only method of submission shall be through Electronic means.

Applications must be submitted to the MTA on the email address: **sponsorships.mta@visitmalta.com**, inserting the event name in the following format in the subject line: MTESS - [insert event name].

### 6.1.5 Receipt Acknowledging Submission

Each Applicant will receive a receipt acknowledging submission of the Application and the related documents. This will be sent on the email indicated in the application form.

## **6.2 Evaluation**

### **6.2.1 Evaluation Committee**

All applications will be evaluated by an appointed Evaluation Committee (the 'Committee') composed of a Chairman, three voting members and a Secretary to the Committee. These will be appointed by the Minister responsible for Tourism. One of the members is to be a public officer at the Ministry. The Committee may also call on the support of independent experts and reserves the right to request further information from the Applicant.

All Committee members must declare their impartiality and that they do not have any conflict of interest, prior to evaluating. External experts shall declare any conflict of interest in writing prior to delivery of advice. This shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

### **6.2.2 Evaluation Stage 1: Assessment of Submitted Documents**

All documents submitted as per Section 6.1.2 will be assessed by the Evaluation Committee against the Selection Criteria outlined Section 5.2, the Key Funding Conditions in Section 5.4 and the Cost Eligibility in Sections 5.5 and 5.6.

### **6.2.3 Evaluation Stage 2: Presentation of the Proposed Event**

As part of the evaluation process, all applicants will be invited to deliver a 10-minute presentation of their proposal to the Evaluation Committee. This will also serve as a two-way discussion on the proposal, enabling the applicant to promote and elaborate further on the idea and the Committee to ensure full comprehension of the proposal.

### **6.2.4 Right of Negotiations**

The Evaluation Committee may negotiate the proposal with the applicant primarily to reduce the costs of the event and to ensure that the proposed are inline with the strategy of MTA and the wider calendar of events.

### **6.2.5 Right of Refusal**

The Committee shall have the right to refuse to fund an event (even after committed) should it come to its attention that the Applicant or the beneficiary of the event has a serious default.

An application will be refused if, during the evaluation process, the Committee finds out that the Event is double funded, and such double funding is not declared in the Application.

The Executive of the Malta Tourism Authority reserves the right to refuse to fund an event or cancel the funding if in its opinion the event shall cause reputational harm to the country.

### **6.2.6 Outright Disqualification**

Any contact, direct or indirect, with any member of the Evaluation Committee outside the official channels will lead to an automatic disqualification of the proposal.

### **6.3 Award**

Following the Evaluation Stages, the Committee will rank all Applications based on their performance in both stages of the Evaluation process, seeking maximal contribution towards the achievement of the objectives of MTESS. Funding is dependent on the available budget and therefore, applications that make it through the evaluation stage do not necessarily get funded. Should budget become available, either through withdrawal of events or registered savings, applicants will be notified by order of merit.

#### **6.3.1 Notification of Results**

The evaluation results will be published on [www.mta.com.mt](http://www.mta.com.mt)

#### **6.3.2 Notification of Award**

The successful applicants - i.e. the ones receiving funding support - will also be informed by an email sent by the Secretary to the Evaluation Committee. This will include the form of financing and the value of the awarded support.

Award is subject to the outcome of the review process under Section 6.4.

#### **6.3.3 Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants**

The unsuccessful applicants will receive an email from the Secretary to the Evaluation Committee, outlining the outcome of the evaluation and a summary of the application's strengths and weaknesses.

Unsuccessful applicants may seek redress through the procedure outlined in Section 6.4.

### **6.4 Review of the Award**

All applications received within the open call period will be assessed in a just and fair manner. The Evaluation Committee shall provide a synopsis of the outcome of its decision to all applicants. However, a review procedure is in place should an applicant be unsatisfied with the assessment process of their application. In circumstances where an applicant decides to ask for a review of the decision, s/he must, in the first instance, contact the Committee Secretary on: [sponsorships.mta@visitmalta.com](mailto:sponsorships.mta@visitmalta.com) to arrange a debrief meeting which must take place within 10 calendar days from the date of receiving the notification.

During the debrief meeting, the Evaluation Committee will explain why the application was unsuccessful. Following this, if the applicant still wishes to proceed with an independent review, written notification must be submitted to the Review Committee on email [sponsorshipsreview.mta@visitmalta.com](mailto:sponsorshipsreview.mta@visitmalta.com) within 20 calendar days from when the de-briefing takes place. Official reviews will be considered by an independent review board.

To ensure consistency and fairness to all applicants, no additional event information from that supplied within the original application will be considered during the review procedure.

If an application is successful in securing an offer of funding, applicants are not permitted to object on the amount and conditions of the award.

### **6.5 Signature of Funding Support Agreement**

Following the conclusion of the award and appeals process, the successful applicant/s will be invited to sign the Funding Support Agreement with the Malta Tourism Authority.

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## Payment

The following methodology of payment is recommended.

**Form of Financing 1 - Global Sum**

<i>Payment reference</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Payable</i>
Advance	25% of the awarded support	Within 30 days of signature of the Support Agreement.
Interim payment	25% of the awarded support	30 days before the date of the event
Final payment - 1	30% of the awarded support	Upon presentation of all tax invoices and receipts related to the expenditure of the eligible costs.
Final payment - 2	20% of the awarded support	Upon the outcome of an economic assessment and audit of the event.

**Form of Financing 2 - Unit Cost per incoming tourist**

<i>Payment reference</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Payable</i>
	10% for marketing purposes	Within 30 days of signature of the Support Agreement.
One payment	90% of the awarded support (calculated on the rate per tourist multiplied by the verified number of tourists attending the event)	After 30 days of event and verification

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## Rights of the Authority

- a) From time to time, MTA may issue updates on these guidelines. It is the responsibility of the applicants to submit their proposals in accordance with the latest version and clarifications as published on the website [www.mta.com.mt](http://www.mta.com.mt)
- b) The MTA reserves the right to request the equivalent of up to fifty percent (50%) of the sponsorship value in complimentary tickets for any event.
- c) The MTA reserves the right to require the Applicant to use MTA's ticketing platform. In the event of alternative arrangements, the Applicant shall give real-time access to MTA for auditing, marketing and logistical purposes.
- d) The MTA reserves the right to require the Applicant to provide access to relevant databases of travellers/companies produced by the event to be used by MTA for research/marketing purposes, in line with Chapter 440, Data Protection Act of the Laws of Malta.
- e) The MTA reserves the right to request from the Applicant any information that may be required for auditing purposes.
- f) The MTA reserves the right to hold any person from entering the venue of any sponsored Event should this be required for security purposes.

- g) The Applicant shall allow access to MTA staff during the Event.
- h) The Applicant must provide the necessary clearance from talent guests to be available for interviews by foreign media guests invited by MTA to cover the event.
- i) Post-Event, the Applicant must provide the MTA with relevant evidence such as hi-res photography and HD videography (both royalty-free), media clippings, artist testimonials, social media links, etc, relating to the Event.
- j) It is the responsibility of the Applicant to inform the MTA of any change in the status or circumstances of the application, including changes in: date, location, event, name, and program. The MTA reserves the right to reassess the funding and sponsorship agreement if any changes occur.