

# MICE in Gozo Scheme 2020

Restoring and Upgrading Venues with the Capacity to Host MICE Events in Gozo

Guidance notes to applicants



MINISTRY FOR GOZO



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ST. FRANCIS SQUARE, IR-RABAT, GOZO, MALTA

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Scope of the Guidance Notes**

These Guidance Notes are intended to assist both the Voluntary and Private Business sectors in applying for grants under the Restoring and Upgrading Venues with the Capacity to Host MICE Events in Gozo 2020.

All applicants must abide by the Guidance Notes valid at the time of application, which may be periodically reviewed, updated and amended.

### **1.2 Objective of the Scheme**

The Beneficiary, in this case, either an entity considered as a Voluntary Sector Organization or a Private Business entity, that undertakes a project to restore and upgrade their venue facilities to enhance their capabilities of hosting qualitative MICE activities, shall be entitled to financial grants subject to meeting the criteria set by these Guidance Notes. The objectives of this scheme are two-fold. Firstly, to enhance Gozo's competitiveness in attracting MICE events both on a local and international level. Secondly, to support those that have the capacity or potential capacity to invest in their infrastructural capabilities and ancillary technological equipment/materials.

### **1.3 Legal Basis for the Scheme**

The administrative basis for this scheme is Budget Measure 7.19, Incentives for the Creation of Jobs in Gozo, Budget Speech 2020.

### **1.4 Available Budget and Duration of the Scheme**

The scheme is demand driven. Aid will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to the annual ceiling and total budget. The total budget available for the scheme is €125,000 for the year 2020. Complete applications must be submitted by 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 while documentation submission shall be by 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020. Any exceptions made for applications submitted afterwards will be at the discretion of the Ministry based on the entity of the investment.

### **1.5 Main Parties involved in the Implementation of the Scheme**

#### A – Ministry for Gozo

The overall responsibility for the management and implementation of this scheme is the Ministry for Gozo, hereinafter referred to as the Ministry.



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## B- The Beneficiary

Voluntary Organizations or Private Business single-undertakings are hereafter referred to as the Beneficiary:

- i. The beneficiary is the Voluntary Organization or the Private Business benefitting from the incentives provided by this scheme when applying the structural works to the venue owned and purchase of equipment.
- ii. The Beneficiary is responsible to implement the project activities in line with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement signed and of those of these Guidance Notes. The beneficiary should always be guided by the principles of good governance, sound financial management, fairness and transparency.

## **2. Eligibility**

### **2.1 Eligibility of Applications**

Complete applications will be evaluated against the eligibility criteria listed in this Section (2. Eligibility). Incomplete or incorrect applications will be rejected.

The Scheme will be implemented in line with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to De Minimis (OJ L 352, 18.12.2013, p.1).

Undertakings active in all economic sectors may be eligible, with the exception of:

**(a)** aid granted to undertakings active in the fishery and aquaculture sector, as covered by Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000 of 17 December 1999 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products (OJ L 17, 21.1.2000, p. 22).

**(b)** aid granted to undertakings active in the primary production of agricultural products;

**(c)** aid granted to undertakings active in the sector of processing and marketing of agricultural products, in the following cases:

(i) where the amount of the aid is fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertakings concerned;

(ii) where the aid is conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;

**(d)** aid to export-related activities towards third countries or Member States, namely aid directly linked to the quantities exported, to the establishment and operation of a distribution network or to other current expenditure linked to the export activity;

**(e)** aid contingent upon the use of domestic over imported goods.



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## **2.2 Eligibility of the Beneficiary – Voluntary Organization and Private Business undertakings**

Eligibility is subject to availability of funds and subject to the overall scheme's eligibility period. The latest version of the documentation, as published on the Ministry for Gozo website must be submitted.

- 2.2.1 The applicant must provide documentation confirming ownership of venue.
- 2.2.2 To be eligible, the Beneficiary must certify that it has neither exceeded, nor will exceed with the aid granted through this scheme, the de minimis threshold of €200,000 (or €100,000 in the case of a single undertaking performing road freight transport for hire or reward) cumulatively from this scheme and any other De Minimis scheme over the applicable three-year reference period, in line with the De Minimis Regulation.
- 2.2.3 Further to point 2.2.4, the Beneficiary must duly fill in the State Aid (*De Minimis*) Declaration found at Section D of the Scheme Application.
- 2.2.4 Private Business single-undertakings are to have all documentation updated in line with all relevant local authorities to conduct business such as the Tax Identification Number and VAT Registration.
- 2.2.5 Local Voluntary Organizations must be registered with the Commissioner for Voluntary Organizations.

## **2.3 Eligibility of Project at Application Stage**

Applications that do not satisfy all of the below criteria shall not be considered eligible.

- 2.3.1 In order to be eligible, the completion of the project shall ensure a minimum seating-capacity of 150 persons.
- 2.3.2 The Venue should also ensure that other facilities that complement standard MICE-event hosting are to be also included in the layout.
- 2.3.3 Submitted plans at Planning Authority have been approved in their entirety and Order to Start Works obtained.
- 2.3.4 A bill of quantities pertaining to the works and signed by the representative Architect of the project is to be submitted.
- 2.3.5 A signed estimate by the representative Architect that provides financial costs relating to the restoration works which may include also materials, and an estimate figure of the purchase of technological equipment such as projectors, audio-visual, and air-conditioning.
- 2.3.6 Projects that are ongoing shall also be eligible should all the criteria set in these Guidelines be met.
- 2.3.7 Completed projects will not be considered as eligible.
- 2.3.8 Deadline for submission of applications is 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020.



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- 2.3.9 Entities that have already submitted plans at the Planning Authority and are pending the necessary approvals, are eligible to apply for this scheme. Should there be no issuance of approval by the PA, the application shall not be accepted by the Ministry.
- 2.3.10 The application should include works divided into phases which shall be considered as baselines for payments. Each project should not have more than 3 phases.
- 2.3.11 The necessary measures have been taken to ensure that the venue is finally certified by CRPD in terms of the accessibility of the facilities.
- 2.3.12 A signed declaration by the beneficiary shall be provided to ensure that the scope of the venue shall remain to host MICE events for the minimum of 5 years.

## **2.4 Submission of Documentation for Reimbursement and Reimbursement Payments**

As part of the payment and reimbursement procedures, the Tourism and Economic Development Directorate within the Ministry for Gozo will be responsible to vet applications and claim for reimbursements adequately and in a timely manner. The Ministry reserves the right to request supplementary documentation should this be deemed necessary. The Ministry also reserves the right to disapprove applications should the project proposal be deemed as not linear with these Guidance Notes. Moreover, commenced projects that for any reason are not completed, shall not obtain the remaining assigned funds and shall also be subject to reconstituting the reimbursement payment/s made to the Ministry.

### **2.4.1 Voluntary Organizations**

Voluntary Organizations are to submit their applications by 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 as per Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of these Guidance Notes. Following submission of application, those projects that are currently in progress can also submit documentation relating to works and expenses incurred. These projects will not receive a pre-financing payment. Rather, the representative architect shall declare the progress measured to date. Should the project be declared as to have progress up to 50%, and all documentation provided is in line with these Guidance Notes, the Ministry will provide a reimbursement of 50% of the expenses up to a maximum of €35,000 with the overall maximum the beneficiary can obtain, capped at €50,000 for 2020. The remaining reimbursement payments shall be made upon the completion of the remaining phases including the purchasing of technological equipment.

While completed projects are not eligible for reimbursement, projects that go beyond the 50% mark, as declared by the representative architect according to the progress made through the Bill of Quantities, will be eligible for the full annual ceiling amount of €50,000.

For projects that have not yet commenced, upon obtaining approval by the Planning Authority, the Architect shall provide a signed contract with a works contractor including the Bill of Quantities submitted at application stage. The Ministry will provide a 50% pre-financing up to a maximum of €25,000.



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Following this, the remaining 50% shall be provided upon completion of the pre-determined phases submitted at application stage. The maximum reimbursement of 50% per phase shall be eligible till the maximum ceiling of €50,000 has been reached for 2020.

Technological material shall be reimbursed at a rate of 50%, subject to the maximum threshold stated above, upon receipt of invoice and written declaration by the owner of the venue that these have been purchased exclusively in relation to the project.

Reimbursement payments made by the Ministry will be directed to the Beneficiary.

#### **2.4.2 Private Business**

Private business single-undertakings are to submit their applications by 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020 as per Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of these Guidance Notes. Following submission of application, those projects that are currently in progress can also submit documentation relating to works and expenses incurred. These projects will not receive a pre-financing payment. Rather, the representative architect shall declare the progress measured to date. Should the project be declared as to have progress up to 50%, and all documentation provided is in line with these Guidance Notes, the Ministry will provide a reimbursement of 50% of the expenses up to a maximum of €12,500 with the overall maximum the beneficiary can obtain, capped at €25,000 for 2020. The remaining reimbursement payments shall be made upon the completion of the remaining phases including the purchasing of technological equipment.

While completed projects are not eligible for reimbursement, projects that go beyond the 50% mark, as declared by the representative architect according to the progress made through the Bill of Quantities will be eligible for the full annual ceiling amount of €25,000.

For projects that have not yet commenced, upon obtaining approval by the Planning Authority, the Architect shall provide a signed contract with a works contractor including the Bill of Quantities submitted at application stage. The Ministry will provide a 25% pre-financing up to a maximum of €10,000. Following this, the remaining 75% shall be provided upon completion of the pre-determined phases submitted at application stage. The maximum reimbursement of 25% per phase shall be eligible till the maximum ceiling of €25,000 has been reached for 2020.

Technological material shall be reimbursed at a rate of 50%, subject to the maximum threshold stated above, upon receipt of invoice and written declaration by the owner of the venue that these have been purchased exclusively in relation to the project.

Reimbursement payments made by the Ministry will be directed to the Beneficiary.

#### **Liabilities, Damages and Injuries**

The Ministry is not liable to any mishaps, damages and injuries caused during or after the works have been completed.



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### 3. Information & Data Protection

#### 3.1 Publicity

- a. In order to enhance transparency regarding the use of the Scheme's funds, general details of the operation including details pertaining to the project and the amount of public funding allocation to each entity, may be published.
- b. The Ministry for Gozo will provide a publicity poster to the beneficiary showing the fund sources of the Scheme. The applicant must place this poster in a prominent place within their premises.

#### 3.2 Data Protection

All data is collected and held by the Ministry for Gozo and/or transferred to third parties in order to fulfil reporting functions, publicity, research and other Community obligations according to Law and in line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act<sup>1</sup> and the General Data Protection Regulation<sup>2</sup>.

### 4. Definitions of the Terms Used

**Beneficiary** refers to the entity legally responsible for the application submitted and the recipient of the aid. The recipient of aid granted by the scheme is either a Voluntary Organization or a Private Business single-undertaking.

**Voluntary Organizations** are autonomous and voluntary. No part of the income, capital or property of the organization shall be available directly or indirectly to any promoter, member, administrator, donor or other private interest. An organization shall not be considered as a Voluntary Organization if it is controlled by the Government or a public agency. For the purpose of this scheme, Voluntary Organizations must be enrolled with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organizations. International Organizations must be officially registered in their home country or by means of an international treaty.

**Private business entities** refer to organizations, businesses, enterprises and companies that are free from direct governmental control, owned by an individual or a group of individuals with an objective of making monetary profits. These must have Tax Identification Number and VAT Registration.

**Single Undertaking** –A 'single undertaking' includes, for the purposes of this scheme, all enterprises having at least one of the following relationships with each other:

- a. one enterprise has a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another enterprise;

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<sup>1</sup> Data Protection Act, Cap 440 of the Laws of Malta

<sup>2</sup> General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) EU 2016/679



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- b. one enterprise has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another enterprise;
- c. one enterprise has the right to exercise a dominant influence over another enterprise pursuant to a contract entered into with that enterprise or to a provision in its memorandum or articles of association;
- d. one enterprise, which is a shareholder in or member of another enterprise, controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders in or members of that enterprise, a majority of shareholders' or members' voting rights in that enterprise.

Undertakings having any of the relationship referred to in points (a) to (d) above through one or more other undertakings, shall also be considered to be a single undertaking.

**The acronym "MICE"-**

Refers to Meetings (Corporate), Incentives, Conventions (Congress, Conference) and Exhibitions. A further detailed breakdown refers according to the:

- **Meetings:** a general term indicating the coming together of a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity consisting of Annual General Meetings, Board/Management/Shareholder Meetings, Stakeholder Meetings, Training Seminars, and Committee Meetings.
- **Incentives:** Trips for employees and other relevant stakeholders sponsored under a corporate umbrella, intended for reward or motivation purposes.
- **Conventions:** Participatory meetings of hundreds or thousands of individuals belonging to a single profession, cultural or religious group or with another common interest. Conventions can entail a regional, national or international dimension. Conferences, Congresses including forums and symposiums all fall under the umbrella of a Convention.
- **Exhibitions:** whereby businesses and other types of entities rent an exhibition space with the purpose of displaying or promoting their services, goods, role or objective to the public, client firm representatives and other participants.