



GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA



Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund Programme (2021-2027)

Eligibility Guidance Notes
Call 6 for Project Proposals

Specific Objective 3
Return



Co-funded by
the European Union

1. Scope of the Eligibility Guidelines

The scope of these Eligibility Guidelines is to provide assistance to prospective Applicants when applying for projects part-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) Programme 2021-2027.

In Malta, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) falls under the responsibility of the Managing Authority (MA), the Funds and Programmes Division (FPD), within the Ministry responsible for the Economy, European Funds and Lands (MEFL).

Potential Applicants are encouraged to read through these Eligibility Guidelines and the relevant sections of the AMIF Programme¹ as will be highlighted in the sections below, in order to avoid submitting ineligible applications.

Prospective Applicants are also encouraged to go through the Indicator Guidance Notes for better understanding of what is requested with regards to the indicators section.

2. Background information on the AMIF 2021-2027 programming period

The AMIF aims to further boost national capacities and improve procedures for migration management, as well as to enhance solidarity and responsibility sharing between Member States, in particular through emergency assistance and the relocation mechanism. The policy objective of the Fund is to contribute to the efficient management of migration flows and to the implementation, strengthening and development of the common policy on asylum and the common immigration policy, in accordance with the relevant Union acquis and fully respecting the international obligations of the Union and the Member States arising from the international instruments to which they are party. Specifically, under 2021-2027, AMIF shall contribute to the following **four specific objectives**:

- *to strengthen and develop all aspects of the **Common European Asylum System**, including its external dimension;*
- *to support **legal migration** to the Member States, including by contributing to the integration of third-country nationals;*
- *to contribute to **countering irregular migration** and ensuring effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries;*
- *to **enhance solidarity** and responsibility sharing between the Member States, in particular towards those most affected by migration and asylum challenges.*

¹ The document can be downloaded from: AMIF – <https://fondi.eu/programme/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund/>

3. Context of the Call

Call 6 under AMIF is open to project proposals to be submitted by the:

- Government departments, public entities, international organisations², social partners, non-governmental organisations and voluntary organisations working in the field of migration.

Applicants are to ensure that the proposal fits within the below specific objective of the AMIF Programme:

- 3 - Contributing to countering irregular migration, enhancing effective, safe and dignified return and readmission, and promoting and contributing to effective initial reintegration in third countries.*

Only proposals which can demonstrate their contribution to the above specific objective are eligible to apply.

At project evaluation stage, the Project Selection Committee shall consult the State Aid Monitoring Board to obtain clearance regarding the involvement of state aid.

4. The Application Process

The Application Form is to be submitted through the following link, <https://sfd.gov.mt/Application/> by **Friday 25th August 2023, at 12.00 p.m.**

Submission of an Application Form is considered as a formal statement by the applicant organisation that all the details in the application form are factually correct. It is also a confirmation that should the project be approved, the Applicant will carry out the project as described in the application form, including any amendments that maybe proposed by the Project Selection Committee during evaluation or by Managing Authority, in line with the conditions stipulated in the Grant Agreement, and the applicable procedures, rules and regulations applicable to the fund concerned.

5. Project Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Projects submitted will be evaluated by the Project Selection Committee according to the eligibility and selection criteria (refer to table below) which have been approved by the Monitoring Committee in line with Article 40 of the Common Provision Regulation (EU) 1060/2021. These criteria aim at ensuring that the projects are being selected within the Specific Objective parameters and can concretely contribute to the achievements of the objectives and results of the Programme. For a project to be considered for funding or to be placed on the reserve list, a project must pass all the Eligibility Criteria and must also

² In cases of international organisations, the provisions included under Article 22 of the AMIF Regulation (EU) 2021/1147 will become applicable provided that the relevant prerequisites are fulfilled, in line with Article 154(4) and (7) of the Financial Regulation. These conditions shall be reflected in the Standard Operating Procedures, which will be supported with a specific Grant Agreement.

obtain a minimum of 50% of the total marks allocated to the Selection Criteria. However, the project must achieve the threshold for each of the relevant selection criteria (where applicable) in order to be considered further, even if the total points achieved exceed 50%.

Moreover, the assessment will take into consideration the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union when applying criteria and procedures, as well as accessibility to persons with disabilities as per Articles 23 and 26 of the respective Charter, ensure gender equality as per Article 23, and take account of the principle of sustainable development and of the Union policy on the environment in accordance with Article 11 and Article 191(1) TFEU.

Table 1 below indicates the approved eligibility and selection criteria.

Eligibility criteria are the essential criteria that all projects must meet to be admissible for a further qualitative assessment. Such eligibility criteria are normally assessed through a technical assessment which ensures that all applications have reached a minimum standard. Projects which do not comply with the gateway eligibility criteria will not proceed to full appraisal and scoring.

Selection criteria are designed to assess the fit and contribution of project proposals with the Programme strategy, its target groups and its objectives. These criteria are divided in a way to capture both quantitative assessment and qualitative assessment. The evaluation will combine both data (quantitative and qualitative) to have a comprehensive understanding of the proposal.

Table 1: Project eligibility and selection criteria

Eligibility Criteria	Assessment	Selection Criteria	Marks
The application must be submitted within the deadline defined in the Call	Yes/No	Relevance and Justification	Total Points: 20 Threshold: 10
The application submitted must be complete	Yes/No	Quality of the Application Form	Total Points: 10 Threshold: 5
The applicant shall be an eligible applicant	Yes/No	Capacity of the Organization to implement the activities proposed	Total Points: 15 Threshold: 8
The applicant must declare to implement the project respecting the non-profit principle	Yes/No	Outputs and Result Indicators	Total Points: 15 Threshold: 10

Project remit must be in line with the mandate of the Beneficiary	Yes/No	Cost Effectiveness and Sustainability	Total Points: 20 Threshold: 10
The proposed action has a duration that does not exceed the implementation period of the AMIF Programme i.e., 31 December 2029	Yes/No	Dissemination of Project Results	Total Points: 5 Threshold: NA
Proof of co-financing must be provided (when applicable)	Yes/No	Complementarity with Other Actions Funder by the EU or National Programmes	Total Points: 5 Threshold: 2
The objective(s) of the proposed action correspond(s) to the relevant objectives defined under the AMIF Programme	Yes/No	Readiness	Total Points: 10 Threshold: 5
Addresses at least one of the output and result indicators of the AMIF National Programme	Yes/No		
The action does not involve State Aid	Yes/No		
Ensures that selected operations are not directly affected by a reasoned opinion by the Commission in respect of an infringement under Article 258 TFEU that puts at risk the legality and regularity of expenditure or the performance of operations	Yes/No		
Ensure climate proofing of investments in infrastructure and which are to have an expected lifespan of at least 5 years	Yes/No		
Project implemented within the eligible territory	Yes/No		

6. Eligibility Criteria

As explained above, a project must fulfill the following criteria to be eligible for further assessment:

- a) Submission of a complete project application as published in the call: The Applicant must present a complete application form, filled in with all relevant details and documentation using the system made available by the MA, unless otherwise stipulated by the MA. No outline applications or incomplete applications shall be considered. Submission of project proposals must be made within the time-limit set for receipt of applications.
- b) Applicant Organisation is an eligible Applicant as outlined in the relevant call. Supporting documentation related to the legal status of the Applicant, in case of NGOs/International Organisations/Voluntary Organisations, would need to be provided by the Applicant.³
- c) Applicant Organisation is to declare that the project to be implemented will respect the non-profit principle.
- d) Applicant is not in an exclusion situation in accordance with Art 136 (1) and Art 141 (1) of 2018/1046 Financial Regulation and CPR Art 73(2)(i): The Applicant should sign a declaration confirming that they or any person involved in the project are not in an exclusion situation in accordance with the Financial Regulation and Common Provisions Regulation.
- e) Applicant Organisation has remit to implement the project within its mandate: Applicants must be publicly mandated or authorised to implement the project by virtue of the applicable law establishing the Organisation or by the respective Statute, in the case of NGOs. The parameters and the objectives of the project must fall within the remit and mandate of the Applicant. Supporting documentation as required in the call would need to be provided.
- f) Proof of co-financing (where applicable)⁴: In cases where Government is not co-financing the project from the national budget, Applicants must submit, together with the application form, evidence of co-financing.
- g) Selection of a relevant Specific Objective as published in the call: Only proposals that selected the relevant Specific Objective/s as published in the call will be considered.
- h) Addresses at least one output indicator or one result indicator linked to a relevant Specific Objective as published in the call: The project must have at least one output or at least one result indicator of the AMIF Programmes.
- i) Action does not involve State Aid: Projects involving state aid are not eligible under this call, however ALL applicants of AMIF/BMVI/ISF funds assisted projects must ensure compliance with State Aid rules.

³ Determining the eligibility of applicants shall include due diligence checks on the applicant organisation (excluding government bodies).

⁴ Not required in case of Government bodies.

- j) It is to be ensured that selected operations are not directly affected by a reasoned opinion by the Commission in respect of an infringement under Article 258 TFEU that puts at risk the legality and regularity of expenditure or the performance of operations. This is in line with 73 (2)(i) of CPR- upon project selection, whereby projects are not directly and overtly infringing an opinion given by the Commission, based upon Art. 258 TFEU- that risks expenditure, performance or breaks any regulation/law, neither state nor EU.
- k) Status of operation is either ongoing or not yet started unless otherwise allowed by the specific applicable regulation: Unless otherwise allowed by the specific applicable regulations, operations shall not be considered eligible for support by the Funds where they have been physically completed or fully implemented before the application for funding under the programme is submitted, irrespective of whether all related payments have been made.
- l) Ensure climate proofing of investments in infrastructure and which are to have an expected lifespan of at least 5 years: 'climate proofing' means a process to prevent infrastructure from being vulnerable to potential long-term climate impacts whilst ensuring that the 'energy efficiency first' principle is respected and that the level of greenhouse gas emissions arising from the project is consistent with the climate neutrality objective in 2050.
- m) Project to be implemented within the eligible territory: The eligible territory for the Programme is the whole territory of the Republic of Malta. All or part of an operation may be implemented outside of a Member State, including outside the Union, provided that the operation contributes to the objectives of the programme and provides direct benefits to the targeted territory of Malta.

7. Selection Criteria

The Applicant organisation will be assessed on the below parameters, which the voting members of the PSC are to follow as their guidance when assigning points for each section:

- a) Relevance and Justification (Total: 20 marks. Threshold: 10 marks)
 - Does the proposal address an existing EU-relevant need, backed up by relevant policies, strategies and CION recommendations?
 - Does the applicant demonstrate a clear understanding of the context and of the need that the organization represented by the applicant (within Malta and the EU) is planning to address?
 - Does the proposal add value in relation to previous projects of similar nature, or results achieved of previous Programmes?
 - Are the proposed activities adequately justified⁵ and designed to address the issue and to achieve the stated objectives?
- b) Quality of the Application Form (Total: 10 marks. Threshold: 5 marks)

⁵ The applicant is to ensure that any gaps and needs in the particular field (ex. Integration, asylum etc) are identified and is to demonstrate, through the proposal, how such gaps/needs are to be narrowed down or addressed.

- How well is the proposal prepared in terms of information (qualitative and quantitative) provided, clarity of action, work-plan, implementation period?
 - Is the proposed action 'feasible' in terms of the budget (e.g. has market research been undertaken)?⁶
- c) Capacity of the organization to implement the activities proposed (Total: 15 marks. Threshold: 8 marks)
- Does the organization have the sufficient capacity, experience, expertise, reliability, and financial resources to implement the project?
 - Does the Project Leader have sufficient experience in project management?
 - Does the applicant have the necessary resources and processes available to ensure a proper and successful implementation of the project?
 - Do the actors/partners involved in the project - if any - have the adequate knowledge and expertise to contribute to the project's objectives?
 - How well is the Project Leader versed with EU funding rules?
 - Is the experience of the Project Leader in the field of migration substantial?
- d) Outputs and Result Indicators (Total: 15 marks. Threshold: 10 marks)
- Does the proposal identify quantifiable outputs and results as indicated in the Operational Programmes?
 - Is the calculation provided in line with the CION guidance on indicators?
 - Does the proposal address more than one indicator?
- e) Cost effectiveness and sustainability (Total: 20 marks. Threshold: 10 marks)
- What is the added value of the project?
 - Is the proposed expenditure justified in the light of the activities and objectives proposed?
 - How cost effective/sustainable is the proposal?
 - Does the proposal address cost reduction through effective procurement, if applicable?
 - How does the project present the best relationship between the amount of support, the activities undertaken and the achievement of objectives, in accordance with Article 73(2)(c) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060?
- f) Dissemination of project results (Total: 5 marks. Threshold: NA)

⁶ Marks are awarded for 'feasibility', by demonstrating or guiding a research study which highlights a plan of action.

- Does an appropriate plan exist for the dissemination of results and knowledge transfer?
 - Does an appropriate strategy exist for publicity and visibility of the EU funding to a broad audience, where applicable?
- g) Complementarity with other actions funded by the EU or National Programmes (Total: 5 marks. Threshold: 2 marks)
- The extent to which the project is compatible with existing national policies.
 - The extent to which the project complements other actions funded by the general budget of the EU or as part of national programmes, if applicable.
 - Avoidance of duplication of effort with existing projects or services in the relevant geographical area.
- h) Readiness (Total: 10 marks. Threshold: 5 marks)
- How ready is the project to start: (have tenders/request for quotations been launched)?
 - Have participants and stakeholders been identified?
 - Have the relevant partners identified their respective roles and functions?
 - Is there anything hindering the start of implementation?

8. Support

Further information and generic queries on this call and on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, 2021-2027 may be obtained from <https://fondi.eu/> or by sending queries to the following email fondi.eu@gov.mt.