

Malta Book Fund 2026 Audiobook Publishing Grants Guidelines & Regulations

1. Overview

The Malta Book Fund Audiobook Publishing Grants, managed by the National Book Council (NBC), support local book publishing by subsidising the publication of books in audio format - (published in Maltese or English with a Maltese ISBN) which includes new books published directly in audio format and/or previously printed books which are to be made available in audio format.

The Book Fund acts as an extension of the NBC's holistic approach to book publishing in Malta by helping to raise publication standards and encourage new work and lines of research.

The budget for 2026 is €6,000.

2. Objectives

- To enrich the local book market by expanding access to books through alternative and innovative formats.
- Develop the audiobook production and publishing ecosystem.
- To boost confidence in the pursuit of new projects and initiatives in the local market.

3. Supported Projects

The strand supports original literary and academic works, including fiction, poetry, drama, biographies, literary nonfiction, graphic novels, and scholarly research.

Funding covers narrator/voice talent fees, studio recording costs, audio editing and mastering, proof-listening, script preparation, cover art adaptation and distribution/platform fees, but also research, writing, editing, documentation, artwork, marketing, and author/researcher payments.

4. De Minimis Regulation - Applicable State Aid Rules

The Malta Book Fund is implemented in line with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/2831 of 13 December 2023 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid.

The total de minimis aid granted to any single undertaking shall not exceed €300,000 over any period of three fiscal years. To this end, applicants are being requested to provide a

signed State Aid de minimis Declaration Form confirming the amount of de minimis aid received and/or applied for during the applicable three-year period.

Rules on cumulation of aid shall be in line with Article 5 of the de minimis Regulation. Assistance under the Malta Book Fund cannot be accumulated with any other government funded scheme for the same costs. Should it become apparent that any project has been awarded separate funds for the same costs, i.e. double dipping, the proposal will be considered ineligible and/or funds will have to be reimbursed if already paid.

5. Evaluation Process

Applications must score at least 60 points for funding consideration. An independent adjudication board assesses projects, with funding subject to budget availability and competition level.

The grants will be awarded to successful applicants following a competitive adjudication process according to pre-established adjudication criteria.

Successful projects are announced within eight weeks of the deadline.

A detailed report will be sent to unsuccessful applicants.

6. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants can be either Maltese citizens or residents applying with a letter of intent from a publishing company registered in Malta, a publisher registered in Malta, or in the case of self-published books, the applicant must be a Maltese resident or citizen.

Applicants can submit any number of projects for funding, but a maximum of two grants per strand may be awarded per applicant.

Applications must include:

- Project description and proposal (max. 1,500 words).
- Budget breakdown with proof of official quotes.
- A detailed plan, including a justification for funding, title, project scope, references and bibliographies of author and publisher.
- An estimated timeline (completion within two years of contract signing).

Project Description

The brief should include a description of the project's positioning in the Maltese publishing market. The applicant must present convincing arguments that the project is of relevant cultural value, and the brief should explain why the project requires funding, alongside a provided justification of the funding requested.

Ineligible projects

- Textbooks;
- Children's books and any material specifically intended for an audience below the age of 12*;
- Instruction manuals;
- Political propaganda content;
- Coffee-table books;
- Musical scores;
- Books based solely on imagery or photography;
- Modules or translation work within a taught course;
- Projects whose expenses are already covered by other public entities or by other NBC-managed funding;
- Projects applying to fund retrospective expenses.

*If projects for children and young adults include extraordinary costs related to making the publication accessible to readers with special requirements, then the project is eligible for funding.

Ineligible projects will not undergo further evaluation.

7. Budget Breakdown

Official documentation and/or quotes must be submitted in support of the budget breakdown of all the project costs.

Eligible expenses include:

- Research;
- Writing;
- Editing;
- Documentation;
- Illustration;
- Artwork;
- Design;
- Printing (specify print-run);
- Marketing;
- Author payments.
- Audiobook production.

Each category filled at application stage and provided for with quotations, must then be accounted for with invoices or receipts with the final report if the fund is given.

Every budget must include both expenditure and income through other sources of funding. Other sources of funding and sponsorships (including sponsorships in kind) must be supported by relevant documentation.

Grants may cover up to 100% of costs, capped at €2,000 per project.

8. Adjudication Criteria

a) Quality: The strength and thoroughness of the project (20 marks)

This criterion looks at the cultural, educational and intellectual importance and relevance to society of the proposed project.

Does the proposed project:

- Present a clear, compelling concept with a well-defined audience and purpose?
- Demonstrate originality, filling a gap in existing literature while showcasing the author's expertise?
- Provide a detailed outline, well-researched content, and a logical structure that ensures readability and engagement?
- Convincingly illustrate why the book is necessary, how it stands out, and its potential impact on society?
- Challenge perspectives, encourage discourse, and contribute to existing scholarly research?
- Influence public thought, shape identities, and bridge generations?
- Preserve and share knowledge, foster critical thinking, and inspire creativity?

b) Quality: The quality of the sample provided (10 marks)

This criterion looks at the sample provided.

Does the sample provided:

- Demonstrate literary merit, clarity, and engagement?
- Showcase well-structured writing, a compelling voice, and a clear narrative or argument?
- Reflect polished language, coherent flow, and depth of thought (whether in fiction or nonfiction)?
- Enhance readability with engaging dialogue, vivid descriptions, or persuasive reasoning?
- Align with the project's intended audience and purpose, demonstrating originality and relevance?
- Provide a glimpse into the project's overall proposal, making it a strong indicator of its potential success and impact?

c) Quality: The quality of the audiobook production (30 marks)

This criterion looks at the creative, technical, and methodological aspects of the audio production. It assesses whether the applicant can produce a professional, engaging, and technically sound audiobook.

Does the sample provided:

- Show the experience and credentials of the narrator (voice acting, narration, theatre, broadcasting)?
- Exhibit a match between the tone and voice and the book's genre (e.g., fiction, children's literature, academic, poetry)?
- Sustain clear diction, pacing, and expressive reading?

Does the proposal:

- Engage an audio director or producer overseeing the narration?
- Evidence that the team understands how to adapt written text into an engaging listening experience?
- Make use of a professional recording studio or properly treated recording environment?
- Show a clear process for completing the audiobook (script preparation, recording sessions, editing, mastering, final export to MP3 or WAV)?

d) Market Engagement: The level of detail and contacts established (10 marks)

This criterion looks at the details of the research plan, editing, publishing, printing, distributing, disseminating and promotion of the work. It considers the level of detail and contacts already established and supported with relevant documentation.

Does the plan for market engagement:

- Provide a plan on these aspects once the project is published?
- Outline the research process, editorial workflow, and publishing strategy?
- Assess the extent of contacts established, such as editors, publishers, printers, and distributors (need to be supported by documentation)?
- Consider promotional efforts like marketing strategies, social media outreach, and potential media coverage?

e) Market Engagement: Cultural value of the work to the Maltese publishing market (10 marks)

This criterion looks at the relevance of the cultural value of the work to the target local market. It requires knowledge of the market targeted and an explanation as to why that specific work is targeting the selected market.

Does the proposed project:

- Assess how it aligns with the cultural, social, and historical context of the intended audience?
- Consider readers' preferences and literary trends, and cultural sensitivities?
- Highlight how it resonates with local values, traditions, or current discussions?
- Ensure its appeal and potential success within the local literary landscape?

f) Management and Feasibility: The clarity of the application (10 marks)

This criterion looks at the clarity of the application and the level of detail provided.

Does the project:

- Communicate well its purpose, scope, and significance?
- Demonstrate the depth of planning and thought behind it (a thorough synopsis, chapter breakdown, research methodology if applicable, and an explanation of the book's unique contribution)?
- Present an overall well-organised proposal?

g) Management and Feasibility: Financials (10 marks)

This criterion looks at the applicant's ability to financially manage the project responsibly and successfully.

Does the applicant:

- Demonstrate strong financial management skills to ensure the book project is executed within budget and achieves its goals?
- Include effective budgeting, cost estimation, and allocation of resources for editing, design, printing, marketing, and distribution?
- Show a clear plan for securing and managing funding?
- Balance financial efficiency with quality?

Successful applications generally include:

- A reasonable description of how and why the project is of cultural, educational, academic and literary value to society in general.
- Support by third parties via a legitimate written reference.
- Realistic budgets backed by official quotes.

The adjudication board may decide to fully or partially fund a particular project or application.

The adjudication board will base judgment on the strength and completeness of each application.

The adjudicating board may discriminate against applications to set funding targets for grants according to certain priorities that the adjudication board deems to be of importance in the current circumstances of the book market.

The adjudication board's decision is final and not subject to appeals.

9. Mandatory documents

Applications must include:

- Online filled application form.
- 1,500-word project proposal.
- Budget breakdown with official quotes.
- Applicant's ID/residence permit copy.
- Author's CV/portfolio.
- Editor's CV/portfolio (where applicable)
- Narrator's CV/portfolio.
- De Minimis Declaration Form.
- A sample of the work.

Other non-mandatory documents

It is highly advisable to include other than the mandatory documents needed for your submission. These documents strengthen and provide a context to your application and thus may help you score higher marks.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of non-mandatory documents.

- Bibliographic references of applicant and/or author's proposed project if any.
- Any other relevant bibliographic references.
- Any references and/or press cuttings supporting the proposed project.
- A list, if any, of any public funds awarded in the past.

10. How to Apply

The call for applications closes on **Tuesday 19 May at noon**.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the guidelines and regulations more than once before applying.

Applications for the Malta Book Fund 2026 should be submitted online through this link: <https://ktieb.submittable.com/submit>. Please follow the application process, which will guide you step by step how to upload your documents.

In case of any difficulty during application stage, or for any queries regarding this fund, kindly send an email to matthew.borg@ktieb.org.mt. You can also call us on +356 27131574 from Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 16:00.

Upon request, NBC representatives can discuss details of the application process with the applicant prior to the submission date but are not authorised to fill in any parts of the application or to check your application form prior to submission.

11. Results & Enquiries

The names of the funded projects will be published online within eight weeks of the deadline. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply in future rounds.

All information received by the fund administrators and adjudicators will be considered as confidential, both during and after the evaluation process. Provisions on data protection and confidentiality for successful projects will be included in the grant agreement with the fund beneficiaries.

12. Project Implementation & Reporting

Grant recipients sign a beneficiary contract and receive 50% of funds upon signing, with the remaining balance released when the project is completed.

Beneficiaries should inform the NBC of any significant changes to the funded proposal in due course, and approval is to be sought prior to any proposed change.

At project completion, applicants should submit:

- a) A final report highlighting the work carried out and the achievements of the project
- b) A final budgetary breakdown with invoices or receipts corresponding to the expenses projected at application stage
- c) 2 audio copies of the book

All of the above should be submitted **within 2 years**.

The Fund beneficiaries must use the NBC's logo on all related material and specify that the project was supported by the Malta Book Fund – in all marketing, PR and printed material. Logos and sentence acknowledging funding will be provided with the beneficiaries contract.

NBC reserves the right to withhold or reclaim funds if:

- the aforementioned documents are not deemed to be satisfactory;
- the actual costs differed considerably from the projected costs,
- significant changes in the project are not considered to be in line with the initial proposal;
- the Council is not informed of the changes within a reasonable time;

- funds were misused.

13. Contact Us

In case of difficulty, or for any queries regarding this fund, you can email us on matthew.borg@ktieb.org.mt. You can also call us on +356 27131574 from Monday to Friday between 09:00hrs and 16:00hrs.

Our address is: National Book Council, Bice Mizzi Vassallo Complex, Arnhem Road, Pembroke, PBK1776.

Appendix - Definition of terms used in the Malta Book Fund scheme

Adjudication board

The board of adjudicators, appointed by the NBC to adjudicate and distribute funds among applicants.

Applicant

The Applicant is the Malta-based individual or a Maltese registered or international publisher, or legally recognised organisation applying for the grant.

Application

An application is a submission, inclusive of all mandatory documents and any annexes to the application form, made by an eligible applicant.

Audiobook

An audio book that carries an ISBN.

Author

A person who has published, or has had published, a minimum of one book, or a story or article in book form.

Beneficiary

The recipient of the grant. The beneficiary is responsible for the implementation of the proposal supported by the Malta Book Fund – Translation Grant.

Book

A printed publication that carries an ISBN.

E-book

A digital book that carries an ISBN.

Eligibility

Applications will first be screened in terms of eligibility. Proposals which are not considered eligible in terms of the set criteria will not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

Grant

A grant may be a publishing, educational or foreign-promotion grant issued by the NBC.

Maltese books

Books in English or Maltese published in Malta and carrying a Maltese ISBN.

Melitensia

Books, electronic or not, published in Malta, or by Maltese authors, or about Malta, or in the Maltese language, or about any aspect of Maltese studies by any author.

New title

A new title is a book with more than 50% original content.

New edition

A new edition is the publication in modified form of a book previously published by the same or a different publisher.

- In contrast with a new title, a book is considered a new edition if more than 50% of its content is taken from the previously published book.
- In contrast with a reprint, a new edition must have at least one of the following: 1. substantial changes in the format or binding; 2. either substantial changes to at least 25% of the original written content or at least 25% new written content; or 3. substantial changes to the illustrations, other than on the cover.
- For the purposes of this Fund, New Editions of Out of Print Works must be noteworthy for their cultural, literary, academic significance (“the purpose of the Fund is to subsidise quality publications of high cultural, educational and intellectual value that in the context of the local market are not seen as commercially viable and thus would otherwise remain unpublished”), and have been out of print for at least 20 (twenty) years before the date of the publication of the current Malta Book Fund call, as well as having more than 50% of its content taken from the previously published book; have substantial changes in the format or binding, or either substantial changes to at least 25% of the original written content or at least 25% new written content, or substantial changes to the illustrations, other than on the cover.

Project

The book the applicant is planning to publish with funds from the Malta Book Fund.

Publisher

Person or group of persons who own a publishing house that has published a minimum of one book by one author.

Reprint

A subsequent printing of a book already published that preserves the identical text of the previous printing.

Single undertaking

'Single undertaking' means, all enterprises having at least one of the following relationships with each other:

- one enterprise has a majority of the shareholders' or members' voting rights in another enterprise;
- one enterprise has the right to appoint or remove a majority of the members of the administrative, management or supervisory body of another enterprise;
- one enterprise has the right to exercise a dominant influence over another enterprise pursuant to a contract entered into with that enterprise or pursuant to a provision in its memorandum or articles of association;
- 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.

Enterprises having any of the relationships referred to in points (a) to (d) through one or more other enterprises shall also be considered to be a single undertaking.

Textbook

A publication used as a standard work for the study of a particular subject at school (all levels).

Translator

A person who has translated a minimum of one translated book, or a story or article in book form, or can prove literary translation skillset.

Translation Grant

A grant awarded under category 1 or category 2 of the Malta Book Fund - Translation Grants supporting the publication of the translation of published literature identified by an ISBN (fiction, literary non-fiction, poetry, drama, biographies, academic works, and graphic novels).

Translation Pitch

In short, a book pitch (or proposal) should capture what the book is about and why people should be interested in reading it. You can pitch an agent in person at a meeting or conference, but a pitch can also be written [out in the form of a query letter](#).

A book translation pitch is slightly different in that its interlocutor is the foreign rights agent or literary agent or foreign publisher. In general, pitches should be brief.

There's one other major difference between pitching a new book and a book in translation: how much of the book/translation you need to have written in advance and what type of material the pitch pack should include.

Your translation pitch letter for the purposes of this fund application (no more than 1,000 words) should include:

- An Advanced Information Sheet or AI (presentation of the book, press reviews, information on the author, purpose of the book (non-fiction) or plot details (fiction) and the main points or topics of the book in short paragraphs, information about the author (previous books, sales history, prizes, films based on their novels etc.);
- How you became interested in translating the specific book: an explanation as to why you are so enthusiastic about the book and why you think it is appropriate for that particular publisher (reference to other titles in their list) and/or market
- A sample chapter (around 3,500 words, enough to give a flavour of the book): the original excerpt to be translated if the funds are granted;
- Facts and figures: length, number of words/pages. Sales figures/bestseller placings in the country of publication and in translation in other countries (which you can obtain from the original publisher);
- Your own résumé (relevant translating experience and credentials of the translator, if any);
- Factors affecting the publisher's decision: how the book was received in its source publishing market and why it is suitable for the chosen target market; length; cost of translation of the whole book:
- BONUS INFO: Is the author alive, 'promotable', available for launch? Is the book part of a series? Is the country of origin fashionable? Can the editor read the language or will s/he need to rely on an outside reader/bridge translation? Links to social media pages or author sites. Any other marketing material to be used to make the title in question as desirable as possible for foreign publishers
- Can you or who represents you fight for and win this book in an editorial meeting?
- Research outcome performed to identify foreign rights holder of the book.

Yearbook

A yearly publication containing information and statistics about the past activities.