

## **Malta Book Fund 2026 Translation and Export Grants Category 2: Book Translation Pitch Grants (Sample Translations) Guidelines and Regulations**

### **1. Overview**

The Book Translation Pitch Grants, part of the National Book Council (NBC) strategy, support literary translators in pitching sample translations of Maltese works for international publication.

The budget for 2026 is €5,000

### **2. Grant Categories**

- **Category 1:** Translation and export of Maltese books in Maltese or English.
- **Category 2:** Book Translation Pitch Grants (sample translations).

For details on Category 1, refer to the relevant guidelines.

### **3. Objectives**

- To facilitate entry into international publishing markets by funding translated excerpts of Maltese books.
- To increase global recognition of Maltese literature across various genres.
- To expand readership and encourage cross-cultural engagement.
- To promote cultural exchange by introducing Malta's heritage to foreign audiences.
- To support translators and publishers in disseminating Maltese literature.
- To maintain high translation standards to enhance the appeal of Maltese works.
- To foster collaborations between Maltese and foreign literary professionals.
- To uphold standards of literary excellence in translation by supporting projects that prioritise fidelity to the original text while also ensuring readability and resonance in the target language.

### **4. Who can apply?**

Authors, translators, and publishers in Malta.

## **5. Supported projects**

Grants support translations of excerpts of Maltese works (in Maltese or in English) into other languages.

The grants address the translation of excerpts of the following types of original works:

- Works of literature, including fiction, poetry, drama, biographies, literary nonfiction and graphic novels.
- Works of research including academic and scholarly books, monographs, edited collections, critical editions, researched exhibition and gallery catalogues containing analytical material that is the result of research.

As for this strand, translation rates are as follows:

- €0.08-€0.15 per word for translation.
- €0.02-€0.06 per word for editing
- Poetry translation costs are evaluated on a per-project basis.

This strand supports pitches of up to 3,500 words for prose, and up to 5 poems with a maximum of 36 lines for each poem.

## **6. 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.

## **7. 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.

Unsuccessful applicants can apply to seek clarifications for their unsuccessful application.

## **8. Eligibility Criteria**

Applications must include:

- A book translation pitch letter (max 1,000 words), including a justification for the cultural/literary value, foreign rights holder research, and target publishers.
- Budget breakdown with official quotes.
- Translator's CV and sample excerpt (source text).
- Additional market research and potential publisher/literary agent details.
- Applicants must submit official quotes and obtain rights-holder agreement.

The original work needs to have been already published and identified by its Maltese ISBN.

### Ineligible projects

Applications for book translation pitch grants in the following areas are ineligible for funding:

- Textbooks, instruction manuals;
- Yearbooks;
- Works whose primary objective is party propaganda;
- Coffee-table books, musical scores and books based solely on imagery or photography;
- Modules or translation work within a taught course;
- Expenses already covered by public cultural organisations, or another public funding programme managed or co-managed by the NBC, or any other public agency, government department or Ministry;
- Projects applying to fund retrospective expenses.

Ineligible proposals in terms of the eligibility criteria listed above shall not be processed further and shall not undergo evaluation.

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

## **9. Budget breakdown**

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

The application should include a justification of the funding requested in the costing and the budget breakdown of the project in order to support the proposal.

- Translation rates
- Translator/s' fees;
- Proofreading;
- Editing.

Applicants must also ensure to identify the rights holder in their application and must include a letter of agreement from the text's author or the rights' owner (or owners) for the text being translated.

The maximum grant awarded is €500.

## **10. Adjudication Criteria**

### **a) Quality and Completeness of the Pitch (35 marks)**

This criterion considers the strength of the translator's professional record and the quality of the pitch provided.

Does the project:

- Corroborate the translator's experience, expertise, and past achievements in literary translation?
- Demonstrate the translator's ability to handle complex linguistic and cultural nuances?
- Show the translator's academic qualifications, proficiency in both source and target languages?

Does the pitch:

- Explain why the book should be translated?
- Contain an AI (Advanced Information) sheet including a presentation of the book, press reviews, plot details (fiction) or the purpose of the book (non-fiction), the main points or topics of the book, and information about the author such as previous books, sales history, prizes, films based on their novels?

- Provide a copy of the sample chapter/excerpt/poems the original language (source text) which will be translated if the funds are granted?
- Outline the book's content, themes, and significance?

**b) Quality: The local work has been awarded the National Book Prize (5 marks)**

If the Maltese book being pitched has been awarded the National Book Prize, 5 marks are automatically awarded.

Refer to the list of all NBP winners here: <https://ktieb.org.mt/national-book-prize/>

**c) Engagement with the Market: Plans and contacts established (30 marks)**

This criterion considers the details of the plan for publication, choice of the specific publisher, thorough research to identify the foreign rights holder. It also assesses the level of detail and contacts already established with the author, publisher and rights holder), supported with relevant documentation.

Does the project:

- Clearly identify the rights holder and include a letter of agreement from the text's author or the rights' owner (or owners) for the text being translated?
- Confirm availability and terms for acquiring rights?
- Include additional market research and potential publisher/literary agent details?
- Select a specific publisher that aligns with the book's genre, audience, and reputation for translating international works?

**d) Engagement with the Market: Relevance to the target international market (10 marks)**

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

Does the project:

- Explain why the book aligns with the target market's trends, readership demand, or other wider factors such as the socio-political climate, and culture in general?
- Consider factors such as genre popularity, thematic relevance, and the publisher's reputation in the target market?
- Make a strong case for why this particular work will resonate with and appeal to the target audience?

**e) 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, and an explanation of the book's unique contribution)?
- Present an overall well-organised pitch?

#### **f) 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:

- Documentation of reasonable research into the target publishing market research, including the suggestion of a potential publisher/literary agents to which the book could be eventually pitched.
- 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.

Applicants may submit more than one application in each and every fund strand, however a maximum of two applications may be funded within that strand.

## 11. Mandatory Documents

Applications must include:

- Signed application form.
- Book translation pitch proposal (1,000 words).
- Budget breakdown with official quotes.
- Applicant's ID/residence permit copy.
- Translator's CV and sample translation (if applicable).
- The excerpt which is going to be translated (3,500 words for prose and 60 lines for poetry)
- Documentation of reasonable research into the target publishing market research, including the suggestion of a potential publisher/literary agents to which the book could be eventually pitched
- De Minimis Declaration Form.

### 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.

## 12. 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. Incomplete applications will be disqualified.

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

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

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.

### **13. Results and 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 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.

Should there be any enquiries regarding the results, please email Matthew Borg on [matthew.borg@ktieb.org.mt](mailto:matthew.borg@ktieb.org.mt) within five (5) working days of receipt of the funding decision.

### **14. Project Implementation & Reporting**

Grant recipients sign a beneficiaries 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.

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) The full sample translation

All of the above should be submitted **within 6 months**.

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.

### **15. Use of the sample translation**

The NBC has the right to use the sample translation for literature promotion purposes and, in collaboration with the applicant, to pitch the translation to publishers at foreign book fairs. The translators may use their translation in parallel, subject to the agreement of the foreign rights' holder.

### **16. Contact Us**

In case of difficulty, or for any queries regarding this fund, you can email us on [matthew.borg@ktieb.org.mt](mailto: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 I. 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.