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The Malta Book Fund

An Initiative launched by the National Book Council to foster cultural growth in the local book market

1. Introduction

An initiative launched by the National Book Council to foster cultural growth in the local book market.

After a consultation process with authors and publishers, and after having studied the local book market in detail, the National Book Council has noted a particular issue which deserves considerable attention. We have come to realise that there are many authors and publishers who have planned very interesting Melitensia publications of significant cultural, educational and intellectual value, however, said projects may not necessarily be easily profitable due to their very specialised nature, or are rather difficult to publish and distribute due to shortcomings within the infrastructure of the market itself.

Furthermore, the NBC, in its drive to contribute to the development of the Maltese book, would also like to support authors and publishers by financing projects to further enhance their skills and capabilities by providing them with grants to attend workshops, courses and cultural initiatives which might help further improve his or her skills and capabilities.

For the above mentioned reasons the National Book Council is issuing a minimum of eight grants totaling €40,000 – with €32,000 reserved for publication grants, and €8,000 to be distributed between education and foreign marketing funds. The grants are to be distributed following a rigorous application process vetted by an appointed adjudication board.

This initiative forms part of the NBC's vision to take the role of a cultural-agent within society, meaning that the NBC becomes a pro-active and progressive contributor to the cultural, educational and intellectual development of our society. While small amounts of funding can make a great difference to publishing projects in our small yet thriving book market, especially to projects in Maltese and/or of local and cultural significance; the NBC strives to ensure that financial allocations are made to those applicants who would make the best use of their funds.

2. Aims of Fund

The Book Fund's aim is to subsidize the publications of books in Melitensia and fund the further

education of authors and publishers. Eligibility criteria of the Fund are open ended so as to cater for as many different initiatives as possible which might prove to be of cultural value according to the opinion of the Board of Adjudication, however rules and regulations still apply in every case.

The Book Fund is divided into three:

- Publishing Grant
- Education Grant
- Foreign Promotion Grant

Please make sure you read the criteria for each grant carefully before building your proposal and applying for funds.

The Book Fund is to act as an extension of the NBC's holistic approach to the local book scene by helping to raise publication standards, to encourage new work and lines of research and promote books in a more general sense in a bid to boost literacy statistics in Malta. Moreover, the Malta Book Fund seeks to contribute to the development of literary and publishing arts by investing in the artistic and scholarly development and training of authors and publishers and encouraging professionalism and innovation in the field.

3. Application and Eligibility Criteria

The Book Fund is open for publishers and/or authors applying for individual Projects and/or Education and Travel Grants.

The Book Fund is not open for the following:

- Members of the National Book Council
- Staff employed by the National Book Council
- State or Public entities

Each grant carries a maximum fund of €5,000.

In order to achieve the desired aims of the Book Fund, this scheme defines several terms as follows:

Publisher

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

Author

A person who has at least published or has had published, a book or a story or article in book form.

Book

A publication which carries an ISBN issued by the National Book Council.

Project

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

Adjudication Board

The board of adjudicators, appointed by the National Book Council to adjudicate and distribute funds amongst applicants.

Grant

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

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

Publishing Grants

Publishers and/or authors publishing their own book, either in print or ebook form or both, may apply for subsidies to publish one or more books. If an application is filed for a project which includes more than one book, the books must have a common theme or content to the extent that it may very well be suggested by the Adjudication Board that they be published in series.

The project must be considered of relevant cultural value and should not be a project which can easily be made self-sustainable if distributed in the local market via already established routes. Coffee table books, musical scores and books based solely on imagery or photography are excluded from the scheme. Translation of local manuscripts and books from Maltese to other languages is also excluded from the Malta Book Fund since such a scheme already exists within the Malta Arts Fund (see "Spreading Words", Strand 4 of MAF Guidelines and Regulations or Malta Culture Export Fund). Applications for translations of foreign-language books into Maltese are allowed.

At the date of submission of the application, the project in question must already exist as a draft of or as a completed manuscript and must also already have a proposed title. The scope and aim of the project must be provided, along with any details, references and bibliographies of the author and publisher.

The grant may finance the artwork, the editing, the research, the documentation, the illustration, printing, marketing and the payment of the author.

The applicant must write a brief description of the project not exceeding 1500 words describing its cultural value. This brief should explain why funding for the project is needed alongside a justification for funding provided.

Applicant must also provide a budget breakdown of the project, preferably with proofs of official quotes.

When available, clearly dated copies of press cuttings (including printouts of online press material) that may further the applicant's cause are to be attached to the application.

Please state whether you have already received public funding in the past and list the dates, amount specifications and any other relevant details about funds received.

Education Grants

Publishers and authors may apply for grants to attend short courses related to their field of work as writers, editors and publishers. A list of short courses and initiatives which the NBC advises authors to attend is listed in Appendix A, but any course or educational experience which might contribute to the applicant's line of work is considered.

The grant may finance travel, lodging and participation fees.

Applicant must write a brief of not more than 1000 words to describe the importance and value of the proposed travel and educational initiative.

Applicant must provide a budget breakdown of proposed expenses, preferably with proofs of official quotes.

When available, clearly dated copies of press cuttings (including printouts of online press material) that may further the applicant's cause are to be attached to the application.

Please state whether you have already received public funding in the past and list the dates, amount specifications and any other relevant details about funds received.

Foreign Promotion Grant

A travel grant may be given to publishers and authors who opt to travel to foreign fairs, festivals and other events to promote their own written or published material.

The grant may finance travel, lodging and participation and promotional fees.

Applicant must write a brief of not more than 1000 words to describe the promotional initiative with a detailed marketing plan.

Applicant must provide a budget breakdown of proposed expenses, preferably with proofs of official quotes.

When available, clearly dated copies of press cuttings (including printouts of online press material) that may further the applicant's cause are to be attached to the application.

Please state whether you have already received public funding in the past and list the dates, amount specifications and any other relevant details about funds received.

4. Documents Checklist

1. Applicant's copy of ID card (front and back).
2. Application form (specify Grant).
3. Proposal.
4. Budget Breakdown (including copies of Quotes).
5. Bibliographic references of applicant and/or author's proposed project.
6. Other relevant bibliographic references.
7. Additional references made by third parties supporting the project or application (only for Publishing Grants).
8. Copies of related press cuttings
9. List of past public funding opportunities

5. Adjudication Criteria

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

The adjudication board may base its judgment on the strength of each application.

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

In cases where an application for a project is turned down, the adjudication board will inform the applicant by issuing an official result sheet including an explanation. Failure to qualify does not bar the applicant from applying again following the next call for applications with a different project. Submitting a proposal for the same project consecutively will automatically disqualify the second application. One is not allowed to submit more than one application proposal at one go.

The adjudication board's decision is final and non-contestable.

Publishing Grants

Preference is given to:

- Projects containing a completed manuscript, lest it is the editing or further research which is in need of financing.
- Applications carrying a concrete vision and ideal behind the project, and which have a clear and defined end to where the project should lead in terms of content, result and response to target audience.
- Projects with a niche audience and hence projects that prove difficult to be made self-sustainable ventures without any additional funding.
- Applications which provide a reasonable description of how and why their project consists of cultural, educational, academic and literary value to society in general.
- Applications which are supported by third-parties via a legitimate written reference.
- Applications with realistic budgets and backed by proven quotes.

A project of cultural value could be:

- Any project in prose, poetry, research and documentation which might distinguish itself by its quality and originality from previously published books with a similar theme.
- A literary or academic project which is of such good quality, but so extensive and particular in scope, that it needs the help of a very specialized editor in order to be brought to completion, or further research and work is needed by the author himself to complete the manuscript.
- Any project which might be considered to be crossing boundaries in the local literary or academic fields, and which opens new avenues of opportunity for the local book scene.

Education Grants

Preference is given to:

- Authors and publishers who give a reasonable justification of how the initiative or workshop to be attended will contribute to their line of work, be it in the realm of creative or academic writing, publishing or editing.
- Authors and publishers who give a reasonable justification as to how they will practically use the workshop or educational initiative to benefit a particular project they are working on.
- Authors and publishers who show a willingness to learn and broaden their horizons.
- Applications with realistic budgets and proven quotes.

Foreign Promotion Grants

Preference is given to:

- Authors and publishers who provide a detailed marketing plan which has definite end results and specific goals.
- Authors and publishers who have a long-term vision of their foreign promotion plans – a vision which does not end with the initiative for which they are applying for funding.
- Authors and publishers who provide the NBC with a proven track-record of marketing success in the local field and who are pro-active in their marketing and distribution approach.
- Applications delineating realistic budgets with proven quotes.

Further Guidance

For further guidance on how to submit an application, one can contact Maria Muscat (Asst. Sec., NBC) on maria.e.muscat@gov.mt

Submitting Applications

You may download a copy of the Application form from the NBC website: www.ktieb.org.mt

Whether you are applying as an individual or company, please make sure you include the official address, contact number and e-mail address in your application. Also make sure you sign and date (date of completion of application) every document before making copies.

Each call for applications closes at 12:00hrs (noon), but you may submit your application dossier (4 identical and complete copies in separate and clearly labeled folders) to the National Book Council before the stipulated deadline, from MON to FRI between 09:00hrs and 12:00hrs noon, and 13:30hrs and 16:30hrs. Call on +356 21222654 to secure an appointment.

Applications for the Malta Book Fund are to be submitted by hand to the National Book Council offices:

2nd Floor,
Central Public Library,
Prof. J. Mangion Street,
Floriana, FRN1800.