



2024 SCHEME GUIDELINES

Call for Project Proposals: Gozitan Local Councils are invited to submit project proposals for restoration interventions on structures or monuments of historical and/or artistic importance, as well as project proposals for the enhancement, surfacing, embellishment, lighting and greening of alleyways.



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR GOZO
AND PLANNING

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GOZO
A BETTER GOZO

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *The Scheme*

The Ministry for Gozo and Planning on behalf of the Government of Malta will be awarding grants to Gozitan Local Councils and Administrative Committees to engage in restoration projects of structures and other immovable monuments of historic and/or artistic value and/or projects for the rejuvenation through enhancement, resurfacing, embellishment, lighting and greening of existing alleyways that are located within their delineated boundaries.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 *Objectives*

This call for proposals is designed to facilitate support for local councils and administrative committees in Gozo to initiate and execute projects dedicated to the restoration and preservation of monuments, niches and other structures of historical or artistic significance. Furthermore, it also invites submissions from Gozitan Local Councils for projects that will enhance, resurface, embellish, and introduce efficient lighting and greenery to rejuvenate existing alleyways. Awarded grants under this call need to be implemented during the years 2024, 2025 and 2026.

3 TARGET ACTIONS

3.1 *Restoration and Preservation of Structures of Historic/Artistic Significance:*

Local Councils are encouraged to propose projects that aim to maintain and restore the integrity of structures, monuments, and niches that hold historical or artistic value. Using sustainability as a guiding principle, the projects would ensure that the methods and materials used are eco-friendly and energy-efficient, thereby minimizing the ecological footprint. Emphasis on preserving national heritage not only safeguards cultural identity but also supports sustainable tourism, which can lead to revitalized local economies and enhanced community pride.

EcoGozo notes that such restoration projects which may merit support through this call may belong to ecclesiastical or other third-parties. Local Councils and Administrative

Committees may also submit proposals for the restoration of such structures, monuments, and niches as long as:

- the Local Council and the Administrative Committees retains all responsibilities related to the submission of the application and its implementation;
- it provides adequate evidence to the fact that the owner of the structures, monuments, and niches has been informed and has given his consent to the submission of the application;

3.2 Rejuvenation and Greening of Urban Alleyways:

Projects under this action would encompass resurfacing the alleyway with permeable materials to reduce water runoff, where possible, embellishing the spaces with local art, and introducing efficient lighting solutions that align with green energy objectives. The integration of greenery through planting native flora contributes to urban biodiversity, creates open spaces for social interaction, and enhances the aesthetic appeal of the neighbourhood. This action not only revitalizes underused urban areas but also aligns with the broader goal of creating sustainable and liveable cities.

EcoGozo is also aware that some alleyways may be privately owned or there is shared ownership. Proposals on such alleyways will not be considered. When a project proposal is submitted to enhance, resurface, embellish, and to introduce efficient lighting and greenery to rejuvenate existing alleyways, the Local Council must ensure that:

- it has all the necessary permits or is in the process of acquiring a permit to carry out the proposed interventions;
- that the alleyway is Government owned (confirmation by the Lands Authority is required¹) and is accessible to the public at all times;

4 ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHEME

4.1 Administration

The Scheme shall be administered by the EcoGozo Directorate, which office shall be solely responsible for administering the scheme. The Local Councils and the Administrative Committees will assume the sole responsibility for the project in a turnkey manner from inception till project completion.

¹ If this information is not available from the Lands Authority [<https://onlineportal.landsauthority.org.mt/Application/LC1>], Local Councils need to obtain relevant information from the Lands Registry.

4.2 Eligibility and Award of Grant

Submissions received under this call will be assessed by a Project Selection Committee, which shall be composed as follows:

- I. a representative of the EcoGozo Directorate, as Chair;
- II. a representative of the Cultural Heritage Directorate, as member;
- III. an architect and civil engineer from the Projects Unit, as member;
- IV. a scientific officer from the EcoGozo Directorate, as member;
- V. an electrical engineer from the Projects Unit, as member.

Secretarial staff will be provided to assist in the management and administration of the scheme.

The Project Selection Committee reserves the right to seek further clarifications when not completely satisfied with the information being submitted. The Selection Committee retains the right to accept or reject any or all applications. The number of projects accepted for funding will be determined according to funds available and strictly according to the ranking order. The decision taken by the Ministry for Gozo and Planning in this process shall be final.

5 ELIGIBILITY

5.1 Pre-requisites

To ensure a meaningful assistance to as many different localities as possible and to help facilitate the successful implementation of the call, the following eligibility criteria shall apply:

- I. Project proposals will be admissible if the applicant can commit itself to provide co-financing for the project. The grant that the Local Council will receive will be equivalent to 85% of the actual cost of the project up to:
 - o a maximum of € 15,000.00 (inclusive of VAT) for project proposals that entail restoration of the integrity of structures, monuments, and niches that hold historical or artistic value;
 - o a maximum of € 75,000.00 (inclusive of VAT) for project proposals that will enhance, resurface, embellish, and introduce efficient lighting and greenery to rejuvenate existing alleyways,

unless otherwise deemed advisable by the Project Selection Committee and approved by the EcoGozo Directorate. The co-financing rate of 15% or the difference between the actual project cost and the maximum grant shall be borne by the Local Council. The grant shall be payable in full upon project completion and approval of final closure report and supporting documentation.

- II. Preference will be given to those projects that are able to start and/or be completed as early as possible or have already obtained the necessary permits.
- III. Project proposals which explicitly or implicitly involve or entail any endorsement, sanctioning or facilitation of any malpractice or any breach or circumvention of relevant permits shall be ineligible for this grant.
- IV. A Local Council or Administrative Committee may submit up to a maximum of **TWO** applications:
 - o one application for the restoration of structures and other immovable monuments of historic and/or artistic value;
 - o and/or one application for the upgrading/greening of an alley.
- V. Applicants shall ensure that they provide all necessary information by filling in ALL sections of the application form and submitting all the related supporting documentation as identified in the same application form.

5.2 Grant Limitations

- I. The grant shall not exceed 85% of the actual cost of the project up to:
 - o a maximum of € 15,000.00 (inclusive of VAT) for project proposals that entail restoration of the integrity of structures, monuments, and niches that hold historical or artistic value;
 - o a maximum of € 75,000.00 (inclusive of VAT) for project proposals that will enhance, resurface, embellish, and introduce efficient lighting and greenery to rejuvenate existing alleyways,unless otherwise deemed advisable by the Project Selection Committee and approved by the EcoGozo Directorate.
- II. The grant shall only cover costs that are reasonably necessary for the implementation and promotion of the chosen project and, unless otherwise authorised, included in the proposed budget for the project. Eligible costs must be identifiable as specific costs directly linked to the performance, implementation and promotion of the project. Project Management fees and any fees for professional architectural services incurred in the design and implementation of projects are not eligible for funding under this call.
- III. Double financing of any intervention, work, activity or purchase is not allowed. Provided that, in the interest of encouraging complementarities with other on-going projects of similar nature, projects that have already been granted Government or European Union (EU) funds may be eligible for the grant as long as

such funding is not directed to any project component in respect of which any such grant has been issued.

- IV. The grant may be given to finance projects that also involve commercial elements which, in the EcoGozo Directorate's opinion, are of a reasonable and limited nature. Proposals for interventions on alleyways in which there are solely economic operators and no residential premises, will not be eligible for funding under this scheme.
- V. The grant may not be awarded retrospectively for already-completed projects. Provided that, the grant may however, be awarded for a component of a larger project which has already started, depending on whether the nature, quality and extent of the already initiated larger project are considered by the EcoGozo Directorate to be in line with the target actions of this call for proposals. Provided further that, the EcoGozo Directorate shall not be bound to retroactively endorse or sanction any fait accompli projects.
- VI. Local Councils and Administrative Committees can submit restoration proposals that involve a **SINGLE** artefact.
- VII. Public structures or monuments that were devolved by the Lands Department onto the Local Council or to any other entity cannot be presented as possible conservation and/or restoration project proposals for consideration under this call.
- VIII. Parish churches and/or specific localised features on parish churches cannot be presented as possible conservation and/or restoration project proposals.
- IX. Private residential structures and/or entire façades and/or specific localised features on such structures cannot be presented as possible conservation and/or restoration project proposals.
- X. Project proposals that involve interventions on structures, monuments, niches, alleyways or other that are subject to Planning Authority enforcement issues cannot be presented as possible project proposals for consideration under this call.
- XI. Conservation and/or restoration project proposals shall be limited to interventions on the external fabric of the structure/monument. This also means, that foundation problems of structures or monuments cannot be presented as possible project proposals for consideration under this Scheme. In case that structure/monument is an underground structure, interventions will be limited to cleaning and internal restoration.

- XII. Project proposal related to interventions on alleyways should not involve any addition or replacement of underground services, like drainage, water services, and/or communication services.
- XIII. the structures, monuments, and niches submitted under the restoration proposals must be accessible to the public at all times. Otherwise, the proposal will be deemed ineligible.

5.3 Non-Eligible Costs

The following projects/interventions and their costs shall not be considered as eligible for the grant:

- I. Projects designed for personal or commercial profit.
- II. Return on capital, debt, debt service charges, as well as any interest owed or paid.
- III. Provision for losses or potential future liabilities, provisions for doubtful debts, exchange rate losses, as well as insurance premium against risk of such losses.
- IV. Indirect costs exceeding the percentage or value agreed in the Grant Agreement, as well as costs in any budget heading that exceed the respective budgeted amount, and any expenditure of whatever nature that is excessive, reckless or unjustified.
- V. Costs incurred in relation to activities not foreseen in the project or in modifications of the action, which are not approved by the EcoGozo Directorate.
- VI. Recreational activities, travel, gifts and presents.
- VII. Costs incurred on education campaigns or communication material (including notice boards and websites) which are wholly or partly partisan in nature, or which fail to acknowledge the grant obtained through this call for project proposals.
- VIII. Expenditure that is illegal per se, or which is in any way connected with activities, practices, processes or interventions that are in breach of law or which infringe the terms, conditions or approved specifications of any permit or licence.
- IX. Anything which would constitute a misuse of public funds, entail a net negative impact on the call itself or the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, or be in conflict with purpose of the call for project proposals.

5.4 Other Terms and Conditions

- I. Applicants are to ensure that they have stable and sufficient resources and finances to sustain the portion of the project that is not supported by the grant, such that the integrity and viability of the project can be guaranteed. Applicants must also have the necessary operational capacity, expertise, competence and motivation to undertake and complete the project within the proposed timeframe whilst meeting the appropriate technical and administrative standards.
- II. Projects, interventions and activities must be covered by all necessary regulatory and other permits and must be carried out in full conformity with all applicable laws and permits. If such permits are not in place by the deadline for the submission of the application, the Local Council will be bound to obtain all necessary permits and notify all relevant authorities of any interventions it will be carrying out. The EcoGozo Directorate shall have the right to withhold or cancel any letter of acceptance or grant agreement, or to impose additional terms and safeguards, if the applicant fails to obtain any required authorisation within a reasonable timeframe as decided by EcoGozo Directorate. Potential eligibility for funding under this scheme shall not per se constitute sufficient justification for:
 - o the granting of any permit which would otherwise not be issued;
 - o circumventing or influencing any assessment; or non-application or relaxation of any appropriate conditions or quality standards.
- III. Wherever relevant the beneficiary must provide sufficient evidence of ownership, title, right of use or consent to intervene, and must subsequently keep any structural/physical improvements in good order for a minimum period of five (5) years from completion.
- IV. Non-disclosure of any required information (including any details required for processing of the application or for subsequent administration, verification or monitoring through project progress reporting), or submission of misleading information, shall invalidate the application and may also constitute grounds for judicial or other proceedings against the applicant.

6 THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The Project Selection Committee reserves the right to seek further clarifications when not completely satisfied with the information being submitted. The Project Selection Committee retains the right to accept or reject any or all applications. The number of projects accepted for funding will be determined according to funds available and

strictly according to the ranking order established as per procedure described below. The decision taken by the Ministry for Gozo and Planning in this process shall be final.

6.1 Applications received by the closing date shall be evaluated using a two-stage procedure:

- I. Eligibility screening and administrative compliance assessment
- II. Technical evaluation in terms of definite criteria.

6.2 Eligibility screening and administrative compliance assessment:

At this stage, proposals will be checked for completeness (e.g. whether all relevant sections of the application forms were filled in correctly, whether all requested accompanying documentation was enclosed, whether the forms are duly endorsed by an authorised representative of the applicant, etc), as well as for compliance with the eligibility screening checks in accordance with the provisions under Section 5 - Eligibility.

In the case of administrative non-compliant proposals (e.g. submission of missing documentation or incomplete applications) the Selection Committee may request the applicant to rectify the administrative non-compliance within 5 working days. Failure to comply with such instruction shall render the application for project proposals ineligible for further evaluation and the applicant shall be informed in writing accordingly.

6.3 Technical evaluation in terms of definite criteria:

After eligibility screening checks and administrative compliance assessment are completed, the proposal undergoes technical evaluation stage, according to the following criteria:

Generic Criterion: Relevance of the proposed project to the priorities of the Scheme [60 marks]

- I. Extent to which the project meets the objectives, parameters, requirements and criteria, and addresses the objectives of the scheme.
- II. Demonstrated need, appropriate feasibility studies, effectiveness, reliability and sustainability of the proposal in meeting and addressing scheme objectives and the needs of the locality and providing tangible societal, environmental and

economic benefits, as well as possibly being complementary with other projects and deliverables.

- III. The wider implications of the project, particularly any other benefits or adverse impacts.

Generic Criterion: Quality and Originality [50 marks]

- I. Presentation, structure and comprehensiveness of the project plans;
- II. Clarity of focus on achieving the declared outcomes in the most effective manner;
- III. Soundness of budget and value for money, securing net long-term benefit;
- IV. The suitability, effectiveness and reliability of proposed methodologies, including any associated safeguards;
- V. Innovative and authentic solutions that contribute towards attaining scheme objectives.

Generic Criterion: Capacity of Applicant [20 marks]

- I. Sufficiency of resources of the applicant to carry out the proposed project; and
- II. Demonstrated ability, competence and experience and capacity of the applicant to successfully and lawfully implement the project in a timely and effective manner.

Generic Criterion: Multiple Project Proposals [20 marks]

- I. Applicant submitted **TWO** project proposals – a conservation and restoration proposal **and** an alleyway intervention.

Generic Criterion: Readiness [30 marks]

- I. Relevant permits in place (PA, ERA, SCH, others as applicable) or in the process of attainment;
- II. Demonstrated readiness to execute and implement project through prepared method statements, timelines, BOQs, technical specifications as may be required in a procurement process.

Generic Criterion – Site/project visibility [20 marks]

- I. Proposal is for a project, that due to its location, it is most likely to be enjoyed more by the general public.
- II. Proposal involves a project that is already a tourist attraction and through the intervention it will most likely enhance the tourist experience.

Specific Criterion – Conservation/Restoration Interventions: Historical relevance/value of the proposed structure/monument [20 marks]

- I. The present Grading / Scheduling of the monument/structure elevates the importance of proposed restoration.
- II. The existing unique features/characteristics of the monument/structure proposed for restoration under this restoration scheme will be meticulously restored to their original wonder.
- III. The restoration of the monument/structure has a historical and cultural importance to the locality.

Specific Criterion – Conservation/Restoration Interventions: Artistic and/or Architectural merit and its contribution to our knowledge of artistic/architectural style [20 marks]

- I. Proposed restoration intervention will elevate the Artistic and/or Architectural Merit or prevent its loss.
- II. Proposed restoration invention will further contribute to our knowledge of artistic/architectural style.

Specific Criterion – Conservation/Restoration Interventions: State of conservation of the proposed structure/monument [20 marks]

- I. The present state of the monument/structure proposed for restoration merits immediate action.
- II. Applicant must demonstrate that if no immediate action is taken, the risk of permanent loss heightens.

Specific Criterion – Alleyway Interventions: Use of Materials [20 marks]

- I. Project proposal includes the use of eco-friendly materials that are congruent to the site of intervention.

- II. Intervention makes use of recycling of materials whenever possible.

Specific Criterion – Alleyway Interventions: Lighting Plan [20 marks]

- I. Intervention also integrates the use of efficient lighting.
- II. Lighting design is in line with the local policy for Dark Sky Heritage, if applicable, and the lighting design is to light up specific features.

Specific Criterion – Alleyway Interventions: Greening and Embellishment originality for Public Space [20 marks]

- I. Originality in design and functionality in the embellishment proposed for the alleyway.
- II. Proposal should include greening aspects that are covered by the definition of Green Infrastructure and that are aligned with one of the seven themes of the GI initiatives.

A technical evaluation pass mark of 60% for **each** criterion is set. Proposals scoring less than the pass mark for each criterion shall not be considered further.

Those proposals scoring 60% or more for each individual criterion shall have their total score computed and awarded the grant strictly according to the ranking order and funds available under this call which amounts to € 500,000.00.

The Project Selection Committee shall also have the prerogative to request further information, amendments or clarifications as it deems appropriate at any stage. The Project Selection Committee retains the right to accept or reject any or all applications. The number of projects accepted for funding will be determined according to funds available and strictly according to the ranking order.

7 POST-SELECTION PROCEDURES

- I. Successful applicants shall enter into a Grant Agreement with the EcoGozo Directorate. The Grant Agreement shall be subject to the conditions set out in these guidelines as well as those contained in the call for applications and shall also include any specific conditions and arrangements as necessary to ensure proper governance and enforcement of the Scheme conditions as well as effective implementation, achievement and durability of the project benefits.

- II. In cases where project implementation requires sub-contracting or procurement contracts, beneficiaries shall abide by the Public Procurement Regulations.
- III. Any purchasing and expenditure requirements are to be submitted in line with the Public Procurement Regulations. The EcoGozo Directorate shall have the right to review any documentation pertaining to the beneficiary with regards to sub-contracting and/or procurement contracts, and to take any action in the event that the relevant procedures and safeguards are not observed.
- IV. In accepting the grant, a beneficiary is expected to:
 - o Ensure that the project commences promptly and progresses steadily.
 - o Submit performance reports to the satisfaction of the EcoGozo Directorate.
 - o Provide due acknowledgement to the EcoGozo Directorate in all publications and reports, all informative, signage, and all public communications relating to the approved project.
 - o Ensure that all funds are used in line with the Scheme conditions.
- V. Payment to beneficiary shall be affected as per below:
 - o 1st payment shall consist of fifty per cent (50%) of the eligible funding and shall be disbursed upfront upon signing of the Grant Agreement.
 - o 2nd payment shall consist of twenty-five per cent (25%) of the amount of the eligible funding and shall be disbursed after completion and certification of fifty per cent (50%) of the works have been carried out; and
 - o 3rd payment shall consist of twenty-five per cent (25%) of the eligible funding and shall be disbursed on completion and certification of works, and approval of final closure report and supporting documentation.
- VI. Any unspent funds of the approved grant shall be returned back within one (1) month of project completion, failing which these will be considered as a public debt (due to the grant) on which commercial interest will be charged.

8 AUDITING, MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

- I. Scheme beneficiaries may be subjected to auditing, monitoring and/or inspection by the EcoGozo Directorate or its delegate/s.
- II. Beneficiaries will be required to provide proof that the grant has been used correctly and in accordance with the provisions of the Grant Agreement. Beneficiaries must also retain all documentation pertaining to the funded

project, as well as original fiscal invoices and receipts, including documents constituting proof of actual delivery of works/goods/services financed through this Scheme, and submit them to the EcoGozo Directorate or its delegate/s when and as requested. All records must be kept for at least five (5) years following award of the grant.

- III. If the beneficiary does not meet all requirements set out in the Grant Agreement, or is found to have defaulted on the conditions of the Scheme, the EcoGozo Directorate may decide to recover the entire grant, or any proportionate amount, at its sole discretion. The beneficiary shall repay any such amount within fifteen (15) days from being notified by the EcoGozo Directorate. Monies due shall be deemed to constitute public debt and the applicable measures may be taken or enforced to recover such debt.
- IV. The EcoGozo Directorate reserves the right to rescind any Grant Agreement at any time if any of the conditions set out therein are not properly observed. Furthermore, if at any point it results that an application, or any terms of the Grant Agreement (or the inclusion or omission of any such terms), were vitiated or influenced by incorrect, misleading or fraudulent information or assurance, or by a breach of rules or regulations or where the 'bona fide' intention of the applicant is manifestly missing, the EcoGozo Directorate shall have the right to revoke the Agreement or parts thereof, or to amend its terms, as it deems appropriate, as well as to recover any funds or seek any other appropriate redress. The EcoGozo Directorate and/or the Ministry for Gozo and Planning shall not be liable for any ensuing damage or inconvenience suffered by the beneficiary. The EcoGozo Directorate shall also have the right to take further action in the event of fraud or other malicious circumstance.

9 PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS

- I. In all cases beneficiaries shall abide fully with Public Procurement Regulations.
- II. Any purchasing and expenditure requirements are to be submitted in line with the Public Procurement Regulations. The EcoGozo Directorate shall have the right to review any documentation pertaining to the beneficiary with regards to sub-contracting and/or procurement contracts, and to take any action as it considers appropriate in the event that the relevant procedures and safeguards are not observed.

- III. Beneficiaries should note that public funded projects are subject to audits by various national bodies. Funds must be contracted in a transparent and competitive manner. In this regard Beneficiaries must be guided by the principles of non-discrimination, equality of treatment, transparency, mutual recognition, proportionality, open competition, sound financial management and good governance. The main responsibility for ensuring proper and sound financial management lies with the Local Councils. Beneficiaries should note that their projects will be subject to documentary and on-site checks. These checks will be undertaken by the relevant authorities.

10 APPLICATIONS

Applications must be submitted by Friday, 3rd May 2024 at noon. The link to the online application form will be sent to each Gozitan Local Council by e-mail upon launch of the scheme. Applicants shall ensure that they provide all necessary information by filling all the sections of the application form and by submitting all the related supporting documentation as identified in the same application form.

Provided that Article 6.2 above shall apply to incomplete applications/non-compliant applications.

11 PUBLICITY

- I. The EcoGozo Directorate retains the right to use any material and organise events connected with the projects benefiting from this initiative, and to publish information it may deem necessary.
- II. It shall also be the responsibility of the Local Council to acknowledge the EcoGozo Directorate and the Ministry for Gozo and Planning as the funding source of the project. The EcoGozo Logo and the that of the Ministry for Gozo and Planning must appear in all published marketing material in all media platforms including social media. Any plaques or information boards installed in connection with the project, must include the EcoGozo and the Ministry for Gozo and Planning logos and other publicity material as required.

- III. The Local Council shall promote the project upon its completion through public or media events with the participation of EcoGozo Directorate and the Ministry for Gozo and Planning.

- IV. The Local Council shall also use its existing communication channels, such as newsletters or social media platforms, to inform residents, workers and businesses in its locality about the project and its contribution to the attainment of the objectives of the scheme. Such communications must also abide by 11(II) and 11(III) above.