GOVERNMENT OF MALTA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION

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Call for Applications

EMPOWER
Professional Development Sponsorship Programme for Local Government

ESF+.03.246 – Lifelong Learning as a Key to Better Governance at a Regional and Local Level

Date of issue: 30th September 2025

VERSION 2
Date of issue: 19th February 2026

VERSION 3
Date of issue: 26th October 2026

VERSION 4
Date of issue: 12th November 2026

Co-funded by the European Union

national training council for local government

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Professional Development Sponsorships are being offered to administrative and clerical personnel and elected members in the Regional and Local Government sector under *ESF+.03.246 "Lifelong learning as a key to better governance at a regional and local level"*, a project managed by the Local Government Division (hereinafter referred to as 'LGD'), under the auspices of the National Training Council for Local Government.

1.2. These Professional Development Sponsorships are co-funded by the European Social Fund+ Programme, under Priority 3: "*Quality and inclusive education and enhanced lifelong learning growth"*.

1.3. The main objectives of these Professional Development Sponsorships are to:

- Support the opportunity to explore, develop skills and competencies, build networks and engage in national and/or international collaborations;
- Nurture knowledge and skills that generate value added in the services and initiatives implemented and provided by the Local Government Sector;
- Facilitate continuous professional development for the eligible actors;
- Enhance the national and/or international dimension of education and training through cooperation with other organisations and training institutions;
- Foster national and/or transnational networking and cooperation through the sharing of good practices and cooperation.

1.4. This is a rolling call, and applications will be accepted from 30th September 2025 until not later than 31st October 2028. Applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis, until funds are exhausted.

1.5. Subject to Clause 1.4, it is recommended that applications for in-person training conducted abroad are submitted at least thirty (30) calendar days prior to the course commencement date, but not later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the course commencement date. Applications submitted after this period shall be inadmissible.

2. TYPES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPONSORSHIPS

2.1. Sponsorships are available for the following opportunities:

i. **On-the-job training / Internships / Job Shadowing / Mentoring Programmes** (locally and/or overseas);

ii. **Masterclasses / Short Courses / Continuous Professional Development Modules / Certification Programmes** (locally and/or overseas; in-person, online and/or hybrid);

iii. **Networking / Partnerships / Conferences / Seminars / Workshops** (locally and/or overseas; in-person, online, and/or hybrid);

iv. **Online Courses / e-Learning Modules / Virtual Classrooms / Webinars** (organised by local and/or overseas training institutions).

2.2. The application needs to include a justification, highlighting the direct benefits of the course to one's duties, accompanied by a course, training, conference, seminar, masterclass (etc...) description and content. The information on the course content should originate from the respective institution (e.g. course/event flyer/website or correspondence). Such information is required to enable the LGD to award the Sponsorship.

3. EVENT DURATION

3.1. In the case of events taking place abroad, the duration of the event is not to exceed two (2) weeks.

3.2. In the case of events taking place either locally or online, the duration of the initiative can be distributed over multiple weeks.

3.3. In the case of online training, this must not exceed eighty (80) contact hours.

3.4. In the case of the events taking place in a hybrid format, the limitations included in Clauses 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 above apply.

4. AREAS ADDRESSED

4.1. The applicant is to identify an area within any of the following fields, or other related fields applicable to the specific work and capacity-building needs of the entity they represent:

- Human Resources and Administration within the Frameworks of Central, Regional and Local Governance
- Leadership, Management, Strategic Planning, Foresight and Change
- Policy Formulation
- Decision-making
- Procurement
- Financial Management and Accounting
- Good Governance, Ethics and Integrity
- EU Affairs
- Artificial Intelligence
- Innovation
- Information and Communication Technology
- Customer Care

- Integration and Inclusion Policies
- Inter- and Intra-Personal Relationships
- Public Speaking and Speech Writing
- Any other relevant field.

5. ELIGIBILITY

5.1. WHO IS ELIGIBLE

5.1.1. Applicants eligible for Professional Development Sponsorships include:

- Executive Secretaries within the Regional and Local Councils and the Local Councils Association (LCA);
- All administrative and clerical personnel employed within the Regional and Local Councils and the LCA;
- Elected members of the Regional and Local Councils and LCA;
- All administrative personnel employed within the LGD.
- Any other public officer, elected member, employee or official of a Public Authority, Public Entity or other Body forming part of or performing functions within the public administration, who is formally nominated by the Permanent Secretary responsible for Local Government to participate in or attend any of the professional development opportunities falling within the categories specified in Section 2.1, provided that such participation or attendance is considered to contribute to the development, capacity-building or advancement of the Local Government sector.

5.2. CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY

5.2.1. To be eligible for the award of a Professional Development Sponsorship, applicants must have:

a) In the case of the LGD personnel:
   - the application form endorsed by the Director s/he reports to.

b) In the case of administrative and clerical personnel of the Regional and Local Councils and the LCA:
   - the application form endorsed by the Executive Secretary.

c) In the case of Executive Secretaries of the Regional and Local Councils and the LCA:
   - the application form endorsed by the President or Mayor.

d) In the case of an elected representative (President, Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor):

- the application form attesting the applicant's status as President, Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor by a Headship Official from the LGD[1] .

e) In the case of any other public officer, elected member, employee or official of a Public Authority, Public Entity or other Body forming part of or performing functions within the public administration, who is formally nominated by the Permanent Secretary responsible for Local Government to participate in or attend any of the professional development opportunities falling within the categories specified in Section 2.1, provided that such participation or attendance is considered to contribute to the development, capacity-building or advancement of the Local Government sector.

- An accompanying nomination letter, duly signed by the Permanent Secretary responsible for Local Government, confirming the applicant's nomination and setting out the anticipated contribution and benefit of such participation to the Local Government sector.

5.3. Eligible mobilities are to be scheduled after 30th September 2025 and by not later than 31st October 2028.

5.4. Applications are to be submitted by email as from Tuesday, 30th September 2025, and will be awarded as per Clause 6.1.

5.5. Applications are expected to be received anytime within the implementation period indicated in Clause 5.3. or until funds are exhausted. Applications will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.

5.6. The application form may be requested by sending an email to the Training Department at the LGD on the following email address: training.lgd@gov.mt or via the LGD website at https://divizjonitalgvernlokali.gov.mt/en/. Only applications received in the stipulated application template will be considered.

5.7. Applications are to be received at the Training Department at the LGD on the following email address: training.lgd@gov.mt, keeping in copy the Human Resources Department at the LGD on the following email address: hr.dlg@gov.mt. Email should be addressed to the ESF+.03.246 Project Leader. Received applications will be acknowledged by means of electronic mail.

5.8. Eligible officers who are already in receipt of a grant or sponsorship from another financial mechanism for the same opportunity shall not be entitled to assistance under this ESF+ Project.

[1] The Application is to be sent to the HR Department of the LGD on email address hr.dlg@gov.mt A Headship Official will attest to the applicant's status, and the application form will be re-sent to the respective applicant.

5.9. The LGD reserves the right to refuse any applications it considers inappropriate within the objectives of this Call for Professional Development Sponsorships.

5.10. Since the applications shall be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, applications may be refused once the allocated budget has been fully exhausted. Applicants are therefore strongly encouraged to plan in advance.

5.11. An applicant may be granted access to more than one Professional Development Sponsorship under the Project; however, no applicant shall be eligible to benefit from a second sponsorship within the first two (2) years of the Project's implementation[2]. This restriction is established to ensure equitable access for the widest possible range of applicants. Upon completion of the initial two (2) years, any eligible applicant who has previously benefitted from a sponsorship shall be permitted to submit a new application. From that point onward, no further restrictions shall apply with respect to the number of subsequent applications, save for limitations imposed by the availability of budgetary resources. This condition does not apply to applications directly nominated by the Permanent Secretary for Local Government and Public Works in terms of clause 5.2.1(e).

6. Financial Thresholds

6.1. The maximum contribution that may be awarded under this Call shall be capped at €4,000 per application. Any costs exceeding this amount must be covered by the applicant and/or the applicant's organisation[3].

7. Documentation required with the application form

7.1. The event agenda and/or programme of activities issued by the respective institution must be submitted with the application form.

7.2. In the case of **participation fees**, including deposit fees and early registration fees, applicants shall preferably provide an official proforma invoice issued by the event organiser clearly indicating the VAT amount of the said proforma invoice.

In cases where a proforma invoice is not available, applicants are required to provide alternative supporting documentation, such as the event agenda, programme of activities, or other relevant correspondence, that clearly and explicitly specifies the participation fee and indicates the corresponding VAT amount. The proforma invoice or the supporting documentation is to include the bank details of the event organiser.

7.3. In cases of **in-person training abroad**, the applicant is also requested to provide a copy of his/her Identity Card or Passport.

[2] This two (2) year period may be revised in accordance with the exigencies of the Project's implementation process.
[3] The specified capping may be subject to revision at any time during the implementation period of the Project.

7.4. In the case of applications nominated by the Permanent Secretary for Local Government and Public Works, the applicant is also requested to provide an accompanying nomination letter, duly signed by the same Permanent Secretary responsible for Local Government, confirming the applicant's nomination and setting out the anticipated contribution and benefit of such participation to the Local Government sector.

8. AWARD

8.1. Applicants will be notified of the result for the award of a Professional Development Sponsorship in writing by email within ten (10) working days from the date when the application is acknowledged.

9. PAYMENTS AND RELATED PROCESS (PRE-TRAVEL)

9.1. The LGD shall directly cover all eligible expenses up to a maximum of €4,000 capping comprising:

- participation fees (including any deposit fees and/or early registration fees and together with any applicable VAT)
- flights
- subsistence allowance and
- any contingency expenses[4].

Flights, subsistence allowance and contingency expenses are only eligible for in-person training abroad.

9.2. On the basis of the information provided by the applicant, the LGD will:

- In the case of participation fees, the LGD shall affect payment directly to the event organiser, for the amount indicated in the invoice or other supporting documentation submitted by the applicant, and in accordance with the bank account details specified therein.
- In the case of flight tickets, the LGD shall directly procure and purchase the ticket on the basis of the agenda or programme of activities submitted by the applicant.
- In case of training conducted abroad, the LGD shall affect the payment of the respective subsistence allowance and any contingencies directly to the applicant. The applicant is therefore requested to provide his/her IBAN and Account Numbers accordingly.

[4] Subsistence allowance (including utilised contingencies) shall be considered eligible in line with the provisions provided in the Overseas Travel MFIN Circular 3/2024 (and subsequent amendments) and with the conditions set in the Public Service Management Code (PSMC), in particular the Manual for Transport and Travel Policies and Procedures. These provision and conditions are applicable to all participants, being public service employees, personnel working at Regional or Local Councils or at the Local Councils Association and elected members of the Regional and Local Councils.

9.3. Any late payment fees shall be deemed ineligible and will not be funded.

10. Payments, Documentation and Related Process (post-studies)

10.1. Within ten (10) working days from the applicant's return from the event, s/he is requested to provide the following details to the Training Department of the LGD by email on: training.lgd@gov.mt:

i. A **copy of the certificate of attendance or participation** (inclusive of EQF level, if applicable). In the absence of such a certificate, the applicant is to provide a **travel report**. A copy of this document will be kept at the LGD.

ii. **Photographs and/or video recordings** documenting your participation during the training programme;

iii. A **statement of expenditure** in case of subsistence allowance[5];

iv. **Boarding Passes or other evidence** in case of online check-in (if applicable);

v. In the case of **contingency expenses**[6], provide a copy of the related **transportation receipts** for events held abroad. Following verification of the transportation receipts submitted by the applicant, the LGD shall reimburse the applicant for the duly verified amounts.

11. Reservations

11.1. The LGD will not be held liable for any losses or damages caused by the applicant to the organiser of the event, as well as any lack of commitment or misbehaviour.

11.2. The LGD will also not be held liable if for any reason, the organiser interrupts the event applied for or stops the applicant from participating in the event.

11.3. If a selected applicant, for any reason, discontinues the participation from the event, s/he may be required to refund some or all the Sponsorship paid.

11.4. Selected applicants that are found to have given false information or who have in any manner withheld information that would have influenced the awarding of the Professional Development Sponsorship, shall be immediately disqualified and asked to refund the full amount paid on their behalf.

[5] The statement of expenses template is to be requested to and provided by the LGD.

[6] Contingency expenses shall be considered eligible in line with the provisions provided in the Overseas Travel MFIN Circular 3/2024 (and subsequent amendments) and with the conditions set in the Public Service Management Code (PSMC), in particular the Manual for Transport and Travel Policies and Procedures. These provision and conditions are applicable to all participants, being public service employees, personnel working at Regional or Local Councils or at the Local Councils Association and elected members of the Regional and Local Councils.

11.5. The LGD reserves the right, subject to written notification, to terminate the award of the Sponsorship if the applicant's progress is deemed unsatisfactory and if the applicant is found in breach of any provision of this Call.

11.6. Eligible officers who already receive a sponsorship from other financial mechanisms for the same training initiative are not entitled for assistance from this ESF+ Project.

11.7. No further applications will be accepted once the allocated budget available for these Professional Development Sponsorships is exhausted.

11.8. The LGD reserves the right to publish the names of the applicants being awarded a Professional Development Sponsorship on its website or social media platforms.

12. Further Information

12.1. Further information may be obtained from the LGD by phone on +356 2090 8645 / +356 2090 8645 or by email on training.lgd@gov.mt.

12.2. It is important that this Call is brought to the attention of all eligible persons in your organisation.

12.3. Personal data collected through this application will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and relevant national data protection legislation. All data will be handled confidentially and used solely for the purpose of project administration, monitoring, evaluation and reporting under the ESF+ Programme.

Robert Tabone
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ESF+.03.246