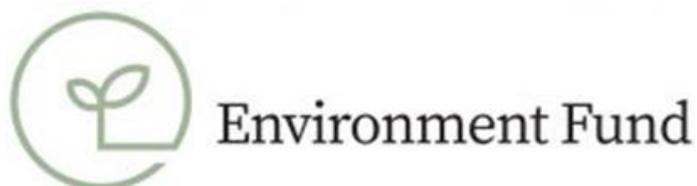




# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



### **1. Who can apply for the BELLUS Call?**

The BELLUS Call is open to: any public entity, including Local Councils and bodies and associations governed by public law, voluntary organisations, established in accordance with the Voluntary Organisations Act (Cap. 492) as well as educational institutions are eligible to apply under this Call.

### **2. Who should submit a project proposal?**

Application Forms must be submitted by the lead (coordinating) beneficiary of the project.

### **3. Is there a limit to the number of associated beneficiaries that can be engaged in the project?**

A project may include one or more beneficiaries. There is no pre-defined number of beneficiaries to be involved in the project. A project which is submitted without any participant other than the lead (coordinating) beneficiary itself is considered eligible. Nevertheless, engagement with other relevant beneficiaries is encouraged, more so when this could strengthen the feasibility of the project.

### **4. Do proposals including more than one beneficiary get extra points in the evaluation?**

No. Points will only be awarded according to the criteria indicated in Annex II of the Guidelines for Evaluators.

### **5. In what language should the project proposal be submitted?**

Project proposals can be submitted either in English or Maltese.

### **6. How do I apply for the BELLUS Call?**

To apply, applicants need to log into the ERIS ERA portal using their e-ID login details on: <https://eris.eraportal.org.mt>

Applicants are then required to select the 'Submit an Online Application' option from the e-Applications drop-down menu and click on 'Environment Fund Application'. This will direct the applicants to the online Application Form.

Besides the online submission, applicants must also submit one hard copy of the Application Form including original signatures and stamps within the stipulated deadline. The hard copy must be the printed version of the Application Form submitted online on the ERIS ERA portal. For complete details regarding the application process of the Environment Fund, kindly refer to the Environment Fund Guidelines for Applicants and the BELLUS Call.

## **7. How do I log in?**

All applicants in possession of a Maltese ID card are obliged to log into the ERIS ERA portal using their e-ID credentials. Applicants without a Maltese ID card, will be allowed to create an account which shall be verified by ERA IT officers before use.

## **8. Can I apply without an e-ID?**

Applicants without a Maltese ID card, will be allowed to create an account which shall be verified by ERA IT officers before use.

## **9. Can the application be saved?**

Yes, the ERIS system will allow users to save their draft versions of the Application Form several times before the final submission. However, once the Application Form is submitted, no amendments to the submitted version will be allowed.

## **10. When will the calls for applications open and close?**

The call for applications will open on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 and will stay open until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, 12:00 p.m. local time. Incomplete applications and applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

## **11. What is the co-financing rate of projects submitted for the BELLUS Call under the Environment Fund?**

The Fund will cover 100% of the eligible costs and up to a maximum of EUR 100,000 of the projects submitted for the BELLUS Call.

## **12. Is there a list of expenses which are not covered by the BELLUS Call?**

For more information on which costs classify as eligible and which do not, kindly refer to section 14 of the Guidelines for Applicants. Full descriptions for each eligible cost category can be found within this document (questions 35-41).

## **13. Can some of the project activities be outsourced?**

The project partners should have the technical and financial capacity as well as the competency to fully implement the proposed project activities. However, should external assistance be required, this will be allowed provided that an adequate justification is provided in the project proposal.

## **14. What is the optimal budget for an Environment Fund proposal under the BELLUS Call?**

There is no optimal budget per project. The project budget depends on the project type. However, each project will be capped at a minimum of EUR 50,000 and a maximum of EUR 100,000. Should the budget

exceed the maximum limit financed by the Fund, the application will be evaluated carefully to access the source of the remaining funds. In this case, the applicant must provide sufficient proof of guarantee of the additional funds so as to ensure the full completion of the proposed project.

**15. What is the best starting date and duration for a project?**

Ideally projects are to commence in Q2 of 2022. Endorsed projects shall need to be implemented and completed within a period of two years or less. Projects must also include a long-term maintenance plan, to sustain the project even after its completion. More details can be found in the Guidelines for Applicants.

**16. What documentation do I need to fill in?**

All relevant details are described under section 6.10 of the Guidelines for Applicants.

**17. Where do I access the Application Form and all related documents?**

The Application Form together with all the relevant documents can be found on the Authority's website: <https://era.org.mt/environment-fund/>

Details of the Call are available on: <https://era.org.mt/environment-fund/bellus/>

**18. What type of projects are funded through the BELLUS Call?**

Applicants must propose tangible environmental projects or initiatives that have the potential to achieve and manage the aims and objectives of the Environment Protection Act (Cap. 549), remedial action to mitigate any harm caused to the environment or otherwise contribute to environmental protection in the Maltese Islands. Applicants must ensure that their project relates to the specific focus area, scope and target projects outlined in the Call. Details of the Call are available on: <https://era.org.mt/environment-fund/bellus/>

**19. How voluminous should the project proposal be?**

The proposal should be concise and clear as much as possible. Each field of the Application Form will have a word limit or condition to guide the applicant on what is required in each entry.

Leaflets, brochures, CVs and any other similar documents containing irrelevant miscellaneous content will not be considered if provided.

**20. When will I know whether my application has been selected or not?**

Applications will go through stage one of the evaluation process to examine their eligibility which will be based on the criteria as outlined in the Guidelines for Evaluators. Applicants will be informed as to whether their proposal is eligible or not within one month following the closing date of the call for applications. Those ineligible will be given reasons for this decision. Applications which are eligible will then move on to stage two of the evaluation process.

Applicants will be notified in Q1 2022 as to whether their applications has been awarded for funds. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing of the final decision taken.

#### **21. How are projects selected for funding?**

Eligible applications will need to pass through stage two of the evaluation process, which involves the ranking of the applications which will be based on the criteria as outlined in the Guidelines for Evaluators.

#### **22. Can ongoing activities be included in the project proposal?**

Double-financing of activities is prohibited. Completed actions or actions that are already ongoing before the official start of the project are therefore, not eligible. You can include actions in your proposal that are significantly different from previous or ongoing activities in terms of frequency or intensity.

#### **23. Are research activities funded under the Environment Fund?**

The Environment Fund finances studies, as well as works which may be needed for that purpose or to remedy any harm caused to the environment. However, the BELLUS Call is not addressing specific research projects.

#### **24. Are large infrastructure works funded?**

The Fund does not finance projects for the construction costs. For more information on which costs classify as eligible and which do not, kindly refer to section 14 of the Guidelines for Applicants.

#### **25. Are personnel costs covered?**

According to Article 11.2 of the Common Provisions, *'employee salaries and other similar costs as outlined in the 'Guidelines for Applicants' are not eligible for funding'*. Nevertheless, project management functions relevant to the project may be outsourced and covered by the Fund.

#### **26. Can we receive financial support from other funding sources in addition to the Environment Fund?**

A project benefitting from the Environment Fund may benefit from any other Government or European Union funds if the grant from the Fund does not cover 100% of the eligible costs of the project. Sufficient proof of guarantee of the additional funding must however be provided so as to ensure the full completion of the proposed project.

Double-financing (whereby the beneficiary receives funding from two sources for the same cost) is prohibited.

**27. Can I apply for a project that falls under two initiatives?**

Yes. A project proposal under the BELLUS Call may target more than one target initiative e.g.

- Removal of Invasive Alien Species and their replacement with native indigenous flora where pertinent, and
- Forestation initiatives utilising native indigenous flora.

**28. What is a lead beneficiary?**

The lead (coordinating) beneficiary is responsible for ensuring the overall implementation of the project. The lead beneficiary is also responsible for submitting the Application Form.

**29. What is an associated beneficiary?**

Associated beneficiaries (partners) directly contribute to the project through the implementation of project activities. These beneficiary types will receive financial contribution from the project.

**30. What are stakeholders?**

Stakeholders refers to organisations/entities that have an interest in the issue targeted by the project because they could either benefit from, or be affected by the issue the project is tackling. Stakeholders can contribute to the project without receiving any financial contribution from the project's budget.

**31. How is the awarded grant distributed amongst the beneficiaries?**

The lead beneficiary shall receive the grant. It is up to the lead beneficiary to distribute the funds appropriately (according to the project budget breakdown) amongst all the beneficiaries involved. The Authority will monitor that funds are distributed in accordance with the agreement. After the first phase of the project, the beneficiary is required to prepare a report on the implementation of the project and a technical financial report. Section 13 Guidelines for Applicants.

**32. Can ERA review project proposals?**

No. ERA staff will not be reading or reviewing draft applications.

**33. Can beneficiaries discuss the project proposal between themselves?**

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to seek cooperation to avoid possible overlaps and increase synergies where possible.

**34. Will ERA assist in project development?**

ERA staff will assist applicants in relation to queries on the Call criteria and advise on technical matters, but will not be in a position to draft proposals which it will be assessing for funding purposes.

**35. What are equipment costs?**

Costs which refer to equipment that will be specifically used to achieve the project's objectives.

**36. What are consumable costs?**

Costs must relate to the purchase, costs of materials, supplies and similar products incurred directly as a result of the project.

**37. What are subcontracted costs?**

These refer to any activities related to the project, which are not carried out directly by the Project Beneficiary but are carried out by any third party; individual, company, partnership or entity.

**38. What are infrastructure costs?**

Infrastructure costs means capital costs including blue-green infrastructure, trees and shrubs.

**39. What are post-project maintenance costs?**

Costs related to services and works, which will be carried out after the project's end to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project's investment.

**40. What are overheads?**

Costs which reflect the general indirect costs for each beneficiary. Overheads will be capped at 5% on the eligible costs for each beneficiary.

**41. What falls under 'other' costs?**

Other estimated expenses which are relevant to the project implementation

**42. What is the 5-10% of the project budget for communication, education, public awareness and involvement?**

Applicants are required to include a significant communication, education, public awareness and involvement element in their project and must dedicate at least 5% and a maximum of 10% of the total project budget proposed to such initiatives. In the project proposal, a dedicated work package should be dedicated to Communication and Dissemination activities.