

NEWS



Film Commissioner Johann Grech with then Tourism Minister Clayton Bartolo at the Malta Film Awards 2022.

€4 million unaccounted for by Film Commission to be scrutinised



The Shift Team

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The Malta Film Commission (MFC) has been asked to provide evidence to parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of how €4 million of taxpayer funds, which were supposed to be used for infrastructure upgrades, were spent.

The PAC, which meets on Tuesday, has been scrutinising the MFC's controversial activities in recent years, and its findings have revealed what appears to be a significant discrepancy in the state entity's accounts.



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According to a presentation by the National Audit Office (NAO) to parliament, some €4 million funds were unaccounted for.

According to the NAO, while the Film Commission received €7.2 million between 2019 and 2022 to upgrade its infrastructure—mainly the tanks at the Malta Film Studios—its accounts show that only €2.4 million was spent.

However, while the accounts show that some €4.8 million was not spent on capital expenditures, the same financial statements show that the Commission only had €1.2 million in current assets and receivables, including €800,000 in cash at the bank.

This leaves a full €4 million unaccounted for.

The PAC chaired by PN MP Darren Carabott, has now asked the Commission and the government to provide a detailed explanation, including proof of payment, of where and what the outstanding €4 million has been spent.

The ongoing PAC scrutiny focuses on just one massive cost paid by the Commission just before the 2022 elections. It does not cover other massive concerns on unaccounted-for costs during the most recent years, including two editions of a glitzy [Mediterrane Film Festival](#).

For the latest edition (2024), Film Commissioner Johann Grech spent just half a million on filming a small promotional production in which he played a prime role.

The 2022 Film Awards

In January 2022, just weeks before the general elections, Grech, also involved in the PL's election team, organised a Film Week culminating in a spectacular [awards ceremony](#).

The ceremony served as a propaganda exercise for the government.

According to information published in the Government Gazette, Grech authorised some €2 million in payments through 112 different direct orders for this event.

Most of them were awarded to the same contractors, who just a few weeks after, were used by the Labour Party for its electoral campaign.



16	MFC/ DO/2022/16	Historical Production	20/01/2022	Sharpshoot Malta	€9,940.00
17	MFC/ DO/2022/17	Rental of Generator for foreign production	23/01/2022	Nexos Manufacturing	€7,500.00
18	MFC/ DO/2022/18	Filming Related: Video Editing, Production, Sound	28/01/2022	Blaze Animation	€7,392.37
19	MFC/ DO/2022/19	Catering for event	29/01/2022	Corinthia Group	€9,810.17
20	MFC/ DO/2022/20	Diguise Server Technician	30/01/2022	Roland Greil	€6,540.00
21	MFC/ DO/2022/21	Lighting Design & Implementation	30/01/2022	Roland Greil	€38,760.00
22	MFC/ DO/2022/22	Costume props for rental from Malta Film Studios	31/01/2022	Gina Bonello	€8,241.00
23	MFC/ DO/2022/23	Supply and service of generators	01/02/2022	HoneyComb Ltd	€97,000.00
24	MFC/ DO/2022/24	Design Services	02/02/2022	Antilia Limited	€17,700.00
25	MFC/ DO/2022/25	Crowd Control Barriers + Solid High fencing, including weight & stays	02/02/2022	Exquisite Holding Limited	€9,150.00
26	MFC/ DO/2022/26	Location scouting including crew and interpreter	02/02/2022	Unique Promotions	€6,975.00
27	MFC/ DO/2022/27	Supply and service of audio	03/02/2022	Besteam - B.E. Support Team Ltd	€93,834.56
28	MFC/ DO/2022/28	Provision of Projectors and servers	03/02/2022	Mad About Video Ltd	€101,488.00

Some of the direct orders issued by the Malta Film Commission during the electoral campaign.

The direct orders included €153,000 to Ray Vella & Company Ltd, which supplied massive LED screens for Labour's campaign; €140,000 to [Carmelo Magro of TEC Ltd](#), who built the PL's mass meeting stages; €151,000 to Nexos, which provided Labour's stage lights, among other things; and €94,000 to Besteam Audio, Labour's sound provider.

Other direct orders dished out by Grech for the 2022 Film Awards included thousands paid to AF Sign Studio, which took care of Labours billboards, [Sharpshoot media](#), owned by Kurt Farrugia's brother and [GMedia](#) – Robert Abela's photographer Gareth Degiorgio.

In some cases, the direct orders were approved weeks after the event.

The Labour Party never explained how it spent millions on its 2022 campaign and refuses to provide information.

The government continues to defend Johann Grech despite a series of blunders that have been exposed in recent years.

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