

Creative Europe – MEDIA Sub-programme

GUIDE FOR EXPERTS

ON ASSESSMENT OF TV PROGRAMMING ACTIONS

managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Unit B2 – MEDIA

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (the Agency) is responsible for the implementation of the Actions of the Creative Europe MEDIA. The Agency is in charge of the selection of projects to be funded, it assesses projects with the assistance of independent experts to ensure that only those of the highest quality are selected for funding. Thus, the final decision on the selection or rejection of applications is taken by the Agency.

This Guide for Experts provides instructions and guidance for experts when assessing applications, in order to ensure a standardised and high quality assessment.

The Guide for Experts provides information on:

- the role and appointment of experts;
- the principles of the assessment;
- the assessment process in practice;
- information on how to assess the award criteria for each action and field.

2. THE MEDIA SUB-PROGRAMME: TV PROGRAMMING SCHEME

The general objectives of the MEDIA sub-programme of Creative Europe are to strengthen the competitiveness and distribution of the audiovisual industry in Europe and thus contribute to growth and jobs as well as to cultural and linguistic diversity.

The TV programming scheme is directly linked to these general objectives in the sense that the support to TV works contributes to the strength and competitiveness of European production companies by enabling them to realise their projects, and at the same time the scheme encourages the circulation of TV works in Europe.

The specific objective of the support to TV programming is to increase the capacity of audiovisual producers to develop projects with the potential to circulate throughout Europe and beyond, and to facilitate European and international co-productions within the TV sector.

The scheme aims to strengthen the independence of TV producers in relation to broadcasters by providing funds to produce strong, competitive content with wide circulation potential in the international markets and to encourage broadcasters to be involved in high quality programming aimed at wide international distribution.

The expected results are:

- Increased feasibility of high European quality works for the TV market.
- Stronger producer's independence in relation to broadcasters.

3. EXPERTS

3.1 Role of experts

The assessment and selection of grant applications is organised on the basis of impartiality and equal treatment of all applicants.

The role of experts allows providing a fair, impartial, and consistent assessment of project applications according to the objectives and the policy priorities of the Programme.

The assessment is a key part in the selection procedure. Based on the experts' assessment, a list of grant applications ranked in quality order is established, which serves as a basis for the Agency to take the grant award decision, following the proposal of the Evaluation Committee.

Based on the experts' comments, the Agency provides feedback to the applicants on the quality of their application (cf. section 4).

3.2 Appointment of experts, code of conduct and conflict of interest

Experts are appointed on the basis of their skills and knowledge in the areas and the specific field(s) of the audiovisual industry in which they are asked to assess applications. Experts perform assessments on a personal basis, not as representatives of their employer, their country or any other entity.

To ensure their independence, the names of the experts are not made public.

Experts are required to perform the assessment to the highest professional standards and within the deadline agreed with the Agency.

Through the appointment by the Agency experts are bound to a code of conduct as set out in the appointment letter or contract with the expert.

The assessment of applications will be undertaken by two independent experts, external to the Agency. Experts must not have a conflict of interest¹ in relation to the proposals on which they are requested to give their opinion. To this end, they sign a declaration provided by the Executive Agency that no such conflict of interest exists at the time of their appointment and that they undertake to inform the Executive Agency of both the existence and its nature should such conflict arise (cf. template in annex 3 to this Guide). The same declaration binds experts to confidentiality.

When a potential conflict of interest is reported by the expert or brought to the attention of the Executive Agency by any means, the Executive Agency will consider the circumstances and decide either to exclude the expert from the assessment of the given application or the whole selection round or allow the expert to take part in the assessment, depending on the objective elements of information at its disposal.

4. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

4.1 Preparation for assessment

Before the start of the assessment, the experts are briefed by the Agency on the Programme and the action under assessment, as well as on the assessment process.

Experts are provided with the reference documents for the assessment and get access to the Online Evaluation Expert Tool (OEET), in which they perform the assessment using the standard quality assessment forms.

Before starting the assessment of applications, experts must:

¹ Financial Regulation Art. 57(2): « ... a conflict of interests exists where the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of a financial actor or other person, ..., is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest with a recipient.»

- have a sound knowledge of the TV programming Guidelines² which provides all necessary information to potential applicants on the actions for which they can apply for a grant;
- have an in-depth understanding of the award criteria applicable to the applications under assessment (cf. section 3.3);
- be familiar with all the reference documents and tools provided by the Executive Agency.

Experts have to read the whole application carefully before completing the assessment form. It is recommended to read several applications before assessing any one of them in full: this allows experts to benchmark answers in different sections of the applications.

Each expert works individually and independently, gives scores and comments for each criterion and summarises his/her assessment in the assessment form-

The eligibility criteria are assessed by the Agency in the first phase of the selection process. Only eligible projects are sent to experts for evaluation.

4.2 Assessment forms

Experts carry out their assessment in English, using the Online Expert Evaluation Tool (OET). The applications to be assessed as well as the evaluation forms are accessible through OET. Experts are provided with technical instructions for the use of OET by the Agency as part of their briefing.

Experts examine the issues to be considered under each award criterion, enter their scores for each applicable criterion and provide comments on each award criterion and on the application as a whole (cf. section 3.3).

On completion of the assessment, experts validate the individual assessment in the Online Expert Evaluation Tool, thereby confirming that they have no conflict of interest with respect to the assessment of that particular proposal.

4.3 Assessment of award criteria and scoring

Experts assess applications only against the award criteria defined in the Guidelines. These award criteria are listed and further explained in Annex 1 of this Guide.

Each of the award criteria is defined through several elements which must be taken into account by experts when analysing an application. These elements form a list of points to be considered before giving a score for the given criterion. They are intended to help experts arrive at the final assessment of the criterion in question.

In order to give clear guidance to experts as to how individual elements of analysis should be assessed, further information is provided in the above mentioned annexe.

When assessing applications against award criteria experts make a judgement on the extent to which applications meet the defined criteria. This judgement must be based on the information provided in the application. Experts cannot assume information that is not explicitly provided. Information relevant for a specific award criterion may appear in different parts of the application and experts take all of them into account when scoring the award criterion.

An application can receive a maximum of 100 points for all criteria relevant for the action. The table below shows the relative weightings of each criterion:

	Criteria	Definitions	Max. Weighting
1	Relevance and European added-value	Potential for European and international distribution of the project	30
2	Quality of the content and activities	Quality of the project and the European dimension and financing of the project	30
3	Dissemination of project results	Quality of the distribution and marketing strategy	30
4	Organisation of the project team	Distribution of the roles and responsibilities of the production and creative team	10

Within the maximum number of points per award criterion, ranges of scores are defined that correspond to a fixed definition of the expected quality standard so that as coherent approach as possible is implemented, across experts as well as across schemes. The score cannot include decimals. The standards on a 10 points scale are as follows:

- 9-10 Very good – the application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question convincingly and successfully. The answer provides all the information and evidence needed and there are no concerns or areas of weakness.
- 7-8 Good – the application addresses the criterion well, although some small improvements could be made. The answer gives clear information on all or nearly all of the evidence needed.
- 5-6 Acceptable – the application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are some weaknesses. The answer gives some relevant information, but there are areas where detail is lacking or the information is unclear.
- 3-4 Fair – the application addresses the criterion, but there are many weaknesses. The answer gives some relevant information, but there are several areas where detail is lacking or the information is unclear.
- 1-2 Very weak – the application fails to address the criterion or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information. The answer does not address the question asked, or gives very little relevant information.
- 0 No evidence –the application fails to include a minimum amount of evidence to enable the criterion to be evaluated.

N.B. Although indicated on the scoring scale, experts should avoid "0" which relates to "no evidence". For obvious particular case, experts should contact the agency staff à priori.

Experts are expected to give comments on each award criterion and, in their comments, refer explicitly to the elements of analysis under the relevant criterion. The comments on each award criterion have to reflect and justify the score given for it.

At the end of the assessment, experts give overall comments on the application as a whole. In the comments, experts must provide a thorough analysis of the application highlighting its relative strengths and weaknesses.

As their comments will be used by the Executive Agency to provide feedback to applicants, experts must pay particular attention to clarity, consistency and appropriate level of detail. All evaluation reports are to be written in English.

The Executive Agency monitors the quality of expert assessments and can require the expert to revise the assessment should the necessary quality standard not be met.

Experts must assess all applications in full, regardless of the score given to any award criterion.

4.5 Possible problems with applications

Experts are under no circumstances allowed to contact applicants directly. In case of any problems arising during the assessment, experts contact the Agency. The Agency decides whether the applicant will be asked to provide additional information or clarifications or if the application should be assessed in the form it was submitted.

Also, if experts notice during the assessment that the same or similar text appears in two or more applications submitted, as well as any other indications of possible double submissions and overlaps, they should inform the Agency about this situation immediately.

4.6 Panel of experts, consolidated assessment and final score

At the first stage of assessments, the role of expert 1 and expert 2 are identical. Both experts do their assessment individually and submit the evaluation through the online Expert evaluation Tool. Once all applications have been assessed by two experts, the experts meet in Brussels to fulfil the following further evaluation steps:

First phase of the Expert panel: Consolidation of each assessment between the two experts.

In this phase, the two experts having assessed the project compare their evaluations and reach to an agreement for a consolidated score. In case the two experts fail to agree on the consolidation, the project will be discussed collectively by the expert panel in the second phase.

Second phase of the Expert panel:

During the second phase of the Expert panel, the following evaluation steps will be carried out by all experts:

- discuss the projects for which the consolidation has failed, and that need to be discussed further;
- validate scores of all projects that have been subject to consolidation process;
- discuss any issues/questions related to projects;

- confirm the ranking of all projects.

At the end of the two phases of the Expert panel, the approved consolidated assessment forms the basis for ranking the application on the list of eligible grant applications.

5. Feedback to applicants

As explained in the Guidelines, the Agency notifies the applicant in writing of the selection result once the grant award decision is taken, providing the relevant information on the assessment scores and comments.

In case of a request for further information or appeal by an applicant, the Agency may request the expert involved in the assessment to provide additional elements of information on the assessment as necessary.

Annexes:

1. Award criteria
2. Reference documents on policy priorities in the field of the audiovisual
3. Template for the Declaration of absence of conflict of interests and of confidentiality

	Criteria	Definitions	Max. Weighting
1	Relevance and European added-value	Potential for European and international distribution of the project	30

This criterion should be scored on the basis of the following table:

	For works from France, Germany, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom	For works from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland	For works from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, FYROM, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
3 broadcasters from 3 different countries participating in the MEDIA Sub-programme	1-10 points	10-15 points	15-20 points
At least 4 broadcasters from 4 different countries (of which at least 3 from countries participating in the MEDIA Sub-programme)	11-30 points	16-30 points	21-30 points

How to assess, How to score:

- for a project submitted by a company based in France, Germany, Italy, Spain or the UK for which only three broadcasters are involved, the experts will have to give a score between 1 and 10 points.

or

- for a project submitted by a company based in the second category (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, etc) where more than 3 broadcasters are involved, the experts will have to give a score between 16 and 30 points.

Elements of analysis of the award criteria:

In order to decide the score to attribute, the experts will have to analyse the following aspect:

Is the number and nature of the broadcasters involved confirming the potential of international distribution of the project?

For projects having only the 3 minimum broadcasters involved, the scoring should be based on:

- the financial involvement of the broadcasters (strong financial involvement increases the score);
- the possible impact of the broadcasters involved in the success of the film;
- the coherence of the broadcasters involved with the nature of the film;
- the geographic and linguistic diversity of the broadcasters involved.

For projects having more than 3 broadcasters involved, the scoring should be based on

- the number of European and non-European broadcasters involved;
- the financial involvement of the broadcasters (small amounts would be less considered than high amounts);
- the possible impact of the broadcasters involved in the success of the film;
- the coherence of the broadcasters involved with the nature of the film;
- the geographic and linguistic diversity of the broadcasters involved.

For the assessment of the criterion, please refer in particular to the confirmed Financing Plan of the project.

	Criteria	Definitions	Max. Weighting
2	Quality of the content and activities	Quality of the project and the European dimension and financing of the project	30

How to assess, How to score:

Experts will have to score this criterion on a scale between 0 to 30 points.

Each of three elements of analysis mentioned below, count as one third (0-10 points) of the total score for this criterion.

Elements of analysis of the award criteria:

In order to decide the score to attribute, the experts will have to check the following aspects and answer to the following questions:

- Overall quality of the financing of the project: coherence between the budget and the financing, strength and commitment of the partners involved (broadcasters, coproducers, etc.): **0-10 points;**
- European dimension of the financing of the project: percentage of non-national financing, strategies of the producer and efforts made to reach the confirmed financing: **0-10 points;**
- Artistic quality of the project: originality and quality of the subject/treatment, quality of the pitch/trailer (please note that the absence of a trailer should not penalize a project). Please refer in particular to section E.3 of the application form and to the detailed description of the project attached: **0-10 points.**

	Criteria	Definitions	Max. Weighting
3	Dissemination of project results	Quality of the distribution and marketing strategy	30

How to assess, How to score:

Experts will have to score this criterion on a scale between 0 to 30 points.

Each of two elements of analysis mentioned below, count as the half (0-15 points) of the total score for this criterion.

Elements of analysis of the award criteria:

In order to decide the score to attribute, the experts will have to check the following aspects and answer to the following questions:

Quality of the distributor's involvement: 0-15 points

- Experience and track record of the distributor involved with similar projects;
- Financial involvement and risk taken by the distributor (i.e. amount of the MG);
- If applicable and if the production company is acting as distributor: experience and track record of the producer as distributor.

Quality of the marketing and distribution strategy: 0-15 points

- Is the marketing strategy coherent and well developed?
- Have all marketing elements and key aspects of the distribution been identified and covered?

Please refer to section E.4 of the application form for the assessment of this point.

	Criteria	Definitions	Max. Weighting
4	Organisation of the project team	Distribution of the roles and responsibilities of the production and creative team	10

How to assess, How to score:

Experts will have to score this criterion on a scale between 0 to 10 points.

Elements of analysis of the award criteria:

In order to decide the score to attribute, the experts will have to check the following aspects and answer to the following questions:

Adequacy of the track record of the producer in relation to the objectives of the project

- Adequacy of the track record of international sales of the producer/production company (in relation to the project)

Please refer to section D.3 of the application form and the Track Record document for the assessment of this point.

Adequacy of the track record of the creative team in relation to the objectives of the project

- Adequacy of the track record of the Director (in relation to the project)

- Adequacy of the track record of other key actors of the creative team (Scriptwriter, Script Doctor, Animation team, etc.) (in relation to the project).

Please refer to section E.2 of the application form and to the CV's attached for the assessment of this point.

The Legal basis of Creative Europe:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

TV Programming Guidelines:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/funding/tv-programming-2016_en



Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Declaration of absence of conflict of interests and of confidentiality

Title of Call for proposals: Support for TV Programming of audio-visual European works

Reference: Call for proposal [include reference here]

I. Conflict of interests

I, the undersigned [Surname, family name], having been appointed as an expert for the abovementioned call, declare that I am aware of Article 57 of the Financial Regulation, which states that:

"1. Financial actors and other persons involved in budget implementation and management, including acts preparatory thereto, audit or control shall not take any action which may bring their own interests into conflict with those of the Union.

Where such a risk exists, the person in question shall refrain from such action and shall refer the matter to the authorising officer by delegation who shall confirm in writing whether a conflict of interests exists. The person in question shall also inform his or her hierarchical superior. Where a conflict of interests is found to exist, the person in question shall cease all activities in the matter. The authorising officer by delegation shall personally take any further appropriate action.

2. For the purposes of paragraph 1, a conflict of interests exists where the impartial and objective exercise of the functions of a financial actor or other person, as referred to in paragraph 1, is compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other shared interest with a recipient."

I hereby declare that I do not fall under any of the following circumstances in which a conflict of interests might exist. I confirm that, if I discover before or during the evaluation that a conflict of interests exists, I will declare it immediately to the Agency.

1/Disqualifying conflict of interests:

- Involvement in the preparation of the proposal;
- Direct benefit in case of acceptance of the proposal;
- Close family relationship with any person representing a participating organisation in the proposal;
- Director, trustee or partner of a participating organisation;
- Current employment by a participating organisation;
- Current involvement in a contract or collaboration with a participating organisation;
- Any other situation that compromises my ability to evaluate the proposal impartially.

2/Potential conflict of interests:

- Employment by one of the participating organisation within the previous three years;

Annex 3 Declaration of absence of conflict of interests and confidentiality

- Involvement in a contract or collaboration with a participating organisation within the previous three years;
- Any other situation that could cast doubt on my ability to evaluate the proposal impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of a third party (*Ex. Past or current personal relationships, nationality, political affinity, etc.*).

I hereby declare that I fall under one or more of the above circumstances (please specify which and explain) ^{*} :

**Ex. In case of employment by a structure including different departments or institutes, please specify the degree of autonomy between them.*

I hereby declare on my honour that the disclosed information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.³

II. Confidentiality and personal data protection

I also confirm that I will keep all matters entrusted to me confidential and will process the personal data I receive only for the purposes of the performance of the present evaluation. If unnecessary or excessive personal data are contained in the documents submitted by the applicant, I will not process them further or take them into account for the evaluation of the proposal. I will not communicate outside the panel any confidential information that is revealed to me or that I have discovered. I will not make any adverse use of information given to me.

Signed:

Date/Place:

Name (in capitals):

³ In case of false, incomplete or incorrect statements or failure to provide information in an attempt to obtain the contract or any benefit resulting therefrom, or where this was the effect of the action, this constitutes a breach of the contract between the Agency and the expert. The Agency may decide to terminate the contract and to recover any sums paid to the Contractor under the order (cf. Article 8 of the General Conditions).