

**CREATIVE EUROPE – MEDIA SUB-PROGRAMME**

**GUIDE FOR EXPERTS**

**ON ASSESSMENT OF *FILM FESTIVALS* 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: FESTIVAL 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 specific objectives include the aim to support the capacity of the European cultural and creative sectors to operate transnationally and internationally; and to promote the transnational circulation of cultural and creative works and transnational mobility of cultural and creative players, in particular artists, as well as to reach new and enlarged audiences and improve access to culture and creative works in the Union and beyond, with a particular focus on children, young people, people with disabilities and under-represented groups.

The Festivals scheme of the MEDIA sub-programme aims at supporting audience development as a means of stimulating interest in, and improving access to, European audiovisual works.

The expected results of the Festivals scheme are in particular:

- Effective outreach activities towards non-core film festival audience;
- outreach mechanisms and initiatives for film literacy in close cooperation with schools and other institutions;

## **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 sector in which they are asked to assess applications.

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 contract with the expert.

All information related to the assessment process is strictly confidential. Therefore, experts are not allowed to disclose any information about the applications submitted and results of the assessment and selection to the public. They must not have a conflict of interest<sup>1</sup> in relation to the proposals on which they are requested to give their opinion. To this end, they sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration prior to beginning their work and adhere to it during and after the evaluation.

## **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 (OEE), in which they perform the assessment using the standard quality assessment forms.

Before starting the assessment of applications, experts must:

- have a sound knowledge of the Film Festivals Guidelines<sup>2</sup> 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 quality assessment form.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.»

<sup>2</sup> [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/funding/festivals-2016\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/funding/festivals-2016_en)

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. Each eligible project is sent to two experts for an independent evaluation.

#### 4.2 Assessment forms

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

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 marks of each criterion:

	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Max. points</b>
1	Relevance	Activity towards the audience and in particular outreach mechanisms including online activities, the use of the latest digital technologies and tools such as social media, and film literacy actions of the project.	40
2	Quality of the content and activities	The European dimension of the programming including its cultural and geographic diversity.	20
3	Dissemination of project results, and impact and sustainability	Size of the audience and film community and the impact on the promotion and circulation of European audiovisual works (the use of digital technologies and mechanisms to facilitate commercial or alternative distribution).	30

4	Organisation of the Team	The distribution of the roles and responsibilities of the Team vis-à-vis the specific objectives of the proposed action.	10
Total score			100

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 an as coherent approach as possible is implemented, across experts as well as across actions. 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 a 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 inform the Agency about that immediately.

#### **4.6 Panel of experts and Consolidated assessment and final score**

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:

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

At the end of the two phases of the Expert panel, the approved consolidated assessment forms the basis of the final score of the eligible 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.** Festivals - Award criteria
- 2.** Reference documents on policy priorities in the field of the audiovisual

AWARD CRITERIA	Definition of the award criteria	Elements of analysis of award criteria relevant for all projects	Weighting of the criterion	Aspects to be taken in consideration
<b>Relevance</b>  (maximum 40 points)	<b>1. Activity towards the audience and in particular outreach mechanisms, including the use of the latest digital technologies and tools such as social media, and film literacy actions of the project.</b>	1a) How consistent is the Quality of activities towards the audience taking into account the applicant's definition of existing/potential Audience?	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Impact of the actions towards the audience (Q&amp;As, Conferences, Live events, Open-air screenings, nbr of screens);</li> <li>- Inclusion of satellite events, year-long activities and/or decentralisation to other cities (with smaller partner festivals)</li> </ul>
	Activity towards the audience before, during and/or after the event, such as: year-long activities and/or decentralisation to other cities (with smaller partner festivals) and/or any efficient outreach activities towards non-core film festival audience.	1b) How efficient are the festival's outreach mechanisms (including the use of the latest digital technologies and tools such as social media)?	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adequacy of targeted Communication &amp; adapted tools;</li> <li>- Partnerships with local/regional institutions;</li> <li>- Strategy to reach new audiences/non-attendees</li> <li>- Extent of the use of the latest digital technologies and tools such as social media</li> </ul>
	Outreach mechanisms and initiatives for film literacy (for example film education) in close cooperation with schools and other institutions.	1c) How effective are the film education initiatives and actions for young audiences?	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality, scale/variety, adequacy of film literacy initiatives, including particular attention paid to young audience;</li> <li>- Level of cooperation with schools/institutions</li> </ul>
		1d) How do you evaluate the event in artistic, organisational and financial terms taking into account the quality of the programming, positioning and strategy to maintain/enhance its level?	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positioning of the event and its strategy to maintain/enhance its level</li> </ul>

<b>Quality of the content and activities</b>  <b>(maximum 20 points)</b>	<b>2. The European dimension of the programming including its cultural and geographic diversity:</b>  The proportion of programming devoted to devoted to European non national films, the proportion of programming originating from countries with low audiovisual production capacity and the number of eligible countries represented in the programming.	2a) How do you assess the European dimension and geographic diversity taking into account its evolution over the last years and number of eligible countries represented?	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The evolution of European film programming over the last years.</li> <li>- The geographic diversity of the programming, in particular number of eligible countries represented: min 27 ms: 5 points, min 24 ms: 4 points, min 21 ms: 3 points, min 18 ms: 2 points, min 15 ms: 1 point</li> </ul>
		2b) Please score the proportion of programming devoted to European non-national films.	5	min 90%: 5 points, min 80%: 4 points, min 70%: 3 points, min 60%: 2 points, min 50%: 1 point
		2c) Please score the proportion of programming originating from countries with low audiovisual production capacity.	5	min 40%: 5 points, min 35%: 4 points, min 30%: 3 points, min 25%: 2 points, min 20%: 1 point
<b>Dissemination of project results, and impact and sustainability</b>  <b>(maximum 30 points)</b>	<b>3. Size of the audience and impact on the promotion and circulation of European audiovisual works (mechanisms to facilitate commercial or alternative distribution):</b>  actions implemented to promote the programming beyond the event, level of co-operation with other European festivals.	3a) Please evaluate the expected audience size taking into account its evolution over last editions?	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Size of the audience at screenings;</li> <li>- Size of the audience at satellite/decentralised events</li> </ul>
		3b) How efficient are the mechanisms facilitating commercial or alternative distribution of the featured European films and the use of digital technologies.	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adequacy of the measures foreseen for promotion and circulation of programmed works: screening booths; attendance of buyers / distributors / tv commissioners / sales agents</li> <li>- commercial/alternative distribution</li> <li>- use of digital technologies (event's own streaming VOD platform, etc.)</li> </ul>
		3c) How efficient are the actions implemented to promote the European programming and the European talents beyond the event?	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relevance of the measures for promotion of European programming and talents (putting forward the European films in the event's programming, special young talent sections, screenings beyond the event, inclusion of focused websites, edition of DVDs, etc.)</li> </ul>
		3d) Please evaluate the quality of the event's policy towards collaboration with other European film festivals and/or with any professional networks.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The actions carried out within festivals networks and/or concrete actions to be put in place through collaboration with other festivals;</li> <li>- presence of other festivals programmers;</li> </ul>



		3e) Please evaluate adequacy of the actions foreseen to increase/maintain the impact of the event on the circulation of European works and the promotion to the professionals.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The actions carried out to enhance the impact of the event on the circulation (specialised workshops including training activities for professionals, pitching sessions,</li> <li>- Sales follow-up</li> </ul>
<b>Organisation of the team</b>  (maximum 10 points)	<b>4. Technical and management experience of the team</b>	4) Are the festival's organisation structure and the roles and responsibilities of the Team relevant to the activities described in the application?	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management and technical involvement of the key members to implement the foreseen activities</li> <li>- The structure of the organisation and the role of key team members (director, artistic director/programmer, general coordinator, responsible for audience activities, etc.) in the festival</li> </ul>

**The Legal basis of Creative Europe:** <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32013R1295:EN:NOT>

**Festivals Guidelines:** [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/funding/festivals-2016\\_en](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/funding/festivals-2016_en)

