CREATIVE EUROPE – MEDIA SUB PROGRAMME

GUIDE FOR EXPERTS
ON ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING 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: TRAINING 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 Training scheme shall facilitate the acquisition and improvement of skills and competences of audiovisual professionals and the development of networks including the use of digital technologies to ensure the adaptation to market development, testing new approaches to audience development and testing of new business models.

The expected results of the Training scheme are in particular:
- to improve the capacity of the audiovisual sector to operate transnationally and internationally including knowledge-sharing and networking capabilities,
- to improve the competitiveness of the audiovisual sector on European and international markets and to have a structural effect on the European companies including testing new business models,
- to improve the circulation of European audiovisual works on international markets including audience development and new distribution modes,
- to improve the capacity of the audiovisual sector to integrate digital technologies.

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 5).

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 appointment letter or 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\(^1\) 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 (OEET), 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 Training Guidelines\(^2\) 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 4.3);
- be familiar with all the reference documents and tools provided by the Executive Agency.

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\(^1\) 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.»

\(^2\) https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/funding/support-training-2016-eacea062016_en
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.

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 4.3).

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Max. points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Relevance and European added value</td>
<td>Relevance of the content of the activity including its international/European dimension vis-à-vis the objectives of the Call for proposals, the needs and trends of the industry, the level of innovation of the project in relation to the existing European training offer and the partnerships with the audiovisual industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Quality of the content and activities</td>
<td>Adequacy of the methodology to the objectives (format including innovative aspects relying on the use of the latest digital technologies, target group, expertise, cost effectiveness of the activity).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dissemination of project results, impact and sustainability</td>
<td>Mechanisms to disseminate good practice and results beyond participants, the impact on participating professionals, single companies and the audiovisual sector, as well as impact on access to international networks and markets of individuals and companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Organisation of the project team</td>
<td>The distribution of the roles and responsibilities of the team as well as the relevance of the pedagogical expertise of the tutors, experts and coaches vis-à-vis the objectives of the training action.</td>
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</table>

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.

**When an application presents different activities, the expert can propose to reject the activity(ies) of lower quality.**

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 propose a ranked 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. Training - 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
### Award Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AWARD CRITERIA</th>
<th>Definition of the award criteria</th>
<th>Elements of analysis of award criteria relevant for all projects</th>
<th>Weighting of the criterion</th>
<th>Aspects to be taken in consideration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Relevance and European added value (maximum 30 points) | 1. Relevance of the content of the activity including its international/European dimension vis-à-vis the objectives of the Call for proposals, the needs and trends of the industry, the level of innovation of the project in relation to the existing European training offer and the partnerships with the audiovisual industry. | 1a) clarity and consistency of the action vis-à-vis the objectives of the Call for proposals and the current needs and trends of the industry. | 10 | • Clarity and consistency of the action with regards to the objectives of the Call  
• Adequacy of subject and skills taught, learning outcomes in relation to the specific sectors needs and trends in the industry and market |
| | | 1b) level of innovation with regards to the existing European training offer. | 10 | • Clarity of the added value and quality of the unique positioning of the action compared to similar activities |
| | | 1c) International/European added value and demonstrated partnerships and linkage with the audiovisual industry. | 10 | • European and/or international added value  
• Evidence of a financial partnership/co-financing from the audiovisual sector (public funds or private companies)  
• Evidence of a pedagogical partnership with companies from the audiovisual industry  
• Evidence of partnerships with festivals or coproduction markets within Europe and internationally  
• The participation of decision makers at pitching sessions, organised at the end of a training and networking activity  
• The impact on development, co-financing and broadcasting/screening of short films/pilots produced during a training activity |
### Quality of the Content and Activities (maximum 40 points)

#### 2. Adequacy of the methodology to the objectives (format including innovative aspects relying on the use of the latest digital technologies, target group, expertise, cost effectiveness of the activity).

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<tr>
<td>2a) adequacy of the content of the action (subjects, skills taught and learning outcomes), the proposed methodology, the pedagogical approach including innovation and deployment of digital technologies as well as the suitability of the targeted geographical area in terms of business opportunities (in case of international actions).</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | • Relevance of the content, the methodology and the pedagogy  
• Level of innovation and deployment of digital technologies  
• Level of involvement of the experts/trainers/tutors in the implementation of the action  
• Suitability of the targeted geographical area (in case of international actions) in terms of business and co-production possibilities |
| 2b) adequacy of the format (duration, type and number of modules, workshops, one-to-one meetings, on-line session, on-line consulting etc.), the professional benefits and the long and short term effects on the participants. | 10 |
|   | • Adequacy of proposed long-term or short-term training, type and number of modules  
• Adequacy of proposed workshops (residential or not), consulting sessions and/or internships, online sessions and/or online consulting  
• Adequacy of proposed lectures, case studies, role plays, group sessions, one-to-one meeting, screening  
• The professional benefits and the long and short term effects for the chosen target group |
| 2c) adequacy of the target group (type of professionals, level of skills and professional experience), the size of the group, the selection procedure, the scholarship policy. | 10 |
|   | • Adequacy of target group (type of professionals, level of skills and professional experience for whom the training has been designed)  
• Selection procedure and accessibility of professionals and/or works  
• Scholarship policy |
| 2d) cost-effectiveness of the proposed action. | 10 |
|   | • Global cost-effectiveness of the training taking into account  
  o Forecast budget reasonable for number of participants, projects and days |
| Dissemination of project results, impact and sustainability (maximum 20 points) | 3. Mechanisms to disseminate good practice and results beyond participants, the impact on participating professionals, single companies and the audiovisual sector, as well as impact on access to international networks and markets of individuals and companies. | 3a) adequacy of the mechanisms in place to disseminate good practice, business models, results beyond the participants and follow up of projects and participants. | 10 | • Dissemination of project results  
• Dissemination of business models and results beyond participants and follow up of projects and participants beyond the training |
| | 3b) impact on participating professionals (gained expertise, career development and access to markets and networks), on selected projects (international co-production and distribution), on companies (development of business models and good practices) and on the audiovisual sector (increased competitiveness and growth). | | 10 | • Facilitation of networking and peer to peer collaboration  
• Impact on individual learning outcomes, skills and career development  
• Impact on projects (international co-production and distribution)  
• Impact on companies (development of business models and good practices)  
• Gained knowledge and accessibility to international markets and networks by the participating professionals  
• Increased competitiveness and growth of the European audiovisual industry |
### Organisation of the project team (maximum 10 points)

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<td>4. The distribution of the roles and responsibilities of the team as well as the relevance of the pedagogical expertise of the tutors, experts and coaches vis-à-vis the objectives of the training action.</td>
<td>4a) relevance of the distribution of the roles and responsibilities of the team.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Relevance of the distribution of roles and responsibilities of team in the field of the action (i.e. event organisation/technical experience/audiovisual expertise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b) relevance of the pedagogical expertise of the proposed tutors, experts and coaches vis-à-vis the specific objectives of the training action.</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Previous experience as trainer and previous pedagogical collaboration</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Solid professional experience in the audiovisual sector</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Selection criteria of trainers, experts, coaches and tutors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Adequacy of the professional background with the training content / program</td>
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Annex 2  Reference documents on policy priorities in the field of the audiovisual

The Legal basis of Creative Europe:


Training Guidelines:

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/funding/support-training-2016-eacea062016_en
Title of Call for proposals:

Reference: Call for proposals

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.
Annex 3  Declaration of absence of conflict of interests and confidentiality

2/Potential conflict of interests:

- Employment by one of the participating organisation within the previous three years;
- 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)\(^2\):

\[^2\text{Ex. In case of employment by a structure including different departments or institutes, please specify the degree of autonomy between them.}\]

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):

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