

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 94/2003

SUPPORT FOR THE TRANSNATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF EUROPEAN FILMS AND AUDIOVISUAL WORKS ON VIDEO/DVD

GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS TO OBTAIN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION.

This call for proposals is based on Council Decision 2000/821/EC on the implementation of a programme encouraging the development, distribution and promotion of European audiovisual works (Media Plus – Development, distribution and promotion 2001 - 2005), adopted by the Council on 20 December 2000 and published in the Official Journal of the European Communities on 17 January 2001 (OJ L 13, pages 34-43).

Objectives of the programme.

In the distribution sector, the objectives of the programme include the following:

- to strengthen the distribution sector for European works on media intended for private use, by encouraging publishers to invest in digital technology and the promotion of non-domestic European works.

Particular attention will be paid to the development of potential in countries or regions with a low audiovisual production capacity and/or a restricted linguistic or geographical area.

Actions to be implemented.

This call for proposals is aimed at European companies whose activities contribute to the realisation of the above objectives, and in particular off-line publishers of European works on media intended for private use. It explains how to submit a proposal with a view to the generation of a potential fund in the framework of the "automatic" support scheme.

The « automatic » support scheme works in two phases :

- 1. The <u>generation</u> of a potential Fund is based upon the annual revenues yielded by the video/DVD distribution of European non-national works and certified by an independent chartered accountant. The total revenues certified will be adjusted taking into account the country of origin of the film. The potential fund will equal to 20 percent of the total adjusted revenues, with the condition of the company reaching a minimum availability threshold. This threshold is measured depending on the size of the market in which the publisher is located.
- 2. The potential Fund thus generated by each company must be reinvested in:
- the costs of producing and/or promoting non-domestic European works on DVD; or
- the costs of promoting non-domestic European works on video.

Financial support

"Generation": The total annual amount of potential fund available to each publisher shall be determined on the basis of the market performance by the publisher in the reference year (2002).

In the case of "Reinvestment", the amount of the financial contribution awarded to each company is determined with respect to the cost and nature of each proposed reinvestment project. Under no circumstance may the amount of the financial contribution awarded by the Commission exceed 50% of the overall costs of the projects. The recipient company must guarantee the remaining finance. Support will be in the form of a grant.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 Formal Criteria

Applications duly signed (by the legal representative of the company) must be submitted before the relevant deadlines and use the application forms annexed hereto.

Applications which no not meet these criteria and the following criteria will be excluded.

2.2 <u>Definitions</u>

For the purposes of this call for proposals, the following definitions shall apply.

2.2.1 Eligible Countries

Participating countries

This call for proposals is open to companies registered in and owned in majority by nationals from the Member States of the European Union, countries of the European Economic Agreement participating in the MEDIA Plus Programme (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway), as well as those other countries that satisfy the conditions laid down in Article 11 of Decision N° 2000/821/EC (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia).

In particular, applications from companies registered in and/or owned in majority by nationals of countries which are candidates to join the European Union¹ will be eligible for this Call for Proposals subject to the coming into force of their country's participation in the MEDIA Plus Programme in 2004. The signature of agreements with successful applicants from these countries shall be subject to the coming into force of their country's participation in the MEDIA Programme by this date, and the fact that the proposed action is not completed at that date.

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¹ Hungary, Malta

Countries with a low audiovisual production capacity

For the purposes of this Call for Proposals, the following countries will be considered as countries with a low audiovisual production capacity: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden, as well as those countries which are candidates to join the European Union and which fulfil the conditions defined in the above paragraph ("Participating countries").

2.2.2 Eligible Companies

European company

Company registered in one of the Member States of the European Union or of the countries participating in the MEDIA Plus Programme as defined in this Call for Proposals, and which is owned and continues to be owned, whether directly or by majority participation, by nationals from these countries.

European Video/DVD publisher

Any European company which, having bought contractually the publication rights to a film or an audiovisual programme for a given territory, is directly responsible for its publication, negotiates the dates and the terms of its release into the market and bears the costs of publication and distribution.

The use of "physical distributors" for specific services is allowed, provided that it has been previously disclosed to the Commission. Such "physical distributors" shall not be eligible for support.

For the avoidance of any doubt, wholesalers, rack-jobbers and other sub-contractors shall not be eligible for support either.

2.2.3 Eligible projects and audiovisual programmes

Any work of fiction (including animated films) or documentary complying with the following conditions:

- the work has been majority produced by companies established in one or more countries participating in the MEDIA Programme;

and

the work has been made with a significant participation by professionals who are citizens / residents of the countries participating in the MEDIA Programme. Significant participation is defined as 10 or more points under the following scheme (or the majority of points if the total is less than 19 in case of documentaries or animated films):

+	Points
Director	3
Scriptwriter	3
Composer	1
Actor 1	2
Actor 2	2
Actor 3	2
Artistic Director/Production Design	1
Director of Photography	1
Editor	1
Sound	1
Shooting location	1
Laboratory	1
Total	19

Categories of Projects

Films and audiovisual works belonging to the following categories are eligible:

- Fiction works of a minimum total duration of 60 minutes
- Creative Documentaries (one-offs and series) of a minimum total duration of 50 minutes. Creative documentaries are productions based on real subject matter but which require substantial original writing, in particular those setting out the point of view of a writer and/or a filmmaker. Creative documentaries based on archive footage are eligible. News programmes, magazines, sports events, talk-shows, reality-shows, docu-soaps, school and "how to" programmes are not eligible.
- Animation works (including series) of a minimum total duration of 50 minutes.

Works consisting of advertising, pornographic or racist material or advocating violence shall not be eligible for support.

Films and audiovisual programmes for children and young people in general will be given special consideration.

National/Non-national European works

European works will be considered as national in that member state or territory participating in the MEDIA Programme whose citizens / residents have participated in the highest proportion in the making of the work, on the basis of the points table shown above. They will be considered as non-national in all the other territories.

2.3 <u>Situations of exclusion</u>

- 1) Applicants are excluded from participation in this call for proposals if:
- (a) they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- (b) they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;
- (c) they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- (d) they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the project is to be performed;
- (e) they have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Communities' financial interests;
- (f) following another grant award procedure or procurement procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations.

Applicants must certify that they are not in one of the situations listed above (by signing the **declarations** in Annex 3 and/or 4).

- 2) Applicants shall be excluded from the participation at this call for proposals if:
- (a) they are subject to a conflict of interest;
- (b) they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the Commission as a condition of participation in the relevant call for proposals or fail to supply this information.
- N.B.: Administrative and financial penalties of an effective, proportionate and dissuasive nature may be imposed by the Commission on applicants who are excluded under the above grounds, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 93 to 96 of the Financial Regulation (Council Regulation 1605/2002 of 25/6/02) and Articles 133 and 175 of the Implementing Regulation (Commission Regulation 2342/2002 of 23/12/02).

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria make it possible to assess the applicant's financial and operational capacity to complete the proposed project.

The applicant must provide evidence of:

1) stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain his/her activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out.

This criterion will be assessed on the basis of the following documents, which must obligatorily be included in the proposal submitted:

- the audited accounts for the last fiscal year;
- for new companies: a bank declaration (document delivered by the bank confirming that the applicant company is the holder of an account which is properly operated).

2) professional competencies, qualifications and/or experience required to complete the proposed project.

This criterion will be assessed on the basis of the following documents, which must obligatorily be included in the proposal submitted:

- the curriculum vitae of the legal representative of the company and of the Head of home entertainment/video/DVD publishing (if any);
- the list of audio-visual works distributed by the applicant over the last two years.

The Commission reserves the right not to select proposals submitted by distributors who have not fulfilled their obligations in the framework of contracts signed in the framework of the MEDIA I, MEDIA II and MEDIA Plus Programmes or other EC-funded programmes.

4. AWARD CRITERIA

4.1 Generation Stage

A potential Fund will be attributed to eligible European Video and DVD publishing companies on the basis of the net revenues from European non-national films and audiovisual works distributed by the applicant in the reference year (2002).

The potential fund will be calculated on the following basis:

- Net revenues per title shall be declared by the applicant company using the attached forms. Revenues generated by non-national European works published in the reference year (2002) will be eligible. Only those net revenues actually received on the account of the publisher and capable of verification by an independent chartered accountant shall be eligible.
- On the basis of the applicant's declaration, the fund generated will be calculated by multiplying the revenues per title by a fixed amount following the country of origin of the film.

Example on how to calculate the fund:

Film Title	Revenue	Multiplier per eligible film			Revised
					revenues
		Films originating from France and United Kingdom	Films originating from Germany, Spain, Italy	Films originating from countries having a limited audiovisual production capacity	
		1	1,3	1,5	
French drama	8000	X			8000
Danish dogma	5000			X	7500
UK comedy	9000	X			9000
Latvian animation	2000			X	3000
Spanish horror	6000		X		7800
Σ Revenues	30000				35300

Within the limit of budgetary resources available, the potential fund will equal to 20 percent of the total revised revenues certified, with the condition that the company reach a minimum availability threshold set according to the size of the market in which the publisher is located:

Territory of distribution	Minimum availability threshold	Generating automatic minimum award
France, Germany, Italy, Spain	€50.000 in revenues	€10.000
Belgium, Denmark, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom	€20.000 in revenues	€4.000
Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary*, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta*, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia	€7.500 in revenues	€1.500

The amounts indicated above are provisional and may be subject to modification depending upon the budgetary resources available. Under any circumstances the fund allocated to one company may not exceed € 200 000.

In the event that the potential fund generated by a company in a given year does not reach the minimum threshold, the potential fund will not be available. This amount may however be carried forward and be available in the following year, if the total of potential fund generated for the two years is greater than the availability threshold.

Following the calculation of the potential Fund generated, a notification letter will be sent by the European Commission to the beneficiary. This letter will indicate the amount of the potential fund and the reinvestment criteria to meet to be able to use this potential fund.

The letter will normally be sent to the beneficiary within 5 months of the deadline of this Call for Proposals.

The notification to the beneficiary of the potential Fund generated does not constitute a claim on the European Commission.

4.2 Reinvestment Stage

The potential Fund generated may only be used through reinvestment projects.

The potential Fund can be reinvested in:

- the costs of producing and/or promoting non-domestic European works on DVD;
- the costs of promoting non-domestic European works on video.

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^{*} The following countries are to join the European Union (and thus the MEDIA Plus Programme) on the 1st of May 2004: Hungary and Malta.

50 % of the potential Fund must be reinvested in new titles, i.e projects where first copyright was established during or after 2001. Upon written confirmation, an exception to this rule is accepted for companies specialising in the publishing of classics only.

Please note that the Commission will only process these projects after the establishment of the letter informing the beneficiary of the amount of the potential Fund she/he has generated. The reinvestment projects will be treated on the basis and within the limits of the potential Fund generated by the publisher as calculated and notified by the Commission. Reinvestment projects must be approved by the European Commission.

Publishers can present reinvestment projects starting from receipt of the notification letter of the Commission or from 1st July 2004, whichever is earlier.

A reinvestment project must in any case be submitted before the release date of the DVD/video.

The final deadline for the submission of reinvestment projects is 1st October 2005.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

5.1. Amount of the Project Allocation

The minimum threshold for reinvestment projects is € 1000 in MEDIA contribution.

The amount of the potential fund that may be drawn for a given reinvestment project may not exceed 50% of the total costs of the proposed reinvestment project.

5.2 Payment of the Project Allocation

Every reinvestment project will have to be approved in writing by the Commission.

Once approved, the reinvestment projects will be the subject of an Agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the MEDIA contribution granted (i.e. the amount of potential fund reinvested in the project, the period of eligibility of costs...).

Under the proviso that the beneficiary complies with the terms of the Agreement, each financial contribution will take the form of a grant.

Payment will normally be made in two parts:

- 50% following the signature of the Agreement by both parties;
- the balance on presentation to the Commission and acceptance by the Commission of the final eligible costs of the project, certified by an independent chartered accountant.

The beneficiaries will notify the Commission of any significant alteration in the budget of any reinvestment project (variation of more than 30 %) at the latest in the Financial Report.

If this alteration implies a reduction of the total distribution costs or a variation between headings of more than 50 % from the forecast budget, the beneficiaries must justify this reduction and request prior written approval of the Commission for this variation.

If the final distribution costs are below 50 % of the forecast budget without justified commercial reasons and without written information from the distributor to the Commission and acceptance by the Commission of this variation, the Commission will ask for the immediate repayment of all sums already paid for the project.

6. EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCEDURE

<u>Duration and validity of the Call for Proposals</u>

These guidelines are valid for the period 2004-2005.

The Commission reserves the right not to process proposals which lack the required documentation (documents listed in the application forms) at the closing date.

The Commission reserves the right to request additional information from applicants before taking any final decision on granting support.

Proposals that meet the eligibility and selection criteria will be submitted to an evaluation process.

Applicants will be informed as soon as possible whether or not the Commission has decided to grant them a financial contribution. This decision will be final.

The Commission will publish the name and address of the beneficiary, the subject of the grant and the amount and the rate of financing. This will be done, in agreement with the beneficiary, and unless publication of the information may threaten the safety of the beneficiary or harm their business interests. In the event that the beneficiary does not agree to this, they should attach a detailed justification, which the Commission will consider in the process of deciding on the award of the grant.

No file or document submitted will be returned to applicants at the end of the evaluation and award procedure.

<u>Budget</u>

The budget for 2004 will be minimum 3 M €.

7. PRESENTATION AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS.

Deadline for submission of proposals

The closing date for submission of proposals (postmark date) in view of the "generation" of a potential Fund is 10 April 2004.

European Video and DVD publishing companies applying for the type of support described above must present their proposal in view of the generation of a potential Fund in <u>duplicate</u> by using the attached application forms and providing the required annexes.

Proposals must include the following items (see Annex 3):

- the Company Form
- the Revenue Statement (certified by an independent Chartered Accountant)

as well as the Annexes (including distribution contracts) defined in the application forms.

Applicants may submit proposals

- by post, for which purposes the relevant date is to be the date of despatch by registered post, as evidenced by the postmark; or
- by hand-delivery by the applicant in person or by an agent, including courier-service, against a signed & dated receipt.

at the following address:

European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture Audiovisual support (MEDIA) Mr Jacques Delmoly Office B-100, 4/20 B-1049 Brussels - Belgium.

Office address (if delivered by hand/courier): Rue Belliard 100, 4th floor, Office n° 20 B - 1040 BRUXELLES

Proposals delivered by hand or courier must be delivered by 17h00.

ENVELOPES SHOULD BE CLEARLY MARKED:

"MEDIA Plus - DISTRIBUTION 94/2003 - AUTOMATIC Video/DVD"

Applicants submitting a proposal by post are asked to send the Commission, before the closing date, a fax announcing their intention to apply:

Fax n° (+32-2) 299 92 14

Contacts at the European Commission

The Commission service responsible for implementing the MEDIA Plus Programme is Unit C-3 of Directorate General for Education and Culture (EAC).

Any requests for clarification should be addressed to:

Catharina Nes

Catharina.Nes@cec.eu.int Tel: +32 2 295 99 25

Technical Assistance Office

D&S Media Service GmbH MEDIA Plus Programme Distribution Cinema Pierre Gavet Rue du Trône 12 B – 1000 BRUSSELS

Tel: +32 2 743 22 39 Fax: +32 2 743 22 45

e-mail: pierre.gavet@d-and-s.com

National contacts

Additional information, as well as guidelines and applications forms in the Community's official languages other that French and English are available at MEDIA Desks and Antennae (list enclosed).

Annex 1 – FINANCIAL GUIDE

The "Automatic" support system works in two successive stages:

- The generation of a potential Fund is based upon the annual revenues yielded by the video/DVD distribution of European non-national works and certified by an independent chartered accountant. The total revenues certified will be adjusted taking into account the country of origin of the film. The potential fund will equal to 20 percent of the total adjusted revenues, with the condition of the company reaching a minimum availability threshold. This threshold is measured depending on the size of the market in which the publisher is located.
- The <u>Reinvestment</u> of the potential Fund in:
 - the costs of producing and/or promoting non-domestic European works on DVD; or
 - the costs of promoting non-domestic European works on video.

These two stages can be summarised as follows:

	Stage 1: GENERATION	Stage 2: REINVESTMENT
Distributor	Application from the publisher for the generation of the support (declaration of revenues per title certified by an independent chartered accountant)	Presentation of reinvestment projects
Commission	Calculation of the potential fund generated Notification letter informing the publisher about its available potential fund and about the reinvestment rules	Agreement setting out the terms of the financial contribution granted
Payment of a Community Financial Contribution	No Yes	

The purpose of this section is to define the procedures to follow clearly for the applicants when filling in and submitting reinvestment projects, as well as the normal financial principles which will be applied in the framework of the execution of the Agreement for financial support signed by the Commission.

1. Reinvestment Application Forms

All reinvestment requests must be made using the application forms attached to the current Call for Proposals (Annex 4) together with two copies of the requested documents except where otherwise specified.

Two types of reinvestments are possible:

- Reinvestment in the costs of producing and/or promoting non-domestic European works on DVD
- Reinvestment in the costs of promoting non-domestic European works on video

50 % of the potential Fund must be reinvested in new titles, i.e projects where first copyright was established during or after 2001. Upon written confirmation, an exception to this rule is accepted for companies specialising in the publishing of classics only.

Reinvestment projects must be submitted within the deadlines set out in Section 4.2 of these Guidelines.

2. Eligible Costs

2.1 **Duration of the eligible costs**

Only those costs incurred by the beneficiary during the following periods in the execution of the reinvestment project will be eligible.

From 5 months before 1st video/DVD release until 6 months after.

The period of eligible costs cannot start more than 11 months before the signature of the Agreement between the beneficiary and the Commission, nor finish more than 15 months after this date. In case of conflict between the above rules and the present rule, the present rule shall apply.

2.2. Categories of eligible costs.

In all cases, the costs which are considered as eligible are those that are:-

- directly linked to the distribution of the film concerned
- actually incurred by the beneficiary
- identifiable and controllable on the basis of justifying documents
- registered in the accountancy or financial records of the beneficiary.

The beneficiaries of a community support are obliged to maintain a clear analytical accounting of the costs for each Approved Project. This accounting and classification system will facilitate the verification and certification of the final costs by the independent chartered accountant necessary for the payment of an eventual financial contribution.

The categories of eligible costs are clearly identified in the form "Distribution Budget". We can, in short, distinguish the following categories:

Advertising and Promotion costs for VHS & DVD (Section 1).

Publicity Material: Design, layout and printing of the posters; design and printing of publicity for Point of Sale; slides and photographs, production of advertising spots for radio and TV, flyers, design and layout of press advertising,...

Publicity Spaces: purchase of advertising spaces (Folder, poster, TV, Radio, Press), distribution of flyers / postcards and mailing etc.

Promotion: Promotional material.

Production Costs for DVD only (Section 2)

These costs comprise the costs related to the manufacturing of the DVD: Glassmaster, Premastering, Authoring, Disc checking, Duplication, Sound, Dubbing and Sub-titling costs, boxes and jackets conception and the production or purchase of Bonus Material.

Other Costs (Section 3)

Audit Costs.

In the framework of the execution of an eventual financial support contract, the Commission requires the beneficiary to produce a statement of the final costs of the project. This document must be certified by an independent chartered accountant on the basis of justifying documents and the accountancy records of the beneficiary. Therefore the costs of this certification are eligible.

Other Costs.

A space is provided in the form for the disclosure of other costs directly linked to the project which are not expressly provided for in the form. These "other costs" have to be clearly identified and detailed in the application form for them to be eligible. Those costs normally associated with the normal running of the company are not eligible under this heading.

Indirect costs (Section 4)

Overheads

A flat-rate fee up to a maximum of 7% of the eligible direct distribution costs, within the limit of € 15,000 per project, to cover the following indirect costs of the beneficiary relevant to the project: rent of company offices, insurance, maintenance costs, telecommunications, postal charges, heating, lighting, water, electricity, office supplies, rental of stands on markets and festivals.

The indirect costs are eligible in so far as they do not include any of the costs taken into account in another section of the budget and if they cannot be the object of a direct allocation in the distribution budget.

Please note that the total amounts of indirect costs charged by the beneficiary who has multiple Community financial support contracts cannot exceed the actual total costs incurred by the beneficiary for these categories of costs for the financial reporting period.

2.3 Categories of ineligible costs

In all cases, the following costs are ineligible:

- unnecessarily high expenses which are unjustified;
- costs which are not identifiable or verifiable on the basis of supporting documents
- costs which are not registered in the accountancy or financial records of the beneficiary
- capital investment costs;
- general provisions (for losses, future debts, etc.)
- financial costs (bank charges, costs of opening and maintaining bank accounts, exchange charges and other bank charges)
- debts
- loan interest
- bad debts
- exchange losses
- contributions in kind (such as publicity partnerships with various media)

3. Exchange Rates

The provisional budget must be presented in Euro (\mathcal{E}) .

<u>For those countries which are not members of the Euro zone</u>, or for expenses incurred in the currencies of countries which are not part of the Euro zone, the exchange rate to be used is the official exchange rate published at the beginning of each month for the month in which the reinvestment project is presented.

This exchange rate is available from the MEDIA Desks and Antennae and from the web site of the Commission at http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/infoeuro.

Annex 2 - MEDIA DESKS & ANTENNAE

BELGIË/BELGIQUE/BELGIEN (BE)

Vlaamse Gemeenschap:

MEDIA Desk België Vlaamse Gemeenschap Bijlokekaai 7 F

B-9000 Gent

Tel. (32-9) 235 22 65 (32-9) 235 22 66 Fax

E-mail:

Info@mediadesk-vlaanderen.be Internet:

http://www.mediadesk-

vlaanderen.be Karen Depoorter

Communauté française:

MEDIA Desk Belgique Communauté française de

Belgique 44, bd Léopold II B-1080 Bruxelles

(32-2) 413 22 45 Tel Fax (32-2) 413 20 68

E-mail:

mediadesk.belgique@cfwb.be

Internet:

http://www.cfwb.be/mediadesk/i

ndex.htm

Thierry Leclercq

BALGARIJA (BG)

MEDIA Desk Bulgaria Bulgarian National Film Center 2 - A Kniaz Dondukov Blvd. 1000 SOFIA Bulgaria

Tel.: + 359 2 988 38 31 or 987 51 35 or 987 40 96

Fax: + 359 2 987 36 26 E-mail: nfc@mail.bol.bg

KYPROS / KIBRIS (CY)

MEDIA Desk Cyprus Othellou 9 CY-1016 Nicosia Cyprus

Tél: +357 22 305367 Fax: +357 22 305368 mobile: +357 99 67 37 52

email:

mediadesk@pio.moi.gov.cy

Ioanna Americanou

CESKA REPUBLIKA (CZ)

MEDIA Desk CZ Ceska filmova komora o.p.s. Narodni 28 110 00 Prague 1 The Czech Republic

Tel.: +420 221 105 209 or +420 221 105 210 Fax.: +420 221 105 303 Info@mediadesk.cz

www.mediadesk.cz Daniela Kucmasova

DANMARK (DK)

MEDIA Desk Danmark Vognmagergade, 10 DK-1120 København

Tel. (45-33) 74 34 42 (45-33) 74 34 65 Fax E-mail: media@centrum.dk Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.dk

Søren Stevns

DEUTSCHLAND (D)

MEDIA Desk Deutschland 14-16, Friedensallee D-22765 Hamburg

Tel (49-40) 390 65 85 Fax (49-40) 390 86 32 E-mail: info@mediadesk.de

Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.de

Cornelia Hammelmann

MEDIA Antenne München Herzog Wilhelm Str. 16 D-80331 München

Tel. (49-89) 54 46 03 30 Fax (49-89) 54 46 03 40

F-mail:

info@mediaantennemuenchen.

<u>de</u> Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.de

Ingeborg Degener

MEDIA Antenne Düsseldorf 14, Kaistrasse D-40221 Düsseldorf

Tel. (49-211) 930 50 14 Fax (49-211) 93 05 05

E-mail:

media@filmstiftung.de

http://www.mediadesk.de

Heike Meyer Döring

MEDIA Antenne Berlin-

Brandenburg

August-Bebel-Strasse, 26-53 D-14482 Potsdam

(49-331) 743 87 50 Tel (49-331) 743 87 59 Fax

F-

mail:mediaantenne@filmboard.

de Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.de

Gabriele Brunnenmeyer

ESPAÑA (E)

MEDIA Desk España Ciudad de la Imágen C/ Luis Buñuel, 2-2°A E-28223 Pozuelo de Alarcon

Madrid

Tel (34-91) 512 01 78 Fax (34-91) 512 02 29

F-mail

info@mediadeskspain.com

Internet:

http://www.mediadeskspain.com

Jesús Hernández Moyano

MEDIA Antenne Barcelona Portal Sta. Madrona, 6-8 E-08001 Barcelona

Tel (34-93) 316 27 84 Fax (34-93) 316 27 81

E-mail:

media antena.cultura@gencat.

net Internet:

http://www.media-cat.com

Aurora Moreno

MEDIA Antenne San Sebastián Ramon Maria Lili 7. 1°B E-20002 San Sebastián (34-94) 332 68 37 Tel Fax (34-94) 327 54 15 info@mediaeusk.org E-mail: Internet:http://www.mediaeusk.o

Verónica Sánchez

MEDIA Antenne Sevilla Casa Museo Murillo Santa Teresa. 8 E-41004 Sevilla

(34-95) 503 72 58 Tel (34-95) 503 72 65 Fax

E-mail:

media.epgpc@juntadeandalucia

Internet:

http://www.antenamediaandaluc

Catalina González

EESTI (EE)

MEDIA Desk Estonia Estonian Film Foundation Department of International Relations

Vana – Viru 3 101 11 TALLINN

Estonia Tel.: +372 6 27 60 65

Fax: +372 6 27 60 61 E-mail: marge.liiske@efsa.ee

http://www.mediadesk.efsa.ee

Marge Liiske

HELLAS/GREECE (EL)

MEDIA Desk Hellas 44. Vassileos Konstantinou Street GR-11635 Athinai

Tel. (30-210) 725 40 56 (30-210) 725 40 58 Fax E-mail: media-he@otenet.gr Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.gr

Ioanna Haritatou FRANCE (F)

MEDIA Desk France 24, rue Hamelin F-75116 Paris

Tel. (33-1) 47 27 12 77 (33-1) 47 27 04 15 Fax

E-mail:

mediadesk@wanadoo.fr

Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.com.fr

Françoise Maupin

MEDIA Antenne Strasbourg 1, place de l'Etoile F-67070 Strasbourg

(33-3) 88 60 95 89 Tel. (33-3) 88 60 98 57 Fax

E-mail:

media@cus-strasbourg.net

Internet:

http://www.strasbourg-film.com

Olivier Trusson

IRELAND (IRL)

MEDIA Desk Ireland 6. Eustace Street Dublin 2 Ireland

(353-1) 679 18 56 Tel. (353-1) 670 96 08 Fax F-mail: info@mediadesk.ie

Internet:

http://www.iftn.ie/mediadesk

Siohban O'Donoghue

MEDIA Antenna Galway Cluain Mhuire Monivea Road Galway Ireland

Tel. (353-91) 77 07 28 Fax (353-91) 77 07 46 mediaant@iol.ie F-mail: Internet:

http://www.iftn.ie/mediadesk

Eibhlín Ní Mhunghaile

ISLAND/ICELAND (ISL)

MEDIA Desk Island 14, Tungata IS-101 Reykjavík

Tel. (354) 562 63 66 (354) 562 71 71 Fax E-mail: mediadesk@centrum.is mediadesk@iff.is E-mail:

Internet:

http://www.centrum.is/mediadesk

Sigridur Vigfusdottir

ITALIA (I)

MEDIA Desk Italia c/o ANICA Viale Regina Margherita, 286 I-00198 Roma

Tel. (39-06) 440 46 33 Fax (39-06) 440 28 65

F-mail:

produzione@mediadesk.it formazione@mediadesk.it distribuzione@mediadesk.it mercati@mediadesk.it

Internet: http://www.mediadesk.it Andrea Marcotulli/Giuseppe

Massaro

MEDIA Antenna Torino Piazza San Carlo 161 I-10123 Torino

Tel (39-01) 153 98 53 Fax (39-01) 153 14 90 E-mail:media@antennamedia.to.it Internet:

http://www.antennamedia.to.it

Alessandro Signetto / Silvia Sandrone

LATVIJA (LV)

MEDIA Desk Latvia National Film Centre Elizabetes 49 1010 RIGA Latvia

Tel.: +371 7505079 Fax: +371 75 050 77 lelda.ozola@nfc.gov.lv www.mediadesk.lv Lelda Ozola

LIETUVA (LT)

Europos "MEDIA" programu biuras J. Basanaviciaus 5 LT-2600 Vilnius Lithuania Tel./fax: +370 5 2127187 info@mediadesk.lt

LUXEMBOURG (L)

leva Skarzinskaite

MEDIA Desk Luxembourg Maison de Cassal 5, rue Large L-1917 Luxembourg (352) 478 21 70 Tel. (352) 46 74 95 Fax E-mail: romain.kohn@mediadesk.etat.lu Internet: http://www.mediadesk.lu

Romain Kohn

MAGYARORSZÁG (HU) MEDIA Desk Hungary

c/o Film Unio Hungary Varosligeti fasor 38 H-1068 Budapest Tel +361 351 77 60 Fax +361 352 67 34 e-mail: eva.vezer@filmunio.hu Internet: www.filmunio.hu

Contact person: Eva Vezer

MALTA (MT)

No MEDIA desk has been established yet

NEDERLAND (NL)

MEDIA Desk Nederland Post Box 256 NL-1200 AG Hilversum Nederland

Tel (31-35) 677 72 00 Fax (31-35) 621 85 41 info@mediadesk.nl F-mail:

Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.nl

Dominique van Ratingen NORGE (NO)

MEDIA Desk Norge Norsk Filmfond PO Box 752 Sentrum N-0106 Oslo

Tel. (47-22) 47 80 40 (47-22) 47 80 41 Fax mail@mediadesk.no F-mail· Internet: http://www.mediadesk.no Sidsel Hellebø-Hansson

POLSKA (PL)

MEDIA Desk Polska Chelmska 21/ Building 4A, room 218 00 724 Warszawa Poland

Tel.: +48 22 85 11 112 Fax: +48 22 85 11 112 mediadesk@mediadesk.org.pl

Agata Pietkiewicz

PORTUGAL (P)

MEDIA Desk Portugal 45, Rua São Pedro Alcântara P-1200 Lisboa

(351-21) 347 86 44 Tel Fax (351-21) 347 86 43 mediadesk@icam.pt F-mail: Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.icam.pt

Amélia Tavares

SLOVENIA (SI)

MEDIA desk Slovenia c/o Slovenian Film Fund Miklosiceva 38 SI-1000 Ljublijana Tel. +386 1 431 31 75 Fax +386 41 644 318 e-mail: iztok.polanc@film-sklad.si

internet: www.film-sklad.si contact person: Iztok Polanc

SLOVENSKO (SK)

MEDIA Desk Slovakia Grösslingova 32 SK-811 09 Bratislava Slovak Republic

Tel. +421 2 526 36 935 Fax +421 2 526 36 936 Info@mediadesk.sk

Internet: http://www.mediadesk.sk

(soon) Vladimir Stric

SUOMI/FINLAND (FIN)

MEDIA Desk Finland Finnish Film Foundation K 13, Kanavakatu, 12 FIN-00160 Helsinki

Tel. (358-9) 62 20 30 13 Fax (358-9) 62 20 30 70

E-mail:

kerstin.degerman@ses.fi

Internet:

http://www.ses.fi/mediadesk

Kerstin Degerman

SVERIGE (S)

MEDIA Desk Sverige Svenska Filminstitutet 5, Borgvagen

S-10252 Stockholm

Tel. (46-8) 665 12 05 Fax (46-8) 666 37 48 E-mail: mediadesk@sfi.se Internet:

http://www.sfi.se/mediadesk

Lisa Taube Ulrika Nisell

UNITED KINGDOM (UK)

MEDIA Desk UK Fourth Floor, 66-68 Margaret Street

UK-London W1W 8SR Tel. (44-20) 7323 9733 Fax: (44-20) 7323 9747

E-mail:

england@mediadesk.co.uk

Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.co.uk

Agnieszka Moody

MEDIA desk UK Media Service Northern Ireland c/o Northern Ireland Film & TV Commission

Third floor, Alfred House 21, Alfred Street Belfast BT2 8ED United Kingdom

Tel. +44-28 9023 2444 Fax +44-28 9023 9918 E-mail: media@niftc.co.uk

Internet: www.mediadesk.co.uk

Cian Smyth

MEDIA Antenna Glasgow 249, West George Street Glasgow G2 4QE United Kingdom

Tel. (44-141) 302 17 76 Fax (44-141) 302 17 78 E-mail:

media.scotland@scottishscreen.c om

Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.co.uk

Emma Valentine

MEDIA Antenna Cardiff C/o SGRÎN

The Bank

Mount Stuart Square, 10 Cardiff CF10 5EE

United Kingdom

Tel. (44-2920) 33 33 04 Fax (44-2920) 33 33 20 E-mail: antenna@sgrin.co.uk

Internet:

http://www.mediadesk.co.uk

Gwion Owain

ÖSTERREICH (A)

MEDIA Desk Austria Österreichisches Filminstitut Stiftgasse 6

A-1070 Wien

Tel. (43-1) 526 97 30-406
Fax (43-1) 526 97 30-460
E-mail: media@filminstitut.at
www.mediadesk.at

Gerlinde Seitner

Updated: 07.01.2004

Annex 3 - Application forms - "Generation"

Application Form - Company 2004

Application Form - Film / Audiovisual Work

Application Form - Declaration of Revenues

<u>Annex 4 - Application forms – "Reinvestment"</u>

Reinvestment Project Form

Budgetary Form