

New Procedures & Principles

to be introduced for project assessment

Multiple Project Development



Bord Scannán na hÉireann
The Irish Film Board

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Bord Scannán na hÉireann/the Irish Film Board (BSÉ/IFB) will shortly make changes to the ways in which it considers projects and reaches decisions with regard to its funding of production and development. These changes will come into effect from 1st July 2006.

This paper describes the new procedures, and the principles that will inform them. The changes will affect BSÉ/IFB's consideration of all submissions except those for short films which, together with funding for marketing and distribution, will be the subject of separate, later review.

General Aims - Production Funding

The intention here is to encourage a somewhat different relationship between BSÉ/IFB and its applicants. The present requirement to submit a project, with a comprehensive set of elements already in place, to an adjudication process – after which the sum of money applied for is either awarded or not – will be replaced by an invitation to producers to propose projects to BSÉ/IFB at an earlier stage and seek an in-principle commitment of support.

Where this is forthcoming, it will start a process of discussion between the producer and BSÉ/IFB as to the assembly of the film's creative package and overall financing, with BSÉ/IFB executives ready to provide assistance in the film's preparation to the extent appropriate and useful. In the best cases, where the film becomes fully financed and can be put into production, this process will have led to negotiation and confirmation of the amount and terms of BSÉ/IFB's investment.

Where an in-principle commitment of support is not forthcoming from BSÉ/IFB, the producer, having expended less time and resources on preparation of the project so far, is in a better position to decide how next to proceed with it: whether to take BSÉ/IFB's response to it into account and attempt to re-shape it with the aim of re-submitting it; or to move on and seek to finance it from other sources; or to abandon it in favour of other projects on his/her current development slate.

In either event, the aim of the procedure will be to foster a mature, interactive relationship between producers and BSÉ/IFB executives, based on dialogue and mutual respect between professionals. No system can be devised for the funding of creative work whereby measurement against a set of objective criteria leads to an incontrovertible positive or negative decision. In such an inexact science, best practice is likely to result where applicants recognise the inevitable part played by subjectivity in all decisions, and decision-makers accept their obligation to explain and defend a position.

The new procedure does not preclude producers from applying to BSÉ/IFB at a later stage, as hitherto, with most other elements in place, if they prefer.

General Aims - Development Funding

Here also applicants will be strongly encouraged to submit projects at an earlier stage than is the prevailing practice. In the great majority of cases, BSÉ/IFB will seek to become involved in the support of a project before a first draft screenplay has been written, when the project exists only as an idea, an outline or a treatment. BSÉ/IFB will be ready to take an early-stage risk on both new and experienced screenwriters, and recognises a responsibility to enable writers to be paid from the inception of a project.

Notwithstanding BSÉ/IFB's earlier entry into a project, where a producer is involved and a full development plan is in place BSÉ/IFB will generally be prepared to make an in-principle commitment to provide support throughout the development of a project, subject to periodic reassurance as to satisfactory progress. Rather than requiring re-application on behalf of a project at each stage of writing or practical preparation, BSÉ/IFB will take an 'innocent until proved guilty' attitude to projects it elects to support: its development executives will engage in regular discussions with the filmmaking team as work progresses, and will be empowered to release (or withhold) further funding as requested within budget parameters agreed at the outset.

All BSÉ/IFB's creative executives will follow the course of projects that proceed through development towards production, in order to ensure continuity of opinion and feedback across the agency.

These two changes – provision of support from an earlier stage and in-principle commitments to a higher level of support from the start – are likely to mean that the number of projects approved for development funding from BSÉ/IFB in a given year will decrease. In effect, the hurdle may be set slightly higher. Equally, as with production funding applications, the process will be simpler and more interactive, and rejection of a project before a significant amount of writing has been done should be more tolerable.

New Procedures in Practice - Production Funding

1. Before making a formal submission, producers are asked to make informal contact with one of the executives responsible for managing BSÉ/IFB's production funding: the Chief Executive (Simon Perry) or one of the Production Executives (Noemi Ferrer, another to be appointed). This will allow the executive to gather basic information about the project and give advice with regard to the prospective application – its timing, any further work needed, legal or other obstacles, etc. An application will not be accepted (i.e. logged in and processed) without this prior discussion having taken place.

2. Applications can be made at any time and will be considered immediately or as soon as executives' workloads allow. New application forms should be used: the form requests basic information on the project (title, previous history with BSÉ/IFB if any), contact details of the production company and principal creative personnel (producer, director, writer) and a declaration and signature. It also lists additional materials that should be submitted, namely:
 - i. Screenplay
 - ii. Synopsis and log-line
 - iii. CVs of producer, director, writer
 - iv. Note of cast or creative/technical personnel in place
 - v. Note of any other marketable aspects/elements
 - vi. Budget topsheet, if available
 - vii. Draft/indicative finance plan, if available

This is all that will be required at this stage. Where a project receives an in-principle commitment of support ("provisional approval") further documents will be required in due course by BSÉ/IFB's Legal & Business Affairs team, e.g. chain of title, full budget, analysis of Irish creative spend (in co-productions), production schedule and cashflow, correspondence/agreements with other financing sources, etc.

3. Each application will be logged in by the Applications Coordinator (Jill McGregor) and will be assigned to one of the three production funding executives (see above) by agreement among them. Further discussion of the project may then take place between the producer and the executive handling it; in any event the screenplay will be read, and the elements of the project assessed, by members of the Project Group, as next described.
4. Funding decisions will no longer be taken by a Production Panel (consisting of certain BSÉ/IFB executives, together with a BSÉ/IFB board member and an 'external', different on each occasion) meeting monthly, but on a rolling basis by a Project Group comprising all BSÉ/IFB production and development executives and, on an ad hoc basis, consultants drawn from a small pool of non-BSÉ/IFB professionals retained for their specific skills. Each submission will have been thoroughly considered by at least three members of the Project Group. Meetings of the Project Group will take place fortnightly, conferencing between Galway, Dublin and elsewhere as necessary, and weekly when the volume of submissions is unusually high. At least one member of the Legal & Business Affairs team will always attend.

5. Positive decisions by the Project Group will be expressed as provisional approvals which will then require formal endorsement by the Board of BSÉ/IFB and thereafter be communicated to applicants. Normally this will be sought from the Board as soon as possible after the Project Group's decision unless a scheduled Board meeting happens to fall within 72 hours of a Project Group meeting.
6. BSÉ/IFB's financial commitment to a project will not normally form part of a provisional approval unless insisted upon by the producer, in which case an 'up to' figure may be specified. As a general rule, the exact amount of BSÉ/IFB's investment will be determined in the course of subsequent negotiations between the producer, BSÉ/IFB and other financiers, the objective being for BSÉ/IFB to provide the minimum level of funding needed to enable production to proceed as planned (see section on Additionality below).
7. Provisional approval of a project by BSÉ/IFB signifies sufficient commitment to enable a producer to represent to other prospective financiers that the project has the full support of the national agency subject to BSÉ/IFB's statutory funding constraints and negotiation of the terms of its investment. Once provisional approval has been given, BSÉ/IFB is effectively 'on board' and negotiations by its Legal & Business Affairs team will start in earnest, in parallel with monitoring by BSÉ/IFB's Production Executives of the project's creative and practical progress towards production.
8. BSÉ/IFB will give final approval to a project once the terms of its investment are agreed by all parties and the film is fully financed. Final approval, including the amount of funding to be provided by BSÉ/IFB, will also require ratification by the Board before contracts are signed.
9. Following a negative decision by the Project Group, a project may be re-submitted to BSÉ/IFB only if significant, material changes have been made to the package, i.e. to the screenplay, to key creative elements such as casting, or to the production cost. All unsuccessful applications will be notified to the Board at the next Board meeting.

10. A project will be considered for production funding by BSÉ/IFB only if:
 - (a) the application is made by a bona fide producer with a production company established in Ireland or another state of the European Union; and
 - (b) there is a director committed to making the film.

11. The procedure described so far will be used to assess applications on behalf of documentaries, animation and TV fiction as well as features, with certain small variations to take account of the nature of the material being considered. The application form for documentaries does not refer to a screenplay or cast, for example, but to a detailed outline of the content of the film. Animation projects will continue to benefit from additional consideration by non-BSÉ/IFB consultants with specialist knowledge of the field; it is hoped that a Production Executive with in-depth experience of animation will eventually be recruited. Applications for completion funding will continue to be considered – on a yes-or-no basis, with no provisional approval stage – by the Project Group.

12. It is current practice for development funding applications on behalf of documentary and animation projects to be considered by the Production Panel (while all other development applications go through a Development Panel process). There will be two changes here. First, in future BSÉ/IFB will only rarely provide development funding for documentaries as a stand-alone activity: in most cases, where a documentary proposal in outline is felt to be strong enough to deserve BSÉ/IFB support, an in-principle commitment to both development and production will be made. Subject to basic legal requirements being met, the aim will be for BSÉ/IFB to start ‘drip-feed’ funding of the project as research and other preparatory work get underway, until the necessary co-finance is in place and production can start. Second, certain animation projects may benefit from being handled in the same way, where the most effective way to develop characters and visuals is to start a process of pilot production which, if successful, will lead directly into full-scale production. Where, on the other hand, development of an animation project also requires intensive screenplay work, BSÉ/IFB is likely to suggest it should be submitted under the new development funding procedures described below.

New Procedures in Practice - Development Funding

1. Procedural changes in BSÉ/IFB's consideration of projects for development funding will be less marked than for production funding. The most significant changes will be to the modus operandi of development funding – availability at the very beginning of the writing process and as a single commitment over the whole period of development, subject to performance – as explained at the start of this paper.
2. Applications will be accepted at any time, and most decisions will continue to be reached on a monthly basis. But the current Development Panel process will alter somewhat. Projects submitted will first be assessed by the Development Executive (Paula Mulroe) working with the Production & Development Coordinator (Katie Lowry). Reports from external readers will be requested if deemed useful. Some applications may then be rejected, without further consultation, if judged to be particularly weak.
3. Applications retained as interesting will be sent each month to members of an Advisory Group of between four and six non-BSÉ/IFB consultants, some Irish, some not, with a variety of experience in film – in distribution, exhibition, sales, acting, cinematography, as well as in writing, directing, producing. Advisory Group members will be asked to respond to the proposal – the idea, the concept, the basic story set out in the application – in terms of its potential, if well realised, as a film for the cinema. (The Advisory Group will assess outlines or treatments only, not screenplays.) They will be encouraged to be rigorous. Although their contribution to the process will be strictly advisory, not decisive, a body of opinion one way or the other among a diverse group of professionals is likely to be both revealing and persuasive. Advisory Group members will not be asked to serve for more than one or two years, so that the mix can be regularly refreshed.

4. With the responses of the Advisory Group taken into account, decisions will be made on each month's batch of submissions by the Development team and at least one other member of the Project Group. An executive from the Legal & Business Affairs team will examine the development budget submitted and, if this is considered necessary, assist the Development Executive in negotiating with the producer to make adjustments, before an in-principle commitment ("provisional approval") is given to the project's development plan.
5. Provisional approvals of development funding will require ratification by the Board of BSÉ/IFB.
6. Following provisional approval of a project by BSÉ/IFB, which includes specific approval of the first tranche of funding to be made available, development of the project will proceed in agreed stages, with the Development Executive empowered to authorise further funding as required, or to cut off funding if she (together with any BSÉ/IFB colleagues she elects to consult) concludes that the project and its sponsors have ceased to make useful progress. Unlike production funding, approval of development funding is inherently provisional: final approval is only forthcoming de facto when the last tranche of provisionally approved funding is authorised.
7. There will inevitably be a period of transition from the current situation, where most development applications are made with a draft screenplay already written, to the point where such applications are rare exceptions. While BSÉ/IFB executives will discourage applications with screenplays henceforward, these will continue to be accepted in circumstances of particular merit.
8. None of the projects currently in development with BSÉ/IFB funding have commitments from the agency beyond their present stage. Where executives take a strongly positive view of the potential of any of these, the tendency will be to convert the present arrangement into provisional approval of a development plan in accordance with the new practice. Assessment of 'old' projects is likely to be rigorous, with a prospect of continued, long-term support for those considered to be capably handled and clearly viable.

9. In addition to taking a new, long-term approach to the funding of projects in development by producers, as described so far in this section, BSÉ/IFB remains fully committed to its provision of support for writers applying on their own. That said, after a transitional period of six months the writers-only awards scheme will be strictly limited to proposals to start from scratch, i.e. where no draft screenplay has yet been written; and will be extended to encourage directors to initiate project development to a greater extent than at present.
10. Specifically, applications to the scheme, to be called First Draft Loans (as opposed to Project Development Loans made to producers), will be invited from writers on their own, from writer-directors, and from directors who do not themselves write – who may or may not have decided upon a writer for a story they have conceived or discovered and want eventually to realise. A director looking for a screenwriter may choose to approach BSÉ/IFB in order to request ideas, discuss possible candidates, read material, and so on. Thus the scheme will be open both to individual writers (including writer-directors) and to teams of directors and writers. As before, the level of funding available under the First Draft Loans scheme will be fixed, but higher and subject to periodic review: initially awards to writers and writer-directors will be ?12,000; to teams of directors and writers, ?16,000 to be shared between them as they agree. All rights in projects supported will remain with the writers or, in the case of directors and writers working together, as they agree between them.
11. Applications for First Draft Loans will be subject to the same procedure as Project Development Loans, including consideration by the Advisory Group where a project is retained as interesting by BSÉ/IFB's executives.

Some Guiding Principles - Additionality

An essential rationale for making public money available to an industry is that it should create activity that would not otherwise occur, i.e. that the market, left to itself, would not engender. It follows that films backed by BSÉ/IFB should be films that will not be made, or will not be made with the same level of benefit to Ireland, unless enabled to do so with the support of the agency. Such films, and the benefits that flow from them, will represent ‘additional’ economic activity.

The new procedure for considering submissions for production funding is intended to ensure more effectively that the extent of BSÉ/IFB’s involvement in a project really reflects the extent to which its involvement is needed: specifically, that the level of BSÉ/IFB’s investment is what is required to complete a film’s financing and no more. Clearly this is hard to police with absolute accuracy, given the nature of film financing negotiations, but the principle holds good and will be closely observed.

The aim to fund films that are ‘additional’ will also affect BSÉ/IFB’s preferences in seeking out projects to support. Additionality implies making a difference, and BSÉ/IFB will tend to be drawn towards supporting projects that appear to be of high quality but tangibly distinct and different from films available in the mainstream marketplace. This does not mean that BSÉ/IFB is interested only in supporting ‘un-commercial’ material. On the contrary, there is a wealth of cinema history evidence to show that the big hits are frequently ground-breaking, left-field surprises. The market appears to need regular refreshment. BSÉ/IFB will give energetic backing to producers who display an ambition to achieve market success – with projects that display an awareness of the market, but not a prostration to it.

Cultural Priorities, Industrial Priorities

Consistent with its government remit, and responding to the present perceived needs of the Irish film industry, BSÉ/IFB considers that certain projects, in terms of their content, provenance or economic benefit to the industry, represent clear priorities for its funding as against others.

Strong preference will be given to submissions on behalf of projects which:

- Are of ‘Irish initiation’ in a creative sense; that is, conceived, written and to be directed by Irish talents
- Tell Irish stories, drawing on and depicting Ireland’s culture, history, way of life, view of the world and of itself
- Entail new Irish filmmaking talent in key creative roles, i.e. director, writer, producer, composer, principal actor

Serious attention will also be paid to submissions which:

- Propose a strongly Irish project (in terms of setting, characters, etc) that is to be directed by a non-Irish talent, where BSÉ/IFB regards the director’s track-record as an assurance of quality
- Involve an Irish producer as minority co-producer of a film, where
 - (a) BSÉ/IFB is convinced of the quality of the project,
 - (b) At least all of BSÉ/IFB’s investment will be spent on Irish elements, and
 - (c) A commitment is in place by the majority co-producer to reciprocate by acting as minority co-producer of a future Irish film

Submissions on behalf of films to be made predominantly in the Irish language will continue to be particularly welcomed by BSÉ/IFB.

BSÉ/IFB will always be vigilant in ensuring that films in which it invests entail a high volume of expenditure on Irish personnel and in the Irish industry, and this aspect of a submission is likely to play a material part in a positive decision. It will not in itself be a decisive factor, however, where BSÉ/IFB is unconvinced by the quality of a project, or where the project in other respects does not comply with any of the priorities set out above.

Making Cinema

A fundamental reason for BSÉ/IFB's existence is to encourage, sustain and promote work in Ireland that is made to be shown on the big screen.

This has not prevented BSÉ/IFB from supporting work for which the main exhibition outlet in practice is television. Moreover, to the extent that this enables production companies to survive and even thrive, and reflects a healthy and necessary synergy between the cinema and television media, in a country the size of Ireland it would be unrealistic for BSÉ/IFB to confine its support to filmmaking for the cinema.

But, while continuing to respond positively to submissions on behalf of some projects that are most likely to find an audience on television, even including made-for-TV films and series, BSÉ/IFB will place somewhat greater emphasis on its obligations towards cinema work and cinema talents in the future.

In practice this will mean:

- Documentaries will be more rigorously assessed in terms of their potential to achieve theatrical release or stimulate interest from international film festivals. Preference will be given to 'feature documentaries'; films aimed at a one-hour TV slot or shorter, with little or no international appeal, are likely to be supported only if they are felt to be of an irresistible quality. Besides BSÉ/IFB's emphasis on cinema, this approach is also designed to respond to the manifest increase in theatrical audiences' desire to see documentaries.
- Animation will be treated with more flexibility, in recognition both of the growing importance of Irish work in this field, and of the narrowness of the theatrical market that exists for animated features. Preference will nonetheless be given to original work from Irish talents that appears to be sufficiently inventive and striking to measure up to the big-screen format if an opportunity becomes available.

- Television fiction, whether singles or series, will be considered for their inherent quality but other factors will also come into play. Strong emphasis will be placed on backing directors (and, on occasions, writers) whose careers to date clearly demonstrate an ability to make cinema films, or who in the view of BSÉ/IFB are headed for a career in cinema filmmaking. Further, BSÉ/IFB will need to be convinced that its financial involvement is crucial to the realisation of the programme and will expect to contribute editorially to its content.

Originality

In the interests of achieving distinction in the way in which it utilises its resources, and consistent with the additionality objectives already outlined, BSÉ/IFB will set considerable store by originality in seeking out and selecting projects for support. Artistic benefits apart, there is ample evidence that in a market dominated by high-budget products, the films that compete most effectively are those that offer audiences something not seen before – in terms of controversial content, provocative viewpoint, fresh humour, twisted genre, or new depths of emotion.

This will lead BSÉ/IFB to favour directors (and writers) with distinctive ‘voices’, whose work depicts a strongly individual view of the world, portrays life in such a way as to give it new meaning, holds a mirror up to aspects of nature that more conventional filmmakers avoid or fail to notice. BSÉ/IFB is concerned to back films that reach as wide an audience as possible, and expects filmmakers to demonstrate a similar ambition. At the same time it recognises that box-office success eludes many. Whether a film succeeds or fails, BSÉ/IFB believes that expenditure of public money can be vigorously defended if the film has something original to say, something original to add to the mass of world cinema.

Multiple Project Development

Bord Scannán na hÉireann / the Irish Film Board (BSÉ/IFB) plans to take a fresh approach to the provision of support for producers who have an attractive slate of projects that they are seeking to develop. The new approach aims to replicate some of the more useful outcomes of the previous CDI (Company Development Initiative) schemes, but the emphasis will be squarely on project development. BSÉ/IFB's existing development funding will be extended and adapted to enable selected producers to enjoy a high degree of autonomy in their development activity.

Single project development funding, as currently provided by BSÉ/IFB, is made available to approved projects and is released in approved tranches to cover the direct costs incurred in developing a project. Under new arrangements for multiple project development ("MPD") successful applicants will have access to funding for a range of projects that they themselves choose to develop. Furthermore, two types of funding will be available: direct development costs funding, which may be used at the producer's discretion across his/her slate; and indirect development costs funding, designed to contribute to the general costs incurred by a production company in the course of its development activity and create a conducive economic climate for the development process.

BSÉ/IFB intends the scheme to create in producers a sense of purpose combined with a sense of responsibility. Producers will be trusted to know what projects to develop and how; and production companies will reap financial benefits from successful project development as if they had invested their own resources. Matching funding in respect of the direct costs of each project developed will be required to the same extent as the current parameters for single project development require. With regard to indirect costs, producers will need to demonstrate in an analysis of their business that their companies' own contribution to these will be at least equal to that made by BSÉ/IFB.

Applicants will be producers with a number of projects in development or available for development, and with different levels of experience. In selecting producers for access to MPD support, BSÉ/IFB will strongly favour producers who are primarily aiming to develop feature films.

Successful applicants will be a mix of producers who have at least one feature film to their credit and producers who have been responsible for short films, TV, etc, but have yet to produce a feature film on their own initiative. But the selection will not divide producers rigidly into categories of ‘experienced’ and ‘emerging’ with regard to levels of funding. The amount of funding awarded to a producer will partly reflect his/her experience and track-record in business, and partly be tailored to the scale of projects on his/her development slate.

MPD support will be provided to producers for a minimum period of two years (the “MPD term”). This will be extended for a further year for producers who consistently comply with their obligations to BSÉ/IFB and who are considered to be performing effectively.

MPD support will give each successful applicant access to funding of two distinct types:

- A revolving Direct Costs Fund to be drawn down as needed by the producer to meet direct costs associated with the development of projects on his/her slate;
- A regular Indirect Costs Contribution made available on a quarterly basis to help defray general costs incurred by the production company in the course of its development activity.

MPD Direct Costs Fund

This is a fixed sum of money agreed at the outset from which the producer may draw down amounts as needed in order to pay development costs directly attributable to projects on his/her slate. It is a finite resource for the whole of a producer’s MPD term; it is not increased annually.

BSÉ/IFB will not have approval of projects developed by a producer during the MPD term, but the producer must notify BSÉ/IFB of each one and secure BSÉ/IFB approval of its development budget and chain of title.

Provided BSÉ/IFB is satisfied that costs to be covered by the Direct Costs Fund are genuinely associated with projects on the producer's slate, draw-down will be automatic on presentation of proof of payment. For companies with limited cashflow, a 'float' system may be agreed whereby an advance is made from the producer's Direct Costs Fund at the outset and then replenished according to proof of expenditure.

Examples (not exhaustive) of eligible direct development costs:

- Acquisition of rights
- Research for screenplay development purposes
- Screenwriting
- Retention of director
- Retention of other key personnel for artistic or practical development purposes
- Storyboards
- Research and identification of key actors and technicians
- Location scouting
- Preparation of production schedules, budgets, cashflows
- Travel, entertainment, etc, for purposes of raising finance
- Development of marketing tools, where appropriate

The Direct Costs Fund is intended as a revolving fund, with expenditure on each developed project recouped as the project in question goes into production, and money returned to the 'pot' as described below. However, BSÉ/IFB may decide to set a limit on the amount of a Direct Costs Fund that can be drawn down in any given period: for example, 40% in any 12-month period on a rolling basis.

When a project developed with MPD funding goes into production, the amount of the Direct Costs Fund expended on its development costs is recouped as a budget item on the first day of principal photography and returned to the Direct Costs Fund for the producer's further use, together with a premium of 50% which is paid to BSÉ/IFB.

Any unused amount remaining in a producer's Direct Costs Fund at the time of expiry of his/her MPD term will continue to be available to the producer on the same terms and indefinitely.

MPD Indirect Costs Contribution

This is an amount paid quarterly in order to reduce the burden of general costs necessarily incurred by a production company in the course of development and provide a healthier economic climate for the development of projects.

The annual amount payable during a producer's MPD term will be agreed at the outset by IFB having regard to the number, nature and scale of projects on his/her slate, and the size of the producer's operation. It will be expressed as a percentage of the producer's Direct Costs Fund: for example, 25%. It will represent a contribution towards his/her company's outgoings which must be at least matched by the producer's own resources. It could be subject to review in the second or third year of an MPD term where a producer can demonstrate significantly increased indirect costs as a result of new projects joining the slate or simply strong performance.

Although BSÉ/IFB will have only limited approval and control of MPD producers' development activities, producers will be required to keep BSÉ/IFB closely informed of these throughout their MPD term, providing regular reports (written or face-to-face as agreed) and quarterly accounting of expenditure from the Direct Costs Fund. If a producer fails to report or account in accordance with his/her MPD obligations, BSÉ/IFB may withhold Indirect Costs Contribution payments.

MPD producers will also be required to furnish BSÉ/IFB with annual accounting of the production company's overall activities in a form to be agreed. Again, Indirect Costs Contribution payments may be withheld by BSÉ/IFB in the event of late or unsatisfactory annual accounting.

Examples (not exhaustive) of eligible indirect development costs:

- Producers' fees
- Legal and accountancy costs attributable to project development
- Proportion of travel, registration, etc, associated with relevant festivals, markets, training courses – as reasonably attributable
- Proportion of administration and other overhead costs – as reasonably attributable
- Expansion of human resources for development purposes

Amounts received by a producer as Indirect Costs Contribution will be rolled up and partly repaid – together with recoupment of direct development costs paid from the Direct Costs Fund – each time that a film developed with MPD funding goes into production. The minimum amount of Indirect Costs Contribution to be repaid will be 50% of the total amount outstanding, i.e. received to date and not repaid from earlier productions. Repayment of Indirect Costs Contribution, which is made to BSÉ/IFB, should be included in an approved budget allocation for production company overhead, not as an additional budget item.

Where a producer's Direct Costs Fund remains 'live' after the end of his/her MPD term, the obligation to repay outstanding amounts of Indirect Costs Contribution (when projects developed with MPD funding go into production) remains in force, even though Indirect Costs Contribution ceases upon expiry of the term.

Selection Criteria

Successful applicants for MPD funding will be producers who:

- Have a track-record that includes high-quality production in the field of features, short films or TV;
- Show evidence of good creative relationships with directors and screenwriters, and good professional connections with talent agents, casting directors and production personnel;
- Have at least two viable and attractive feature film projects in development or available to them for development;

- Set out a work plan for the MPD term that includes building a collaborative team or network of: development personnel, aspiring producers, international co-producers;
- Can demonstrate good management of their companies to date;
- Have a good record of dealings with BSÉ/IFB and other funding bodies;
- Describe their ambitions and strategies as feature film producers in an exciting and credible way.

Application Process

In addition to this descriptive paper, BSÉ/IFB will shortly publish on its website a guideline and form to be used by applicants for MPD funding. The guideline will describe the procedure and timeline for the processing of applications.