

Durban Film Office Micro Budget Film Programme Fact Sheet

A. Programme Overview - What do we fund / what funding do we provide?

The Micro-budget Film Programme aims to support local emerging filmmakers and encourage the production of content in order to stimulate the local film industry. The programme seeks to develop a local model and brand of low budget film-making that is cost-effective, practical and commercially viable. The Durban Film Office defines 'emerging' filmmaker as having acquired some experience producing a work which has earned industry or public attention, and is aspiring to write, direct or produce feature film length works.

The Micro-budget Film Programme offers R150, 000.00 for production of a feature length film. The programme specifically targets fiction feature projects, and will run for a period of 12 months with an aim of producing 5 micro budget films per year.

B. Eligibility Criteria – Can I apply?

- The project must be capable of being developed as a feature-length fictional (minimum 90 minutes) or documentary film (minimum 60 minutes).
- At least 50% of the key creative team falls within the definition of being historically disadvantaged individuals as defined in the constitution of South Africa.
- Principal photography must be located within the EThekweni Municipality.
- A project with a minimum total production budget of R150 000 00.

C. Submission Criteria – What must I submit with my application?

- Completed application form.
- Film synopsis (max. 1 page)
- Treatment (max. 8 pages)
- A proposed finance plan.
- A completed script. (Scripts must only be submitted on request).
- Applicants may submit only one project per funding cycle, previous grant awardees must wait two cycles before applying for new development funds.
- Proposed budget outline and production schedule.
- Professional profiles of key creative (writer, producer, director).
- A motivation letter (maximum 1 page).
- Examples and/ or showreels of previous works if available.
- Company Registration documents and original tax clearance certificate.
- SARS tax clearance certificate.
- Proof of South African identity.

Important Note:

- Applicants are not permitted to direct any questions or comments to evaluation panel members in advance of deadlines or following decisions. All inquiries pertaining to the fund must be directed to Durban Film Office staff.
- The Durban Film Office reserves the right to alter program guidelines with general public.
- The number of awards and amount awarded is contingent on confirmation of the Durban Film Offices annual budget.

D. Evaluation Process – How does it work?

The evaluation of applications takes place in three phases:

Phase 1: Technical Evaluation Stage

The initial evaluation stage will evaluate whether your submission fulfils all the eligibility criteria and if your application includes all the documents required under 'submission criteria' (see above).

The Durban Film Office will contact you to request any documentation not submitted and you will have 5 working days to submit these documents. If you are unable to complete the application submission within 5 working days from date of first contact, your submission will be removed from the submissions and you will receive a notification that you will need to submit your project during the next project cycle.

Phase 2: Evaluation

A panel of industry professionals will evaluate your project submission on set criteria (see below). The panel will provide final scoring, assessments and recommendations for shortlisting for the phase 3 evaluations. Submissions that are not shortlisted will receive a notification that the project has not been selected for an interview.

Phase 3: Interview of shortlisted applications

Project submissions shortlisted in the phase 2 evaluation will receive an invitation to attend an interview. Each shortlisted submission will be interviewed by the panel and provided an opportunity to present their project. The panel will then provide final scoring, assessments and recommendations to the DFO.

E. Phase 2 Evaluation Criteria - What criteria are used to assess my submission?

Merits of the creative proposal

- Does the project present strength and distinctiveness of the story or subject matter?
- Does the writer demonstrate understanding of story/narrative structure?

Feasibility of the business proposal

- Is there a clearly defined and relevant marketing and / or development plan?
- Is the proposed budget realisable?
- Is the proposed finance plan feasible?
- Is there a clear market / audience for the film?

Track record of the creative team and the production company.

- Has the company produced similar projects?
- Do the level of skills, experience and track record of each of the key principals demonstrate reasonable capacity to advance the project?

The market potential for the film

- Does the project demonstrate South African distribution potential?
- Does the project demonstrate international sales potential?

F. Phase 3 Evaluation Criteria - What criteria are used to assess my interview?

Presentation of the creative proposal

- Is the vision of the creative team clear?
- Is the story structure logical / believable?

Feasibility of the business proposal

- Is the proposed team able to make the necessary commitments to the proposed plan?
- Ability of the team to raise the necessary financing?
- What level of production value can be achieved?
- Is there a clear understanding of the market for the project?

Track record of the creative team and the production company.

- Does the producer have the necessary skills to advance the project?
- Does the directors' profile and vision align the project objectives?

Overall presentation

- The evaluation panel will be looking for applications that demonstrate a well-thought out plan to drive the project to final financing and production with realistic projections within a year. Any research or other background supporting the application should be included.

G. Contractual Arrangements

- Successful applicants will be required to submit documents to prove the ownership of all the intellectual property rights of the film and to execute funding contracts with the EThekweni Municipality.
- Subject to customary exclusions and exceptions, the Durban Film Office Fund support is to be acknowledged with a Durban Film Office credit and logo on the production, publicity and promotional materials relating to the production.
- Successful applicants will be required to register a Special Purpose Corporate Vehicle (SPCV) incorporated in the Republic of South Africa solely for the purpose of the production of the film project. The SPCV and parent company(ies) must have a majority of South African shareholders of whom at least one shareholder must play an active role in the production and be accredited in that role.

H. Funding Drawdowns and Reporting Requirements for successful applicants

- Successful applicants will be notified by letter and will be required to enter into a grant fund agreement with the Durban Film Office, Ethekewini Municipality in terms of s67 of the Municipal Finance Management Act No. 56 of 2003.
- The fund agreement will outline the reporting requirements for the duration of the agreement.
- The fund agreement will outline the funding drawdowns for the duration of the agreement.