



UK-WIDE FILM FESTIVAL STRATEGY

UK–Wide Film Festival Strategy

Purpose of the strategy document

The UK Film Council’s aims and funding priorities for the next three years have been set out in the publication *Film in the Digital Age*. These were structured and framed to support the UK Film Council’s overarching goal:

‘To help make the UK a global hub for film in the digital age, with the world’s most imaginative, diverse and vibrant film culture, underpinned by a flourishing, competitive and sustainable film industry.’

One of the new funding priorities identified by the UK Film Council is a UK–wide Film Festival Fund totalling £1.5 million a year for the next three years. This strategy paper sets out the framework for the fund, and may be used as a framework for other public funders of festivals.

Section 1: Film Festival Fund mission statement and key objectives

1.1 Definition

For the purposes of the Film Festival Fund, a film festival is defined as:

‘An event which takes place bi–annually or less frequently, which offers film screenings or a programme of films that would not otherwise be available to the local or national population. A festival includes individual events and elements , eg debates, masterclasses, criticism, guest speakers, etc, that create a sense of occasion, time and/or place, and generate a unique atmosphere of anticipation, excitement and learning which over time permeates the festival’s brand.’

1.2 UK–wide Film Festival Fund mission statement

The mission statement for the fund is:

‘To ensure that by 2012 audiences across the UK have access to a wide variety of film festivals which maximise audience choice and provide opportunities for learning, and that collectively these festivals contribute to the development of a more competitive UK film industry at home and overseas.’

1.3 The three key objectives of the Film Festival Fund:

Objective 1: To help ensure that, taken together, UK film festivals deliver significant economic, company, and global value for the UK film industry.

Objective 2: To help ensure that the majority of the population in the UK has access to film festivals that deliver clear and substantial cultural, social and education value.

Objective 3: To establish effective impact measurements for film festivals that address all six of the UK Film Council's core public values (economic, company, global, cultural, social and education), and ensure that public funding is allocated to target those impacts.

Section 2: Current film festival landscape

There are many film festivals of various types held in the UK, numbering well over a hundred. They range in size, ambition, focus and type. Many of these festivals are not publicly funded, often because they do not fit the criteria of the various bodies providing funding. Those festivals that may be funded to some extent often lack management resources, time and marketing expertise, and are thus unable to fulfil their potential to deliver greater public value by reaching out to a much wider and broader audience. The aim of this strategy is to provide a structure and co-ordination (where appropriate) to this diverse and constantly changing sector.

The majority of film festivals in the UK are necessarily local in ambition, focus and scale. Support for such festivals is most effectively provided through bodies such as the National or Regional Screen Agencies (RSAs) that understand such festivals well and which in many cases have strong connections to them. Currently around 80 festivals are funded in this way (approximately £900,000 was invested in 2006/07).

The Film Festival Fund is aimed at building the ambition and reach of film festivals that are currently, or have the potential, to be of national or international significance and is not aimed at local festivals.

Nevertheless, it is recognised that these local festivals make a major contribution to the public value indicators for film in the UK and abroad. Understanding and measuring the impact of these festivals is therefore also important. Consequently, the public value indicators set out below may be useful for these other funding bodies when making funding decisions.

Section 3: Defining the public value and impact of film festivals

Funding should be allocated according to the ability of a film festival to contribute towards the mission statement and the three key objectives.

In return for UK Film Council funding, film festivals will be required to deliver against the UK Film Council’s six core public value indicators set out below, and measure the impact that the festival has on each.

1. Market development value	The contribution to the UK economy in terms of employment, skills, exports, inward investment and tourism.
2. Company development value	The contribution to the development of companies within film and related sectors.
3. Cultural value for the individual	Providing pleasure and stimulation from film in all its variety, and thus enriching the life of the nation’s individual citizens through film.
4. Educational value	Improving, increasing and deepening understanding of the world and its diversity and its history for people of all ages.
5. Social value – communities	Improving understanding within and between communities, encouraging participation by all and enriching the life of those communities across the UK.
6. Global value	Positively representing UK culture around the world, and building partnerships with other countries.

A more detailed description of how these individual values relate to the film festival landscape is provided below. Any festival applying for funding would be required to specify how their proposed activities contribute to each applicable value.

3.1 Market development value

One of the most important values that festivals can deliver is the increase in value of an individual film(s) in the UK. Owners of film rights are looking to festivals to increase the profile of their respective films, and thereby increase its value in the market place. This can be achieved in two ways:

- if a distribution deal is already in place the film’s distributor may consider working with a festival as part of an overall marketing and PR plan;
- where a film is seeking distribution, often the rights owner is hoping to achieve sufficient profile and opportunity to attract distribution deals both domestically and internationally.

Festivals may also raise the profile of film as a whole, thereby increasing economic value of the whole industry. These scenarios have one common demand – profile. Consequently, larger and higher-profile festivals are often able to achieve greater impact in this area.

3.2 Company value

Company value focuses on the film industry, specifically the contribution to the development of companies within film and related sectors. It can be defined by the amount of film industry activity and participation within a festival, both formally and informally. Examples of formal activities may include training schemes, industry recognition programmes, peer to peer programmes, etc. It may also include the collaboration (paid or otherwise) with other industry bodies/members such as technology and equipment providers, staffing or industry partners. Informal activities could include networking events or environments encouraging forums for discussion.

3.3 Cultural value

Cultural value is defined as providing pleasure and stimulation from film in all its variety, and thus enriching the life of the population through film. In practice this refers to the way an individual enjoys and appreciates a film that they would not have normally seen. The word 'enriches' encapsulates this value, in that the film(s) have been able to deepen and stimulate a persons experience of film, and consequently their experience of film culture and culture generally. This can be achieved by a festival through, for example, programming choices, screening environments, or events enriching the film experience such as Q&A sessions with cast or crew.

3.4 Educational value

Educational value is aimed at the broader audience, and refers to improving, increasing and deepening understanding of the world and its diversity and history. Although closely aligned with the educative elements of company value, educational value encompasses the general viewing public. Education may be structured in a formal manner, or intrinsically delivered through the festival in various forms. Structured educational value could be delivered through formal educational programmes, or experiential activities and events relating to films and their subject matter. Intrinsic education might achieve a deepening of understanding around history, events or cultures through a film's (or indeed a programme of films) particular story or subject matter.

3.5 Social value

Social value seeks to improve understanding within and between communities across the UK, and encourage participation by all. The intrinsic nature of the festival programming, as well as the depth and breadth of that programming and how it speaks to various groups and communities viewing the films, will impact social value. Practical examples would therefore include not just programming choices, but how these choices both relate to, and enrich the experience of, the target audience of the festival. This may include different communities seeing and enjoying films that they would not ordinarily encounter, and gaining an understanding of other communities through the subject matter and through the actual festival experience.

3.6 Global value

Some UK festivals have an impact on the international stage. Global value is concerned with positively representing UK culture around the world, and building partnerships with other countries. This can be achieved by international activity and/or participation in the festival within the UK, or international coverage/activity outside of the UK. It may range from basic coverage and awareness, to active participation and contribution.

Section 4: Types of film festivals

Using the public value indicators and analysing the festival landscape in the UK, it is possible to arrive at three types of festivals:

- i. **Festivals of major international and UK-wide significance** – those festivals that currently, or have the potential to, deliver significantly against **all** six values.
- ii. **Festivals of ‘national’ significance** – those festivals that currently, or have the potential to, significantly deliver at a UK-wide level against **some** of the public value areas, and have some impact on all of the public values.
- iii. **Festivals of regional/local/special interest significance** – those festivals that currently, or have the potential to, deliver significantly against a few of the public value areas, but not against all public values.

Any festival support, and the scale of this support, can be assessed against the ability of that festival to match some or all of the indicators as the following grid illustrates (with indicative maximum possible scores):

Festival Type	Market development value	Company value	Cultural value	Educational value	Social value	Global value
Major international and national significance	***	***	***	***	***	***
National significance	*	*	***	***	***	*
Regional/local/special interest significance	*		***	***	***	

The UK Film Council's £1.5 million UK-wide Film Festival Fund will only be allocated to festivals of major international and national significance, and festivals of national significance.

Nevertheless, the scoring system above may be applicable or adaptable towards assessment of all types of festivals.

4.1 Support for festivals of major international and national significance

The UK has the world's third biggest film economy. Currently this status is not reflected in or reinforced by its film festivals when compared to other major world festivals such as Venice, Berlin, or Sundance. As a response, the UK Film Council has identified two types of film festivals that it wishes to support, which though thematically different, both enjoy global ambitions:

- A festival focussed around new and emerging talent, a key rendezvous for filmmakers, for discovery and at the forefront of new ideas about film. Such a UK festival should or could have an impact in Europe and the rest of the world.
- A festival that acts as a major public showcase for film in general and for British films both in the UK and abroad, on a par or exceeding the scale of festivals such as Berlin.

To achieve such global status will require considerable resources and perhaps new partnerships. The UK Film Council has allocated £1.25 million a year for three years to see whether these ambitions can be achieved through no more than two separate festivals. The allocation of the money will be decided as part of the application assessment process. Success will be influenced by the ability of a festival to obtain additional partnership funding.

4.2 Support for festivals of national significance

The UK Film Council has allocated £250,000 a year for three years towards festivals of national significance. Such festivals will be required to meet, through their reach, programming, etc, the public value categories set out in Section 3. The more impact they can show against the value, the more likely they are to be successful.

Other considerations which will influence the UK Film Council's assessment of applications include issues such as genre, location, demographics, etc.

Section 5: Managing the strategy

Research by the UK Film Council points to a large, fast moving and diverse number of film festivals. Around 80 festivals per year obtain public funding from National and Regional Screen Agencies and the UK Film Council, totalling around £900,000.

The Film Festival Fund of £1.5 million is additional to this and is not meant to substitute any existing support.

In addition to the funding, the UK Film Council proposes to set up a strategic group (meeting at least once a year) to continue to review the overall film festival landscape in the UK. It would consider all festivals being funded, look at their activities, and determine whether the activities are meeting the fund's mission statement and objectives. The group could also act as a forum for learning, sharing and initiative-building between festivals. This directly relates to Objective 3, measuring and better understanding the impact of film festivals, especially as to how they are succeeding in meeting any or all of the public value categories.

The group would be led by the UK Film Council's Distribution & Exhibition Department, working with the UK Film Council's Partnerships team. The make-up and format of the group will be determined following discussions with partners and festivals. It is suggested that representatives of a mixture of funded festivals, national and RSAs, monitoring/research bodies, and other funders such as local authorities might attend a day long conference/meeting each year.

Section 6: Key parameters for the Film Festival Fund

The following parameters apply to the Film Festivals Fund:

- The fund will allocate £1.25 million a year for three years to festivals of major international and national significance; and £250,000 a year for three years for festivals of national significance.
- No more than two festivals that are, or have the potential to be, of major international and national significance will receive funding.
- Up to and no more than eight festivals that are, or have the potential to be, of national significance, will receive funding.
- For both strands, there will be one call for applications with each award being made for a three year period (subject to annual performance reviews).
- All awards of funding will be based on the principles of delivering upon growth and additionality, and not to fill existing funding gaps.
- The six public value categories as described in Section 3 will form the key part in the application and assessment process
- Where appropriate, activities linking and enhancing other UK Film Council strategies will be encouraged. Examples might include the Digital Screen Network, screen heritage, education and Olympics.

Section 7: Timetable

Publication of the strategy, guidelines and application forms November 2007	2
Applications deadline	31 January 2007
Assessment and decisions 2008	End February
UK Film Council November 2007	

