

Guidelines for FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA (Austrian Television Fund) 22 January 2024

Pursuant to Art. 23(1) of the KommAustria Act (KOG), Federal Law Gazette I No 32/2001 as last amended by Federal Law Gazette I No 182/2023, the Austrian Regulatory Authority for Telecommunications and Broadcasting (Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH, or RTR) has defined and published the following Guidelines for grants from FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA under Articles 26 to 28 KOG.

The section of these Guidelines relating to financial aid takes into consideration Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market (GBER) in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), OJ L 187/1 of 26 June 2014, as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023, OJ L 167/1 of 30 June 2023. The text of the Guidelines refers to FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA or “the Fund”; where rights and obligations are concerned, these designations refer to RTR.

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1 Object of grants

1.1 Legal basis

(1) Each year, FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA has EUR 13.5 million at its disposal for the purpose of supporting the creation and exploitation of cultural assets with Austrian character, in the form of television films (including television series, miniseries and documentaries), subject to the provisions of Articles 26 to 28 KOG as well as the Guidelines detailed in this document.

(2) The criteria specified in Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014, as amended by Regulation (EU) No 2021/1237 amending Regulation (EU) No 2020/972 amending Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 and amending Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 OJ L 215 of 7 July 2020, last amended by Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023, OJ L 167/1 of 30 June 2023 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (GBER), and in particular in Article 54 of the Regulation, are mandatorily applicable.

(3) The general provisions of Chapters I and II of the GBER are also mandatorily applicable, specifically:

- Art. 1(4)(a) GBER, which excludes the payment of individual aid in favour of an undertaking which is subject to an outstanding recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring an aid illegal and incompatible with the internal market.
- Art. 1(4)(c) GBER, which excludes the payment of aid to undertakings in difficulty.
- Art. 1(5)(a) GBER, which allows the grant of aid to be made subject to the obligation for the beneficiary to have a business premises or branch in the aid granting Member State at the moment of payment of the aid.
- Art. 6 GBER, which requires aid to have an incentive effect, i.e. the beneficiary has submitted an appropriate written application for the aid before work on the project or activity starts.
- Art. 8 GBER, which requires mandatory compliance with cumulation regulations. The sum of aid for the same eligible cost must not exceed the highest applicable thresholds specified in Art. 54 GBER.
- Art. 9 GBER, which requires by no later than 1 July 2016 publication of the information referred to in Annex III GBER on each individual aid award exceeding EUR 100,000.

1.2 Goals

The purpose of the grants is to contribute towards improving the quality of television production and the continued performance of the Austrian film industry, and to ensure diversity within the cultural landscape. Another purpose of the grants is to contribute to strengthening the audiovisual sector in Europe.

1.3 No legal claim

Grants will only be awarded within the scope of the funds made available by the Austrian federal government. No legal claims to grants from the FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA can be asserted.

1.4 Cultural test

Production grants can only be awarded for productions which include cultural content according to verifiable national criteria.

At least three of the following criteria must be fulfilled in order for a cultural production to qualify for a grant:

- The production is based on an Austrian or European topic or content
- The production is set in Austria or the EEA
- The production covers topics relevant to Austria or Europe
- The production reflects the diversity of Austrian or European culture or creativity
- The production supports the maintenance of the general cultural heritage
- The production uses Austrian or European motifs or locations
- The leading actors or creative film makers in positions of responsibility are from Austria or the EEA

1.5 Productions not eligible for grants

The following are not eligible for grants:

- Productions for which filming began prior to applying for a production grant. Where it is not possible to apply for a production grant via the online platform by the deadline, an exception is permitted whereby the application to the Fund may be sent via email beforehand; the applicant must await approval by the Fund
- Productions expected to result in a breach of the Austrian federal constitution, other Austrian laws or provisions of European law
- Commissioned film productions
- Corporate, advertising or image films
- Show programmes and similar programmes
- Magazine programmes and television reports including any parts thereof
- Mere recordings of theatre, opera or concert events
- Single- and multi-part productions with calculated total production costs of less than EUR 80,000

- Productions with calculated total production costs of EUR 1.8 million or more, as well as series with calculated total production costs of EUR 600,000 or more per episode, unless applying exclusively for the Excellence Bonus as laid out in 7.2.

2 Eligible costs and own contribution

2.1 Eligible costs

(1) Eligible costs in terms of these Guidelines for productions are total production costs excluding value-added tax (deductible input tax). Overall production costs comprise net production costs, calculated production overheads and the calculated producer's fee, as itemised under Section 10.3.

For FISA+ funded projects applying for the Excellence Bonus, eligible costs are those parts of the production costs that can be recognised as project-related expenses in Austria, excluding value-added tax (deductible input tax), as itemised under Sections 10.3 and 10.4.

(2) Recognised costs include those which are in line with the provisions of wage and salary laws, social security laws and labour laws, especially collective bargaining agreements, and other agreements or guidelines commonly applied in the industry. Cost calculations must duly consider the principles of thrift, expedience and economy. The Fund is entitled to request confirmation from an independent expert.

(3) Production overheads (general expenses) will be recognised up to a maximum of 7.5% of total net production costs.

(4) A calculated producer's fee will be recognised up to a maximum of 7.5% of total production costs.

(5) No buffers for cost overruns will be accepted, except in cases where a completion bond is taken out. A reasonable level of financing costs will be recognised under the 'General costs' item.

(6) The amount calculated for own services performed will be assessed with due attention to the scope and nature of the project to be funded.

(7) Grants can be awarded for the costs of obtaining an International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN) or an entry in the Entertainment Identifier Registry (EIDR), or for the costs of "green production".

2.2 Own contribution

(1) Grant awards presuppose that applicants will finance a reasonable share of the overall production costs themselves. The scope of the production and the means of the grant recipient shall be taken into account in this context.

(2) The applicant's own contribution may also include provisions arising from cost items in the calculation. This contribution can be financed from the applicant's own funds or with proceeds from the transfer of exploitation rights as long as the licence shares arising from this source are available for the production and the transfer ensures reasonable exploitation. Third-party funds granted to the applicant in the

form of loans (e.g. bank loans) are considered equivalent to own funds where such funds are not grants from public institutions.

(3) The applicant's own services are considered equivalent to own funds contributed provided that such services are valued at market rate and are immediately related to the production of the film. Such own services are in any case valued at a rate of one hundred per cent.

(4) The costs allocated for natural persons or legal entities which are identical to or have a close business relationship with the grant applicant, a co-producer, a shareholder or the managing director of a legal entity in the role of co-producer are to be indicated separately as services settled internally at prices customary in the market; provision can be made for such costs in the applicant's own contribution.

3 Personal and material requirements

3.1 Independence

(1) Under these Guidelines, only independent producers of films are eligible to apply for grants.

(2) Independence will be assessed in particular based on shares of ownership in the production company, control over production, the volume of programmes supplied to one and the same television broadcaster, and ownership of exploitation rights. A producer will not be considered independent, and thus not eligible, in particular where a television broadcaster participating in the funding of the production in question holds a majority share in the production company applying for a grant. A majority share always exists where a single television broadcaster (directly or indirectly) holds more than 25% of the production company's shares or voting rights, or where two or more television broadcasters jointly hold more than 50% of the shares or voting rights. Where one or more indirect participations exist and participation exceeds 25% or 50% at each level, such a case will be considered equivalent to a direct participation of more than 25% or 50%. The participation limits are to be reviewed at each level (continuing through all levels as required).

At the Fund's request, the grant applicant must submit a statement signed by a lawyer or notary public confirming the applicant's independence.

(3) Public and private broadcasters are not eligible to apply for production grants.

3.2 Specialised qualifications

(1) Eligible applicants include natural persons or legal entities possessing the necessary specialised qualifications (i.e. sufficient artistic and film industry qualifications) and experience who can provide evidence of a branch or business premises in Austria, regardless of their place of establishment or residence, as long as it is located within the European Economic Area (EEA), no later than on the date the grant is disbursed and as long as it is ensured that the applicant will consistently create cultural assets with Austrian character.

(2) Grant applicants will generally be considered qualified if they have created an artistically and financially comparable production with Austrian character in the past three years. Apart from this consideration, applicants' specialised qualifications will always be duly assessed according to the scope and nature of the production to be funded.

3.3 Quality and economy

Projects funded under these guidelines must be anticipated to assure a production that is eligible for funding in terms of quality and economic criteria, and that such production could otherwise not be realised – or only insufficiently realised – without such funding.

3.4 Share of non-Austrian financing

With consideration of the legal mandate to strengthen Austria as a media sector location, productions involving a large share of non-Austrian financing, which will contribute to covering expenses incurred in Austria, will be given special consideration, especially where the applicant has a major part in the production.

3.5 Maximum number of submissions

In the case of productions that are rejected or refused, an application for a production grant may be submitted a maximum of three times provided that filming has not yet begun. Productions that have already received funding may not apply for an increase of the production grant.

3.6 Minimum length

(1) Grants will only be awarded for productions that are at least 45 minutes in length.

(2) In the case of multi-part productions, the length of the individual episodes may be totalled.

4 Agreements with television broadcasters

4.1 Financing

(1) A production is only eligible for funding where one or more television broadcasters contribute at least 30% of overall production costs to the financing of the production. This minimum contribution is of a financial nature and does not include the provision of free-issue materials (such as archive rights and/or other contributions in kind) by the broadcasters. If archive material is provided, the costs must be valued appropriately and at prices customary to the market, based on a publicly published price list. Archive and research costs must be borne by television broadcasters. Valued free-issue materials that are offset are also not included in the revenue share of the television broadcaster.

(2) Where the participation mostly or exclusively consists of pre-sales (guaranteed purchase of licences), at least 50% of this financial contribution should be available when shooting begins.

(3) Where a television broadcaster participating in financing contributes archive material to the production and grants rights to use and exploit that archive material only within that broadcaster's region, it is necessary to clarify the applicable conditions and licence fee required for the producer to acquire the rights needed for additional use or exploitation of the production.

(4) Productions in which one or more television broadcasters hold a large participation may be given preferential treatment.

(5) When calculating the required share of financing by a television broadcaster as referred to under Section 4.1 (1) and (2), participation by a distributor that derives from pre-sales to a television broadcaster can also be recognised up to a maximum of 10% of total production costs, provided that the distributor's participation is subject to an appropriate minimum guarantee and a corresponding statement of intent from the broadcaster can be presented when submitting the application.

The expected sales price is to be given as a net figure, i.e. after subtracting the distributor's commission and distribution costs.

4.2 Rights

(1) Television broadcasters participating in financing overall production costs may only acquire rights which are limited:

- To a period of no more than five years and, with multi-part productions, no more than seven years;
- To the intended broadcasting region of the respective television broadcaster; and
- With respect to content or subject matter,
 - to free TV

- to live streaming (within the framework of integrated retransmission of the broadcaster's channel over the internet) and
- to catch-up TV offered in the form of free video-on-demand no earlier than seven days before and no later than 90 days after the broadcast.

(2) Where television broadcasters operating in the field of pay TV participate in financing total production costs, they may acquire pay TV rights for corresponding areas and periods on the basis of conditions customary in both the industry and the market. Pay TV VOD rights can be transferred as set out under 4.8.

4.3 Extended licence period

(1) Where only one television broadcaster participates in the financing of overall production costs and contributes a share of at least 55%, that broadcaster is entitled to acquire the rights referred to under Section 4.2 (1) for a maximum of seven years and, with multi-part productions, for a maximum of ten years.

(2) Two or more television broadcasters can acquire a licence for the rights referred to in Section 4.2 (1) for an extended period of a maximum of seven years and, with multi-part productions, a maximum of ten years, provided that they jointly contribute at least 60% towards the financing of the overall production costs. Furthermore, each participating television broadcaster must contribute a share of at least 15% towards total financing in order to be eligible for the extended licence period.

4.4 Free TV

Free TV rights may only include terrestrial broadcasting and broadcasting via cable and satellite.

4.5 Live streaming

(1) The integrated retransmission of the production via internet live streaming is permitted.

(2) To safeguard the exclusive nature of those exploitation rights remaining with the producer, when broadcasting the production via live stream, the television broadcaster is required to apply geo-blocking mechanisms to restrict use to the broadcaster's licence region. If the television broadcaster participates in the financing in accordance with Section 4.3, the Fund may allow deviating agreements for justified exemptions at the request of the funding applicants.

4.6 Catch-up TV / Free video-on-demand

(1) The production may be made available to users via streaming on demand (free video-on-demand) only for a period of seven days before and ninety days following the free TV broadcast ('catch-up TV right').

(2) To safeguard the exclusive nature of those exploitation rights remaining with the producer, when broadcasting the production, the television broadcaster is required to

apply geo-blocking mechanisms to restrict use to the broadcaster's licence region. If the television broadcaster participates in the financing in accordance with Section 4.3, the Fund may allow deviating agreements for justified exemptions at the request of the grant applicants.

4.7 Pay TV

(1) Pay TV rights may be acquired only by parties participating in financing in accordance with Section 4.3. In such cases, a free TV broadcaster participating in financing as referred to in Section 4.3 and the applicant are entitled to jointly hold and exploit pay TV rights for the broadcaster's exclusive licence region for a period no longer than the first half of the licence period specified under Section 4.3.

(2) After that period, the applicant is entitled to freely use the pay TV rights and in any case to exploit the production within the television broadcaster's licence region even without the broadcaster's consent.

4.8 Pay video-on-demand

(1) Pay video-on-demand rights may be acquired only by parties participating in financing in accordance with Section 4.3. In such cases, a TV broadcaster participating in financing as referred to in Section 4.3 and the applicant are entitled to jointly hold and exploit pay video-on-demand rights for the broadcaster's exclusive licence region for a period no longer than the first half of the licence period specified under Section 4.3.

(2) After that period, the applicant is entitled to freely use the pay video-on-demand rights and in any case to exploit the production within the television broadcaster's licence region even without the broadcaster's consent. The provisions specified under Section 4.6 of these Guidelines remain unaffected.

4.9 Other utilisation rights

(1) No other restrictions to the applicant's use of these rights are permitted beyond the provisions specified in these guidelines.

(2) All other usage rights, especially for pay TV, home video, DVD, Blu-ray, video-on-demand, near-video-on-demand, internet TV (in any case in the form of an on-demand service and live streaming in other language versions), excerpt rights, cinema presentation rights, rights to usage types not yet known at the time of concluding the contract etc., remain at the free disposal of the grant applicant. This does not prejudice any claims held by the television broadcaster to participate in revenues.

(3) The aforementioned does not apply to typical annex rights associated with broadcasting rights, such as rights to broadcast excerpts announcing the programme, archiving rights and editing rights, while giving due consideration to personal rights under copyright law.

(4) In the case of international co-productions, the requirements set out under Sections 4.2 to 4.18 need not be met where the co-producer contracts with a co-financing non-German-language television broadcaster and the non-German-language license region is not relevant for the applicant, for example due to a limitation of utilisation regions or areas.

4.10 Licence start

(1) The licence period pursuant to Section 4.2 or Section 4.3 commences no later than twelve months after the final acceptance of the entire production.

(2) The beginning of this period also applies to the broadcasting rights of the television broadcasters indicated under Section 4.11 (2).

(3) In the event that a period for blocking utilisation is stipulated, the beginning of the licence period is postponed by the duration of that blocking period.

4.11 Licence region

(1) In the case of public television broadcasters, the broadcasting region must always be the same as the region defined in the broadcaster's legal coverage mandate. It is not permitted to limit the broadcasting region along language lines.

(2) Television broadcasters participating in financing a project may also acquire rights for broadcasters with which they cooperate. This does not imply any expansion of the exclusive licence region as specified under Section 4.11 (1).

(3) Television broadcasters may acquire broadcasting rights on behalf of other television broadcasters. The authorisation order must be included with the submitted documents.

4.12 Exclusivity

It is permitted to grant a television broadcaster a period of exclusive utilisation for the broadcaster's licence region. The period ends with the premiere broadcast but no later than twelve months after final acceptance of the production.

4.13 Licence share

Any contract concluded with a television broadcaster participating in financing must stipulate a license share of at least 50% of the entire amount to be contributed by the television broadcaster.

4.14 Participation in revenues

(1) Each and every claim entitling the television broadcaster to participate in revenues must be based on the ratio of the co-production share (i.e. the total amount contributed minus the license share) to the recognised total production costs. As per

Section 4.1 (1), valued free-issue materials that are offset are not included in the revenue share of the television broadcaster.

(2) A revenue participation entitlement on the part of the television broadcaster cannot become effective until the recognised own contribution by the producer (minus the licence share) has been recovered in full and any minimum guarantees/advance payments for distribution (cf. Section 5.1) have been repaid.

4.15 Collecting societies

Where the funding applicant is a member of a collecting society, it is necessary to ensure that the collecting society can exercise the rights conferred upon it without restriction and that all resulting revenues (minus the collecting society's share) are paid to the applicant.

4.16 Festivals and fairs

The transfer of non-exclusive and non-commercial usage rights to television broadcasters participating in the financing, specifically for use at festivals and exhibitions/fairs, is permitted.

4.17 Excerpt rights

(1) The applicant must be given unlimited rights to excerpts from all language versions.

(2) The acquisition of non-exclusive excerpt rights to own productions or productions by a television broadcaster participating in financing must be limited to the authorisation to use excerpts from the relevant production with a maximum length of three minutes for the purpose of:

- announcing the broadcast(s) forming the subject of the contract (programme previews);
- other cases of programme promotion, cross-promotion or current events broadcasts (news, obituaries); and
- documentary films, in particular for portraits of actors, directors or producers.

(3) This includes the authorisation to advertise the broadcast forming the subject of the contract in other media in a manner that is common in the relevant industry, for example in programme guides, in print media and on websites.

(4) Other additional uses of excerpt rights by the participating television broadcaster are payable at a flat rate of compensation per second used.

(5) Television broadcasters may also acquire an option to purchase non-exclusive excerpt rights for the agreed license period and region or for utilisation within the broadcasting family. This option may only be exercised after final acceptance, and a separate licence fee must be defined.

4.18 Additional usage periods

(1) A television broadcaster who is granted an option to acquire rights for a second usage period may exercise this option no earlier than six months after the premiere broadcast. The compensation stipulated as part of the option for granting rights must not be a component of production financing. No options are permitted to be granted to or by affiliated undertakings.

(2) The compensation stipulated in return for any free TV rights (including live streaming and free VOD) and/or pay TV rights granted for a second usage period must be in line with customary market practice. The stipulated compensation will be considered in line with customary market practice where the total equals 10% of the total amount originally paid by the television broadcaster.

(3) Where the right to a second period for using free TV rights or pay TV rights is acquired, that period must not exceed five years and, with multi-part productions, not exceed seven years. Payments made to the grant recipient for the purpose of securing rights for a second or subsequent usage period do not fall under the co-financing television broadcaster's share in revenues.

4.19 Guideline priority

The following sentence must be included in the text of all agreements between the funding applicant and the television producer: "The producer intends to make use of funding from the FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA; the grant Guidelines of FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA in the version applicable at the time of concluding this agreement (available at www.rtr.at) is considered an integral part of this agreement and has priority over any conflicting agreements. Where for the purpose of production additional funding is accepted from other funding sources and any relevant guidelines from those sources include provisions that conflict with those of FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA, all participating parties shall endeavour to reach an agreement that corresponds to the guidelines of all financing and funding partners."

4.20 Additional agreements with television broadcasters

(1) Where a television broadcaster participating in financing wishes to acquire additional rights, this is possible within the scope of the licence period agreed in accordance with Sections 4.2 or 4.3. The agreed compensation must be customary to the market and not be a component of basic production financing. This means that it may not be included when calculating the television broadcaster's share in financing and therefore cannot be subject to revenue participation.

Furthermore, additional rights cannot be acquired for rights that are tied to increased funding by television broadcasters as set out in 4.3. An expanded acquisition of these rights is therefore excluded.

(2) In addition to the items listed above, all other agreements with television broadcasters participating in financing a production will be evaluated with regard to the production's eligibility for funding.

5 Exploitation

5.1 Distribution and commission

(1) Preference may be given to productions with the potential for further exploitation. These include productions that already when applying for a production grant present a plan for producing a version accessible for viewers with disabilities, as referred to in Section 8.1.

(2) The commission stipulated in distribution agreements may not exceed 25% and the term of the agreement may not exceed ten years. Lump-sum distribution costs may not exceed 10% of distribution revenues. This also applies to distribution agreements with any television broadcasters or their affiliates participating in financing the project. Any additional participation of distributors in revenues is excluded.

(3) Applicants can freely decide on their form distribution. Therefore, contracts with the co-financing television broadcasters may not include any stipulations regarding a distribution mandate. Distribution rights may also be granted to undertakings affiliated with a television broadcaster in cases where the terms of the distribution agreements are in line with customary industry practice in the relevant market, and it is ensured that any license fees and settlement arrangements for distribution that are stipulated with affiliates under company law are in line with customary industry practice. If a television broadcaster participating in financing does not acquire the rights for a second licence period, they revert to the applicant.

(4) Provision must be made for the possibility of cancellation. Any participation in revenues on the part of the television broadcaster participating in financing is permitted only once minimum guarantees and the recognised own contribution by the producer (without licence share) have been repaid (refer to Section 4.14).

(5) The applicant shall submit reports on the exploitation of rights each year without prior request.

6 Agreement with co-producers

6.1 Television broadcasters

Television broadcasters are not considered co-producers under these Guidelines.

6.2 Co-producers

(1) The participation of co-producers should comprise financial, artistic and technical contributions. The artistic and technical contributions of each co-producer should correspond to that co-producer's financial contribution.

(2) Producers with minority share in the production who are at the same time grant applicants should contribute a minimum of 20% to the overall costs of the production.

(3) If only one television broadcaster is involved in the production, the broadcaster's share of financing will be apportioned to all co-production partners. A minimum share of 20% in relation to the total production costs are to be apportioned to the applicant.

(4) The applicant is to receive a percentage of the proceeds from all forms of exploitation at least commensurate with the applicant's share in financing. In cases where utilisation regions and areas are delineated, the market size and value must be taken into account.

(5) The selection and commissioning of worldwide distribution must be mutually agreed.

7 Extent and nature of grants

7.1 Relative amount for productions without FISA+ funding

(1) With due consideration given to Section 10.6 of these Guidelines, a maximum of 20% of the overall production costs for television productions will normally be funded by FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA in the form of subsidies.

(2) Notwithstanding the paragraph above, the amount of the grant may be increased to a maximum of 30% of the total production costs where the grant objectives are especially well met.

This is in particular the case where, for example:

- The added value generated by the production is expected to be well above average for Austria;
- The majority of the filming days take place in Austria;
- The product reflects Austrian cultural identity to an especially great extent;
- Foreign funding is used in Austria;
- The applicants for funding are sole producers with the participation of international television broadcasters;
- Multiple television broadcasters, including an international television broadcaster, participate in the production;
- The financial participation of the television broadcasters is over 55%;
- The funding applicant in international co-productions is majority co-producer;
- The majority of the staff is employed in Austria (tax domicile);
- The majority of the essential staff functions (script, direction, camera, sound, editing, music, line production/unit production management) are performed by different persons;
- The majority of the main staff functions (script, direction, camera, sound, editing, music, line production and unit production management) are performed by different women;
- National and international exploitation is ensured by an appropriate minimum guarantee; or
- The production is distinguished by innovative strategies in the field of production and/or marketing.

(3) Exceptional grants exceeding 20% will be considered only in cases where the criteria listed above are met to an extent that clearly surpasses the average standards of other funded productions and where at least four of the criteria listed above are met. The grant applicant must provide evidence of meeting the conditions.

(4) The funding rate will be reduced to 20% as set out in (1) if by the date of final settlement the applicant cannot provide evidence of meeting the criteria previously listed by the applicant or if the requirements based on which the increased grant was approved have changed to the extent that the criteria are not met.

7.2 Excellence bonus – relative amount for FISA+ funded productions

(1) If the funding decision of Austria Wirtschaftsservice Gesellschaft m.b.H. (hereinafter: "AWS") is available, a maximum of 10% of the recognised expenses incurred in Austria for productions will normally be funded by FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA in the form of subsidies with due consideration given to Section 10.6 of the Guidelines where the grant objectives as set out in Art. 27(6) KOG are especially well met.

This is in particular the case where, for example:

- The Austrian costs amount to at least 50% of the total budget;
- The majority of the filming days take place in Austria;
- The product reflects Austrian cultural identity to an especially great extent;
- Foreign funding is used in Austria;
- The applicants for funding are sole producers with the participation of international television broadcasters;
- Multiple television broadcasters, including an international television broadcaster, participate in the production;
- In addition to co-financing television broadcasters, audiovisual on-demand services participate in the funding with at least 10% of total production costs;
- The financial participation of the television broadcasters is over 55%;
- The funding applicant in international co-productions is majority co-producer;
- The majority of the staff is employed in Austria (tax domicile);
- National and international exploitation is ensured by an appropriate minimum guarantee; or
- The production is distinguished by innovative strategies in the field of production and/or marketing.

(2) The production must clearly surpass the average standards of other funded productions and meet at least four of the criteria listed above. The grant applicant must provide evidence of meeting the conditions.

(3) The funding must be repaid as set out in Section 13(1) if by the date of final settlement the applicant cannot provide evidence of meeting the criteria previously listed by the applicant or if the requirements based on which the funding was approved have changed to the extent that the criteria are not met.

7.3 Expenses incurred in Austria

(1) The expenses incurred in Austria should equal at least 1.6 times the grant amount awarded and must not be lower. In any case, 20% of the total production costs can be incurred in other member states of the European Economic Area.

(2) In cases where the share of planned expenses in Austria is not reached, the amount of the grant will subsequently be reduced by the ratio of actual expenses incurred in Austria to the planned expenses in Austria. In exceptional cases FERNSEHFONDS

AUSTRIA can refrain from reducing the grant amount where the shortfall in actual expenses incurred in Austria is below 10%.

(3) In grant award decisions, applications which involve an especially large share of expenses incurred in Austria will be given special consideration. In such cases it is also necessary to take into account the ratio of the total planned amount of Austrian financing in relation to the planned expenditure in Austria.

8 Exploitation grants

8.1 Object of exploitation grants

(1) In addition to the total production costs as referred to in Section 7.1, the following measures may also be funded:

- Production of versions for people with hearing or visual impairments, where grants may cover 80% of the actual costs incurred and documented or a maximum of EUR 10,000;
- Production of foreign-language versions, where grants may cover 50% of the actual costs incurred and documented or a maximum of EUR 30,000;
- Screening of the production at film festivals, fairs and competitions, where grants may cover 50% of the actual costs incurred and documented or a maximum of EUR 30,000.

(2) Applications for exploitation grants will only be allowed subject to the availability of funds and to valid approval for a production grant. Where a previously issued approval for a production grant becomes void at a later stage, the exploitation grant also becomes void.

(3) Where funding is requested for the production of a foreign-language version, evidence of corresponding buyer interest must be provided.

(4) Applications for exploitation grants can be submitted repeatedly, until the maximum grant amount is fully exploited.

(5) Where a grant is requested for screening a previously funded project at film festivals, fairs and competitions, the relevant documentation must be provided.

8.2 Other funding institutions

The total share of the exploitation activity funded by other funding institutions or territorial authorities may only exceed 50% where grants are for the production of a version for people with hearing or visual impairments.

9 General provisions

9.1 Distribution of grant funds

(1) FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA may distribute funds for production grants and the excellence bonus based on whether productions have fictional or documentary content, in which case the respective share is to be disclosed in a suitable form at the beginning of each grant year. Should circumstances during the grant year make it appear likely that funding in one of these areas will not be fully utilised, FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA may adjust funding distribution.

(2) A share of 3% of the funds available to FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA each year may be reserved for exploitation grants under Section 8.1.

9.2 Grant amount

(1) The maximum grant amount for production grants and the excellence bonus is

- for productions with fictional content: EUR 750,000
- for productions with documentary content: EUR 550,000

10 Procedure

10.1 Deadlines

(1) Information on how to submit grant applications is published on the FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA website.

(2) Applications for exploitation grants pursuant to Section 8.1 can be submitted at any time after completion of the production. Applications for exploitation grants must be received by FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA at the latest 24 months after the production's announced completion date.

(3) Wherever possible, applications for grants from the Fund should be submitted via eRTR.

The eRTR terms and conditions of use can be viewed at www.fernsehfonds.at (in German).

(4) Applicants must complete their applications correctly and in full, and submit any declarations required. The fully completed application is to be signed by an individual authorised to sign for the applicant, by means of a qualified electronic signature as defined in Art. 3(2) of the Signature and Trust Services Act (SVG; Federal Law Gazette I No 50/2016 as last amended by Federal Law Gazette I No 104/2018) in conjunction with Art. 3(12) of the eIDAS Regulation as amended by Federal Law Gazette I No 104/2018; Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and repealing Directive 1999/93/EC, OJ L 257 of 28 August 2014. (5) Digital copies of the documents required for the application must be uploaded simultaneously as attachments to the online form.

(6) In the event that, for whatever reason, the applicant is not granted any funding, or originally granted funding is withdrawn, all documents will remain at the disposal of RTR. RTR will retain these documents for a period not exceeding the end of the contractual relationship with the grant applicant or until expiry of the legal retention periods applying to RTR or, beyond such periods, until termination of any legal disputes in which the data are required as evidence.

(7) A timely submission is defined without exception as an application with a qualified electronic signature submitted via the online portal no later than the last day of the submission deadline (midnight).

10.2 Documents to be submitted

(1) The documents required in the electronic application forms, especially descriptions of content, should preferably be submitted in German. All submitted documents become the property of FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA.

(2) Documents to be submitted specifically include the following:

- Details of the applicant
- Confirmation incl. form by a tax advisor or public accountant stating that the conditions defined under Article 2 (18) of the GBER (undertaking in difficulty) are not met
- Financing commitment(s) (at least conditional)
- Calculation of total production costs (correlating with the calculation sheet) specifically indicating the share of expenses to be incurred in Austria and own services
- Content description
- Evidence of film rights
- Financing plan showing the grant applicant's own contribution
- Crew and cast list (preliminary)
- General schedule and shooting schedule
- Information on any co-production partners, including a current excerpt from the Commercial Register and co-production contract; a preliminary contract or declaration of intent, stipulating in particular the artistic, technical and financial participation of each production partner as well as the distribution of exploitation as referred to in Section 6.2.

(3) Applicants who are applying for exploitation grants as referred to under Section 8.1 are also required to submit cost calculations for the planned activities.

(4) At the time of submission, the applicant should be able to provide evidence of third-party financing amounting to at least 50% of the total production costs in the form of binding commitments from these parties. The existence of such commitments may be taken into consideration when evaluating a production's eligibility for funding. The television broadcasters with a direct participation in the financing must describe the acquired and/or yet to be acquired scope of rights (in temporal, territorial and material terms) in the submitted financing commitments and reflect an appropriate licence share.

10.3 Calculation of total production costs

(1) In accordance with the principles of prudent business practice, the recognised net completion costs eligible for grants include advance costs, usage rights, artist fees, wages and contractor fees, costs for image and sound recording, equipment, studio, lighting and outdoor shooting, editing, synchronisation and mixing, travel expenses and transport/transportation costs, insurance and general costs.

(2) The calculation summary sheet must correspond to the detailed calculations. FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA reserves the right to refuse to recognise some of the itemised expenses.

(3) Advance production-related costs incurred prior to calculation may be included in the calculation (e.g. costs of project development, prior consultations and negotiations, casting, research or travel expenses).

(4) Wages and salaries must not be lower than the level specified in the applicable collective bargaining agreement and may be calculated based on the rates customary for the industry. The foregoing provision also applies to wages, salaries and artist or contractor fees not subject to a collective bargaining agreement.

The line producer fee must not exceed 2.5% of the net production costs.

(5) Services settled internally, own services and expenses settled with subsidiary firms are required to be separately itemised in the calculation and are part of the agreement. Upon final settlement, such costs can only be increased in substantiated exceptional cases, and only when previously reported to and approved by FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA.

(6) Calculated general expenses and the calculated producer's fee are calculated cost items that cannot be increased automatically if the net production costs are exceeded but remain at the level calculated. If the costs fall below the calculated level, the general expenses and the producer's fee are to be recalculated at 7.5% of the net production costs.

Production overheads/general expenses: The applicant may calculate a maximum of 7.5% of the net production costs as general expenses. In particular, the items listed below cannot be included as individual items in the calculation:

- General office supplies and IT
- General personnel costs
- General postal and courier services
- General phone expenses
- General insurance expenses
- General administrative expenses
- General expenses for entertaining
- Accounting and auditing expenses
- Costs of permanent business premises
- Travel expenses and other expenses not incurred by the production in question
- Interest and banking fees for general loans

(6) A maximum of 7.5% of total production costs is permitted to be calculated as producer's fee. No additional producer's fee can be calculated under the 'Wages and artist and contractor fees' cost item.

10.4 Expenses incurred in Austria

(1) Wages, salaries, and artist and contractor fees are recognised as expenses incurred in Austria if the recipient is a tax resident in Austria under the double taxation agreements. Therefore, the persons employed in the production must be named in a crew and cast list, indicating each person's place of tax residence. Otherwise, only the public levies and contributions payable in Austria on these wages, salaries, and artist and contractor fees shall be recognised as expenses incurred in Austria.

(2) Products or services provided by undertakings are only recognised as expenses in Austria in cases where:

- Evidence is provided that the undertaking's place of establishment, branch office or business premises is located in Austria and entered in the Austrian Commercial Register, and of its business licence;
- The product or service for which an invoice is issued was actually procured, purchased, leased or rented in Austria.

(3) Calculated general expenses and the calculated producer's fee for non-FISA+ funded productions are not considered costs incurred in Austria as defined for the purposes of this grant.

For projects that receive funding from AWS, the calculated general expenses and the calculated producer's fee can be included as costs incurred in Austria.

10.5 Submission of identical documents and exchange of information

All persons, companies and grant institutions participating in financing are to be provided with the same production data and information. Upon submitting the application, the applicant must also provide a declaration permitting the exchange of production-related and personal data, particularly with the grant institutions and television broadcasters with which FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA cooperates in Austria and abroad, for the purpose of verifying the documents.

10.6 Accumulation of grants

(1) Under these Guidelines, grants can be combined with grants from other institutions or territorial authorities. Grants under these guidelines cannot generally be awarded for productions which have already received support from other sources of Austrian federal funding (i.e. multiple federal grants are not permitted), unless a federal act expressly permits the acquisition of grants from other sources of federal funding.

(2) The total share of total production costs financed with public funds must not exceed 50%, while difficult productions, as defined in Section 10.6 (3), made with small budgets may be funded up to 80%. Funds obtained directly from EU programmes such as the MEDIA programme are not to be considered when calculating the maximum permitted amount of grants.

(3) A production can be considered difficult for example where only a low level of market acceptance can be expected and its chances of economic exploitation must therefore be considered limited, especially due to the production's experimental character or because it is associated with high risks due to its content, its manner of production, its artistic and/or technical design or its high cultural standards.

10.7 Grant decisions

(1) In general, FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA is required to issue decisions on completed applications for production grants within two months of each submission deadline. The review board established for advisory purposes is responsible for providing a statement with regard to the eligibility of the applications submitted for funding.

(2) Decisions on exploitation grants will be made after receipt of all relevant documentation.

(3) The applicant must be informed of the grant decision in writing and without delay. In the event of rejection, which must be issued in writing with due indication of the main reasons for the decision, the applicant is to be informed in due time so that the production can be submitted for another submission deadline, unless it generally breaches the relevant legal provisions or these Guidelines.

10.8 Notification of grant decision

In the event of a positive grant decision, the grant recipient will be given information on the amount of the grant to be awarded as well as all accompanying requirements and conditions connected to the funding approval, including the obligations related to the award in the form of a grant agreement. The grant agreement is to be signed and returned by the applicant within six weeks. The grant application may be declared void if the signed agreement is not returned to FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA within this period.

10.9 Carrying out a production prior to a valid grant agreement

Should the applicant begin carrying out the production proposed for funding before the grant agreement enters into effect, it is solely at the applicant's own risk. In such cases FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA will not be subject to obligations of any kind whatsoever.

10.10 Use of grant funds

Grant funds may only be used to cover costs arising from the production submitted to FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA. The applicant must ensure that the funds are used as specified and in an expedient and economical manner.

10.11 Grant approvals for a limited period

On the basis of the submitted documents, FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA may issue a grant approval which is valid for a limited period of time. If evidence of fulfilment of the requirements and conditions of the grant approval is not provided within this period, which is generally six months, or if the prerequisites for the grant approval are not or no longer met, the grant approval will be considered void. In justified exceptional cases, the Fund may extend the deadline following a written request by the applicant.

11 Method of disbursement

11.1 Completion guarantee

(1) The grant applicant and any co-producers holding a majority share must provide a written declaration stating that the planned production will be completed by a specific date (completion guarantee).

(2) FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA reserves the right to stipulate the requirement of a completion bond or other guarantees (e.g. a bank guarantee) in the grant agreement.

11.2 Evidence of full financing

Evidence that the production is fully financed is a condition for disbursement of the approved grant funds.

11.3 Disbursement of production grant in instalments

Before the grant agreement takes effect, the applicant is required to provide FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA with the final detailed calculation, final calculation sheet, the agreements with financing partners and other documents specified in the grant agreement. Reasons must be provided for any deviations from the calculations underlying the grant decision (i.e. those originally submitted or submitted later) and such deviations require approval by FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA.

11.4 Instalments

(1) Approved grants are generally disbursed in three instalments:

- 3/6 when the grant agreement takes effect
- 2/6 after filming starts
- 1/6 within six months of completion and audited final settlement statement of production

(2) Alternative contractual arrangements may also be made with regard to the scheduling of individual instalments.

11.5 Disbursement of exploitation grants

(1) Exploitation grants are disbursed only upon evidence of the costs incurred.

(2) The request for disbursement of the exploitation grant must be accompanied by invoices and receipts documenting the costs incurred. The incurred costs must not have already been included in the production costs. External costs as well as the applicant's documented own services can be submitted.

11.6 Absolute expiry date

Notwithstanding the other provisions of these guidelines, payments owing to and claims held by the grant recipient expire if they are not requested (after meeting all disbursement conditions) within three years after the grant agreement takes legal effect; such claims cannot be asserted in courts of law, in out-of-court proceedings, or by way of offsetting charges.

11.7 Prohibition of pledges and assignment

Grant recipients are not allowed to dispose of approved grant funds by means of assignment, cession, pledges or any other instrument.

11.8 Depletion of grant funds

If the funds allocated for grants are depleted, no further grants can be awarded in the given calendar year.

12 Reporting, settlement, final audit

12.1 Acceptance confirmation and final cost statement

(1) Grant funds are to be managed with due care and according to the principles of prudent business practices. Grant recipients are to keep separate records of all revenues and expenses related to the production as evidence of the use of funds for their specified purpose. To verify the use of grant funds for their specified purpose, acceptance confirmation from the co-financing television broadcasters is required to be submitted to the Fund before and after completion and before the final grant instalment is paid out (requested).

(2) Should the second and third instalments not be requested within six months of the announced completion date, the FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA may set a grace period of no more than six months. Within that period, the grant recipient must submit the final cost statement for the production (co-signed with the authorised signatures of any and all co-producers); the statement must be presented in a well-structured and meaningful form as well as provide sufficient detailed information to enable verification. Otherwise, the grant recipient's claim to the unpaid instalment (or instalments) will expire irrevocably.

(3) Should the grant recipient fail to submit the final cost statement on time, the grant recipient will be excluded from the submission process and will not receive grant approvals for any further productions until an appropriate cost statement has been submitted.

12.2 Access to books and accounts

FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA reserves the right to review the procedures of production, the use of grant funds for the specified purpose, the final cost statement on the basis of original records, account statements, records on own services at assessed value, original contracts etc., or to entrust a third party with this task. The grant recipient undertakes to make the original documents available to FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA or the third party entrusted with the review, to allow the inspection of documents, contracts, business ledgers and records, and to provide all information necessary for this purpose. The original documents will be returned to the grant recipient once the review has been completed. As a rule, such reviews will be carried out on site and must be permitted by the grant recipient.

12.3 Reporting and information obligations

(1) The grant recipient is required to carry out the project according to the agreed schedule and to report to FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA immediately and in writing any and all events which might delay the production or render it unfeasible or imply a change in the agreed purpose of the grant or its requirements and conditions.

(2) Grant recipients are to provide FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA with information on the progress of their projects at all times upon request. Depending on the duration of the

funded production or the amount of the grant, the grant agreement may require the recipient to present reports at regular intervals.

(3) An annual progress report is to be submitted in the first quarter of each calendar year for projects spanning several years.

13 Discontinuation and reimbursement

13.1 Forfeiture of grants

Grant recipients will be obliged to repay any previously awarded grant in part or in full within 14 days of a written request by FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA, in which case any grant awarded but not yet paid out will also be forfeited, where:

- The grant recipient presented important circumstances inaccurately or incompletely
- The grant recipient fails to comply with a general or special grant requirement as specified in law, these Guidelines or the grant agreement
- A grant has been awarded to an undertaking in difficulty as defined in Art. 2(18) GBER
- Required reports or verifications are not submitted or necessary information is not provided, where in such cases the recipient fails to comply with a written request previously sent, setting an appropriate deadline and expressly stating the legal consequences of non-compliance
- The grant recipient fails to report immediately and in writing any and all events which might delay the production or render it infeasible or require it to be modified
- Before proper completion of the funded production and before submission of the final cost statement, bankruptcy or settlement proceedings are initiated against the assets of the grant recipient, or bankruptcy proceedings are not initiated due to a lack of assets to cover costs and thus in particular achievement of the grant's purpose is or appears unfeasible
- The grant recipient impairs or obstructs agreed monitoring measures
- Part or all of the grant funds are not used for their specified purpose
- The production cannot or could not be completed at all or on schedule
- Failure to comply with the guideline prohibiting the assignment/cession of funds

13.2 Interest

In cases where grants already awarded must be repaid, the grant agreement may stipulate interest at an annual rate 4 percentage points above the applicable base rate per annum.

In the event of a grant repayment default, late-payment interest of up to 9.2 percentage points above the applicable base rate, as published by the Austrian National Bank (OeNB), can be charged per annum from the date the payment was due. The base interest rate applicable on the first of January or the first of July will apply for the following six months.

14 Contractual arrangements

14.1 Written form

(1) The grant agreement as well as any supplements to it must be in written form and stipulate the rights and obligations of the contracting parties.

(2) The following constitute the basis of the parties' rights and obligations as stipulated in the grant agreement: the treatment or content description submitted by the grant recipient, the recognised total production costs, the financing plan, the crew and cast list, the production schedule, the co-production agreements, the agreements with television broadcasters, and the agreements with other grant institutions and with other co-financiers. All documents of this kind are considered parts of the grant agreement.

14.2 KommAustria Act

The respective provisions of the KommAustria Act (KommAustria-Gesetz) and the Grant Guidelines are also considered parts of the grant agreement.

14.3 Acknowledgement obligation

(1) The grant recipient undertakes to make mention of the grant from FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA, specifically in the recipient's public relations work as well as in all advertisements, announcements or other presentations of the production (on the main page of the press information folder, in press releases, on posters and wherever credits appear).

(2) Mention is to be made of the grant from FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA in the opening and/or closing credits of the production.

(3) At least one line of text is to be used in the opening credits of the production to make mention of the grant from FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA.

(4) The logo of FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA is to be used in the closing credits to make mention of the grant. The logo is available at www.fernsehfonds.at or www.rtr.at. Compliance with the guidelines on logo use is mandatory. The use of the FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA logo must always be coordinated in advance with FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA.

(5) The scope of the acknowledgement obligation includes all utilisation and advertising of the production in every form of use worldwide.

(6) The grant recipient undertakes to submit, without explicit request, written reports on all exploitation activities, broadcasts (where known) and revenues from the exploitation of the production at least once a year for a period of 36 months following the premiere broadcast of the production.

(7) In addition, the grant recipient must provide to FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA at no cost one DVD copy or a copy on a storage medium of the funded production as well as press materials for archival purposes, and, if available, a trailer of the production, and grant FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA at no cost the appropriate rights of editing, reproduction and presentation as well as other non-commercial rights to use the relevant production for presentations in FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA's public relations work, and where possible provide FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA with such copies as have been manufactured for the purpose of broadcasts.

14.4 Information obligation

The annual report to be compiled by FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA must also include information on developments in the field of television film production. Grant recipients are therefore obligated to provide FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA with the information and documents required for preparing this report.

15 Data processing, data sharing and publication

- (1) The grant recipients acknowledge that the use of personal data disclosed during the application for and execution of the funding agreement is an essential prerequisite for the performance of the task assigned to FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA by law or is otherwise necessary for the fulfilment of the funding agreement by FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA or an agent thereof and expressly consent to this use within the meaning of Art. 6 GDPR.
- (2) In particular, the grant recipients agree that FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA may transmit all personal and/or project-related data to the review board. They also agree that FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA may transmit personal and/or project-related data to third parties, such as auditors, to the extent necessary for the reviews to be carried out in accordance with the grant agreement. The grant recipients agree that FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA may exchange project-related and personal data, in particular with participating funding institutions, for the purpose of verifying the submitted documents.
- (3) Furthermore, the grant recipients acknowledge that personal data must be transmitted or disclosed in particular to bodies and authorised representatives of the Austrian Court of Audit (in particular pursuant to Art. 3(2), Art. 4(1) and Art. 13(3) of the 1948 Court of Audit Act, as amended) and to the Federal Chancellor pursuant to Art. 23(4) of the KommAustria Act (KOG). Reference is made to notifications pursuant to the Transparency Database Act, Federal Law Gazette I No 99/2012.
- (4) Furthermore, FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA is authorised to publish personal and project-related data to the extent that it serves the public need for information (e.g. name of grant recipient, grant amount, project type including title, staff and cast, brief content summary, etc.).

16 Final provisions

16.1 Entry into force

(1) These guidelines will enter into effect as of 22 January 2024 and will remain in force no longer than until 31 December 2025. The previous version of these guidelines (19 January 2023) applies to all productions submitted by 31 December 2022.

(2) FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA will review these guidelines at the latest two years after they become effective and adapt them if necessary on the basis of experience and fund administration requirements in accordance with the objectives of FERNSEHFONDS AUSTRIA.

Vienna, 22 January 2024

Austrian Regulatory Authority for Broadcasting and Telecommunications (RTR)

Wolfgang Struber

Managing Director, Media Division