

Whitepaper



SKW
Schwarz

May 2025

Film Funding in Germany

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In Germany, film funding is organized at both the federal and state levels. The German Federal Film Board (FFA) handles funding at the federal level, while regional film funding boards operate in the federal states of Germany.

We provide you with an overview of the funding instruments at both the federal and state levels. The focus of this paper is on Film Funding. Additional information (Cinema Funding, Distribution Funding, etc.) will follow.

We continuously update reforms in the German Film Funding System on the following pages. Enjoy reading and stay tuned!

Table of Contents

A	German Federal Film Funding	
	I) Film Funding under the German Film Law (FFG)	→
	II) Film Funding under the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)	→
	III) Film Funding under the German Motion Picture Fund (GMPF)	→
	IV) Film Funding under the jury-based Cultural Production Funding	→
B	German State Level Funding	→

Overview of Federal Film Funding Instruments

Film Funding under the German Film Law (FFG)

- Funding of production companies, directors and authors (reference funding).
- Legal Basis: German Film Law ([→](#)) und corresponding Guidelines ([→](#), no English version yet).

Film Funding under the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF I and DFFF II)

- Funding of production companies and production service providers (reference funding).
- Legal Basis: DFFF-Guidelines ([→](#)).

Film Funding under the German Motion Picture Fund (GMPF)

- Funding of films and series that are not intended or suitable for initial release in cinemas (reference funding).
- Legal Basis: GMPF-Guidelines ([→](#)).

Film Funding under the Cultural Production Funding

- Funding of producers, directors and authors (jury-based funding).
- Legal Basis: Guideline for jury based cultural film funding ([→](#), no English version yet).

German State Level Funding

- Broad Funding of films and series by the federal states of Germany.

Legal Basis: Funding Guidelines of the federal states, including:

- Funding Guidelines of the FilmFernsehFonds Bayern ([→](#));
- Funding Guideline of the Medienboard Berlin Brandenburg ([→](#));
- Funding Guideline of the Film- und Medien Stiftung NRW ([→](#));
- Funding Guidelines of the Film- und Medienförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein - MOIN ([→](#)).

A German Federal Film Funding

I) Film Funding under the German Film Law (FFG)

In Short:

- Funding of feature film production companies, directors and authors as a non-repayable grant.
- Funding of a new production requires a successfully exploited „**reference film**“ / „**reference series**“. The „reference film“ / „reference series“ is a production that received funding based on its success, which can be invested in a new film/series.
- Legal Basis: German Film Law (→) und corresponding Guidelines (→, no English version yet).

Applicants:

Producers with domicile or registered office in Germany/EU/EEA/Switzerland; if domicile or registered office is not in Germany, business establishment within Germany at the time of disbursement of grant necessary.

National and international **co-productions** are also eligible for funding. The already released film/series can also be an international co-production.

Subject of Funding:

Feature-length films (screen length of at least 79 minutes, for children's films 59 minutes), non-feature length films and short films.

Reference film-related grant requirements (among others):

- Minimum of reference points according to certain criteria (e.g. success with viewers, awards);
- Applicant's own financial contribution of at least 5% of total production costs;
- No financing of Applicant's own financial contribution through other public/private funding;
- Remuneration of staff in accordance with collective wage agreement;
- Employment of junior staff.

Project-related grant requirements (among others):

- Production of at least one final version for cinema showing suffices in German language;
- Use of technical service providers with domicile in Germany/EU/EEA/Switzerland;
- Maximum of 30% of studio recordings outside Germany/EU/EEA/Switzerland;
- Direction by German or EU/EEA/Switzerland nationals;
- World premiere at a festival in Germany;
- Further content requirements in Sec. 41 (1) no. 7 FFG;
- Compliance with Holdback Periods for exploitation on VoD, PayTV and FreeTV.

Funding Rates consists up to EUR 2 million per reference film.

The funds available for funding are distributed among the entitled Applicants in proportion to the reference points achieved by the individual films.

Application of funds depends on the fulfillment of requirements for the reference film and the new film and the availability of financial resources.

Distribution of funds awarded to the reference film is carried out among:

- the producers;
- the writers (5%);
- the directors (5%).



II) Film Funding under the German Federal Film Fund (DFFF)

In Short:

- Funding of Producers and Production Service Providers for the production of German and international feature films in Germany as a non-repayable grant.
- Funding requires at least one already exploited feature-length film or feature-length series.
- Legal Basis: DFFF-Guidelines (→).

Applicants

Producers with domicile or registered office in Germany/EU/EEA/Switzerland; if domicile or registered office is not in Germany, business establishment within Germany at the time of disbursement of grant necessary.

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Production and exploitation of at least one feature-length film or feature-length series during the last ten years before filling the application in the aforementioned territory and (in case of a film) exploitation in German cinemas.

Production Service Providers with domicile or registered office in Germany/EU/EEA/Switzerland; if domicile or registered office is not in Germany, business establishment within Germany at the time of disbursement of grant necessary.

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Provision of services with a contract value of at least EUR 1 million each within five years prior to filling the application as a production service provider for at least two feature-length films with total production costs of at least EUR 10 million net each, or production of such a film as a producer.

National and international **co-productions** are also eligible for funding. The already released film/series can also be an international co-production.

¹ The DFFF Guideline refers to the earlier German production as a 'reference film', cf. section 7 (5) DFFF Guideline. Unlike in the context of reference film funding under the FFG, however, the success of the reference film is not decisive for the funding of a new production. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the term 'reference film' has been omitted here.

Funding of Producers under the „DFFF I“

Project-related grant requirements (among others):

- Commercial release in Germany;
- Total production costs (excluding deferrals) of at least EUR 1 million (feature films), EUR 200.000 (documentary films) or EUR 2 million (animated films);
- German production costs of at least 25% of total production costs;
- Production of at least one final version for cinema showing suffices in German language;
- Compliance with Holdback Periods for exploitation on VoD, PayTV and FreeTV;
- Applicant's own financial contribution of at least 5% of total production costs;
- Positive test of cultural characteristics.

Funding Rates:

Grant consists up to 30% of German production costs, but not exceed EUR 5 million per film (but not more than 80% of total production costs).

Note: The increase in the aforementioned maximum funding rates only applies to productions that have received approval from February 1, 2025 and whose filming did not begin before February 1, 2025.

Applications will be processed in the order in which they are received in full.



Funding of Production Service Providers under the „DFFF II“

Project-related grant requirements (among others):

- Commercial release in Germany;
- Reaching minimum total production costs;
- German production costs of at least EUR 8 million, in case of animated films and films with virtually animated components at least EUR 2 million;
- Production of at least one final version for cinema showing suffices in German language;
- Compliance with Holdback Periods for exploitation on VoD, PayTV and FreeTV;
- Positive test of cultural characteristics.

Funding Rates:

Grant consists up to 30% of German production costs, but not exceed EUR 25 million per film (but not more than 80% of total production costs).

Note: The increase in the aforementioned maximum funding rates only applies to productions that have received approval from February 1, 2025 and whose filming did not begin before February 1, 2025.

Applications will be processed in the order in which they are received in full.



III) Film Funding under the German Motion Picture Fund (GMPF)

In Short:

- Funding of films and series, that are not intended or suitable for initial release in cinemas, as a non-repayable grant.
- Funding requires at least one already exploited feature-length film or feature-length series in German cinemas, German television or by video-on-demand services accessible from Germany.
- Legal Basis: GMPF-Guidelines (⇒).

Applicants:

Producers with domicile or registered office in Germany/EU/EEA/Switzerland; if domicile or registered office is not in Germany, business establishment within Germany at the time of disbursement of grant necessary.

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Production and exploitation of at least one feature-length film or feature-length series during the last seven years before filling the application in the aforementioned territory and exploitation in German cinemas, German television or by VoD services accessible from Germany.

National and international **co-productions** are also eligible for funding. The already released film/series can also be an international co-production.

² The GMPF Guideline refers to the film/series that has already been evaluated as a 'reference film' or 'reference series', cf. section 3 (6) GMPF Guideline. Unlike in the context of reference film funding under the FFG, however, the success of the reference film/series is not decisive for the funding of a new production. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the term 'reference film/series' has been omitted here.

Funding of Films

Subject of Funding:

Feature-length films (screen length of at least 79 minutes, for children's films 59 minutes), that are not intended or suitable for initial release in cinemas.

Project-related grant requirements (among others):

- Total production costs must be at least EUR 25 million;
- German production costs of at least 40% of total production costs and cannot be less than EUR 13 million.;
- Release on German television or by video-on-demand services accessible in Germany;
- Positive test of cultural characteristics.

Funding Rates:

Grant consists up to 30% of German production costs, but not exceed EUR 5 million per film.

Note: The increase in the aforementioned maximum funding rates only applies to productions that have received approval from February 1, 2025 and whose filming did not begin before February 1, 2025.

Applications will be processed in the order in which they are received in full.



Funding of Series

Subject of Funding:

Feature-length series, irrespective of whether they are intended for linear or non-linear reception, that runs for at least 240 minutes per season or, in case of a documentary series, for at least 180 minutes per season.

Project-related grant requirements (among others):

- In the case of fictional series, total production costs must be at least EUR 30.000/minute or at least EUR 1.2 million/season. In the case of documentary series, total production costs must be at least EUR 9.000 EUR/minute or at least EUR 360.000/episode and at least EUR 1.6 million/season. The costs per minute cannot be less than EUR 7.000;
- German production costs of at least 40% of total production costs or at least EUR 10 million in the case of fictional series and EUR 3 million in the case of documentary series;
- Release on German television or by video-on-demand services accessible in Germany;
- Production of at least one final version in German language;
- Positive test of cultural characteristics.

Funding Rates:

Grant consists up to 30% per series of German production costs, not to exceed per series:

- EUR 6 million for series with German production costs of up to EUR 24 million;
- EUR 7.2 million for series with German production costs of up to EUR 40 million;
- Higher Funding Rates (of up to EUR 20 million) for fictional series possible.

Applications will be processed in the order in which they are received in full.

IV) Film Funding under the jury-based Cultural Production Funding

In Short:

- Funding of Producers, Directors and Writers for the production of films as a non-repayable grant.
- FFA decides on funding on the basis of evaluative proposals from juries (e.g. Jury for feature-length films, Jury for feature length documentary films, Jury for children's films). A reference film is not necessary.
- Legal Basis: Guidelines for jury-based Cultural Production Funding ([→](#)).

Applicants:

Producers, Directors and Writers with domicile or registered office in Germany/EU/EEA/Switzerland; if domicile or registered office is not in Germany, business establishment within Germany necessary.

National and international co-productions are also eligible for funding. The already released film/series can also be an international co-production.

Project-related grant requirements (among others):

- Significant German cultural imprint;
- Regular initial theatrical release;
- Compliance with Holdback Periods for exploitation on VoD, PayTV and FreeTV;
- Production of at least one final version in German language.

Subject of Funding is Development Funding and Film Funding

Development Funding:

- Treatment Funding for feature-length films and documentary films;
- Script Funding for feature-length films;
- Development Funding for feature-length films and documentary films;
- Treatment, Script and Development Funding for feature-length children's films.

Film Funding:

- Film Funding for feature-length films;
- Film Funding for feature-length documentary films;
- Film Funding for children's films;
- Film Funding for short films.

Funding Rates:

- Treatment Funding consists up to EUR 14.000;
- Script Funding consists up to EUR 40.000;
- Development Funding consists up to EUR 100.000;
- Film Funding for feature-length films consists up to EUR 1 million;
- Film Funding for feature-length documentary films consists up to EUR 500.000;
- Film Funding for short films consists up to EUR 40.000.



B German State Level Funding

In addition to funding at federal level, the 16 federal states provide a wide range of funding for films and series.

Legal Basis: Funding Guidelines of federal states, including:

- Funding Guidelines of the FilmFernsehFonds Bayern (→);
- Funding Guideline of the Medienboard Berlin Brandenburg (→);
- Funding Guideline of the Film- und Medien Stiftung NRW (→);
- Funding Guidelines of the Film- und Medienförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein - MOIN (→);

Subject of Funding is development and production of Scripts, feature films and elaborate television and streaming films and series as well as international co-productions – usually in the form of repayable loans.

Grant requirements are usually (among others):

- Investment of funding in respective federal state in question;
- Investment of further production costs in respective federal state;
- Production of the film/series (also) in respective federal state.



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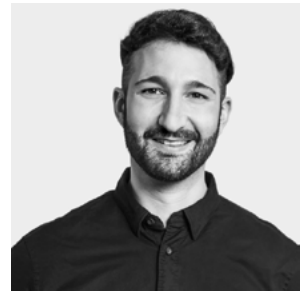


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