

Requirements and Adjudication Criteria for the Malta Literary Short-Film Contest 2019

Minimum Requirements

- Screenplay must be for a short film between 15 and 20 minutes long.
- Applicant must represent a team with previous experience in film making.
- Screenplay must be an adaptation of a Maltese Short Story published in book form.
- Screenplay must be written in Maltese.

Apply by sending in the screenplay and project plan to Michael Mercieca by 30 March 2019 at michael.mercieca@gov.mt or to National Book Council, Central Public Library, J Mangion Street, Floriana, FRN 1800.

Application Criteria and Rules

This is a contest open to film-making teams making short films of a duration between 15 and 20 minutes based on a published Maltese short story. To apply, the team must submit a script along with a Project Plan which includes a breakdown of the budget.

The selected proposal will also be vetted by the author of the original story and the script has to be approved by the author prior to production.

The chosen proposal will receive €20,000 in funding from the National Book Council (NBC), which should cover all the technical requirements and logistics, including electricity charges and lights. NBC will also allocate a €1,000 grant to the author of the original short story as compensation for the use of his story.

The selected team will be responsible for the execution of the film including all development and post-production tasks and must deliver a finished copy in High-Definition true HD native format (PAL 1920x1080 50i - Audio 4ch stereo) R128 compliant and in Stereo sound to NBC prior to the National Book Festival.

NBC, which will be listed as the Executive Producer in the credits of the finished project, retains the right to disseminate the finished product non-commercially after completion. In case the team opts to put the short-film on sale after it is aired by a broadcaster chosen by NBC, the author of the story from which the script is derived must be paid 15% in royalties for every sale made of the film.

The winner of the contest is decided by an adjudication board composed of judges appointed by the NBC. Throughout the production period, the team must be in contact with NBC to ensure that the project is developing according to the proposal and in line with the application criteria and rules.

The Project Plan should not exceed 2,000 words and must address the following adjudication criteria.

Documents Checklist

- Screenplay
- Project Plan (not more than 2,000 words)
- Producer's Statement
- Director's Statement
- Team Bios
- Team Portfolio
- Project Schedule
- Project Budget
- Accounting Declaration

Adjudication Criteria

Producer's Statement

Explain how the team dynamics and your approach to the project will ensure a clear adaptation of the original story and help promote Maltese Literature and the collaboration between Literature and Film.

Screenplay

Adaptation

The script should be loyal to the published story, but variations on the plot are allowed. Any variations should be explained in the Producer's statement.

Structure

The structure of the film has to be consistent so that the film may give a holistic experience, but not necessarily a sense of narrative closure. Whilst ambiguity and open questions in films can add suspense and create intrigue for the audience, it is important that the script guides the audience to understanding the themes and content of the film.

Visual Interpretation

Director's vision

The director should have a clear vision of where the film would lead to in terms of feeling and response by the audience. Explain how the director intends to achieve this response.

Visual Style

How does the director and his creative team plan to bring the vision and script to life? What kind of lenses, colours, locations, outfits etc.. do they plan to use? Is it to be an animation or a live-action project? Is it an engaging visual style? The proposal must be supported by examples and sketches.

Sound and Music

What sound and music is the team going to use and do they play an important role in the film? One must ensure that all rights are obtained before the screening of the project.

Team

The technical and creative team should be outlined and the biography and filmography of each Head of Department should be included. Whilst changes to the creative and technical team will be allowed post adjudication, each change has to be justified along with a confirmation that the same quality of talent has been chosen. A tentative list of cast members should also be included.

Portfolio

Applicants should present their project along with previous works cited. Applicant must provide a case to explain that their portfolio is a testament of their reliability and moreover, a convincing statement on the ability of the applicant to execute submitted project.

Technical Points

Schedule

Is the schedule realistic? How much time is allocated to planning? To production and post-production? Is the use of the budget also realistic? Is it a 1 day shoot or a 10 day shoot?

Pre-Production

Must include plans for casting, location scouting, final rewrites, storyboarding, contracts and crewing.

Production

The period during which all filming takes place. The application must include a tentative schedule for the production.

Post-Production

The period during which the editing, colour grading and animation is done. Including sound editing and music composition or licensing.

Care must be taken to ensure that enough time is given to each phase to allow the project to develop well and achieve the desired quality.

Approach

The applicant must show that the project can be completed to the level expected within the financial and scheduling constraints present. Should the team be planning on acquiring further investment, either in contributions in kind, sponsorships or financial investments, the plan must be detailed in the proposal.

Film always carries an element of risk and it is important that the applicant shows that they are aware of the risks involved in their project and how they plan to approach the project to reduce these risks.

Applicants must show that their approach and previous experience will ensure that the project is within their means and abilities.

Budget Breakdown

How is the budget being spent?

It is important that applicants provide a clear budget, breaking down how they plan to use the funds and resources at their disposal. The budget will need to be adjusted throughout the process, but it's important that there is certain transparency in the use of the funds and planning on how they are spent.

Accounting procedures

Applicants must also provide a declaration committing to presenting the final budget and any payslips or invoices related to the project on successful completion. It is important that employment regulations are followed and the production operates in good faith and without any discriminatory practices.