



**The 8th First Feature Film Initiative
Screenplay and Production Proposal Competition
("FFFI")**

Guide to Application ("Guide")

1 Purpose and Definitions

- 1.1 This Guide is issued to provide information on an application ("**Application**") for funding from the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China ("**Government**") under the FFFI. It shall not in any circumstances affect or limit the interpretation of any agreements, if applicable, to be entered into between the Government and the successful applicants.
- 1.2 Unless the context otherwise requires, all capitalised terms and expressions defined in the Application Form shall bear the same meanings in this Guide.

2 Scheme Summary

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 FFFI was first launched in March 2013 to identify new talents through a competition on screenplay and production proposals. FFFI is supported by the Hong Kong Film Development Council ("**HKFDC**") and funding is made available from the Film Development Fund ("**FDF**") for the winning new directors and their film production teams to make their first feature films¹. The FDF is administered by the Secretariat of the HKFDC (the "**Secretariat**"). The Government will decide in its absolute discretion whether to approve the applications and disburse funds after having considered the recommendations of the HKFDC.

2.2 Aim

- 2.2.1 FFFI provides Government funding to winning teams in the form of cash prizes as more particularly set out in paragraph 2.3.1 below. The aim of the FFFI is to support new directors and their film production teams to make their first feature films on a commercial basis in order to nurture talents for the film industry.

2.3 Main Features

- 2.3.1 FFFI takes the form of a competition. The competition is divided into: Higher Education Institution Group ("HEIG") and Professional Group ("PG"), with each group being awarded a

¹ A feature film is a fictional narrative. It must be a film or digital film suitable for release in commercial cinemas and is not shorter than 80 minutes in running time. Animation films and documentaries are not considered as feature films under FFFI.

maximum of three prizes. The winning teams of the HEIG and the PG will be awarded a maximum of \$5 million and \$8 million respectively to make their first feature films.

- 2.3.2 The winning teams are required to complete the whole film production and sales process, involving planning, shooting and distribution, and acquire practical knowledge in planning and making a feature film.
- 2.3.3 Each participating team is required to submit a screenplay and production proposal which shall contain: logline, synopsis, character description, treatment, full screenplay, detailed production plan (including schedule), names of cast and crew members (attaching letters/statements of intent from the main cast and main film crew members), production budget and marketing forecast. No substantial changes of the screenplay and production proposals after submission are allowed without approval.
- 2.3.4 The winning teams should complete the whole film production and sales process with only the prize money granted under this competition and shall not engage any financier/investor or use prize monies or funding from any other sources (including any other Government funding) to finance the film.
- 2.3.5 Each team may only submit one application and participate in either of the competition under the HEIG or the PG.
- 2.3.6 To be eligible for an application under the FFFI, the film project must not have previously received or successfully applied for financial support from any of the following seven (7) schemes under the FDF, namely, (i) the Film Production Financing Scheme; (ii) the Film Production Financing Scheme (Relaxation Plan); (iii) the FFFI; (iv) the Directors' Succession Scheme; (v) the Film Production Grant Scheme (now defunct); (vi) the Hong Kong-Asian Film Collaboration Funding Scheme; and (vii) the Content Development Scheme for Streaming Platforms. Please refer to the Guide to Application for the respective schemes for details of the respective rules.
- 2.3.7 If the screenplay of a film project has obtained Government funding/financial support under the Scriptwriting Incubation Programme ("SIP"), the fund to be granted under FFFI for the screenwriting portion shall be reduced by the amount obtained under the SIP fund.

2.4 Eligibility for Participation

HEIG & PG

- 2.4.1 Each participating team shall comprise at least a director, a producer and a screenwriter. The director and the producer shall not be the same person.
- 2.4.2 Each and every director (if more than one director) of a participating team shall not have previously shot² any commercial film³ with a running time of 80 minutes or longer and shall be a Hong Kong permanent resident aged 18 years or above. For the avoidance of doubt, the Assessment Panels referred to in paragraph 2.5.1 below and the Government shall have full discretion in determining whether a director is considered as having previously shot any commercial film.
- 2.4.3 Each and every producer (if more than one producer) of a participating team shall be a Hong Kong permanent resident aged 18 years or above.

² "Shall not have previously shot" means not having shot any commercial film as a director, co-director or executive director.

³ "Commercial film" means a fictional narrative that has been publicly exhibited at commercial cinemas in or outside Hong Kong.

2.4.4 At least one of the screenwriters of a participating team shall be a Hong Kong permanent resident aged 18 years or above.

2.4.5 Apart from the director(s), producer(s) and screenwriter(s), there shall be at least one Hong Kong permanent resident in each of the following nine positions: leading actor, leading actress, cinematography, action design, art direction, costume design, editing, music scoring/ sound effect and visual effect.

HEIG

2.4.6 The director(s) of a participating team in the HEIG shall be a student or graduate of not more than ten years from film/TV production or similar disciplines of a local or overseas higher education institute or a professional school.

2.4.7 The producer(s) of a participating team must have participated in the production of:

- (a) at least two feature films publicly exhibited in Hong Kong⁴ in the past 20 years⁵ in the capacity of a presenter(出品人)/producer(監製)(not including executive producer(執行監製) and assistant producer(助理監製))/director/director of cinematography/art director (with at least one occasion as a producer); or
- (b) at least three feature films publicly exhibited in Hong Kong⁴ in the past 10 years⁶ in the capacity of an executive producer(執行監製); and
- (c) must be a Hong Kong permanent resident aged 18 or above.

2.4.8 To ensure that a participating team possesses reasonable knowledge and skills in film production, a participating team shall be screened and nominated by one of the following local higher education institutions or institutions under the Vocational Training Council providing film/TV production or similar programmes. The number of team(s) to be recommended for participating in the competition by the relevant recommending bodies are as follows. In addition, there are four additional quotas available for the recommending bodies:

	Institution	Number of Team(s)
a.	The Hong Kong Academy for Performance Arts	2
b.	Hong Kong Baptist University	2
c.	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	2
d.	City University of Hong Kong	2
e.	Hong Kong Metropolitan University	2
f.	Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (Lee Wai Lee)	2
g.	Hong Kong Design Institute	2
h.	The University of Hong Kong	2
i.	The Chinese University of Hong Kong	2
j.	Chu Hai College of Higher Education	2
k.	The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong	2
l.	Floating quotas	4
Total		26

⁴ “Publicly exhibited in Hong Kong” means theatrically released in Hong Kong for at least five shows within 30 consecutive days in commercial cinemas on the member list of the Hong Kong Theatres Association.

⁵ Refer to films publicly exhibited in Hong Kong between 29 May 2003 and 28 May 2023.

⁶ Refer to films publicly exhibited in Hong Kong between 29 May 2013 and 28 May 2023.

2.4.9 The additional quotas, together with application quotas remaining after the application deadline on 28 September 2023 (“Application Deadline”) (i.e. the number of applications received by the Government is less than the quota of 22 applications stated in (a) to (k) of paragraph 2.4.8 above) would be available for allocation after the Application Deadline. Each recommending body may submit additional applications within a week after the Application Deadline, i.e. on or before 5 October 2023. If, after the same number of remaining quotas allocated to each recommending body who submits additional applications, the number of backup applications exceeds the remaining available quotas, the Secretariat will decide by drawing lots.

PG

2.4.10 The director(s) of a participating team in the PG must be a member of the local film industry who possesses filmmaking or related experience; or who has previously won in local major short film competitions or a film industry member who has returned from overseas.

2.4.11 The producer(s) of a participating team must have participated in the production of:

- (a) at least two feature films publicly exhibited in Hong Kong⁴ in the past 20 years⁵ in the capacity of a presenter(出品人) or producer(監製)(not including executive producer (執行監製) and assistant producer(助理監製)) (with at least one occasion as a producer); or
- (b) at least three feature films publicly exhibited in Hong Kong⁴ in the past 10 years⁶ in the capacity of an executive producer(執行監製); and
- (c) must be a Hong Kong permanent resident aged 18 or above.

2.4.12 For the PG, a producer can only take up the post of producer (including co-producer) of one participating team in the same competition. For the avoidance of doubt, a producer may still participate in this round of competition even if he or she is a producer or co-producer for other film projects which were awarded in previous rounds of the FFFI.

2.4.13 Quota system does not apply to PG. Participants of the PG may submit their applications to the Secretariat direct.

2.5 Assessment Procedures

2.5.1 The Assessment Panels shall comprise veteran industry practitioners including directors, screenwriters, film critics, film investors, producers, film distributors, festival programmers and/or representatives of the HKFDC (“**Assessment Panels**”).

2.5.2 The Assessment Panels will recommend the list of awardees to the Fund Vetting Committee set up under the HKFDC (“**FVC**”) for consideration, and funding will be approved by the Controlling Officer of the FDF.

2.6 Assessment Method

2.6.1 There are two stages of assessment. All nominated teams which have met all eligibility criteria can enter the first stage. Subject to the number of applications received, applications may be shortlisted by readers comprising directors, screenwriters, film critics, film investors, producers, film distributors, festival programmers and/or representatives of the HKFDC for entering into the first stage of the assessment.

2.6.2 In the first stage of assessment, the Assessment Panels will shortlist the screenplay and production proposals (film projects) for assessment in the second stage.

2.6.3 In the second stage of assessment, the core creative members of the selected teams will present their film projects to the Assessment Panels and the Assessment Panels will finalise the rank lists and recommend the winners to the FVC for consideration.

2.6.4 Notwithstanding that each of the HEIG and the PG are allocated a quota with three winners, the quality of film projects would be of paramount importance. The Assessment Panels reserve the right not to recommend any award(s) if the film project(s) does/do not attain the required standard.

2.7 Film Production

2.7.1 The director and the producer of each winning team shall, within one month after receiving the notification and accepting the award, form and incorporate a production company ("ProdCo"), and they shall submit to the Secretariat a copy of the ProdCo's Certificate of Incorporation, the ProdCo's membership list and the percentage of shares held by each member. Upon receipt of all the said documents, the Government will sign an agreement with the ProdCo and disburse the funding to it for embarking on the winning film project. The ProdCo shall finish making the film in accordance with the production plan, budget and the terms and conditions of the agreement signed between the parties. It shall also commence principal photography not later than two years of the signing of the agreement.

2.7.2 The founding members (i.e. director, producer, screenwriter and/or the other crew members of the film project) of a ProdCo should, before the commencement of the film's principal photography, reach a consensus on the way and ratio of income-sharing and sign an agreement on this matter.

2.7.3 As the main objective of FFFI is to assist new directors in making their first feature films, change of the directors and producers of the selected film projects is not allowed. If there is a genuine need to change other crew members, the ProdCo shall inform and apply to the Secretariat for the change(s).

2.7.4 The director and the producer shall be the person-in-charge and the coordinator of the film project respectively, and shall be responsible for the completion of the film according to the production plan and the production budget of the winning film project, and shall report to the Government on the filming progress, production expenses and seeking approval of any changes associated with film production.

2.8 Copyright Sale and Distribution

2.8.1 During the production stage, a ProdCo shall not transfer any company share, and shall not solicit funding through pre-sale of distribution rights before the final cut is approved by the Government.

2.8.2 A ProdCo shall arrange by itself for the sale of the copyrights of the film. The Government will not recover any film production costs and related administrative expenses, nor will it share the profits generated from the film. In principle, all proceeds from the sale of the copyrights will go to the ProdCo and be available for release to members of the ProdCo according to the share of stakes held by them or the income-sharing ratio agreed in advance.

2.8.3 The basic conditions related to film distribution include:

- (a) the film shall be exhibited in commercial cinema(s) in Hong Kong for not less than five shows in thirty consecutive days within three years upon signing of the agreement between the ProdCo and the Government;

- (b) upon consent of the Government, the related publicity and promotion shall highlight that the film is funded by the FDF; and
- (c) include in the end credit of the film the following disclaimer: “The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the sponsorship granted under the Film Development Fund bear no relationship whatsoever to the content of, or views expressed in the Film”.

2.8.4 If a ProdCo is not able to arrange exhibition of the film in commercial cinema(s) in Hong Kong and complete the requirements as stated in the agreement within three years from the date it is signed, the ProdCo shall without prejudice to any of the Government’s rights and remedies, repay immediately to the Government all sums provided by the Government in relation to the agreement together with interest incurred up to the date of repayment.

2.8.5 The ProdCo shall obtain the Government’s written approval before the screening of the film or work-in-progress of the film at/for: (a) film festivals in or outside Hong Kong; (b) film markets in or outside Hong Kong; and (c) exhibition at any place of public entertainment within the meaning of section 2 of the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172) in or outside Hong Kong before the final cut is approved by the Government. No prior approval is required after the approval of the final cut.

2.9 Supervision and Execution

2.9.1 The Secretariat will be responsible for administering the FFFI. To ensure that the films are produced according to schedule, within budget and at a standard meeting the requirements of commercial films, the Secretariat will assign industry member(s)/Government staff who is/are experienced in film production to monitor the production of the subsidised films and provide timely assistance.

2.9.2 To ensure the proper use of public money, the Government will disburse the approved funds to the ProdCo according to key milestones. In the event that a ProdCo cannot complete the film production, the film copyright and production material will all go to the Government, and be taken over by the Government.

3 **Application Guidelines**

3.1 Application Date

3.1.1 From 29 May 2023 (Monday) to 28 September 2023 (Thursday).

3.1.2 Applicants are required to submit to the Secretariat a duly completed Application Form together with supporting documents in duplicate (one set of which being bound and the other not) not later than 6:00pm on 28 September 2023 (Thursday) (“**Application Deadline**”).

3.1.3 All supplementary information and/or documents, where necessary, shall be submitted to the Secretariat not later than 6:00pm on 12 October 2023 (Thursday) or such other date and time as requested by the Government. Application Forms not duly completed, signed or stamped as required, or omission of any requisite information and/or documents by the due date may result in the applicant being disqualified.

3.1.4 Application Forms and supporting documents sent by mail, e-mail or fax will not be accepted. Late application will not be processed.

3.1.5 In the case of the typhoon signal No.8 or above is hoisted or a black rainstorm warning signal or “extreme conditions after super typhoons” announced by the Government is/are in force on the Application Deadline, the latest time and date before which applications are to be

submitted will be extended to 6:00pm on the next working day (excluding Saturday) after the typhoon signal No.8 or above or a black rainstorm warning signal or “extreme conditions after super typhoons” is/are cancelled.

3.2 Application Procedure

- 3.2.1 To submit an application, each participating team of HEIG must be nominated by one of the recommending bodies listed in paragraph 2.4.8 above. The Application Form shall be signed and stamped by a representative of the recommending body.
- 3.2.2 Participating teams of PG can submit their applications to the Secretariat directly.
- 3.2.3 Each of the director(s), producer(s) and screenwriter(s) of the participating team must sign “Authorisation to Disclose Confidential Information and Personal Data” attached in **Annex B** of the Application Form to the Government for the disclosure of its Application including but not limited to its Application Form; the logline, synopsis and screenplay of the proposed film; and required documents to the relevant parties including without limitation, panelists of Assessment Panels who are veteran film industry practitioners; members of the FVC and HKFDC; experienced writers and tutors of seminars and workshop organised by the HKFDC; film financiers; film producers; film directors; professionals with experience in film production, financing, distribution, film critics and festival programming; the Secretariat and other representatives of the Government involved in the assessment process.
- 3.2.4 No application fee is required. Application Forms can be downloaded from the following website: www.fdc.gov.hk or obtained at:

Address : Hong Kong Film Development Council Secretariat
40/F, Revenue Tower
5 Gloucester Road Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Telephone No. : (852) 2594 5846
Fax No.: (852) 2824 0595
Email Address : info@fdc.gov.hk
Homepage : www.fdc.gov.hk

3.3 Announcement of Results

- 3.3.1 The Secretariat will notify individual participating teams of the results.

3.4 Signing Agreement

- 3.4.1 The ProdCo shall enter into a written agreement with the Government on terms prepared and approved by the Government. The agreement shall contain the complete terms and conditions of the film production, including matters referred to in this Guide and the Application Form, expanded and modified as necessary, and other matters such as filming schedule, budget, reporting to the Secretariat on the filming progress, financial commitments and to seek approval of any changes associated with film production. The governing laws of the agreement shall be the laws of Hong Kong. Failure to comply with any of the terms and conditions of the agreement shall entitle the Government to terminate the agreement and exercise its discretion not to disburse any of the approved funds, and to require the ProdCo to return forthwith all or any of the funds provided by the Government under the agreement.

3.5 Handling of Information

- 3.5.1 The Authority (which for the purpose of this Guide means all or any of the Government bureaux and departments and the HKFDC (including the Secretariat)) is committed to

ensuring that all personal data submitted under an Application are handled in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486) (“**PDPO**”). Personal data provided in relation to an Application may be used by the Authority and disclosed among them for the following purposes:

- (a) processing and authentication of the Applications;
- (b) payment of prizes under the FFFI and any refund thereof;
- (c) the daily operation of the FFFI;
- (d) conducting credit checks;
- (e) monitoring the performance of the FFFI agreements;
- (f) meeting the requirements to make disclosure pursuant to any law or arbitral or court order;
- (g) statistics and research; and
- (h) any other purposes directly related to, arising from or incidental to the above purposes.

3.5.2 Personal data provided in an Application will be kept in strict confidence. They may however be disclosed by the Authority to any of the following parties for the purposes set out in paragraph 3.5.1 above:

- (a) any person (including the agent, the contractor or the third party service provider of the Government) who is involved in the FFFI;
- (b) subject to (c), any other person under a duty of confidentiality to the Authority; and
- (c) in relation to the names of the members of the participating teams, their recommending bodies and the persons-in-charge, the names of the cast and the other crew members, the public.

3.5.3 According to Section 2.3.3 of the Code of Practice on the Identity Card Number and Other Personal Identifiers issued by the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, the Authority will obtain the identity card number of the applicant in order to verify the identity of the identity card holder.

3.5.4 According to Sections 18 and 22 and Principle 6 of Schedule 1 to the PDPO, the individuals whose personal data are provided in an Application and any person authorised by such individual have a right of access and correction with respect to the personal data including the right to obtain a copy of the personal data.

3.5.5 The Authority shall hold the personal data securely in accordance with prevailing Government information security requirements. All practicable steps will be taken to protect the personal data against unauthorised or accidental access, processing, erasure, loss or use.

3.5.6 The information provided by an Applicant in the Application will not be used by the Authority for any other purposes unspecified in paragraph 3.5.1 above. The personal data provided will be kept by the Authority for a reasonable period of time as may be required for the purposes for which the data are collected and in accordance with relevant statutory provisions. After that time, the personal data will be erased.

3.5.7 A request for access to or correction of personal data or for information of the policies and practices and kinds of data held shall be addressed to:

Senior Executive Officer (Administration)
Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau
21/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar
Hong Kong

A fee will be charged in accordance with the PDPO for providing access to or correcting any personal data and for providing the information.

3.6 Language

3.6.1 The Chinese translation of this Guide is for reference only. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the English text and the Chinese translation of this Guide, the English text shall prevail.

Hong Kong Film Development Council Secretariat
May 2023