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GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL EXPERTS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CO-PRODUCTION SUPPORT PROGRAMME OF THE EURIMAGES FUND¹

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1. Eurimages

Created in 1988, Eurimages is an enlarged partial agreement of the [Council of Europe](#). Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe plays a pioneering role in the process of European integration. The Council of Europe works with its 47 member States to strengthen human rights, democracy and the rule of law throughout the European continent and beyond. It has established an effective system for the protection of rights, the best-known component of which is the European Court of Human Rights.

Eurimages is the Council of Europe's film co-operation fund. The Fund aims to promote the film sectors of the member States by encouraging the co-production and distribution of films and fostering co-operation between professionals.

¹ Eurimages may call upon external experts in the framework of the Fund's other activities (for example, the promotion programme or the gender equality strategy).

Eurimages has 40 members as of January 2021 and has been open to countries that are not members of the Council of Europe since 2017².

More information on the Eurimages Fund and its activities is available on its website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/eurimages>.

The total budget of Eurimages for the year 2021 amounts to just over €26 million, which comes essentially from contributions from the member States. The Fund's own income consists mainly of reimbursements of support granted (in the form of advances on receipts).

2. Co-production support programme

80% of the Fund's resources are devoted to the co-production support programme, which is therefore Eurimages' main activity. This programme is open to independent producers from its member States wishing to obtain co-production support. This support takes the form, depending on the amount granted, of a grant or an advance on receipts, repayable according to the income generated by the film.

Eurimages finances feature-length documentaries, fiction and animation films of at least 70 minutes intended for theatrical release. The amounts awarded are up to a maximum of €500,000 within the limit of 17% of the total budget for fiction and animation films and 25% of the total budget for documentaries. Projects submitted for selection must involve producers from at least two Eurimages member States and must meet financial and legal eligibility criteria. Projects submitted to Eurimages are expected to be fully developed. They are at the end of the financing process as at least 50% of the financing must be confirmed by the submission deadline.

Eurimages supports between 80 and 100 films per year through three calls for projects.

3. Reform and use of external experts

Following an external evaluation conducted in 2018, the Fund has embarked on an in-depth reform of its governance and decision-making process, as well as a review of its working procedures. This reform affects in particular the co-production support programme, the modalities of which will change from 1 January 2022.

The governance and decision-making arrangements of the Fund will be structured as follows:

The **Board of Management** (1-2 meetings per year), composed of [representatives from each of the member States](#), defines the Fund's policy and strategic orientations, decides on the conditions for granting financial support, and adopts and monitors the Fund's budget.

The **Executive Committee** (3 meetings per year), composed of one third of the national representatives on a rotating basis, is mandated to take decisions on any matter not falling within the remit of the Board of Management, including the adoption of recommendations for financial support made by the working groups of the different support programmes.

Independent external experts - from the film, audiovisual and cultural industries - are responsible for assessing applications for support in accordance with the selection criteria and strategy defined by the Board of

² Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine

Management. These experts will be involved in the co-production support programme but may be called upon for other programmes of the Fund³.

4. The Eurimages Secretariat

The Eurimages Secretariat, based in Strasbourg, is composed of around twenty staff members, headed by an Executive Director and placed under the responsibility of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. It is responsible for the administration of the Fund and for implementing the decisions of the Board of Management and the Executive Committee.

The Eurimages Secretariat examines applications for support and monitors support agreements. It prepares the meetings of the Board of Management and the Executive Committee and ensures their follow-up. It monitors the application of eligibility criteria relating to applications for support and examines and analyses these applications in close contact with the applicants. It also monitors the projects supported until the full amount of financial support has been repaid in the case of support granted in the form of an advance on revenue.

Eurimages' activity is governed by different [statutory texts](#), all of which are available on the Fund's website:

- **Resolution (88)15, as amended**, establishing a European Support Fund for the Co-production and Distribution of Creative Cinematographic and Audiovisual Works: this text, voted by the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe's main governance body, is the statutory text of the Eurimages Fund.
- **Rules of procedure of the Board of Management and the Executive Committee** in force as of 1 January 2022: these two rules or procedures voted for by the Eurimages Board of Management specify the operating procedures of the Fund.
- **Regulations for the co-production support programme**: these regulations, voted for by the Eurimages Board of Management, detail the terms and conditions for the allocation of financial support for co-productions. The regulations of the other programmes, also established by the Board of Management, are available online in the corresponding sections.

5. Working languages

The two official languages of Eurimages and the Council of Europe are English and French.

However, for practical reasons and in order to avoid high translation costs for the producers, the documents relating to the submitted projects are available in English with a systematic French translation only for the synopsis and the director's and producer's notes. The selected external experts must have sufficient written English comprehension skills.

The individual project evaluation will be carried out in English or French, with a general written commentary on the project of only a few lines.

Finally, simultaneous interpretation in French and English will be provided at project evaluation meetings, whether they are held online or in person.

³ Guidelines for external experts specific to other Fund programmes will be issued as necessary.

6. Recruitment and selection process

The selection of independent experts is made through a call for expressions of interest published on the [Eurimages website](#) by means of an application form. This call will remain permanently open, allowing the submission of applications at any time.

Applicants are advised to complete the application form carefully as most of the elements will be used in the selection process and not all of them can be changed once the application is submitted.

Profile of eligible candidates

The Secretariat will examine the applications received via the online form and will draw up a list of experts meeting the following criteria:

Eligibility criteria for applicants:

- at least three years proven experience in their field of activity: scriptwriting/directing, distribution/sales, production, performing, picture editing, cinematography, festival programming or other relevant creative activities in the audiovisual sector (department heads: composition, storyboarding, production design, art direction, sound);
- a high level of English reading skills (French is a plus but not required);
- Oral proficiency in English or French at least level B2 ([CEFR](#));
- a good knowledge of international film industry practices and, in particular, of international film co-production;
- Availability in principle during the foreseen project evaluation periods (February/March, May/June and October/November)⁴.

Compliance with the selection criteria is assessed by the Secretariat on the basis of the candidates' curriculum vitae and the declarations made in the online form.

If necessary, the Secretariat may carry out additional research to verify the accuracy of the declarations made. National representatives who are members of the Board of Management may also be contacted for this purpose.

Applicants whose profile has been considered ineligible may reapply at a later stage if they meet the eligibility criteria.

Establishment of the pool of experts and signature of the framework contract

The list of eligible experts, drawn up by chronological order of receipt of application, is submitted to the Board of Management for approval at regular intervals.

Eligible experts whose applications have been approved by the Board of Management are informed by the Secretariat of their inclusion in the list and are invited to sign a framework contract. Their application will require renewal at the expiry of this framework contract.

The experts in the pool approved by the Board of Management may be asked to participate in the preparation of recommendations for support under the Fund's other programmes.

⁴ These periods are indicated in the application form as an indication and on the Eurimages website when they are finalised.

Selection for a session

Prior to each session, experts are appointed to participate in the Co-production Working Groups in sufficient numbers to ensure the evaluation of the projects submitted.

Each Co-production Working Group will be composed of five experts:

- three experts specialised in scriptwriting/directing, distribution/sales and production, respectively;
- two other experts with preferably creative profiles: performing, picture editing, cinematography, festival programming, other relevant creative activities in the audiovisual sector (heads of department: composition, storyboarding, production design, art direction, sound)

Selection criteria in the Co-production Working Groups

Experts are assigned, via an automated selection system, to a Co-production Working Group on the basis of the following criteria, listed in order of priority

- availability for the evaluation period and for the meeting of the co-production working groups of the given session ;
- expertise: the competencies set out above must be represented;
- Gender balance: the five experts assigned to each group must be 2 men and 3 women or 2 women and 3 men;
- geographical diversity: each group has one representative from each geographical group as defined in Annex I of the Rules of Procedure of the Eurimages Executive Committee (§13 to 16);
- language skills: at least one French speaker should be assigned to each Working Group;
- age balance: experts should, as far as possible, have a diverse age profile;
- rotation: as far as possible, the same expert should not participate in successive sessions.

If no expert matching all these criteria can be identified for a given working group, a new search is performed applying only some of the selection criteria.

Immediately after the deadline for applications for co-production support, the Eurimages Secretariat will contact a pre-selection of experts who should promptly indicate their availability to participate in the co-production working groups.

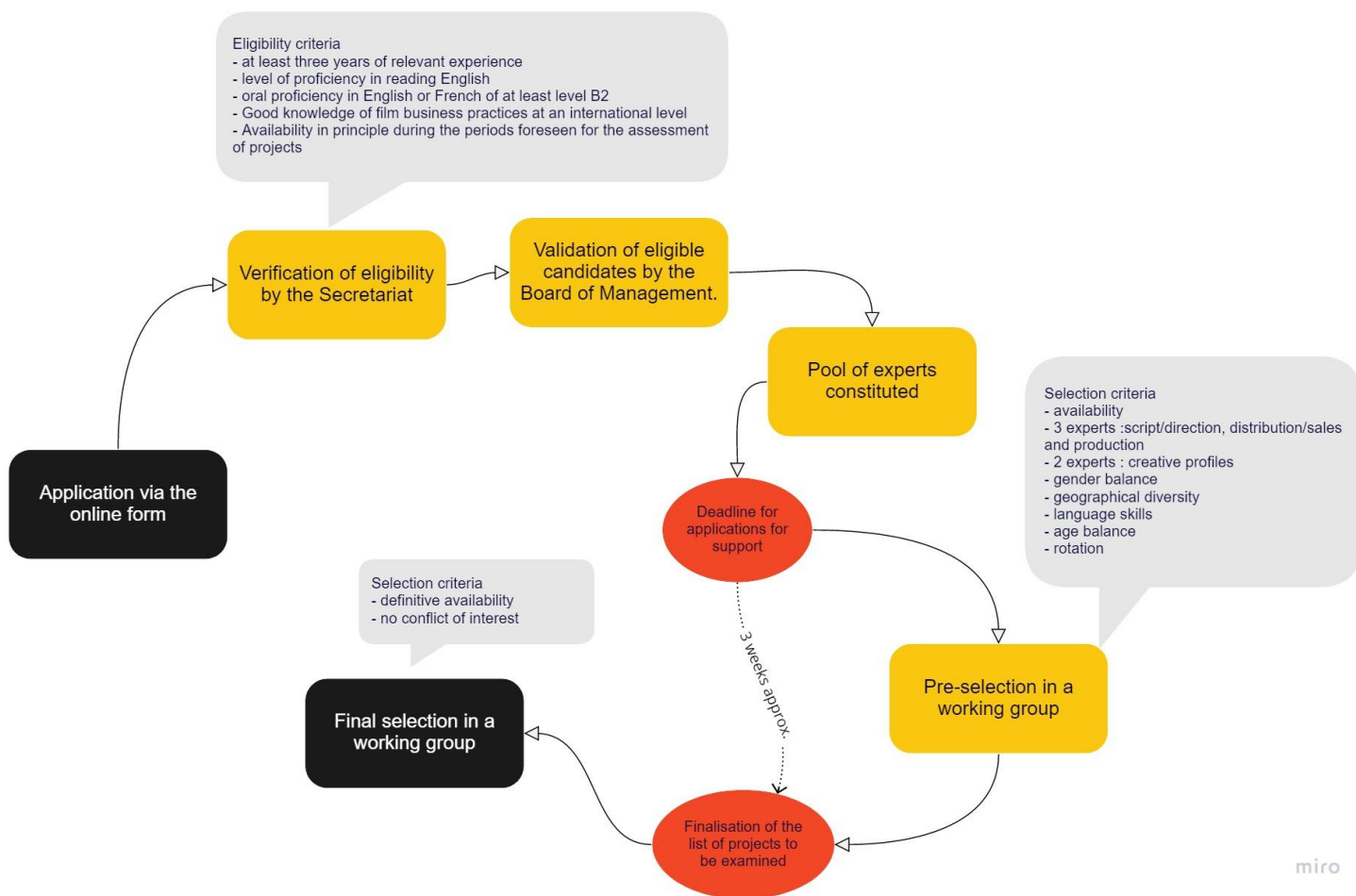
Once the list of projects to be examined has been finalised, approximately three weeks after the deadline for submission of applications for support, the Secretariat will contact as many of the pre-selected experts as necessary. Experts will be asked to confirm their final availability promptly and, after receiving the list of projects to be evaluated, to inform the Secretariat of any conflict of interest as soon as possible. If an expert declares a conflict of interest, the Secretariat will replace him/her by another expert.

Experts who are confirmed to participate are then sent an invitation and order letter specifying the terms of their work. Shortlisted experts who do not participate in the session are returned to the pool and are available for the next session as a matter of priority.

If the pre-selected or selected experts fail to respond within a reasonable period of time regarding their availability or potential conflict of interest, the Secretariat may replace them.

Publication

The list of external experts (full names) used by Eurimages is published annually on the Fund's website. However, there is no mention of the programme or the particular session for which their expertise was sought.



7. Work of the experts

External experts are selected primarily on the basis of their professional competence and experience. The recommendations for support made by the experts must therefore meet the highest possible professional standards, based on a fair, impartial and consistent assessment of the projects.

Selection criteria and strategic orientations of the Fund

The assessment of projects by external experts will be based on the selection criteria defined by the Board of Management in the light of the Fund's strategic orientations, drawing on their professional expertise.

If necessary, the experts may also be reminded of the priorities, constraints and regulations of the Fund and the support programmes during their assessment of the projects.

A document describing the Fund's strategy is available on its website.

Other elements can guide experts in preparing recommendations for example the [Eurimages diversity and gender equality policy](#) or the [Council of Europe Recommendation on equality between women and men in the audiovisual sector](#).

Availability of project material

The list of projects and the corresponding materials are made available to experts via an online platform (see §10).

As an indication, the documentation provided per co-production project via the online platform may include the following elements:

- Legal and financial analysis of the project by the Secretariat
- Script and synopsis of the film
- Director's note of intent
- Producer's note of intent
- Financing plan
- Summary and detailed budget
- CV of the director(s)
- CV of the scriptwriter(s)
- CV of the composer(s)
- CVs of the cast members (leading roles, supporting roles, third roles, etc.)
- CVs of team members (director of photography, sound engineer, mixer, editor, costume designer, set designer, sound recordist, make-up artist, etc.)
- Storyboard (for animation films)
- Film treatment (optional)
- Description of the characters (optional)
- Visual material related to the project (optional)

Depending on the number of projects received for each call for proposals, the final list of projects to be assessed is made available is on average three weeks after the deadline for applications for support.

Assessment of projects

In the framework of the co-production support programme, external experts will be engaged three times a year, following the three application deadlines. They will form, according to the number of film projects received and eligible, working groups of 5 people selected according to the criteria established by the Board of Management.

Each working group will assess a share of the projects received in order to spread the workload. Each working group will be responsible for assessing a maximum of 20 projects and making recommendations for support according to the budget allocated to their group.

Individual assessments

In a first step, the experts will carry out an individual assessment of the co-production projects allocated to their group, on the basis of criteria established by the Board of Management and documentation provided by the Secretariat. This work will be done remotely over a period of approximately 5 weeks and will result in a short written assessment and a preliminary individual ranking.

The selection criteria used for the evaluation of projects are as follows:

- ✓ quality and originality of the script;
- ✓ vision and style of the director;
- ✓ contribution of the creative team and level of artistic and technical cooperation;
- ✓ consistency and confirmed level of financing;
- ✓ circulation potential (festivals, distribution, audience);
- ✓ adherence to the values and aims of the Council of Europe.

For each selection criterion, the experts assess the level of the project using the following scale: *Very weak / Poor / Acceptable / Good / Very good / Excellent*.

In addition to the assessment based on the selection criteria, the experts make an overall assessment of each project, using the same scale, which is then completed by a short commentary, in English or French. This commentary of a few sentences highlights the strengths and weaknesses of a project in relation to the selection criteria and provides an overall written assessment.

Finally, each expert draws up a ranking of the projects submitted to him/her on the basis of his/her individual assessments (preliminary individual project ranking).

▪ Provisional overall assessments:

The Secretariat will receive and process the experts' individual assessments in order to provide the following elements for each group at the opening of the working group meetings:

- ✓ the preliminary overall ranking of the projects in the group (aggregated preliminary individual rankings);
- ✓ the rank frequency given to a project by each expert in the group;
- ✓ preliminary individual project rankings;
- ✓ the available budget;
- ✓ the amount of support requested for each project.

These elements are not circulated beyond the members of the working group concerned, nor before the opening of the meeting.

▪ Working group meeting

A one-day meeting will then be organised for each working group during which the 5 experts, on the basis of the preliminary overall ranking, will draw up recommendations for financial support. These recommendations will take the form of a final ranking of the projects in relation to the budget allocated to the working group in question. There is no fixed methodology for discussion of the projects.

The 5 experts are the only participants in the working group contributing to the support recommendations and are must provide these recommendations for the end of the meeting.

For the time being, the co-production working group meetings will be organised remotely by video conference with the possibility of simultaneous French/English interpretation. In the future, in-person meetings may be organised at the Council of Europe premises in Strasbourg or Paris.

In the case of remote meetings, the participating experts will need to have a good internet connection to allow for quality video conferencing.

In addition to the 5 experts, the working group meeting is attended by a Chair⁵, at least one member of the Secretariat and an Observer from the Executive Committee, but none of these participants has the right to contribute to the support recommendations.

The Chair of the group introduces the Fund and its policy and may actively intervene in the debate to:

- ✓ ensure that all selection criteria are taken into consideration in accordance with the Fund's policy, strategy and objectives;
- ✓ ensure that all experts share the same understanding and knowledge of the Fund's policy, strategy and objectives;
- ✓ remind experts of their duties and obligations when necessary;
- ✓ ensure that discussions are conducted in a respectful and constructive manner.

⁵ The Chair of a Working Group is, in order of priority, the President of the Fund, the Executive Director or his/her deputy, the Head of Programme, or any other member of the Secretariat duly authorised by the President of the Fund.

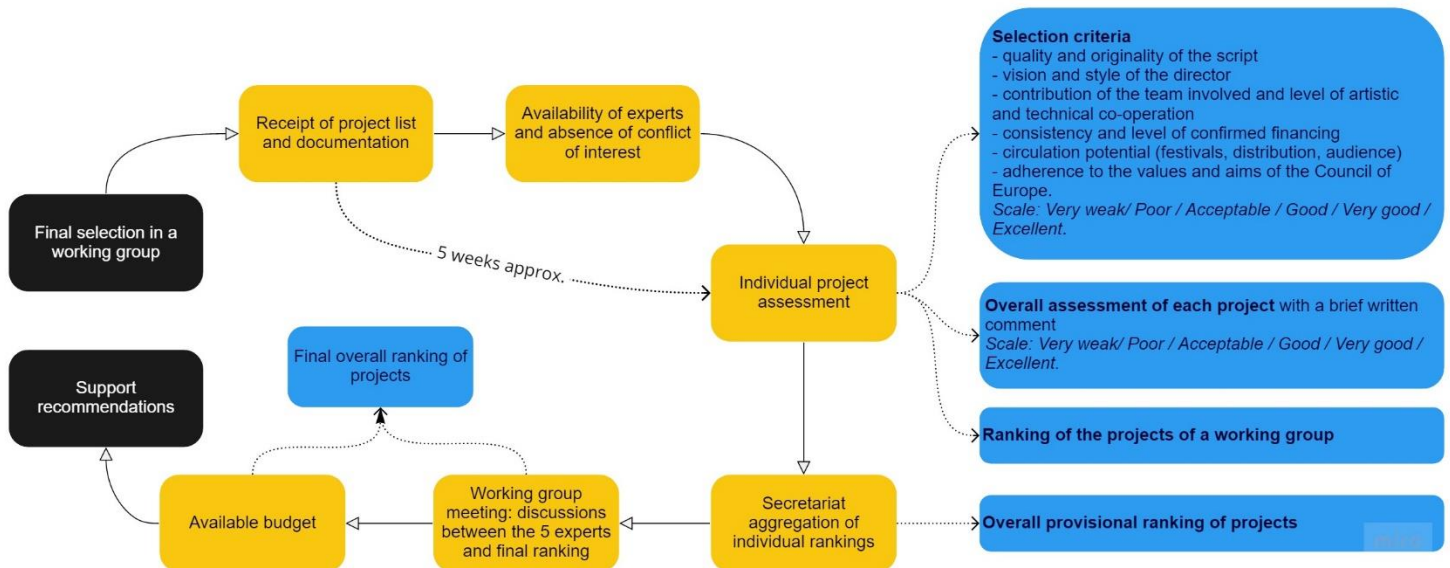
The role of the Secretariat in the working groups is to:

- ✓ provide the experts, when necessary, with technical information on the project and its stakeholders. This information is acquired by the project managers during the examination of the application (such as legal and financial information on the project and the track record of the stakeholders);
- ✓ remind the experts, when necessary, of the regulations of the support programme, the regulations and the rules of procedures applicable to the Fund.

The role of the Executive Committee Observer is to provide feedback to the Executive Committee and the Board of Management on the functioning of the working groups and to assess whether their work and recommendations are in line with the policy, strategy and objectives of the Fund as set out by the Board of Management. He/she does not intervene in the group's discussions.

▪ Recommendations for support

The recommendations of all the working groups will then be examined and validated by the Executive Committee before being communicated to the producers.



8. Obligations of the experts

A number of obligations result from the signature by an expert of a framework contract with Eurimages, in particular the following:

Confidentiality

The external experts selected by Eurimages undertake to treat as strictly confidential the information and material relating to the projects provided to them, both during and after the execution of their work. All information contained therein must be considered sensitive. Beyond considerations of intellectual property and data confidentiality, experts should bear in mind that, in specific cases, the quality of life, freedom and even the life of an artist may sometimes be threatened because of his or her project.

Confidentiality is also a crucial element of the project assessment process in order to maintain the independence of the recommendations for support. It is therefore imperative that film professionals do not know the identity of the experts assessing an application for support.

Conflicts of interest

Experts shall inform the Secretariat as soon as possible of any conflict of interest they may have which is likely to affect the impartial and objective performance of their duties. In particular, they must inform the Secretariat if they have participated, are participating or intend to participate, directly or indirectly, in any of the projects submitted to them.

The following shall be deemed to constitute financial or personal interests giving rise to **conflicts of interest likely to impair the impartial and objective exercise of the expert's functions**:

- current paid employment in a company or entity involved in one of the projects submitted to the expert concerned;
- the status of a partner or shareholder of a company or entity involved in one of the projects submitted to the expert concerned;
- family or equivalent ties to a person with a financial interest in a company or entity involved in one of the projects submitted to the expert concerned.

Experts are also free to declare any other factors which may, in their own judgement, constitute a financial or personal interest going beyond the above definition (e.g. unpaid activity, non-familial personal links or activity outside the audiovisual sector).

The careful examination by the experts selected in a working group of the list of projects submitted to them for assessment is therefore crucial in order to avoid any subsequent difficulties in case of conflict of interest and to ensure the full legitimacy of the recommendations for support.

Use of the Eurimages name

Eurimages' external experts are not representatives of the Fund and, as stipulated in the framework contract, may not use the name, flag or logo of Eurimages or the Council of Europe without prior authorisation.

Experts must refrain from making any reference to their collaboration with Eurimages, notably at public events, in the press, on the Internet or on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), without prior agreement from the Fund's management.

9. Financial and administrative arrangements

Before and after the work of the experts is carried out, some administrative steps must be completed.

Framework contract

When an eligible expert is approved by the Board of Management, he/she is included in the list of independent experts. However, this does not mean that the Fund commits itself to submitting projects to them for evaluation. The actual selection in a working group is made by an automated system according to the criteria defined by the Board of Management and based on the information provided by the external experts.

A framework contract is concluded with the experts included in this list. This document specifies the obligations and rights of the experts (code of conduct, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, etc.) and the general conditions of their mission. It is concluded for a maximum period of three years, i.e. until 31 December 2024.

Experts in the pool may reapply after their framework contract has expired.

Fees

The experts' fees depend on the number of projects to be assessed: currently they amount to €1,000 for between one and ten projects, plus €100 for each additional project. The fee is paid in full at the end of the working group meeting, after the experts have signed a certificate of attendance⁶.

If an expert who has made an individual assessment of the projects and submitted a preliminary ranking cannot participate in the working group meeting for any reason, the amount of his/her fee shall be reduced by 60%.

Invitation and order letters

Once the experts are assigned to the working groups, the Eurimages Secretariat prepares an invitation and order letter (per session and per expert) specifying the assessment period, the list of projects to be assessed and the date and venue of the working group meeting (remote or in-person).

This letter also specifies the financial aspects of the mission (fees, daily allowance, etc.).

Travel and stay

If a meeting is organised in-person, travel and subsistence expenses shall be paid by the Eurimages Secretariat on the basis of a fixed allowance defined by a scale adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The Secretariat shall be responsible for organising and paying for the experts' travel, or for reimbursing the amount of the expenses incurred for their travel on the basis of the most economical fare. Experts shall receive a daily allowance (per diem) covering accommodation and subsistence costs (including meals and local transport).

These elements will be specified in the invitation and order letters. The applicable Council of Europe regulations are available on the experts' page of the Eurimages website.

VAT

For experts invoicing their services from a company and not in their personal capacity, it is necessary to check whether the company is subject to VAT. As part of an international organisation, Eurimages does not have a VAT number and has a specific status. However, payments can under certain conditions be exempt from VAT by following a specific procedure.

For all companies subject to VAT, including those established in the European Union with the exception of France, the Secretariat must request a tax exemption certificate for each session from the French tax authorities when signing the invitation and order letter. As a first step, a pro-forma invoice must be provided before the start of the work (a pro-forma invoice template will be provided by Eurimages). This pro-forma invoice is then used solely for French tax purposes (and not for payment) in order to establish the tax exemption certificate that Eurimages will send to the expert concerned.

After completion of the work, an invoice without VAT can be issued provided that the tax exemption certificate has been received.

⁶ If the meeting is held by videoconference, the attendance list is signed electronically.

The absence of a copy of this tax exemption certificate attached to the invoice in the experts' accounts may create problems with their tax authorities.

Companies subject to VAT without an exemption certificate will be able to charge VAT.

Invoice and payment

Once the work of the experts has been completed, an invoice will be required to process the payment. This invoice will be provided electronically via the online platform. A template invoice may be provided but experts may use their own format as long as it contains the same information as the template.

The experts undertake to comply with all legal provisions in force and to fulfil their tax obligations. To this end:

- they shall submit to the Council of Europe - Eurimages an invoice in accordance with the legislation in force;
- they will declare, for tax purposes, all fees paid to them by Eurimages in accordance with the provisions in force in their country of tax residence.

Payments are not processed directly by Eurimages but by the Council of Europe's Treasury, Payments and Accounting Department and normally take a maximum of 60 working days to process.

Signature of contractual documents

Eurimages uses an electronic signature system, a qualified electronic trust service provider in accordance with the European Union's eIDAS Regulation, which also complies with the regulations of many countries around the world. This service is currently provided to Eurimages by the company [Signaturit](#).

10. Online platform

The Eurimages Secretariat is currently developing an online platform that will allow candidate or selected experts to:

- submit an application and monitor its processing;
- enter information and submit or receive the documents necessary for the administrative and financial processing of their file;
- receive documents and information on the projects to be assessed;
- record their individual assessments of the projects submitted to them;
- access the compilation of individual assessments and final support recommendations for the work group to which they are assigned.

This platform will be accessible from the [experts page of the Eurimages website](#), where a user guide will also be made available.

11. Contacts

The Eurimages Secretariat team in charge of the follow-up of external experts can be reached at the following address:

eurimages-experts@coe.int

Tel: +33 3 88 41 26 40 (switchboard)