MEDICI — The Film Funding Journey

**Wednesday, 25 September (evening) to Friday 27 September 2019
in Potsdam, Berlin**

Ninth workshop:

The public film funds' experiences with new players and forms of content, their impact on funding schemes and their responsibility towards the industry in the 21st century

How do we navigate through digital transformation? The agenda of the 9th Medici workshop is, on the one hand, based on the demand of participants to follow up on issues discussed during the 8th workshop and, more specifically, about blockchain and the experiences the funds have with SVOD/VOD platforms such as Netflix, Amazon, iTunes, HBO.

On the other hand, we will talk about formats, including current formats intended for theatrical or TV release and for the digital market. What do they mean today? Do we need new formats? How can we support the development of formats without knowing how they will be seen? What are the criteria we need to address when discussing/evaluating formats? Last but not least, do funds have a role to play and take action to ensure the sustainability of industry players in the digital age?

Wednesday 25 September 2019

Arrival of participants

20:00   Welcome dinner

Thursday 26 September 2019

Morning

09.00 – 9.15   Introduction

MODULE 1   Platform economy

In this first module, we will give an overview of the current situation of the media platform economy and the developments that we can expect in the coming years. We will follow up with discussions on how the national funds could or should react and what role the European Commission should play in this area.

9.15 - 10.45   A map of the platform economy

The emergence of Netflix (more than 140 million subscribers) and other streaming platforms could be considered as a tsunami in the audiovisual environment. They are profoundly changing audience behaviour and have a deep impact on film production, financing and distribution. The lecture will give us a map showing where the platform economy stands today and where it is going.

9:15 – 9:45   Lecture and Q & A:
                Overview of the platforms' landscape
                European Audiovisual Observatory

9:45 – 10:15   Lecture and Q & A:
                How the platform landscape is evolving
                Fabio Lima, Digital Sofa and Filmillier, Brazil

10.15 - 12.30   How do public funds experience the emergence of platforms?
                How do funds reposition themselves in the changing media environment?

The emergence of platforms has an impact on project financing. Which producer does not dream of selling his/her project to Netflix, Prime Time, YouTube, etc.? A great deal of money and resources go into the creation of original content for platforms. What does this mean for "standard" released projects like Arthouse Cinema?

10:15 – 10:45   Case study:
                Experience with platform content
                Norwegian Film Institute, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg

10:45 – 11:00   Break

11:00 – 11:30   Lecture and Q & A:
                Doing business with platforms
                Constraints, opportunities, actions to be taken by public funds regarding platforms as a financing partner
                William Page, Eurovod
11:30 – 12:30   Open discussion:
                Sharing of the experiences with SVOD/VOD platforms

12.30 - 13.30   Lunch

Thursday 26 September 2019
Afternoon

MODULE 2 — Formats – What are we talking about? Why this question today?

As we shift from linear programming in cinemas and broadcasting to catalogue-based media on platforms, defining and designing the format to reach out to a global audience has become an integral part of the content development process. How does this change the development process? What viewing habits must be taken into consideration – screens, locations, duration, 2nd screen activity? What exactly does "designing for the binge" / "integrating social media strategies" / "acknowledging the long tail" mean? Are there any common definitions that public funds could use to differentiate between new forms of content?

13.45 — 15.45 A short guide to format and their development (lecture and exercise)

Why is there now a need to design formats? How do format and content development blend? What parameters do we need to consider when we define a format? What work stages are part of format design? How do we know what format to develop? When do we begin defining a format? When should we be done with formatting? What skills and criteria are needed to facilitate and assess the development and production for platforms?

13:45 – 14:15   Lecture and Q & A:
A short guide to format development
Inga von Staden

With the evolution of serial content and a multitude of audiovisual formats, the development phase is preceded by a so-called predevelopment in which the story universe is created and audience research conducted. We will take a short dive into the pleasure of creating worlds from which to derive stories for films and actions for games to better understand how the development process for audiovisual media is changing.

14:15 – 15:15   Exercise in groups
Format development

15:15 – 15:30   Break

15.30 -17.30   How can funds support the creation of relevant and accessible content?
How to define relevance, and for whom?

Some funds, e.g. the mfg Baden-Württemberg (Digital Content Fund) and the Danish Film Institute, have adapted their strategies and open up their financing schemes to transmedial and new media projects in development and production. What are the reasons for not doing so? Even those who do not consider transmedial formats to be of relevance to them, what strategies do they have for the development of new formats such as series for streaming platforms? How do they react to audiovisual storytelling taking place at all times and on every device? How does that impact their cultural objectives? How does that impact film making? What could be the framework for programmes addressing formats beyond cinema and traditional TV?

15:30 – 16:00   **What are our insights for the funding schemes?**
Presentation by the working groups

16:00 – 17:00   Case studies:
The Danish Film Institute's open format strategy
Danish Film Institute

17:00 – 17:30   Open discussion
Sharing of the experiences with new format development

MODULE 3 — Free Flow… and a glass of wine!

18.00 — 19.00 Let us know what you want to talk about

Participants are invited to have a glass of wine, network, share and post on a wall the issues they would like to discuss with their colleagues, but also leave their impressions of the day and make proposals for the following day and/or future workshops.

20.00   Dinner

Friday, 27 September 2019
Morning

MODULE 4 — Digitisation from application to distribution

As presented in the previous MEDICI workshop, the blockchain could be adapted to public film funding. That is possible because the blockchain technology correlates with the process of digitisation which most of the public film funds currently use to digitise their funding documents, and because most of the public film funds produce, co-produce, acquire and distribute content. They have to deal with a wide variety of different types of contracts and stakeholders. That implies a great deal of administrative work and burdens that could be reduced by implementing blockchain architecture.

9.00 — 10.30   The digital track record of funding

Various funds are currently synchronising and digitising their documentation. In this discussion, we will be sharing our experiences with the implementation of and work with digitised funding processes. What do we need in order to go forward if blockchain were to be THE solution to the burden of administrative work for the funds and the industry? Are the needs identical? Is there a possibility to share any of these technological developments rather than create them anew for each funding body and thus lose time and money?

9:00 – 9:30   Lecture and Q & A:
                Digitising workflows in public institutions
                Florian Glatz, Founding Member of "Bundeblock"

9:30 – 10:00   **How we digitised our workflow**
                Case studies presented by selected participants

10:00 – 10:30   Open discussion

10:30 – 10:45 Break

10.45 – 12.30 Blockchain: bringing digital into relationships

We will take another look at blockchain to further explore its potentials and challenges. Is its implementation as simple as announced? How does blockchain differ from the digitisation that funding bodies have implemented? How can the different funding bodies synchronise their efforts to make sure that their blockchains enable international co-production?

10:45 – 11:15   Lecture and Q & A:
                Block chain as a part of the workflow
                Vincent Choukroun, Cascade 8/Logical Pictures – France

11:15 – 12:00   Exercise in groups
                Block chain as a part of a new funding scheme
                Supporting new formats and platform distribution

12:00 – 12:30   **What are our insights for the funding schemes?**
                Presentation by the working groups

12.45 — 13.45 Lunch

13:45 — 14.30 Continuation: MODULE 4
                Digitisation from application to final evaluation
                Open discussion

14.30 — 14.45 Break

Friday 27 September 2019
Afternoon

MODULE 5 — Sustainability

Surviving in the 21st century
Never have we produced nor consumed as much audiovisual content as today. The industry is growing by the minute. New technologies, the opening of borders, and new distribution windows have made audiovisual storytelling a very attractive profession. Public funds are unable to keep track of the increased number of producers and studios. How do we deal with this complexity?

14.45 - 15.45   **Are there any strategies in place?**
Case studies presented by selected participants
Open discussion

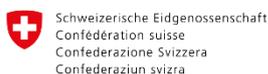**15.45 — 16.45 MODULE 6 — Free flow - What do you think?**

Before leaving, participants are invited to have a glass of wine, network and share their impressions of the workshop and make proposals for future workshops.

17.00   Departure

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