

Locarno Film Festival

Open Doors Projects
Open Doors Producers
Open Doors Directors

REGULATIONS 2025

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Locarno Film Festival
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Member of Swiss Top Events

1. Preamble

The Locarno Film Festival (LFF) proposes a section titled Open Doors in collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

The organization of the section is guaranteed by the Festival, which consequently also allocates people responsible for the project.

The LFF reserves the right to change the Rules & Regulations from time to time. Please check our website (www.locarnofestival.ch/opendoors) for the latest version.

2. Goals and eligible countries

The Open Doors section aims primarily at supporting directors and producers from countries in the South and the East, where independent filmmaking is particularly challenging.

The 2025-2028 cycle is focusing on Central Africa, East Africa and Western Africa regions, championing film projects, talents and producers from the following 42 eligible countries:

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, DR Congo, Eritrea, Eswatini (Swaziland), Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

3. Professional programs online before and onsite during Locarno Film Festival

Every year, following a call for submissions, Open Doors selects projects and professionals to take part in the Open Doors Projects, Producers and Directors, the three main professional programs taking place online before and onsite during Locarno Film Festival.

Up to 6 feature-length projects from the countries in focus are chosen every year to take part in the **Open Doors Projects**: a training and co-production platform where teams of director and producer, after a preparation training, will meet potential international partners for their project.

The **Open Doors Producers** is a training workshop, selecting around 6 promising emerging producers or filmmakers-producers. Participants will take part in a tailor-made program including group and individual sessions, focusing on the role of the creative producer, providing tools to work within the international film industry.

Around 5 directors will be invited to be part of the **Open Doors Directors** program. The Directors program is a tailored-made program, including group and individual sessions online and onsite, during which the participants will discuss about creative processes, challenges in filmmaking and meet industry professionals attending the Festival. Moreover, films of the invited directors will be screened during the Locarno Film Festival as part of the official Open Doors Screenings section.

4. Dates

The 78th Locarno Film Festival will take place from August 6th to 16th, 2025.

The Open Doors Projects, Producers and Directors programs will run online between June and July 2025 and on site from the 7th to the 12th of August 2025. For selected participants, participation to both online and onsite programs in their full extension is mandatory.

5. Entry Conditions

5.1 Open Doors **Projects**

- The director of the project submitted for the selection must be a citizen of one of the eligible 42 countries (see point 2. for the full list).
- The producer doesn't have to be a citizen of one of the 42 eligible countries. If the director and producer are the same person, proof of the production company registered in one of the eligible countries is mandatory.
- We select feature-length projects of any genre, with potential for international co-production and/or distribution. Only projects of at least 70 minutes are eligible for the main prize "Open Doors Grant".
- Applying projects must be submitted with a complete dossier.
- Incomplete dossiers will not be taken into consideration. See paragraph 7.1 for details on the requested and order of the documents.
- The submitted dossier must be presented in English. Good knowledge and practice of the English language for at least one of the attending project representatives is necessary to participate in the Open Doors Projects program.
- Projects that will be shot in any official or spoken language of the eligible countries are suitable for application to the Open Doors Projects program.
- Producers are eligible to apply with projects meeting these criteria, and as a team with the director.

5.2 Open Doors **Producers**

- The applying producer must be a citizen of one of the eligible 42 countries (see point 2. for the full list).
- The production company must be registered in one of the eligible 42 countries (see point 2. for the full list).
- The Open Doors Producers program is selecting producers who are active in the region, supporting their regional and local film industry and wish to build their regional and international network and career as creative producers.
- Producers are requested to apply with a slate of projects, of which one feature-length project (any stage is accepted) will be presented officially within the dossier. This project will provide the working basis for the participant during the Open Doors Producers program.

See paragraph 7.2 for the exhaustive list of requested and order of the documentation. Incomplete dossiers will not be taken into consideration.

- A director must be attached to the main project the producers applying with
- The submission dossier must be presented in English. Knowledge of the English language is necessary to participate in the Open Doors Producers program.

- Projects that will be shot in any official or spoken language of the eligible countries are suitable for application to the Open Doors Producers program.

5.3 Open Doors **Directors**

- The director must be a citizen of one of the 42 eligible countries (see point 2. for the full list).
- We look for directors with feature-length films completed in the last 5 years of any genre and format. Applications must be submitted with a complete entry form.
- Incomplete entry forms will not be taken into consideration.
- The entry form must be presented in English. Good knowledge and practice of the English language for the director of the film is necessary to participate in the Open Doors Directors program.
- Films shot in any official or spoken language of the eligible countries are suitable for application. Submitted films require English or French subtitles already in the pre-selection phase. All films will be required to have English subtitles if selected.
- A maximum of 2 feature films can be submitted by each director (one entry form per film must be completed).
- If selected, the film must have a DCP copy to share with the Locarno Film Festival.
- The director of the film can also apply to the Projects and / or Producers programs by filling out the related entry forms and providing all the requested documentation.

5.4 General conditions (valid for **all programs**)

- Submission is free of charge.
- Dossiers must be presented in English language.
- It is possible to apply to the three programs at the same time (be aware of the three different links to apply).
- The applicant can choose to submit the same project to both Projects and Producers programs, or two different projects, as long as the requested documentation is provided and the motivation to take part in the two different programs is clearly stated (see paragraph 7 for specifications).
- A maximum of 2 different projects per applicant can be sent for the Projects and/or Producers programs.
- A maximum of 2 different films per director can be sent for the Directors program.

6. Application process and deadline

The submission is completed through three mandatory steps:

- Verify eligibility conditions, the complete list and order of required documentation.
- Prepare your project / film documentation. Start now, don't wait for the last minute!
- Fill out the Online Entry form:
 - **Projects's Online Entry Form:** <https://bit.ly/3YVIQrX>
 - **Producers's Online Entry Form:** <https://bit.ly/3OixacA>

- **Directors's Online Entry Form:** <https://bit.ly/4OMchhE>

Deadline to apply: January 16th, 2025, at 23:59 CET

7. Requested documentation for application

Please find below the full list and order of requirements to complete your dossier for the Open Doors Projects, Producers and Directors programs.

For more details and suggestions on the documents to provide, please consult our resource on the Open Doors ToolBox: **"How to Write a Good Film Project Application"**, available at <https://bit.ly/3Cjglm5> upon free registration (Menu > Development).

Please note that the available resource on the ToolBox is only a content reference for the dossier, and **not for its design and look**.

Please note that projects lacking requested documentation will not be considered for selection.

7.1 Requested documents - Open Doors **Projects**

Please include the documents in the following order:

- Cover page including the main details of the project (title, name of director, name of main producer, name of main production company, countries of production)
- Technical details of the project (if needed, refer to the ToolBox resource for details)
- Motivation letter: why do you want to participate in the program, what are your needs, goals and expectations? (max. 1 page)
- Introduction video of the director and the producer, including short introduction of the project, project background, status, main needs and expectations of participation in the program (similar to the motivation letter)
 - The video must be maximum 3 minutes long and in English language
 - The video link must not expire
- Short synopsis (half-page)
- Long synopsis (2-3 pages)
- Director's statement (1-2 pages)
- Visual concept (in form of a description)
- Visual elements (moodboard, reference pictures, teaser if any, etc.)
- Producer's statement (1-2 pages) – this should also include the working relationship with the director and history
- Biographies:

Within each biography, please make sure to specify clearly if the applicants are citizens of one of the eligible countries. If the applicants are not resident in the country, specify what are their activities within the reference country.

- Biography / CV, selected filmography of the director. Please specify your role(s) for each title of your filmography

- Copy of ID or passport of the director(s) (we don't accept driving license, etc.) as proof of citizenship
- Biography / CV, selected filmography of the main producer (please specify your role(s) for each title of your filmography)
- Copy of ID or passport of the producer (we don't accept driving license, etc.) as proof of citizenship
- Production company profile, including filmography and line-up
- Biography / CV and selected filmography and picture of the co-producer (if any)
- Co-production company profile (if any), including filmography and line-up
- Cast and crew including nationality (if any)
- Proof of chain of title
- Budget (1-page top sheet, in the local currency and in EUR / USD)
- Financing plan (1 page, in the local currency and in EUR / USD)
- Financing strategy: written explanation about the status of the project and situation of the financing, as well as alternative financing plans locally, regionally and internationally
 - For early development projects: a project development strategy, including financing strategy development and the producers' strategy for developing the project artistically and increase its visibility and attractively on the market
 - For project in advanced development: steps and accomplishments of the development strategy so far and financing strategy
- Timeline for the project (from development to distribution). In this paragraph, please include a tentative plan of possible new collaborations foreseen by August 2025, and what will be the status of the project then
- Letter of intent, letter of commitment from co-producers, funders, investors (if any)
- Signed agreements of co-production(s), funding or else (if any)
- At least 2 previous films made by the director (shorts and feature films are both accepted)
 - Previous work must be subtitled in English
 - We accept Vimeo or Google Drive link. Links must remain valid and accessible at least until August 16th, 2025
 - Links copied in the text shouldn't exceed one line of length (otherwise use link shortener programs such as bitly.com)
- Script or treatment (treatment must be min. 10 pages long)

NB: The documentation must be submitted in English and the dossier will be assessed based on this language.

However, if wished, it is possible to additionally attach the original Portuguese or French version of the script, treatment and director's note.

7.2 Requested documents - Open Doors **Producers**

Please include the documents in the following order:

Part 1

- Cover page including applicant and project's details: name of the main producer (who must be the applicant), name of production company, project's title, name of the director, countries of production, status)
- CV/biography, filmography of the applicant (1 page max.)
 - Please specify your role(s) for each title of your filmography
 - Within the biography, please make sure to specify clearly if you are citizen of one of the eligible countries. If you are not resident in the country, specify what are your activities within the film industry of the reference country
- Copy of ID or passport of the applicant (we don't accept driving license, etc.) as proof of citizenship
- Production company profile including filmography and line-up of the company (please specify your role in each film listed and clearly explain if the company is owned by the applicant, or what is the applicant's role and position within the company)
- Proof of registration of the production company within one of the 42 eligible countries
- Motivation letter: describe your expectations and goals for the Producers program (1 page max.)
- Country market assessment and career perspective: describe your country's challenges and possibilities in production, financing, distribution and audiences, and your role in it. Add an explanation of the applicant's future plans which includes their view on regional collaborations and international perspective (this doesn't necessarily have to include European participation). A vision of the producer about working as a creative producer in the sector.
- Introduction video of the applicant as a person and as a producer, including introduction of the applicant's producing career, which way the applicant is active in the region and how they wish to build their regional and international network and career as creative producers.
 - The video must be maximum 3 minutes long and in English language
 - The video must not expire
- At least 2 previous films made by the producer (short and feature films are both accepted)
 - Previous work must be subtitled in English
 - We accept Vimeo or Google Drive link. Links must remain valid and accessible at least until August 16th, 2025
 - Links copied in the text shouldn't exceed one line of length (otherwise use link shortener programs such as bitly.com)

Part 2

The applicants must include documentation for one feature-length project that they are producing. Projects at any stage are accepted, except projects that will premiere before August 2025.

The documentation should be as complete as possible and include, in the following order:

Technical details for the project (Title, name of director and producer, production countries, running time, aspect ratio, type, color, sound, language, genre – see ToolBox resource for more details)

- Short synopsis (half page)
- Long synopsis (2-3 pages)
- Director's statement (1-2 pages)
- Visual concept (in form of a description)
- Visual elements (moodboard, reference pictures, teaser if any, etc.)
- Producer's statement (1-2 pages) – this should also include the working relationship with the director and history
- Biographies:
 - Biography / CV, selected filmography and high resolution picture of the director(s), current residency country
 - Copy of ID or passport of the director(s) (we don't accept driving license, etc)
 - Production company profile, including filmography and line-up
 - Biography / CV and selected filmography and picture of the co-producer (if any)
- Co-production company profile (if any), including filmography and line-up
- Cast and crew (if any)
- Proof of chain of title
- Budget (1-page top sheet, in EUR or USD)
- Financing plan (1 page, in EUR or USD)
- Financing strategy: a written explanation about the status of the project, situation of financing and possibilities for financing locally, regionally (and internationally if available)
- Timeline for the project (from development to distribution). In this paragraph, please include a tentative plan of possible new collaborations and status of the project foreseen by August 2025
- Letter of intent, letter of commitment from co-producers, funders, investors (if any)
- Signed agreements of co-production, funding or else (if any)
- At least 2 previous films made by the director of the project (shorts and feature films are both accepted). Previous work must be subtitled in English
 - We accept Vimeo or Google Drive link. Links must remain valid and accessible at least until August 16th 2025
 - Links copied in the text shouldn't exceed one line of length (otherwise use link shortener programs such as bitly.com)
- Script, treatment, subject or current edited scenes / rough cut, if available. This is not mandatory, but it can help evaluating the project.

NB: The documentation must be submitted in English and the dossier will be assessed based on this language.

However, if wished, it is possible to additionally attach the original Portuguese or French version of the script, treatment (if available) and director's note.

Please submit all the above documents in **one single PDF file**.

NB: Applicants to the Producers program that reach the last round of selection will be contacted via e-mail and asked for a 1-hour interview via Zoom with the Open Doors team, foreseen around mid-March (exact dates to be confirmed). The interview will be conducted in English.

7.3 Requested documents - Open Doors **Directors**

Please refer to the Online Entry Form to check which information and files you need to share and prepare to apply.

A max. 5-minute video introduction by the director and a screener of the film are also requested for the application (check the entry form and read the details).

A maximum of 2 feature films can be submitted by each director (one entry form per film must be completed).

8. Selected participants: invitations and costs

The Locarno Film Festival will fully cover the expenses for travel (to and from Locarno) and hotel (in Locarno area), and will provide daily allowances to lunch and dinner to:

- The director and main producer of each project selected for the Open Doors **Projects** program (2 persons maximum per project)
- Each producer selected to take part in the Open Doors **Producers** program
- Each director selected in the Open Doors Directors program.

Most of the meals are also covered by the Locarno Film Festival as well as an Industry accreditation giving access to the Locarno Pro activities, the Festival screenings and other events.

9. Awards

9.1 Open Doors **Projects**

- At the end of the program the Open Doors Jury members will award the Open Doors Grant to some projects among those of the Open Doors Projects program. The Grant may range from CHF 5'000 to CHF 30'000 funded by the Swiss Fund visions sud est, with support from the SDC, and by the City of Bellinzona.
- Only feature-length film projects of at least 70 minutes are eligible for the Open Doors Grant.
- Other prizes for the projects-holders of the Open Doors Projects will be announced before the event.

9.2 Open Doors **Producers**

Professionals participating in the Open Doors Producers program can benefit from several in-kind and/or scholarships awards; these will be announced before the event.

10. If a project is selected for the Open Doors Projects or Producers programs, the following is compulsory

10.1 Open Doors **Projects**

- Before the Festival
 - The result of the selection must stay strictly confidential until the official announcement by the Locarno Film Festival through its press release early June 2025 (date to be confirmed).
- Until the end of the Festival
 - From the confirmation of selection to the end of the Festival (16th August 2025) any subscription or selection to another co-production platform must be submitted to the Open Doors team in advance for approval.
- After the Festival
 - Producers, distributors and international sales agents of the selected projects agree to quote in their publicity and advertising the participation of the film project in the Open Doors Projects program.
 - The mention of the participation in Open Doors must appear on the opening as well as end credits once the film is completed. The mention should appear as follows:
 - At the opening credits: either the Open Doors logo or the written mention “Open Doors – Locarno Film Festival”.
 - At the end credits: the Locarno Film Festival – Open Doors logo that mentions the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
 - The winning projects of the Open Doors Grant must as well include the logos of Visions Sud Est and the Township of Bellinzona in the end credits.
 - The winning project of the CNC Award must include the logo of CNC in the end credits accompanied by the sentence “This film received CNC development grant as part of Open Doors – Locarno Film Festival”.
 - The winning project of the Arte Kino International Prize must as well include the logo of Arte Kino in the end credits.
 - The Open Doors logos will be provided directly by the Festival and must not be, in any case, altered.
 - All publications using the Open Doors logo must receive approval from the Locarno Film Festival (marketing@locarnofestival.ch).
 - Logos of CNC, ARTE Kino and visions sud est will be provided by the respective organisations. For the logo of the City of Bellinzona, please refer to Locarno Film Festival.
 - Directors and producers with a project participating in Open Doors must regularly inform the Open Doors Team concerning the developments of such project.

We are especially interested in production status, date of national release, Festival selections (national and international), award nominations and prizes, any details regarding national or international distribution (including deals with sales agents).

This information is necessary to keep track of the projects selected in Open Doors and to keep our website updated.

- Once the film is completed, a screener (possibly an online download, other formats like online links or DVD are accepted) must be sent to Open Doors for archive purposes as well as to the organisation awarding the respective awards (Visions sud est, CNC, ARTE). One copy will be handed to the SDC for internal use only. The DVD will not be given to third parties without the rights-holder's prior approval.

10.2 Open Doors **Producers**

- **Before the Festival**
 - The result of the selection must stay strictly confidential until the official announcement by the Locarno Film Festival through its press release by early June 2025 (date to be confirmed).
- **After the end of the Festival**
 - Producers with a project participating in the Open Doors Producers program must regularly inform the Open Doors Team concerning the developments of their projects and careers.

We are especially interested in: projects line up, date of national release, Festival selections (national and international), award nominations and prizes, any details regarding national or international distribution (including deals with sales agents) attendance of training initiatives and international platforms.

This information is necessary to keep track record of the participants selected in Open Doors and to keep our website updated.

- Once the project brought by the participant to the Producers program is completed, the logo of Open Doors must appear in the closing credits.
- The Open Doors logos will be provided directly by the Festival and must not be, in any case, altered.
- All publications using the Open Doors logo must receive the approval from the Locarno Film Festival (marketing@locarnofestival.ch).
- Once the project participating at the Producers program is completed, a screener (possibly an online download, other formats like online links or DVD are accepted) must be sent to Open Doors for archive purposes. One copy will be handed to the SDC for internal use only. The film will not be shown to third parties without the rights-holder's prior approval.

10.3 Open Doors **Directors**

- **Before the Festival**
 - The result of the selection must stay strictly confidential until the official announcement by the Locarno Film Festival through its press conference, currently foreseen for July 9th, 2025 (date to be confirmed).
- **Until the end of the Festival**
 - From the confirmation of selection to the end of the Festival (16th August 2025) any selection to another film festival must be immediately communicated to the Open Doors team.
- **After the Festival**
 - Rights-holders of the selected films can quote in their publicity and advertising the participation of the film in the Open Doors Screenings.

- All publications using the Open Doors logo must receive approval from the Locarno Film Festival (marketing@locarnofestival.ch).

11. Force majeure and emergency measures

The 78th Locarno Film Festival will take place in Locarno from August 6-16, 2025.

An eventual cancellation of the 78th edition of the Locarno Film Festival by effect of law, decree or regulation issued by local, Cantonal, Federal or international authorities in the context of a situation of force majeure or emergency (including, but not limited to, situations resulting from an epidemic or pandemic, in particular with regard to COVID-19 and related consequences and effects) shall result in the cancellation of all and/or the majority of the screenings in theaters and in Piazza Grande and of the edition of the Festival and shall render all contractual obligations of the Locarno Film Festival null and void.

Even where no such law, decree or regulation is issued by a competent authority, the Locarno Film Festival may at any time and when required by circumstances beyond its control, for reasons of urgency, necessity or of safeguarding preeminent public or private interests (regarding, but not limited to, COVID-19 and related consequences and effects), cancel the 78th edition of the Locarno Film Festival and thus automatically rescind with immediate effect any contract or agreement with the participants selected.

Should any situation of force majeure or emergency arise, the Locarno Film Festival may at any time and when circumstances require it, for reasons of urgency, necessity or of safeguarding preeminent public or private interests, amend the format of the 78th edition of the Locarno Film Festival (regarding, but not limited to, by digital alternatives or reduction of the program).

In all the eventualities mentioned, the Locarno Film Festival undertakes to promptly inform all the participants of the submitted/invited films.