



(i)FEATURES

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS 2009

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SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE

TUESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2009 @ 12 NOON



UK FILM COUNCIL
LOTTERY FUNDED

skillset

NESTA Making
Innovation
Flourish

These guidelines are intended to assist filmmakers in making a submission to iFeatures. They should be read in conjunction with the iFeatures application form (available for download at www.ifeatures.co.uk/home/apply and with the iFeatures FAQ's (www.ifeatures.co.uk/home/knowmore/faq))

1. INTRODUCTION

iFeatures is a new digital feature film initiative, open to writers, directors and producers from across the UK.

Delivered by South West Screen in partnership with BBC Films, Bristol City Council, Skillset and NESTA, iFeatures aims to harness fresh stories, outstanding creative talent and innovative production methods to create 3 full-length feature films during 2010.

Following an open call for submissions, iFeatures will invite 12 filmmaking teams to take their ideas through an intensive creative and commercial development process. From these, it plans to 'greenlight' 3 films into production next summer. Each film will be produced in and around the City of Bristol, and must be capable of being realised on a budget of £300,000. The completed films are intended to be released theatrically and to embrace the myriad opportunities of digital distribution – DVD, online and mobile. The BBC is the UK TV broadcast partner.

As well as looking for compelling stories that can challenge, move and entertain, iFeatures is seeking projects that can capture something of the essence of Bristol – its people, values, culture, energy – and communicate these in ways that will resonate with audiences across the world. It's about finding films that can give a new perspective on the city, be they genre, indie, documentary or something completely new.

iFeatures will fully engage the creativity of the region's brightest talents as well as draw to Bristol some of the most exciting filmmakers at work in the UK and Europe. This desire to bring together differing voices, perspectives and experience is a crucial element of the initiative.

Guided by experienced industry professionals throughout, iFeatures intends to raise the bar in micro/low-cost filmmaking at every level – development, production, marketing, distribution and training. Through its partnerships and accompanying professional development programme, it will support the production and distribution ambitions of all participants, developing not just exceptional films but also entrepreneurially-driven teams of filmmakers with the skills, self-confidence and relationships to make a significant impact in mainstream feature film.

2. DETAILED OUTLINE OF THE SCHEME

iFeatures consists of five key phases:

i. Submissions

Project submissions can be made at any time up until **the deadline of 12 noon on Tuesday 8th December 2009**. An application form is available for download from www.ifeatures.co.uk/home/apply

For full details on eligibility, submission materials, selection criteria & decision-making processes, etc, please refer to the **Making a submission** and **Selection and decision-making** sections of these guidelines below.

The iFeatures team will be running a number of events in the run up to the deadline in order to assist potential applicants with the development of their project submissions and to foster collaborations between filmmakers. The iFeatures website (www.ifeatures.co.uk) contains a wealth of information on the initiative and on Bristol itself. It also has a community function to help applicants find other writers, directors and producers you want to work with, and to help them find you. The team will also endeavour to respond to individual queries and provide advice to potential applicants where resources allow. Please see our Contact Details below.

ii. Initial Development Phase (12 Teams)

A selection panel consisting of feature film professionals, representatives from each of the funding partners and the iFeatures team will review the submissions and invite **12 filmmaking teams** to take their projects from outline to full treatment during the Initial Development Phase.

The Initial Development Phase will last six weeks and is currently planned to run from **Monday 25th January to Friday 5th March 2010**. It will require a significant time commitment, especially on the part of the writer, although it is not expected that the filmmakers will be working exclusively on development at this stage.

In order to facilitate this Initial Development Phase, each filmmaking team will receive a direct investment of £2,500 together with appropriate creative development support from both the iFeatures team and a BBC Films development executive. Participants will also benefit from a specially designed programme of workshops, seminars and high-level mentoring which is designed to enhance skills and commercial knowledge.

An industry-standard short-form development contract between iFeatures and the filmmaking team will set out the terms of the Initial Development Phase (and, in the event, that a project moves further forward, the terms of the Full Development Phase) including obligations on the part of the filmmakers and iFeatures, payment, options and turnaround provisions. The development contract must be signed before commencement of the Initial Development Phase.

During the Initial Development Phase, it is also expected that other aspects of the project may be worked up including possible casting choices, locations, outline budgets and schedules. For those filmmakers who have successfully applied as “part-teams”, the remaining members of the core writer/producer/director team must also be finalised during this phase of development. The iFeatures team and the partners will provide assistance with this as required.

At the end of the Initial Development Phase, the 12 treatments and any other available elements will be reviewed by the selection panel together with other elements of the projects that may have been developed. Teams will be invited to a meeting with the Panel to re-pitch the project and to discuss progress made to date.

From the 12 projects/filmmaking teams taken through the Initial Development Phase, the selection panel will invite 6 to go forward to the Full Development Phase. The selection process will be informed by the progress each project and filmmaking team has made to date.

Projects not taken forward will be subject to the turnaround provisions set out in the development contract. This will freely allow filmmaking teams to further develop their respective projects, and to seek alternative financing outside of iFeatures. South West Screen and its partners will continue to assist the teams with this process as resource allows.

iii. Full Development Phase (6 Teams)

Each of the **6 projects** selected for the Full Development Phase will receive a further direct investment of £10,000 in order to facilitate the development of a full shooting script together with detailed work on casting, crewing, locations, and the preparation of a full budget and production schedule.

The development process will once again be supported by both the iFeatures and BBC Films development teams, and will continue to run in tandem with a bespoke skills/professional development programme.

Filmmakers will also receive practical assistance and guidance in establishing the project’s commercial positioning including the attachment of sale agents and distributors as well as the possible securing of other financial and marketing partners through sponsorship, private equity, product placement and online media. Any such commitments will be viewed as evidence of a project’s overall “traction”. In keeping with the ethos of iFeatures, the emphasis will be on finding innovative routes to market.

The Full Development Phase is currently planned to commence on **15th March 2010** with a deadline for first draft scripts or equivalent of **23rd April 2010**.

Once a first draft script has been delivered, the precise nature and allocation of time and remaining resources is expected to vary from project to project according to need. The iFeatures team will work closely with the filmmakers to identify and facilitate their requirements throughout. Development techniques such as shooting test footage or using actors’ workshops that will facilitate the shaping of the final script are encouraged.

The decision as to which of the projects (if any) to 'greenlight' into production will be entirely at the discretion of iFeatures and its core funding partners, acting on the advice of the selection panel, and with reference to the overall criteria and objectives of the initiative. Only those projects which have reached the appropriate point in their creative and commercial development can be considered for greenlighting.

It is intended that iFeatures will have the option to greenlight from the beginning of June 2010 onwards in order to give all projects the same development time. Greenlighting will be treated as a rolling process and the first 3 projects so greenlit will move into pre-production. In the event that more than 3 projects are deemed ready to greenlight at any one time, the decision of iFeatures and its core funders as to which 3 to proceed with will be final. .

Projects not taken forward to production through to iFeatures will be subject to the industry-standard turnaround provisions as set out in the development contract after the completion of any outstanding development obligations. The filmmaking teams will be free to further develop and to seek alternative production financing outside of the initiative. Teams will also continue to receive skills and high-end mentoring support through iFeatures' professional development programme in order to assist them in setting up their projects.

iv. Production Phase (3 Teams)

Once a project has been greenlit, the filmmaking team will be required to incorporate a limited company as a condition of funding and the filmmakers (as the controlling parties) will be expected to assign all existing rights and obligations relating to the project to the limited company. iFeatures and its partners will provide legal and accountancy advice to the filmmakers during the incorporation process.

iFeatures, on behalf of the funders, will enter into a formal contract with the filmmakers and their limited company for the production and financing of the film. This production company shall be responsible for the pre-production, principal photography, post-production and delivery of the completed film.

Many of the key requirements of the initiative such as the film being produced for a budget of £300,000, being filmed in Bristol & its surrounds, and being delivered by a mutually agreed date (see **About your film project** below for full details) will have been significantly addressed during the development process and, together with issues such as casting and the recruitment of heads of department, will be part of the greenlighting process.

iFeatures will advance production funding upon signature of a production finance agreement between iFeatures and the production company. This will also set out a range of conditions and also contain provisions governing, amongst others, the following matters:

- Cashflow and financial drawdown
- Insurances
- Health, safety and other statutory requirements such as National Minimum Wage
- Underspend and overspend
- Production trainees

- Copyright ownership and clearances
- Credits
- Final cut
- Delivery requirements
- BBC's exercise of UK TV rights
- UK Film Tax Credit
- Sales, distribution and exhibition arrangements
- Appointment of a collection agent
- Arrangements relating to music
- Recoupment & filmmakers' revenue entitlement
- Publicity

Each film must be capable of qualifying as a "British Film" under the DCMS/UKFC's Cultural Test (www.hmrc.gov.uk/films/index.htm) and must on delivery qualify for a certificate from the British Board of Film Classification not more restrictive than "18" for both theatrical and videogram use.

It is a core principal of the initiative that each film shall be treated equally and subject to the same commercial terms. These will include *inter alia* the following

- iFeatures will take a share of the copyright in the film and associated rights until it has recouped its investment.
- The BBC will be granted exclusive UK TV Rights with appropriate holdbacks to allow sufficient time for the exploitation of the film on other platforms including theatrical.
- The BBC's licence fee and the UK Film Tax Credit will form part of the finance for the budget of the film. iFeatures will advance the UK Film Tax Credit as part of its overall financial contribution. The production company will be responsible for applying to HM Revenues and Customs for the UK Film Tax Credit and, upon receipt, will pay the full cash benefit directly to iFeatures as repayment of its advance.
- An established third party collection agent will be appointed to administer the collection and disbursement of all revenues from the exploitation of the films.
- The production company will be entitled to a corridor of not less than 30% of 100% of all receipts available for distribution by the collection agent in respect of the exploitation of the film by all means worldwide i.e. all revenues received by the collection agent less the usual deductions of pre-agreed collection agent/sales agent/distributor commissions and expenses. It is intended that this corridor will rise to 50% once the total costs of the initiative have been recouped within a pre-notified cap.

v. Distribution & Exhibition

It is intended that the distribution and exploitation rights to the finished films will remain with the production company subject to the pre-sale to BBC of the UK TV rights. The customary industry standard holdbacks on broadcasts by the BBC will

apply in order to accommodate the exploitation of the theatrical and home entertainment release of each film.

The production company will be required to agree a detailed sales and marketing strategy with iFeatures who will also retain a right of approval over the terms of any sales and distribution agreements entered into by the production company in respect of the film. This strategy will be expected to include areas of digital/marketing innovation.

Each film will receive a number of public screenings in Bristol during 2011. The distribution arrangements for the films will also include additional exhibition and outreach within the city as agreed.

3. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

iFeatures has skills and professional development at its core. Primarily funded by Skillset Film Skills Fund, the accompanying training programme is directly linked to the development, production and distribution of the films and will be available to participants at each key phase from the Initial Development Phase onwards.

Consisting of workshops, masterclasses, group exercises and one-to-one mentoring/coaching sessions, the programme will be geared towards both group and individual needs, covering a range of topics - from script development through financing to sales/distribution – designed to enhance both creative and commercial skills.

Training will be delivered by experienced industry practitioners throughout. Participants will also benefit from a specially designed mentoring scheme that will provide hands-on advice and guidance to each filmmaking team.

4. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

iFeatures Limited is a wholly-owned, not-for-profit subsidiary of South West Screen. The iFeatures Executive Producer will oversee the initiative in close liaison with BBC Films and the other funding partners. He will be the main point of contact with filmmakers and will be responsible for the management of the iFeatures team. The team will include a Development Executive, Training Manager and Production Co-ordinator with other support provided by the various funding partners.

iFeatures will also provide each greenlit production with appropriate production accountancy, post-production, legal, business affairs and marketing/distribution support as may be required in order to facilitate effective delivery.

5. MAKING A SUBMISSION

Please note that in the following paragraphs “**applicant**” refers to the individual leading the submission (be it producer, writer or director) and “**filmmakers**” and “**filmmaking team**” refers to the creative team of producer, writer and director.

i. WHO CAN APPLY?

Project submissions are invited from filmmaking teams of writers, producers and directors. Each team should have a minimum of 2 people (ie writer/director and producer; writer and producer; writer and director, etc) and a maximum of 4 people (ie: 2 x co-writers, director and producer, etc) at the time of submission and at least 2 people in each team must be permanently resident in the UK.

Collaborations between writers, producers and directors from across Bristol, South West of England, UK and beyond are positively encouraged. Filmmakers seeking partners are advised to contact the iFeatures team in advance of making a submission in order to discuss their specific needs. The iFeatures website (www.ifeatures.co.uk) also contains information about upcoming workshops and networking events as well as a community function.

Each team should be able to evidence a track record of achievement in film, television or a related creative field such as theatre, games or digital media. Examples of previous work may include short film, “no-budget” film, documentary, broadcast TV, music promos, artist’s moving image, commercials, etc.

Each project idea must be the subject of a separate submission. Each individual can only be involved in a maximum of 3 submissions, either as part of the same or different teams.

Students in full-time education are **not** eligible to apply **nor** are companies although company directors and employees can apply as members of a team

All applicants must be over 18 years of age.

ii. ABOUT YOUR FILM PROJECT

iFeatures is seeking projects and teams that can address as many of the following aims as possible within their submissions:

Quality of the project

iFeatures will be looking for a diverse range of feature-length theatrical films across all genres including documentary and animation. Projects should be cinematic, have a clear authorial voice and be driven by compelling stories that seek to challenge, move and entertain. They must be capable of being filmed in the Bristol and its immediate surrounds. They should also aim to capture something of the essence of the city – its people, values, culture, energy – and communicate these in ways that will resonate with audiences across the world. Provocative, distinctive and ambitious in form and content, all projects must be capable of fulfilling the requirements of each identified phase of the initiative and must be able to be produced to digital master on a budget of £300,000.

Ability and potential of the filmmakers

iFeatures is keen to support committed, ambitious, entrepreneurially-driven filmmakers who will embrace the challenge of developing, producing and exploiting a high-quality cinematic feature film within micro-budget parameters. Collaborations between filmmakers from diverse backgrounds and with differing levels of experience are positively encouraged but teams should be united by a single vision and be able to demonstrate the right balance of skills, knowledge and commitment to tackle each phase of the initiative. Teams should have an awareness of how the project will develop their creative potential and how they intend to advance their careers upon completion of the film. They should articulate how the production of the film might impact upon the development of a viable, confident filmmaking cluster within Bristol and the South West.

Market potential of the project

iFeatures wants to work with filmmakers who are commercially savvy, can envisage the audience for their film and are capable of delivering a distribution strategy to maximise its access, impact and return. Teams should be able to forge collaborations with a wide range of partners and pursue a range of innovative digital/online distribution options as well as more conventional forms.

Public benefit of the project

Projects should contribute to the cultural life of Bristol and deliver a broader public benefit, both within the city and beyond. They should aim to encourage and stimulate talent across the city's communities, particularly those that are currently under-represented both in front of and behind the camera.

All projects submitted will be assessed on how well they meet the above criteria.

iii HOW TO APPLY

The application pack is available to download from the iFeatures website (www.ifeatures.co.uk).

Completed applications together with the required supporting materials must be submitted by post to:

**iFeatures Applications
C/o South West Screen
St Bartholomew's Court
Lewins Mead
Bristol BS1 5BT**

iFeatures cannot accept emailed, online or faxed applications. Please note that because of the number of submission we expect to receive, we cannot return your supporting materials. Please do not send us originals.

iv WHAT TO INCLUDE

In addition to a completed application form, applicants should also supply the following as part of their submission

- **An outline for your proposed film of no more than 4 pages.** This should communicate the story that you are looking to tell – how it starts, develops and resolves, the characters involved and what they want. It should indicate the key story elements. If it is not a narrative film, the outline should give clear indication of the guiding principal vision of the film and its proposed structure.
- **No more than 2 pages** on why you want to make this film and how it will meet the four aims outlined in the iFeatures guidelines, namely quality of the project, ability and potential of the filmmaking team, market potential and public benefit. You can also include any visual materials that you feel might help to communicate your intentions..
- **Individual CVs** of the filmmaking team (writer, director, producer)
- **Examples of work** completed by the writer, producer and director involved in your submission to include **no more than two** of the following (ie: two per team/submission):
 - A showreel or similar on DVD (dates and roles on the productions should be clearly indicated)
 - A writing sample from a completed draft screenplay or similar of not more than 10 – 15 pages
 - A published work such as a novel, poetry, journal or article.
 - A short portfolio of other creative work such as theatre production, games design, photography etc.

Although iFeatures is largely concerned with new ideas, projects that have already been developed to treatment or full script are not precluded from submission but they must be capable of fulfilling all the requirements of the initiative including the Initial and Full Development Phases.

If you intend to submit projects that have already received some form of development investment, are in turnaround or are subject to option/rights acquisition, you must contact a member of the iFeatures team in advance of submission.

v WHEN TO SUBMIT

The deadline for all submissions is 12 noon on Tuesday 8th December 2009. We cannot accept any application forms and/or supporting materials after this deadline,.

We cannot be held responsible for submissions that do not arrive by the deadline or that are incomplete. Please check your submission carefully before submitting.

All submissions are made at the applicant's own risk and iFeatures cannot be held responsible for any damage or loss to supporting materials.

6. SELECTION & DECISION-MAKING

- i Each submission will be logged and will receive a unique reference number (URN) that applicants will need to quote on all correspondence.
- ii An e-mail confirming receipt of the submission together with the URN will be sent to the applicant.
- iii The iFeatures team and independent external industry assessors will assess all submissions against the criteria set out in **5. Making a submission** above. A shortlist of up to 30 submissions will drawn up and presented to the selection panel for review.
- iv All shortlisted filmmaking teams will be invited to pitch their project to the selection panel at interview during w/c 4th January 2010. The selection panel will consist of feature film professionals, key representatives from each of the funding partners and the iFeatures team. Additional supporting materials may also be requested by the panel prior to interview. Filmmakers shortlisted for interview will be notified by e-mail no later than 23rd December 2009.
- v After interview, the selection panel will invite up to 12 projects/filmmaking teams to participate in the Initial Development Phase of iFeatures. All shortlisted filmmakers will be notified in writing as to the selection panel's decision no later than 14th January 2010.

The selection panel's decision in all matters concerning assessment and selection is final. Whilst the selection panel will consider all submissions with due reference to the published criteria, opinions as to the quality and merit of individual projects are inevitably subjective. Applicants can only appeal against a decision if they have good cause to believe that the procedures for submission and assessment were not adhered to. A copy of South West Screen's Complaints and Appeals procedure, which will apply in respect of the iFeatures initiative, is available on request.

In the unlikely event that the selection panel is unable to select 12 projects/filmmaking teams to take forward to the Initial Development Phase, iFeatures shall retain the right to solicit further submissions outside of the above procedures.

Similarly, if any of the selected projects/filmmakers drop out or is unable to continue with iFeatures, or if, at any time, iFeatures and its core funders are of the reasonable opinion that it is unlikely that a minimum of 3 projects will reach a sufficient level of development to be greenlit, iFeatures shall retain the right to solicit further projects in order to meet the aims and objectives of the initiative

7. MONITORING

To enable iFeatures partners to comply with monitoring obligations (eg: National Lottery and/or other public funding), applicants will need to co-operate with the completion of any forms relating, for example, to equal opportunities or social inclusion. Applicants who are invited to take part in iFeatures will also be required to complete an evaluation report at the end of the initiative and to co-operate with any long-term tracking studies.

8. KEY DATES

Submissions deadline	Tues 8 th December 2009
Selection panel Interviews	W/c 4 th January 2010
Initial Development Phase starts	Monday 25 th January 2010
Selection panel review/interviews	W/c 8 th March 2010
Full Development Phase starts	Monday 15 th March 2010
Greenlight	From June 2010 onwards
Films in production	From July 2010 onwards
Films delivered/premiered	Early 2011

All dates referred to in these guidelines may be subject to revision. In the event that a date changes, iFeatures will endeavour to let applicants know as soon as possible.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

We welcome enquires from any filmmakers who are thinking about making a submission to iFeatures.

In the first instance, you should email ifeatures@swscreen.co.uk

While the information and advice in these guidelines is believed to be accurate at the time of going to press, South West Screen reserves the right to make changes at any time to the iFeatures initiative and/or to these guidelines at any time at its discretion. Neither iFeatures nor any of its partners or funders shall be responsible for any loss attributable to errors, omissions or other inaccuracies in the information contained in these guidelines.