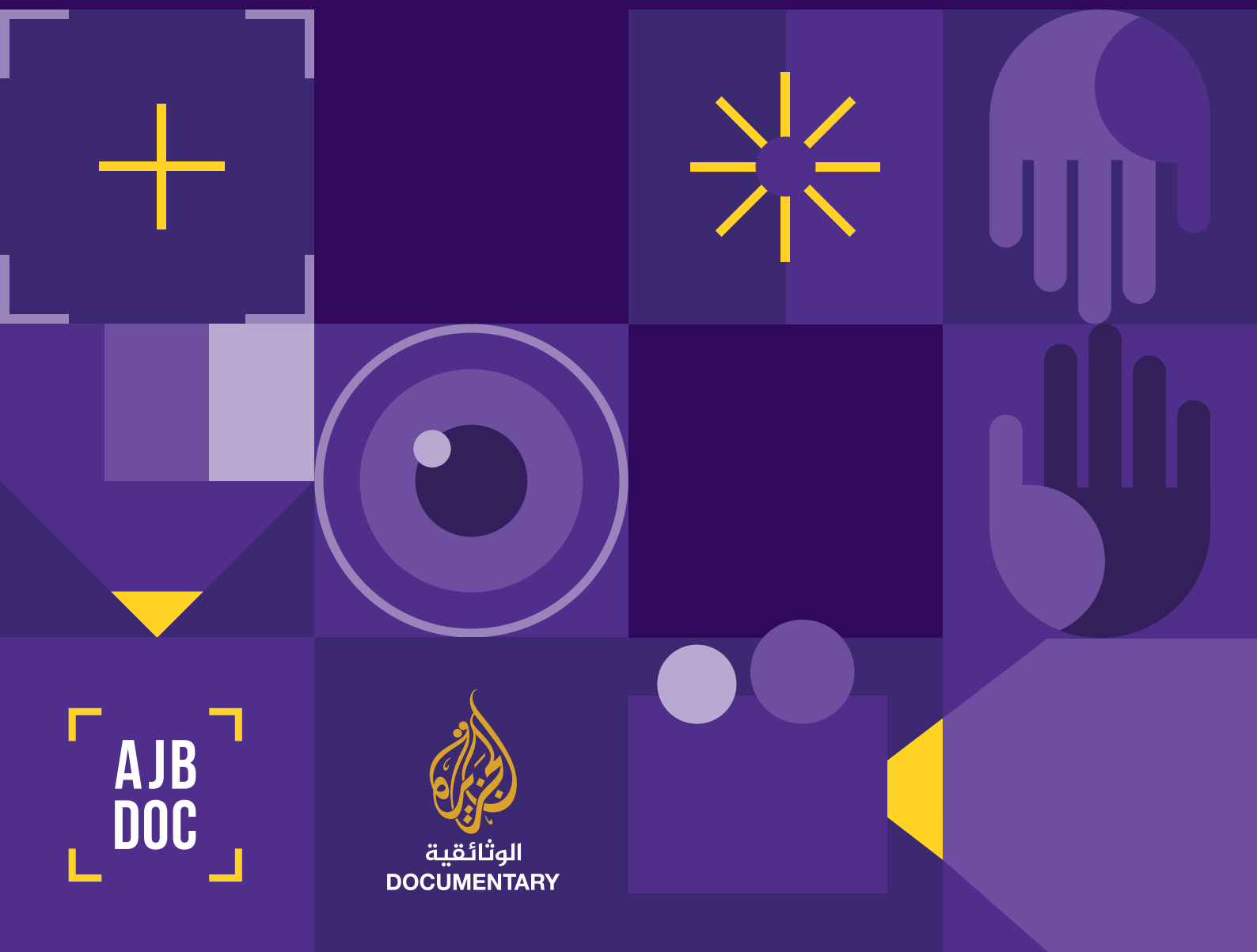


Al Jazeera Documentary Channel

INDUSTRY DAYS

@ AJB DOC



PATRONS



KANTON SARAJEVO
Ministarstvo kulture i sporta
Kantona Sarajevo



PARTNERS



PARTNER FESTIVALS



MEDIA PARTNERS



INDUSTRY DAYS LUNCHES ARE HOSTED BY



**Croatian
Audiovisual
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Hrvatski audiovizualni centar



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FILMSKI
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CENTRE

Al Jazeera Documentary Channel

INDUSTRY DAYS @ AJB DOC



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INTRODUCTION

ADEL KSIKSI
Head of Industry Days



Welcome to the 1st edition of AJD Industry Days. We proudly announce the launch of this platform that will take place during the 5th edition of the Al Jazeera Balkans Documentary Film Festival. It is a documentary industry event that intends to support the expansion of documentaries worldwide, including international co-productions, serving as a bridge between the filmmakers and key players from SEE, MENA, Caucasus regions and global markets.

This year's forum selection contains 32 projects from 21 countries. The projects address a wide range of topics, offering authentic storytelling and a promising cinematic approach portraying the reality.

The forum will provide documentary filmmakers the opportunity to network with decision-makers and leading professionals to help secure funding for documentary production, support broadcast, distribution, screening and sales worldwide. It will also encourage interaction and stimulate dialogue among industry professionals.

Our industry days will consist of a variety of pitching sessions, roundtable meetings, panel discussions, followed by a delightful experience of the vibrant city of Sarajevo.

I would like to thank all the sponsors and decision-makers for coming on board and having trust in the documentary filmmaking.

I wish all the filmmakers a valuable forum experience.

I would also like to thank the selection committees, who have viewed and analyzed more than 175 submitted projects, as well as to the AJB doc team and the volunteers for their hard work in making the forum happen.

I hope the producers and filmmakers can gain trust of financiers and find partners to co-produce and distribute these documentaries.

Thank you!

GOOD TO KNOW

 **HOUSE OF INDUSTRY**
Maršala Tita 56
(Kamerni teatar 55)



AT THE HOUSE OF INDUSTRY LOCATION YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FIND THE FOLLOWING:

INFO DESK

The Industry Days Information Desk will provide you with your Industry Days Schedule and all other relevant information.

During the Industry Days, you can come and set up additional one-to-one meetings with all Industry Days participants.

COFFEE PLACE

From 9:00 AM until 6:00 PM complimentary coffee and tea will be served for the guests, and bagels will be served during breaks.

MEETING ROOM

Industry Days participants will be able to use the meeting room from 9:00 AM until 3:00 PM for meetings that had been arranged at the info desk.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

INTERNET ACCESS

Wi-Fi will be available in all of our venues.

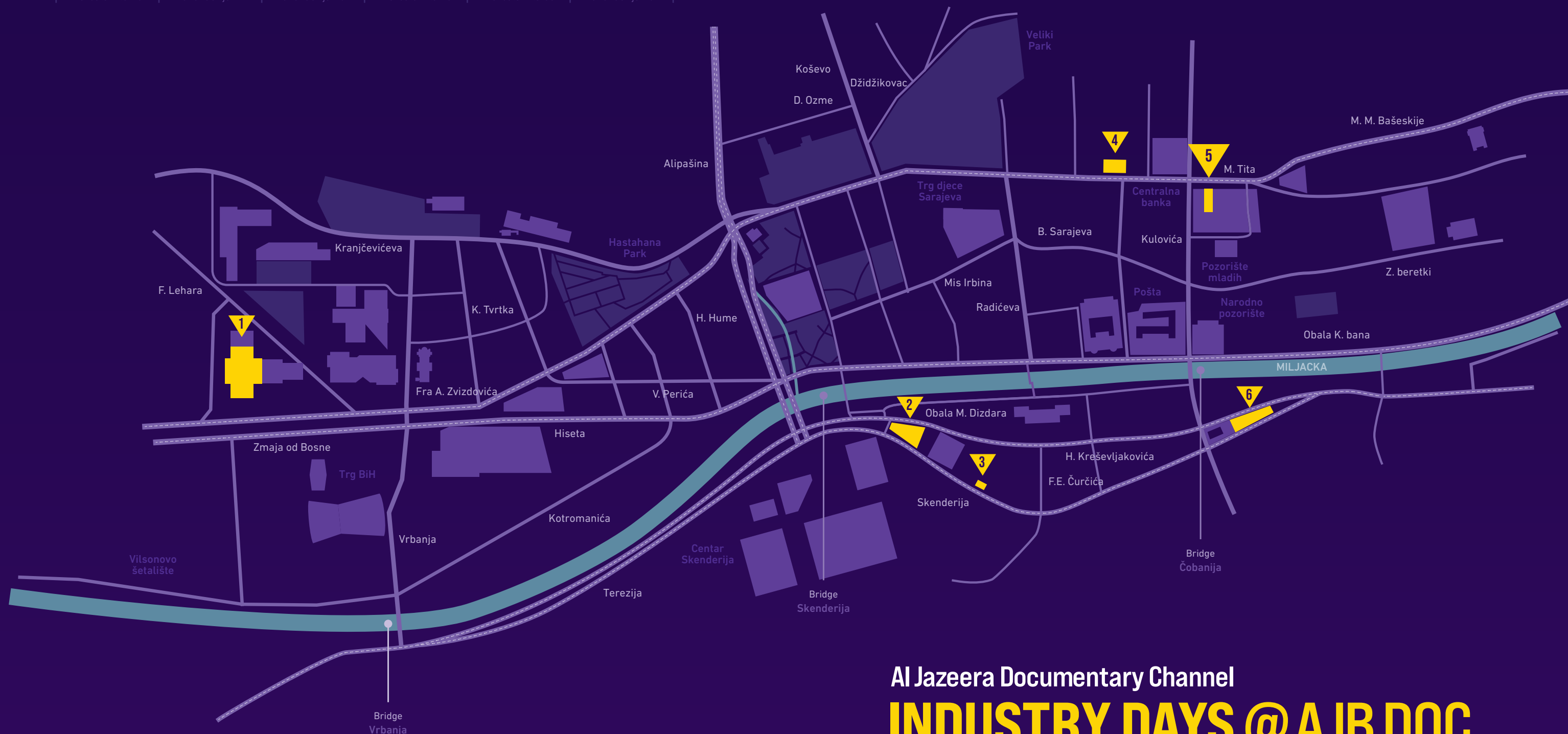
GATHERING PLACE

Gathering place for all accredited guests will be Concept Garden Kutcha, where there will be 10% discount on all drinks for everyone wearing AJB DOC Festival badge.
Opening hours: 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM.

See you there!



					
1	2	3	4	5	6
HOTEL HOLIDAY	HOTEL COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT	GATHERING PLACE & BBQ KUTCHA	LUNCH BREAK MANOLO	KAMERNI TEATAR HOUSE OF INDUSTRY	HOTEL RESIDENCE INN BY MARRIOTT
Maršala Tita 23	Skenderija 1	Skenderija 15	Maršala Tita 23	Maršala Tita 56	Skenderija 43



Al Jazeera Documentary Channel
INDUSTRY DAYS @ AJB DOC

9TH

September
FRIDAY

- 8 PM
FESTIVAL OPENING CEREMONY
Screening of the opening film
"Girl Gang" by Susanne Regina Meures
Location: Open air cinema
MC Kovači – Širokac 22
(All accredited guests welcome)
- 10 PM
WELCOME DRINKS
Location: S One Sky Lounge
Hotel Marriott

10TH

September
SATURDAY

- 9 AM
**AJD INDUSTRY DAYS
OPENING CEREMONY**
- 9:15 AM
MAIN PITCH
4 pitching sessions
- 10:15 AM
Coffee break
- 10:30 AM
MAIN PITCH
4 pitching sessions
- 11:30 AM
Coffee break
- 11:45 AM
MAIN PITCH
4 pitching sessions
- 1:15 PM
**LUNCH HOSTED BY HAVC
(Croatian Audiovisual Centre)**
Location: Restaurant Manolo
Address: Maršala Tita 23
- 3 PM
ROUND TABLE MEETINGS
- 5 PM
PROGRESS FILM SHOWCASE



11TH


September
SUNDAY

- 9:15 AM
WORK IN PROGRESS
4 pitching sessions
- 10:15 AM
Coffee break
- 10:30 AM
WORK IN PROGRESS
4 pitching sessions
- 11:30 AM
Coffee break
- 11:45 AM
WORK IN PROGRESS
3 pitching sessions
- 1:15 PM
**LUNCH HOSTED BY
Slovenian Film Center**
Location: Restaurant Manolo
Address: Maršala Tita 23
- 3 PM
ROUND TABLE MEETINGS
- 5 PM
PANEL DISCUSSION
Meet the Al Jazeera Media Network



12TH

September
MONDAY

- 9 AM
BALKAN STARS
4 pitching sessions
- 10 AM
Coffee break
- 10:15 AM
BALKAN STARS
3 pitching sessions
- 11 AM
Coffee break
- 11:30 AM
ROUND TABLE MEETINGS
- 12:40 PM
Coffee break
- 1 PM
PANEL SESSION
Women Behind Camera
-  **SUPPORTED BY
Council of Europe**
- 2:30 PM
AWARD CEREMONY
- 3:30 PM
GOODBYE BBQ
Location: Concept Kutcha
Address: Skenderija 15



Al Jazeera Documentary Channel
**INDUSTRY DAYS
@AJB DOC**

**PROGRAMME
SCHEDULE**

9TH - 12TH SEPT
KAMERNI TEATAR 55

MAIN AWARDS

MAIN PITCH

The co-production award of **USD 25,000** in this category is awarded by Al Jazeera Documentary Channel.

The co-production award of **€ 8,000** in this category is awarded by Al Jazeera Balkans.

WORK IN PROGRESS

The co-production award of **USD 15,000** in this category is awarded by Al Jazeera Documentary Channel.

The co-production award of **€ 7,000** in this category is awarded by Al Jazeera Balkans.

BALKAN STARS

The co-production award of **USD 10,000** in this category is awarded by Al Jazeera Documentary Channel.

The co-production award of **€ 5,000** in this category is awarded by Al Jazeera Balkans.

BH TELECOM AWARD

Award of **€ 2,500**.

HEAD OF CURRENT TV AWARD

Award of **€ 1,000**.

BHRT AWARD

In-kind award of archive material worth **€ 5,000**.

PROGRESS FILM AWARD

In-kind award of archive material worth **€ 3,000**.

PROJECT AWARDS

SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC

Invitation and accreditation to the Sunny Side of the Doc 2023.

BELDOCS

Invitation to pitch a project at BelDocs 2023.

EASTDOC PLATFORM

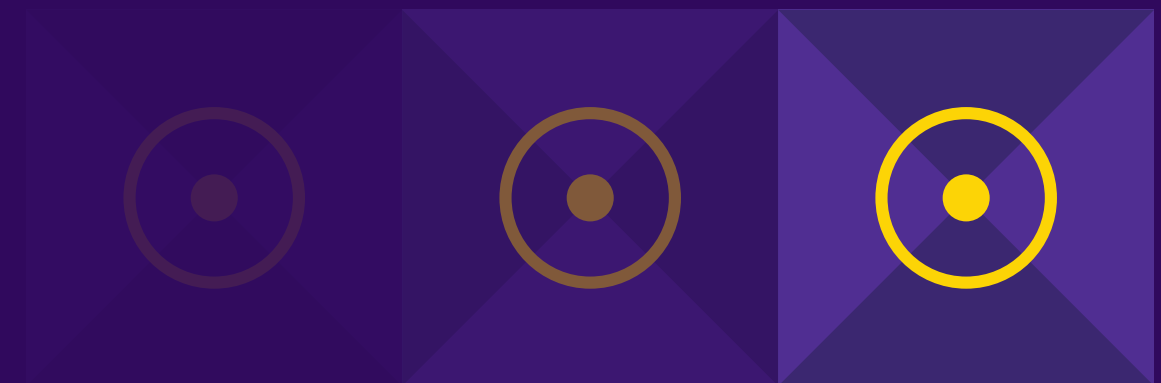
East Silver Caravan Award.

CANNES DOCS

Two projects will be selected and invited to a training at Cannes Docs 2022.

MIA DOC

Invitation to pitch a project at MiaDoc 2022.



MAIN PITCH

Main pitch is a platform intended for independent filmmakers and production companies at an early stage of development. Ten projects carefully selected by the Selection Committee will take part in the main pitch. This will be an opportunity to secure funding for their productions and ensure support for overseas broadcasting, distribution, screening and sales.

Producers will have up to seven minutes to present each project, including the trailer, budget and finance plan, followed by a moderated Q&A session.



MAIN PITCH



BLUEBERRY DREAMS

Duration: **90/52 MIN**
Author: **Elene Mikaberidze**
Production: **Parachute Films**
Contact: **Elene Margvelashvili | parashutki@gmail.com**
Production Country: **Georgia**
Co-production Country: **France, Belgium**
Production stage: **In production**

Synopsis:

In Samegrelo, a Georgian region bordering the Russian-supported de facto state of Abkhazia, tensions have been present since the 1992. conflict. In the main town of Zugdidi, a few kilometres away from the disputed administrative boundary line (ABL) with Abkhazia, a family of four is struggling to make ends meet. Soso (64) a retired engineer, his wife Nino (43), and their two sons Giorgi (13) and Lazare (10) are surviving on the little income from the family guesthouse, their crops, and livestock. There's not much work there and not much to do in Zugdidi. Yet this sleepy provincial town is home to thousands of internally displaced persons, whose trauma and war memories are still alive. Every gesture the father makes has a meaning. Soso wants his kids to have the best memory of him. Nino is the family magician; she finds ways to provide for her kids while making sure that the boys can still dream big. When the pandemic came Soso and Nino mortgaged their house to purchase an allotment through a state-run program Plant the Future, which aims to stimulate the region's agriculture. The family has staked their future on cultivating a blueberry field. It's a risky endeavour, but above all the parents want to ensure a good life for their children and are determined to improve their lives and livelihood in this volatile region. But the boys have a different vision for their future. Speaking in Georgian and Russian, the kids struggle to understand the country they live in and constantly ask questions about their identity. Lazare spends his days in a treehouse, keeping a diary with the constant question: "Who am I?", while Giorgi dreams of living far away. They create anime, take Karate lessons, and fantasize about visiting Japan. By examining the family life in this uncertain land - through the moments of hardship and family joy to the reflections about the future - we observe how life unravels and how the children find their way. The director, who had experienced war, displacement and having family on both sides of the administrative boundary line, weaves the link between a bitter history, a fragile present, and the possibility of reimagining the future.

Logline:

In the midst of political and military tensions on the border of the disputed Abkhazian state, a Georgian family is staking its future on cultivating blueberry fields. Their two sons, Giorgi (13) and Lazare (10) are enrolled in the plan – but their dreams are not confined to the uncertain reality of the land.

Looking for: **Financing, distributors and broadcasters**
Total budget: **€ 223,612**
Amount still requested: **€ 64,350**



MAIN PITCH



THEFT OF FIRE

Duration: **90 MIN**
Author: **Amer Shomali**
Production: **Rashid Abdelhamid – Made in Palestine Project**
Contact: **Rashid Abdelhamid | madeinpal.project@gmail.com**
Production Country: **Palestine**
Co-production Country: **Canada**
Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

Shifting between documentary and fiction, „Theft of Fire“ is a heist film where the audience becomes a key part of the robbery. At its core, the film questions how a nation can tell its narrative when its land and history are being stolen out from under its feet. The film uses archival footage, reenactments and interviews (both real and seamlessly staged CGI deep fakes) to construct a thrilling narrative of resistance to the theft of history. As the recent Israeli expulsions from Sheikh Jarrah have shown, the erasure of a people's history is a necessary step for colonialism. Set in the early 1980s, „Theft of Fire“'s resistance narrative centers around Naji, chief curator at the Palestinian Museum of Archeology in Birzeit, just outside of Ramallah. Naji's tale is based on the true story of the actual Palestinian museum that still lies virtually empty because of the Occupation and years of Israeli looting in the West Bank. We use this real predicament to launch into a speculative tale driven by Naji, our fictional protagonist, who is a composite of several Palestinian artists and curators. Facing media ridicule and an empty museum, Naji decides to undertake a daring heist at an Israeli prison. Inside, Naji must outwit Moshe Dayan, an Israeli military legend, who has hidden away a massive collection of stolen Palestinian archeological artifacts. For decades, Dayan was the main driver of Israel's looting of Palestinian antiquities. He knew the power Biblical artifacts could have over the construction of the modern Israeli narrative. Dayan also recognized how, without control of their antiquities, Palestinians would struggle to tell their own story on the world stage. Facing Dayan's cunning and the power of the Israeli Army, Naji carefully executes the heist as he deals with mistrust from his fellow Palestinian inmates. Ultimately, Naji is faced with a decision: to choose his own journey or help his fellow inmates in the Palestinian resistance. „Theft of Fire“ aims to push the documentary form forward with its blending of fiction and non-fiction to achieve an emotional and historical truth about the Palestinian narrative that is much more profound than mere facts. While much of the plot of Naji's quest to retrieve his nation's history is speculative, it is grounded in the dreams of Palestinian artists across the world. We believe as Werner Herzog has said that “facts do not constitute the truth.” By the end of the film, we will reveal to the audience what is “real” and what is “staged.” So although our methods may be unconventional, we will be frank about our deception. Without divulging all the surprises of the film here, we will come clean with our deep fakes in the final act of the film with an inventive sequence where one of our historical characters begins talking about present-day narratives. We hope that the end result for the audience will be a deeper understanding of the issues, of our story and what it means to be Palestinian.

Logline:

In the early 1980s, a Palestinian artist hatches a daring plot to steal back a trove of looted antiquities from the Israeli military. Shifting between documentary and fiction, „Theft of Fire“ is a hybrid heist film where the audience becomes a part of the robbery.

Looking for: **Financing, broadcasters, co-producers, distributors and sales agents**
Total budget: **\$ 1,175,000**
Amount still requested: **\$ 1,065,000**



MAIN PITCH



THE LAST NOMADS

Duration: **90 MIN**

Authors: **Biljana Tutorov, Petar Glomazić**

Production: **Wake Up Films**

Contact: **Biljana Tutorov** | biljana.tutorov@wakeupfilms.net

Production Country: **Serbia, France**

Co-production Countries: **Montenegro, Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia**

Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

Gara, a shepherdess, and her daughter Nada, live off herding and cheesemaking in the wild highlands of Montenegro, when their pastureland is set to be occupied by an international military base. Against all odds, Gara stands up to defend the land of her ancestors and its untouched nature by challenging the ruling government and the patriarchal tradition. An intimate story unfolds against the backdrop of geopolitical stakes, unraveling complex layers bonding mother and daughter, people and their mountain, which they call "Momma".

Logline:

Gara, a shepherdess, and her daughter Nada, live off herding and cheesemaking in the wild highlands of Montenegro, when their pastureland is set to be occupied by an international military base.

Looking for: **Financing, broadcasters and VOD platforms**

Total budget: **€ 1,036,484**

Amount still requested: **€ 708,364**



MAIN PITCH



HIM, TOO!

Duration: **25 MIN**

Author: **Elahe Esmaili**

Production: **Jumping Ibex**

Contact: **Hossein Behboudi Rad** | hossein@jumpingibex.com

Production Country: **Iran**

Co-production Country: **UK**

Production stage: **Late production**

Synopsis:

Hossein grew up in the most religious city of Shia Islam, Qom; a city that has one of the highest gender separation and sexual sensitive rates in the world. Situation is worse maybe only in the cities controlled by the Taliban. In such a society he has experienced sexual abuse and rape on several occasions by people from the same gender, when he was 4-13 years old. He believes it is a common experience of many boys in his city. So he thinks society is not safe for having kids and he doesn't want to have kids, despite how much he loves to be a dad and despite how much his family pressured him to have children. To find out his own peace, protect his young brother and niece as well as to give an answer to his parents about why he doesn't want to have kids, he decides to talk about his experiences with his family.

Logline:

Hossein grew up in one of the cities in the world with the highest rate of gender-separation and sexual-sensitivity. In such an environment he has experienced several rape and sexual abuses in his childhood. Now it's the time to overcome the trauma of those experiences...

Looking for: **Financing and co-producers**

Total budget: **€ 19,000**

Amount still requested: **€ 8,500**



MAIN PITCH



THE OWL'S LUCK

Duration: **90 MIN**

Author: **Omar A Rashed**

Production: **Flink Studios**

Contact: **Omar A Rashed** | omar.rashed90@gmail.com

Production Country: **Egypt**

Co-production Country: **United States**

Production stage: **Pre-production**

Synopsis:

Being born on American soil automatically grants you the U.S citizenship and in turn qualifies your children to become U.S citizens since birth. Ahmed Rashed was born in the city of Madison, Wisconsin in 1962. Fast forward to 1990, the year when his son Omar was born who hasn't become a U.S citizen to date. Starting in 1999, Omar and his father made several attempts over the years to start the process that qualifies Omar to become a U.S. citizen but they all came to a dead end. U.S citizenship grants you the ability to live and work in the United States which is something Omar, as a filmmaker, wanted upon his graduation, in order to learn and grow in the country most well known for the film industry. Yet he was never able to do so. After countless trials to apply for citizenship, Omar is now about to turn 32 and is almost a year away from getting his green card - the biggest step that qualifies him to become a U.S citizen. Omar is currently in a state of distraction that after building his entire life and career in Egypt, he's finally making progress in getting the citizenship which he's been longing for. Yet he finds himself leaving all the life, career and community he built over the years to start from scratch in a different country. The Owl's Luck refers to Omar's luck with his case to get his citizenship. We follow the story of Omar's case complications and the ongoing journey of personal thoughts, feelings and life changing decisions he's making before leaving his life behind to become a U.S citizen.

Logline:

The Owl's luck refers to Omar A Rashed's (myself) luck who was born to an American born father which automatically qualifies him to become a U.S citizen since birth but was never able to get it. After over 30 years, Omar is finally getting his "green card", the first step to qualify him to become a U.S citizen. We follow the story of the series of unfortunate events, one after another, till present day and how all of it turned out.

Looking for: **Financing and creative consultancy**

Total budget: **\$ 98,000**

Amount still requested: **\$ 30,000**



MAIN PITCH



CINEMA UNDER SIEGE

Duration: **80/52 MIN**

Author: **Srdan Šarenac**

Production: **Novi Film**

Contact: **Srdan Šarenac** | production@novi-film.com

Production Country: **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Co-production Country: **Croatia, Serbia**

Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

Many journalists asked me: 'Why the film festival during the war?' And I always answered: 'Why the war during the film festival?' - Haris Pašović, the director of the first Sarajevo film festival.

„Cinema Under Siege” is an untold story of the first Sarajevo film festival and how the films helped us to survive the siege of Sarajevo when everything was lost.

It becomes an international event involving celebrities, film smuggling, and over 20,000 people risking their lives to go to the movies. Today, the same artists struggle in the war's aftermath.

In 1993. Haris Pašović was 32 and already a successful theater director. A determined romantic with a dry sense of humor, he showed surprising depths of courage by leaving the safety of Antwerp to sneak back into Sarajevo so he could play his part in the war. When he arrived, he saw something unrecognizable. People were living in isolation and fear, hiding from the shelling and snipers that had plagued the city for over a year. For centuries Sarajevo had been a cultural melting pot. In the face of this destruction, Haris and his friends banded together to create a cultural resistance. Against enormous odds, they made first Sarajevo film festival as an effort to hold the city together. Cutting back and forth between Sarajevo's past and current struggles, the film raises the question: „How does the role of an artist change in times of war and peace?” Today the Sarajevo Film Festival is the largest festival in the region and it is the only significant cultural event the city hosts.

Logline:

Cinema Under Siege tells the story of a determined group of artists staging the first Sarajevo Film Festival during the deadly siege of Sarajevo in 1993.

Looking for: **Financing, co-producers, world sales agents, distributors, festivals and TV pre-sales**

Total budget: **€ 250,000**

Amount still requested: **€ 100,000**



MAIN PITCH



SORRY TO BE THERE!

Duration: **90 MIN**

Author: **Aissa Djouamaa**

Production: **Nouvelle Vague Algérienne**

Contact: **Aissa Djouamaa** | nvaproduction@gmail.com

Production Country: **Algeria**

Co-production Country: **Belgium, USA**

Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

In 2022, there are 20,000 inhabitants in southern Algeria, North Africa, who are endangered by radioactivity. This population endures the mutagenic effects of radiation caused by France's nuclear tests between 1960 and 1968. A charity in the region decides to make a census of all the victims who suffer from chronic diseases. They prepare a whole file before going to a law firm, which later prepares the complaint before filing it at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

In Reggane, the infected village, the association representing the village, requests three operations :

- Decontamination of the infected area as a matter of urgency.
- Recognition of this crime against humanity.
- Compensation to all the victims, by studying each case without exception.

I will be a character in this documentary represented by my personal camera which will be the witness of this mission between the villagers and the criminal court.

The film will follow the mission of the association with the appointed lawyer, tracing the path of the complaint to the International Criminal Court in The Hague and awaiting the decision of the institution that always demands equality and justice for all the citizens of the world.

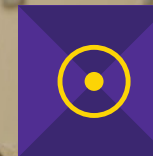
Logline:

After the French nuclear tests in southern Algeria between 1960 and 1968, an association in Reggane will try to lodge a complaint at the International Criminal Court in The Hague against the French government for its crimes against humanity.

Looking for: **Development financing, co-producers, distributors, sales agents and creative consultancy**

Total budget: **\$ 500,000**

Amount still requested: **\$ 50,000**



MAIN PITCH



HARVEST MOON

Duration: **75/55 MIN**

Author: **Rama Ayasra**

Production: **Independent producers**

Contact: **Mariam Salim** | MariamSheWrites@gmail.com

Production Country: **Jordan**

Production stage: **Late production**

Synopsis:

Two activists, Rabee and Lama are on a mission to bring wheat cultivation back to its original homeland, Jordan. They spread awareness while planting abandoned lands along with community members in the city. Their friend Abu-Jeyyab leaves his job as an engineer in New York to become a farmer. He holds on to his legacy and supports the two activists through fundraising. They try to preserve the disappearing knowledge of the elderly farmer and shepherd, Abu-Tareq, who farms wheat in a land he doesn't own. Facing urbanization, lack of public awareness and policies that encourage imported and genetically modified wheat, the four create an ecosystem where wheat is grown, grinded and baked locally. With the community's help, farmer's knowledge and wisdom, we understand existential, personal connection to wheat, and its spiritual meanings.

Logline:

Two activists bring back wheat cultivation to its original land Jordan, facing urbanization, lack of public awareness and governmental support, with the help and knowledge of two spiritual farmers and a belief called Barakah.

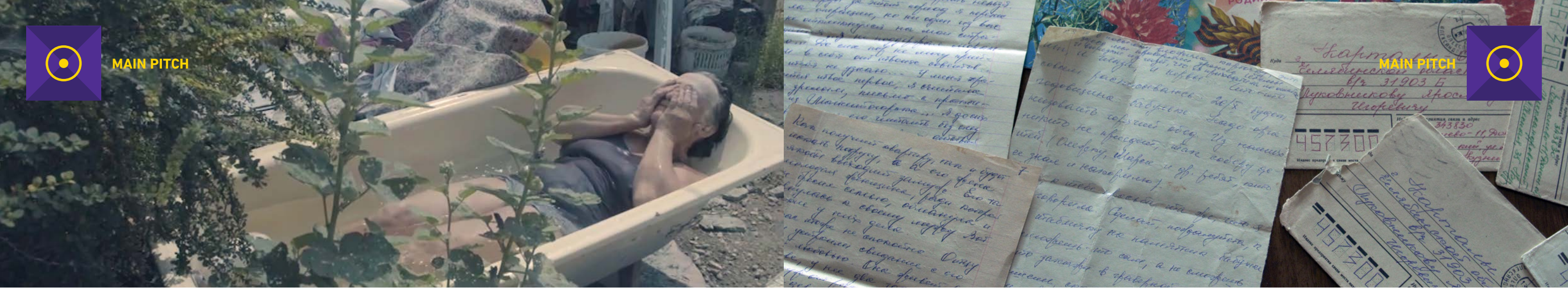
Looking for: **Financing, consultancy and pre-sales**

Total budget: **\$ 228,000**

Amount still requested: **\$ 132,000**



MAIN PITCH



MAIN PITCH

FLOWERS OF UKRAINE

Duration: **65 MIN**

Author: **Adelina Borets**

Production: **Gogol Film, Koskino**

Contact: **Glib Lukianets | film@gogol.foundation**

Production Country: **Poland**

Co-production Country: **Ukraine**

Production stage: **In production**

Synopsis:

Mrs. Natalia is 67 years old. She lives on a plot of land in Kyiv where she was born, gave birth to her children, and where she wishes to spend the rest of her days. She is fighting developers who are erecting a massive housing estate of multi-story blocks around the village.

Natalia, like the last Mohican, refuses to let corporations build on her piece of land. She opposes the construction of an underground parking garage on the site of her home. She is not afraid to run among the bulldozers that frequently enter her neighborhood, trying to threaten her.

Her plot looks like a mess, with the entire infrastructure resembling a temporary shelter for homeless people. It is, however, a paradise on earth for Natalia. She raises animals, including chickens and goats, and grows beautiful flowers here. It is a kind of oasis of peace, independence, and, most importantly, freedom for the people who live in her "queendom".

Natalia's children, who have been scattered around the world for a long time, try to persuade her to sell the land and live peacefully in an apartment in Kyiv, but she isn't interested. When the war breaks out, Natalia does not leave her land, defending not only her territory but also her city. She also decides to join the Kyiv Civil Defense.

Her history is a metaphor for the Ukrainian nation's strength and resistance. The woman is not going to sit around and wait for Kyiv to be liberated; instead, she works in her own way, making Molotov cocktails, among other things. Despite the odds, Natalia is upbeat, laughs a lot, and cracks jokes - the way she goes to the victory.

Logline:

Natalia has lived on her Kyiv plot surrounded by nature since she was born. She is the last one to not surrender to developers and, as a result, her tiny house is wrapped in blocks. When the war breaks out, Natalia stays home to fight for Ukraine.

Looking for: **Financing, co-producers, commission editors and sales agents**

Total budget: **€ 223,600**

Amount still requested: **€ 169,100**

LAST LETTERS FROM MY GRANDMA

Duration: **90 MIN**

Author: **Olga Lucovnicova**

Production: **While we're Here**

Contact: **Frederik Nicolai | frederik@offworld.be**

Production Country: **Belgium**

Co-production Countries: **Germany, Netherlands, Moldova**

Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

A few years ago, I found old letters from my Russian grandmother, who died of suicide in 1989, when the USSR began to fall apart. These letters urged me to travel from Europe to Russia in order to unravel deep-rooted family secrets. But during my search and attempt to reconnect with the past, Russia started the war.

An old train takes my father and me to his homeland in the Urals. The city looks like one giant Soviet machine. The center is guarded by the statue of Lenin and a huge metallurgical plant, which hums three times per day, calling inhabitants to work. We meet different family members and visit the apartment of my grandmother. Gradually, I discover that there were several suicides in the family. My great-great-grandfather jumped under the train after returning from the First World War. My 14-years-old second cousin overdosed with pills a few years ago. I draw a parallel between their tragic fates and Soviet and Russian history.

Suddenly everything changes when Russia starts the war in Ukraine. People become less talkative. Their feelings and opinions become completely incompatible. Censorship, fear and silence are taking more and more space.

This film is an urgent dialogue between the old and young generation of the Soviet era; between the past, which disappears, and the present, which carries the scars with it and repeats history. A film that makes us better understand the legacy of a superpower and searches for a way to break free from the imperial mind in order to build a free, healthy and democratic society of the future.

Logline:

Fascinated by the mysterious life story of my Russian grandmother, who died of suicide in 1989, I travel (from Europe) to Russia to explore the legacy of (private and collective) Soviet history, but come across severe social changes enforced by the new reign of terror.

Looking for: **Financing, broadcasters, sales agents and distributors**

Total budget: **€ 465,720**

Amount still requested: **€ 70,000**



MAIN PITCH
OUT OF COMPETITION



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

Duration: **75 MIN**

Author: **Parvana Rahimova**

Production: **Cinex Productions**

Contact: **Parvana Rahimova** | parvana.rahimova.mjmm21@gipa.ge

Production Country: **Azerbaijan**

Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

A 13 year old girl, Gizilgul lives with her little brother, a loving but strict mother and a sick but kind father in a picturesque village in the mountains of Azerbaijan. Part of this traditional household is a matriarch of a Grandmother, who above all loves her little grandson, yet not so much her granddaughter.

The family belongs to an ethnic minority - Lezgi – who live a life bound by old traditions and set gender roles. The barriers around them very much shape their lives, especially in terms of limited access to education. Gizilgul's mother, who didn't get education while growing up, certainly doesn't want her daughter to follow her path and dreams of her daughter being educated in order to have a better life. Gizilgul agrees. In fact, she dreams of becoming a painter, which is out of the question in the environment where she lives.

While the girl's mother supports her dreams, the main antagonist of the household is the Grandmother, who not only represents the old value system but also embodies all its unwritten laws: stereotypes and mental attitudes towards women, not to mention traumas of abuse. Rather than pushing her grandchild towards a brighter future, the Grandmother pushes her towards her own painful path.

Yet this is where Gizilgul – the little tomboy of a girl who loves hanging out and playing football with her little brother – starts speaking out. Resisting with her entire being, she stands up to the Grandmother, in an outright refusal to be pressured into old traditions – an on-going fight of the household, resulting into a dramatic generational conflict, not without domestic violence.

Logline:

A 13-year old girl dreams of becoming a painter, but she lives in a village in Azerbaijan. Her mother encourages her, but her grandmother is a strict traditionalist and insists that the girl should start preparing to get married. Continuous clashes lead the 13 years old girl to rebel, resulting in a dramatic inter-generational battle.

Looking for: **Financing, co-producers and distributors**

Total budget: **\$ 100,000**

Amount still requested: **\$ 25,000**



MAIN PITCH
OUT OF COMPETITION



A WOMAN'S PATH

Duration: **72/52 MIN**

Author: **Marjan Khosravi**

Production: **Seven Springs Pictures & Lukimedia**

Contact: **Milad Khosravi** | miladpwut@yahoo.com

Production Country: **Iran**

Co-production Country: **Spain**

Production stage: **In production**

Synopsis:

Golbahar has a dream. After bearing eight children, she wants to reconnect with her childhood memories and the tradition of her people, the Bakhtiari, a nomadic tribe from southwestern Iran. The Bakhtiari have been migrating for generations during summer and winter. These huge migratory activities, which used to move some 500,000 people and up to one million animals over the massive Zagros Mountains, are unique in the world. In 1976, the American director Anthony Howarth spent two years with Bakhtiari nomads to shoot the extraordinary documentary „People of the Wind“, nominated for an Academy Award. During these times, the Bakhtiari nomads used to travel on foot for eight weeks under very difficult conditions. Golbahar was one of them. She was only eight years old when she appeared in Howarth's film. Things have changed dramatically since then. Nowadays, not even 10 % of the nomads continue to migrate. They are the last members of a tribe to abandon their nomadic lifestyle. Iranian authorities don't accept these strong and free people. Climate change and political issues threaten their traditions and people. The people featured in Howarth's film have passed away, moved to the city, or have forgotten. Golbahar has been living in a small village and has not walked the traditional migration trail ever since her marriage. According to Bakhtiari tradition, women are responsible for household chores and animals. When they have raised their children, they become more respected and have more time. This is when Golbahar starts to dream about migrating again. But her husband and children have other plans. They want to live a modern, comfortable life in the city. But those who only know how to take care of animals get only low-income jobs in the city, where life is much more expensive. They become impoverished. Golbahar fears for a grey, depressing future. Other Bakhtiari women who appeared in Howarth' film are living in the city, locked up in small apartments, with no freedom and their rights are restricted. A full hijab is compulsory and singing is prohibited for women. Does Golbahar await the same fate? Golbahar finally succeeds in convincing her family to allow her to walk one last migration under the condition that she will live in the city afterwards. She could not predict what would happen on her way... Will her dreams finally be destroyed like those of many Bakhtiari – especially women – in the Islamic state?

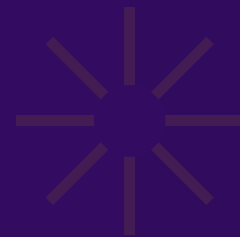
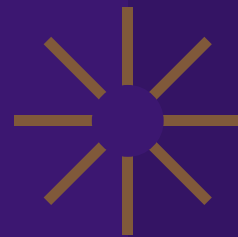
Logline:

Golbahar is betrayed by her family and forced to abandon her nomadic lifestyle. Climate change, personal and political issues have drastically diminished the traditional migratory activities of the Bakhtiari tribe. Golbahar is a strong woman fighting for emancipation in a male dominated society.

Looking for: **Financing, presales, co-producers, festivals and distributors**

Total budget: **\$ 215,000**

Amount still requested: **\$ 146,500**



WORK IN PROGRESS

Work in Progress is an international co-production platform aiming for the projects/film to be broadcast on the Al Jazeera Documentary Channel and possibly on other Al Jazeera Channels, international broadcasters and partner platforms.

The Work in Progress projects are selected according to their stages of production. Ten projects carefully selected by the Selection Committee will take part in the Work-in-Progress pitch. Producers will have up to 15 minutes to present each project, including film clips and financial plans.

This will give an opportunity to filmmakers and producers to find funding, possible festival premiers, broadcasters and enable further networking.

WORK IN PROGRESS



ABASTUMANI

Duration: **70 MIN**

Authors: **Mariam Chachia, Nik Voigt**

Production: **OpyoDoc**

Contact: **Mariam Chachia** | production@opyodoc.org

Production Country: **Georgia**

Production stage: **Postproduction**

Synopsis:

High up in the Georgian mountains, in the middle of the forest, there is a 100 year old mansion where outcasts live. The building is beautiful and the inhabitants, rejected from society, fight drug-resistant tuberculosis there. Forgotten by everyone, Abastumani is the only shelter where all these patients receive treatment from old Soviet doctors.

In the morning Abastumani looks like an old hospital where patients stand in long queues, waiting for pills. In the afternoon the building transforms into social centre where players gamble under clouds of cigarette smoke, patients killing their time. At night, after the doctors go home, Abastumani becomes a dangerous place, where alcohol and drugs make the patients violent.

Old doctors are left alone so patients dictate the rules of the hospital. When dusk comes, everything goes back to normal - heavy drugs bring dizziness as well as hope to the patients that they might survive.

One day, a Georgian oligarch discovered Abastumani. He liked the location, bought the building, expelled all the inhabitants and destroyed the place to build his own dream that would outlive him.

The building collapsed. The dust looked like a ghost leaving the place and finding a refuge in the mountains.

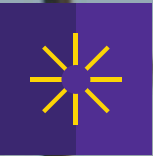
Logline:

High up in the mountains, in the middle of the forest, there is an old palace where outcasts live. The place is beautiful and its inhabitants are rejected from society. Mariam goes to meet this secret society and overcome her fears.

Looking for: **Financing for postproduction, sound, distributors and sales agents**

Total budget: **€ 158,292**

Amount still requested: **€ 27,729**



WORK IN PROGRESS



WORK IN PROGRESS



COMPANY OF STEEL

Duration: **110 MIN**
Author: **Yuliia Hontaruk**
Production: **Babylon`13, VFS Films**
Contact: **Ivanna Khitsinska** | ivanna.khitsinska@gmail.com
Production Country: **Ukraine**
Co-production Country: **Latvia**
Production stage: **Postproduction**

Synopsis:

In 2014, three young Ukrainian men with no military experience set out to serve their country in the Russo-Ukrainian War. Having spent two years on the frontline, the three men were slowly trying to adapt to civilian life. When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 they were forced back to the frontline. Confronted with the trauma they have been trying so hard to overcome, they don't only have to face the challenge of defending their homeland, but also have to safely return to the lives they had worked so hard to build up. A self-sacrificing story of modern Ukrainians, through the prism of three colourful characters.

Logline:

Having endured the horrors of the war in eastern Ukraine in 2014, the three young veterans return home. As they struggle to fit in everyday life as civilians, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 throws them right back into the trauma they have been trying so hard to escape from.

Looking for: **Financing for postproduction, film festivals, sales agents, distributors and broadcasters**
Total budget: **€ 229,627**
Amount still requested: **€ 44,608**

DO YOU LOVE ME?

Duration: **80 MIN**
Author: **Lana Daher**
Production: **Wood Water Films**
Contact: **Lana Daher** | lanadaher@gmail.com
Production Country: **Lebanon**
Co-production Country: **Germany**
Production stage: **In production**

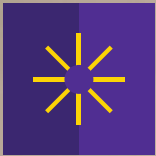
Synopsis:

„Do You Love Me?“ is an archive-based documentary that follows Lebanese society since the 1950's until today. It utilizes a wide range of archival material collected from: newsreels, televised interviews, video art pieces, print, local television, newspapers, international news archives, documentary and narrative films, as well as local and international photographers, plus personal archives (home videos, photo albums). The film covers the oscillation between moments of war and peace during the following periods: the 50's, Lebanon's Glory days (60s & early 70s), the periods of war and civil unrest (1975-1991), and its "post-war" era (90's until today). Featuring the stories, anecdotes, songs, art, and culture of the people who remained in Lebanon throughout these years, we begin to understand this society's dynamics and psyche. Rather than recounting a more traditional history, the film attempts to portray a social/emotional history of the Lebanese people. It presents us with the conundrum of a country that is stuck between a rock and a hard place, unable to agree on its own past, hence blurring its own vision of the present and hindering itself from moving forward. The collective memory of the generations in question is studied through this film. The film's focus is not on a deep nostalgia for the past or the promise of any answers. Instead, it lingers on the questions raised about life in these challenging times and how it affects their experience of the present (how can we co-exist today?).

Logline:

„Do You Love Me?“ is Lana Daher's personal journey through the fractured historical, social, cultural, and political landscapes of Beirut. Using mainly archive footage, the film weaves together the past and the present in a quest to better understand Lebanon's history and current status today.

Looking for: **Financing, distribution and world sales**
Total budget: **\$ 425,091**
Amount still requested: **\$ 241,500**



WORK IN PROGRESS



FRIDAY AT THE WINDOW

Duration: **75 MIN**
Author: **Atieh Zare**
Production: **Associate Directors**
Contact: **Bram Crols** | bram@adirector.be
Production Countries: **Iran, Belgium**
Co-production Country: **Norway**
Production stage: **Postproduction**

Synopsis:

Melina lives with her grandparents because her parents have divorced and neither of them is willing to sacrifice their new relation in favour of their common child. Celebrating her 9th birthday, Melina becomes old enough to bring her case to court, as she wants to live with her mother, but both her father and her new stepfather are against it. Melina is an excellent student at school and, as an award, her mother promised her a trip abroad. Her father is supposed to give his consent to travel but he refuses. Tensions rise high. This challenge to make a trip possible for Melina goes along with many struggles she faces on daily basis whilst considering initiating a court procedure. Melina needs to deal with her distant father, who does not hesitate to abuse her physically. But she also needs to question the relation with her, mainly absent, mother, who had to accept the request of her new husband not to take Melina into their new family. Both Melina, her mother and her grandmother gradually deteriorate in the gender dominated society. Melina is coming of age much too fast, as she needs to cope with adult issues. We feel close to Melina and hope along with her that she finds peace in her torn life. Eventually, her grandparents decide to compensate for the promised trip by taking Melina on a weekend to their rural home in a village. And Melina decides not to bring her case to court, knowing this won't solve the actual problems she is living with. But Melina, blunt as she has become, runs her own trial of her mother in a direct, intimate, but heavy confrontation during the last act of the film.

Logline:

The young Iranian girl Melina lives with her grandparents because her parents are divorced and neither of them is willing to sacrifice their new relationship in favour of their common child. Turning nine, Melina is legally coming of age and considers initiating a custody case in court.

Looking for: **Financing, broadcasters, sales agents, distributors and film festivals**
Total budget: **\$ 155,000**
Amount still requested: **\$ 52,700**



WORK IN PROGRESS



FLOTATION

Duration: **75 MIN**
Authors: **Eluned Zoë Aiano, Alesandra Tatić**
Production: **Wild Pear Arts, Serbia Film**
Contact: **Greta Rauleac** | greta@wildpeararts.com
Production Country: **Serbia**
Production stage: **Postproduction**

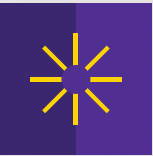
Synopsis:

Diggers are the new dragons: Majdanpek, Eastern Serbia, a place historically renowned for magical practices and supernatural creatures, is being systematically overtaken by an ever-expanding copper mine. Both a giver and taker of life, the mine is central to the local economy but also a major threat to traditional practices, as it spews out toxic dust over the plants used for medicinal potions. Increasing pollution and deforestation are even driving away the dragons from the forest. „Flotation“ explores these conflicts between nature/tradition and industry/modernity through the family of Dragan Marković, a miner by day but a dragon hunter by night. In various ways, each member of Marković family struggles to build a liveable future for them and their city, despite the challenges they face.

Logline:

Living conditions in Majdanpek are so bad that even dragons are leaving. A family of both miners and dragon hunters, Marković family, fights to keep the magic alive as their town is dominated by industry.

Looking for: **Financing, co-producers, broadcasters, distributors and sales agents**
Total budget: **€ 176,648**
Amount still requested: **€ 78,100**



WORK IN PROGRESS



MOTHER AND CHILD

Duration: **90 MIN**
Authors: **Eliane Raheb, Cynthia Choucair**
Production: **Road2Films**
Contact: **Cynthia Choucair | cynthia@road2films.com**
Production Country: **Lebanon**
Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:
Arthur Blok was born in Lebanon in 1976 and was adopted at six months by a Dutch family. In 2002, he came to Lebanon to search for his biological mother. He didn't find her, but he got some information about the dirty business and the chain of lies behind the illegal adoptions in Lebanon during the civil war. His difficult and unsuccessful quest was documented in the film "Children of the Cedars." However, determined not to give up, Arthur submitted his DNA to a worldwide database. In 2022, he finally finds his biological mother and decides to meet her. He returns to Beirut and encounters Charlotte, a lady who struggled for 46 years searching for her kidnaped son, who was taken from her under shady circumstances. A fearless single woman got pregnant, withstood society to keep her newborn. She is a relentless but exhausted mother who never gave up on finding her son and refused to have other children. Now that the miracle has happened and that mother and child are reunited, will they be able to walk side by side and face the whole chain of deceptions that separated them? Will they be able to confront the midwife, the doctors, and the orphanage behind Arthur's disappearance, which led to his illegal adoption? And while searching for the truth, will they be able to connect? Will she be able to tell him everything he needs to hear? Will they finally find redemption?

Logline:
In 2002, Arthur Blok came to Lebanon to search for his biological mother. In 2022, he finally finds her. After 46 years of separate paths, will they be able to connect easily? And will they both find redemption while discovering the ugly truth behind the six months that followed Arthur's birth and led to his adoption by a Dutch family?

Looking for: **Financing, co-producers and broadcasters**
Total budget: **\$ 200,476**
Amount still requested: **\$ 27,976**

WORK IN PROGRESS



LAND OF SAR

Duration: **90 MIN**
Author: **Petra Seliškar**
Production: **Cinephage, Petra Pan Film, PPFP**
Contact: **Sara Ferro | ferrosara3@gmail.com**
Production Country: **North Macedonia**
Co-production Countries: **France, Slovenia, North Macedonia**
Production stage: **Late production**

Synopsis:
Zekir (20) and Zarif (16) are the elder brothers in a family of shepherds. With their younger siblings, they spend half of the year in the heights of the Sar mountains, along with their twenty shepherd dogs and five hundred sheep, while their parents stay back in the village. Life in the refuge is precarious, but nature is gorgeous: "Just fresh air and joy", Zekir says. And work. Hard work, everyday work. There is no alternative: "If you want to stay here, you have to work", Zarif says. And to work means to be a shepherd, as they have been since they were 6 years old. So, when the teenager begins to daydream about another life while scrolling on his smartphone, a question arises. If Zarif leaves, will Zekir be able to keep the trade they have inherited from many generations, and which they began to pass down to the younger ones? Back in the village, the grandfather Muzafir is in charge of the finances, as the main authority in the whole family. But although he would prefer Zekir and Zarif to maintain the work, his motto is: "They are free. It's their decision." Where is the freedom then? Does it lie in the beloved mountains? Or in the decision to go away? One day, while it was already getting harder and harder to earn money from the sheep on the market, Zarif and his cattle were told by the police to leave the town. For the teenager, it was the last straw. The following day Zarif left the mountains, leaving Zekir alone with the sheep and the dogs at 2,000 m altitude, while the winter was coming...

Logline:
Zekir, Zarif and their little brothers and sisters have always been shepherds in the beautiful Sar mountain, where they live half of the year alone with the family's sheep and dogs. But when Zarif, who just turned 17, begins to dream about a life elsewhere, the whole family balance is disturbed.

Looking for: **Financing, co-production, pre-sales, broadcasters and distributors**
Total budget: **€ 420,000**
Amount still requested: **€ 40,000**



WORK IN PROGRESS



SHAMAN VS PUTIN

Duration: **75 MIN**

Authors: **Beata Bubenec, Mikhail Bashkirov**

Production: **Les Steppes Productions**

Contact: **Nicolaï Iarochenko | n.iarochenko@les-steppes.com**

Production Country: **France**

Co-production Country: **USA**

Production stage: **Postproduction**

Synopsis:

„Shaman vs Putin“ is a tale of an incredible quest that lasted from March 2019 to January 2021, which has marked modern Russian history. In 2019, a Siberian shaman sets out to cross Russia on foot with one mission: to free the world from “Putin the Demon”. According to his own prediction, Putin is not a human being, he’s a “Demon” who must be deprived of his power. Thanks to his growing popularity on the Internet, followers from the most remote parts of Russia join Alexander’s journey. While the beginning of Gabyshev’s march sets out to be a happy crusade between friends united around an ideal which, for a while, seemed achievable, Alexander will soon be confronted by forces far beyond him. Although the authorities refuse to admit the fear that Alexander’s prophecies inspire them, they place him under house arrest in his hometown – Yakutsk. But that doesn’t stop the Siberian shaman who, was for several months receiving international press coverage (New York Times, Le Monde, BBC, Times etc.). He organizes his support throughout the country and prepares a new march to Moscow. By defying one of the most repressive authoritarian regimes in the world, Alexander manages to attain to the rank of a popular hero. Thanks to the social media, Alexander became an internet star and the spokesperson of the silent and remote Russian provinces. But faced with the complex and brutal reality of the world he would like to change, he is caught up and destroyed by his very own nature, that of a man scarred by his own past. In May 2020, after several attempts to restart his march, the Russian security services decided to use a popular USSR repressive tool against Alexander: „punitive psychiatry“. Charged with dementia, Alexander Gabyshev has been locked in a mental clinic where he’s held until this day.

Logline:

In 2019 Alexander Gabyshev, a Yakut shaman, crosses Russia by foot to exorcise Vladimir Putin “The Demon”. Followed by his supporters and pursued by the Russian authorities, Alexander becomes a spokesperson of the silent and remote Russian provinces. While the beginning of Gabyshev’s march sets out to be a happy crusade between friends united around an ideal, Alexander will soon be confronted by forces far beyond him.

Looking for: **Financing, broadcasters, film festivals and sales agents**

Total budget: **€ 170,000**

Amount still requested: **€ 85,000**



WORK IN PROGRESS



PROUD, SUSPENDED AND OBSTINATE

Duration: **80 MIN**

Author: **Mohamed Akram Nemmassi**

Production: **Bingo Films**

Contact: **Mohamed Akram Nemmassi | nemmassi.akram@gmail.com**

Production Country: **Morocco**

Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

Over time and through people, we follow a soccer team throughout its struggle to survive – a season of soccer, a season of life and a season of cannabis.

Established in 2017, the Athletic Union of Ketama is a soccer team playing since the beginning in the last of the existing divisions.

This year, the team found itself in a desperate fight for survival. They are going to do everything to avoid a more humiliating descent to the abyss of a fourth division that will be created especially for the losing teams of the last division.

Following the team, its players and staff, the film aims to make a valuable portrait of the region of Ketama by revealing the stereotypes.

No one takes this team seriously in the region. Its players are mocked by opposing clubs and their fans, the organizers, and even their own fellow citizens, Ketamis.

They are pursued by clichés and hostile judgments at home and outside as „a team of smokers and sons of drug dealers full of money“.

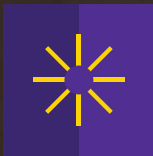
Logline:

The film is a contemplative ballad of the stigmatized and notoriously dangerous region of Ketama, told through its local soccer team, a team of designated losers who is the official representative of the region of Ketama known by its cannabis culture and rich traffickers.

Looking for: **Financing, co-producers, world sales and broadcasters**

Total budget: **\$ 108,000**

Amount still requested: **\$ 85,000**



WORK IN PROGRESS



WOMEN OF MY LIFE

Duration: **80 MIN**

Author: **Zahraa Ghandour**

Production: **KARADA Films**

Contact: **Zahraa Ghandour** | zahraaghandour@gmail.com

Production Country: **Iraq**

Co-production Countries: **Switzerland, Sweden**

Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

Zahraa (30) goes back 20 years to an incident that took place at her aunt Hayat's (65) house in Baghdad, where her childhood friend Noor disappeared. She witnessed Noor being violently dragged out to the street and later found out that Noor was abandoned in front of a mosque and left to an unknown destiny. Zahraa embarks on a search journey to find Noor after two decades. Confronting her fears, secrets and the possible association of her aunt Hayat with the crime, the midwife who helped bring both girls into the world, she digs deep in Hayat's house, hoping to strike a memory that leads her closer to Noor. Hayat has turned her bedroom into a delivery room, where thousands of souls started their journey. Zahraa used to sleep in the next room. There she would hear women's screams every day and night and learned that, after all of this, if a woman gave birth to a girl there would be no celebration, not like there would be if the baby was a boy. Celebrating not having a girl was a big thing for little Zahraa - she would have got a candy or a few dinars as a tip - until she found out that she also belongs to the „uncelebrated kind“. Through the layered search, Zahraa must balance her trauma with reality in Iraq, where death and disappearance of women are happening daily. Along the journey, other women join her. Zahraa's mother (64) appears as a voice-only through phone calls - they share a big love but never agree on things. Her mother always tries to prevent her from questioning the past and searching for Noor. Zahraa's mentor Hanaa (74), a women's rights activist, has over 40 years of experience in defending women's rights and has witnessed how their situation withdraws throughout the years and wars. Hanaa lives with Faiza (35), a kidnapping survivor that became a good friend to Zahraa and took part in the journey. Her heartbreaking story is another example of what women may face at the hands of their families and society. Together with the other women, Zahraa challenges reality by imagining a life free of fear for Iraqi women and raising questions like: How is it possible to find Noor in the middle of this chaos? How does one break out of this endless cycle of fear that everybody is stuck in?

Logline:

Zahraa, a filmmaker from Baghdad goes on a journey to search for her childhood friend who disappeared 20 years ago and unfolds secret worlds of abuse against women taking place on a societal scale in her country.

Looking for: **Financing, co-producers, film festivals, theatrical distribution, distributors, pre-sales, world sales and broadcasters**

Total budget: **€ 331,178**

Amount still requested: **€ 256,780**

WORK IN PROGRESS
OUT OF COMPETITION



LET'S PLAY SOLDIERS

Duration: **90 MIN**

Authors: **Mariam Al-Dhubhani, Mohammed Al-Jaberi**

Production: **MEEM SQUARE FILMS LLC**

Contact: **Mariam Al-Dhubhani** | mariamal-dhubhani2020@u.northwestern.edu

Production Country: **USA**

Production stage: **In production**

Synopsis:

In a small Yemeni village we meet Nasser, a 16-year-old child soldier returning from war. His enrollment into the military is a rite of passage taken by his father and older brother before him. However, Nasser quickly understood there was little to gain in joining the armed groups. The pay is low, the job is hazardous, and only a few people respect such work, so he decides to return home to find another way. The war broke his father and brother and forced Nasser to become a guardian of his younger siblings. And while there are very few ways in which a young man in a war-torn economy can make a living, Nasser's mission is to stop his two younger siblings from taking up arms. This vérité film immerses us deep within Nasser's journey to build a different life for himself and, in his own words, expose the impact of war and the glorified myth of child soldiers in Yemen.

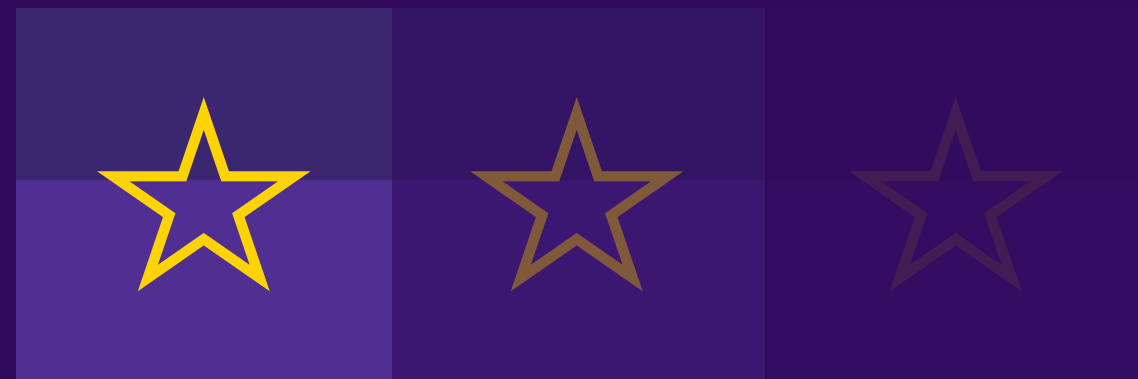
Logline:

A 16-year-old child soldier, Nasser, returns home to seek his place in the community in Yemen, but the only available jobs are manual labor; none offering a good income or a future. Once back home, Nasser realizes that he must protect his two younger brothers from following the same myth of becoming a soldier in order to become a man.

Looking for: **Financing, co-producers, impact co-producers, postproduction consultations and distributors**

Total budget: **\$ 373,778**

Amount still requested: **\$ 264,496**



BALKAN STARS

Balkan Star is a regional and international co-production platform aiming to highlight the work of Al Jazeera Balkans and Al Jazeera Documentary, and subsequent regional and international developments of relevant projects.

Seven projects carefully selected by the Selection Committee will take part in the Balkan Star pitch. This will offer filmmakers and producers the possibility to search for funding, possible festival premiers, broadcasters, and enable further networking.



HVAR LEAGUE

Duration: **50 MIN**

Author: **Emina Kujundžić**

Production: **Studio Switch**

Contact: **Emina Kujundžić | Imajna@gmail.com**

Production Country: **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Production stage: **Development**

Synopsis:

The „Forska“ or „Hvar League“ is a phenomenon that has been going on since the beginning of the 70s of the last century and while it continues, it unites the island with a turbulent and rich history that is more than 6000 years old.

Ten clubs are in the league:

Hvar - Hvar, Jadran - Stari Grad, Jelsa - Jelsa, Levanda - Velo Grablje, Mladost - Sućuraj, Sloga - Dol, Stari Grad,

SOŠK - Svirče, Varbonj - Vrbanj, Vatra - Poljica, Vrisnik - Vrisnik,

Football has been played on the island of Hvar since the beginning of the 20th century. Hvar clubs have played matches between clubs from the same and neighbouring towns for years. When the road from Hvar to Sućuraj was paved in 1969, the prerequisites for the establishment of the Hvar Football League were created. The league was created in the early 1970s (the island cup was played a little earlier). During the aggression against Croatia (1991-1995), the league was not played. After the war, it was reestablished and its quality is getting better every year.

The league was isolated for a long time, in the sense that no one was relegated (or entered it), because there was no competition of a lower rank, nor from it to a higher league, because all the clubs were too poor to cover travel expenses (every game requires a ferry trip). So it was jokingly said that the Hvar football league is like the NBA - no one enters it, no one drops out of it.

That's a history. And what does the league look like today, who are the players, referees and fans - you will find out in these stories, by following us on the road from Sućuraj to Hvar, from olive harvest to spring time.

Logline:

10,000 inhabitants, 10 football clubs, one league on the island.

Looking for: **Financing and co-producers**

Total budget: **€ 12,000**

Amount still requested: **€ 12,000**



BALKAN STARS



MARATHON RUNNER

Duration: **30 MIN**

Author: **Aleksandar Reljić**

Production: **Core Dox**

Contact: **Aleksandar Reljić** | aleksandar.reljic@core-ns.org

Production Country: **Serbia**

Production stage: **Pre-production**

Synopsis:

Being a seasoned hiker, who was spending every weekend in the forest, hiking around the nearby Fruška gora Mountain, Ivan Živković – Žile, was completely frustrated when the lockdown was introduced in the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To make matters worse, he and all other citizens above 65 years of age were not allowed to leave their homes at all. Out of spite, this seventy-year-old, who had never run before, ran a full-length marathon of 42 km in his own backyard in Sremska Kamenica. Žile took part in almost every hiking marathon on the Fruška gora organized annually, and when he heard that his favorite event would be cancelled due to the pandemic, he decided to put up some kind of protest and walk the length of the tour in his backyard. He put on his hiking boots, woolen hat and hauled his backpack, which traditionally contained some bacon, onion, bread, wine and even those stemmed wine glasses, because “you never know who you can run into on a marathon”, but when he realized that this hike could take up too much time, he took it all off and started running. Since that day, Ivan Živković has run more than ten marathons, including the famous one in New York, he has won a dozen medals and become a legend and inspiration to many young runners in Novi Sad and fans of various running disciplines.

Logline:

Ivan Živković was completely frustrated when the lockdown was introduced in the spring of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of spite, this seventy-year-old, who had never run before, ran a full-length marathon of 42 km in his own backyard and became an inspiration for a lot of youngsters.

Looking for: **Financing and co-producers**

Total budget: **€ 45,000**

Amount still requested: **€ 15,000**



BALKAN STARS



JABLAN - POPULUS NIGRA

Duration: **75 MIN**

Authors: **Jelena Bosanac, Tanja Brzaković**

Production: **Public film**

Contact: **Nebojša Miljković** | office@talas.info

Production Country: **Serbia**

Production stage: **In production**

Synopsis:

At the end of the 1970es, in the rural area of Croatia, in a place called Jugovo Polje, the construction of the establishment “Jablan”, called after a tree Populus nigra, began. The owner Nikola and his wife, decided to build a tavern in the middle of nowhere, a place for truck drivers, workers and peasants to enjoy. Surprisingly, the tavern became a place where the most famous stars of folk music of the former Yugoslavia would perform, a place where all nations and nationalities of the Ex-Yugoslavia gathered. Business was booming, “Jablan” became the largest restaurant in the smallest village, where several hundred people gathered every weekend to listen to music, have fun and party. And then the first shot fell and the war erupted. “Jablan” was closed and mined, the family, guests and staff were separated forever. But the memories of that time remained recorded on VHS tapes. By combining archival material, audio interviews and shots of “Jablan” as it is today, we travel through time and critically reassess the memories of witnesses, whose life was strongly influenced by this establishment and moment in time when it existed.

Logline:

Tavern “Jablan”, located in a Yugoslavian village in Croatia, was a joyful gathering place for thousands, when the war started just kilometers away. Thirty years later, witnesses are remembering happy times and trying to understand what came afterwards.

Looking for: **Financing, creative consultancy, co-producers, film festivals, broadcasters, distributors and world sales**

Total budget: **€ 67,394**

Amount still requested: **€ 25,053**



ASSASSINATION OF HAKIJA TURAJLIĆ

Duration: **60 MIN**

Author: **Mirza Pašić**

Production: **MPSC Production**

Contact: **Mirza Pašić** | mirza976@gmail.com

Production Country: **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Production stage: **Pre-production**

Synopsis:

This is a documentary biographical film about the very successful Bosnian-Herzegovinian and ex-Yugoslav businessman Hakija Turajlić. He was killed by a Serbian soldier in the war in 1993.

The film consists of 3 parts.

The first part talks about Hakija's childhood and growing up in Stolac and Mostar, where he finished elementary school and about him finishing the high school in Sarajevo after which he graduated from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Belgrade.

The second part talks about his work at Energoinvest. He worked there as a designer, and later as a head of sector in Energoinvest Dalekovodi. He had worked all over Asian continent, where the former Yugoslavia had excellent economic cooperation with the Non-Aligned countries.

The third part of the film covers the war period 1992/93 when he was the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was a great expert and fought for the normal functioning of the state which was attacked and destroyed. He went to the Sarajevo airport for negotiations in an UNPROFOR vehicle. Serbian soldiers stopped the vehicle and killed him. The person who killed him has not been convicted to this day.

The film brings together the statements of people who knew Hakija Turajlić, the archival material related to Energoinvest where he was a director, the war period in 1992 when he was the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government as well as photographs from his life. This is a documentary film about a man who did a lot for the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, both during the time when it was part of Yugoslavia, when it became independent in 1992 and when it was destroyed by the JNA.

Logline:

This is the story of the unsolved murder of Hakija Turajlic which is yet not resolved, 29 years after the assassination.

Looking for: **Financing, creative and editorial consultation**

Total budget: **€ 111,150**

Amount still requested: **€ 111,150**



WOMAN OF GOD

Duration: **85 MIN**

Authors: **Maja Prettner, Iza Strehar, Boštjan Virc**

Production: **Studio Virc**

Contact: **Boštjan Virc** | bostjan@studio-virc.si

Production Country: **Slovenia**

Production stage: **Postproduction**

Synopsis:

Jana is an Evangelical Protestant pastor working in two small parishes on Slovenian outskirts. She has a strong religious background, growing up in a church courtyard, with both her parents being pastors. She has overcome childhood sexual abuse, father's alcoholism and a rebellious youth marked with troubled relationships. She is now married and has a daughter. With her humorous and open spirit, in constant "search for God", she starts to feel trapped in the teachings of her Church. Even though she is deeply connected to her churchgoers, simple yet heartfelt village people, more and more she is becoming an outcast, revealing the unsettled issues with the church officials. She is being pushed aside to less important parishes, not being able to fulfill her ambitions. She starts to question whether to leave her profession. With it she is shaking the grounds of her long rooted tradition and her family is strongly against it.

After going through struggles we follow her on her path of breaking free and stepping out from the pastorhood. Yet her private life and marriage is falling apart. She starts to solve complex and tense family relationships from the past, with her mother not protecting her against childhood sexual abuse. Her problems are bubbling up, resulting in serious medical problems, bringing an urgent need to make radical life-changing decisions. She takes courage to stand up for her own beliefs, tears down the church walls and confronts long buried family wounds in her personal catharsis.

Logline:

The film Woman of God follows the Protestant pastor Jana for years on her way to step away from the Church. But this difficult decision brings additional challenges to her – she first has to confront her sexual abuse from the childhood, long buried family wounds and the newly diagnosed life-threatening disease.

Looking for: **Financing, presales, film festivals and sales agents**

Total budget: **€ 97,000**

Amount still requested: **€ 40,000**



THE TEACHER, PIANO AND MOUNTAIN

Duration: **30 MIN**
Author: **Valentina Delić**
Production: **Document**
Contact: **Biljana Dautović** | vanjadel@gmail.com
Production Country: **Serbia**
Production stage: **Pre-production**

Synopsis:
Nezrina Šaćirović is a very hard-working and engaged teacher from Novi Pazar, who has been working in small villages on Golija for two decades. Last year, she managed to find used chairs and tables from a school in Belgrade. She organized a truck that brought tables and chairs to the school. This year Nezrina finds a second-hand piano in Zrenjanin and wants to bring it to school for a new school year. The film will follow the first piano coming to Muhovo on Golija. Nezrina travels and works at the school in Muhovo on Golija, 40 km from Novi Pazar. Every New Year, Nezrina organizes a party for children from the village of Golija. This year she wants to have a piano party.

Logline:
Nezrina Šaćirović is a school teacher who tries to bring the piano to the small village of Muhovo on the Mountain Golija. Muhovo is cattle village a far away and it got the asphalt road a few months ago.

Looking for: **Financing for production and postproduction**
Total budget: **€ 33,387**
Amount still requested: **€ 33,387**



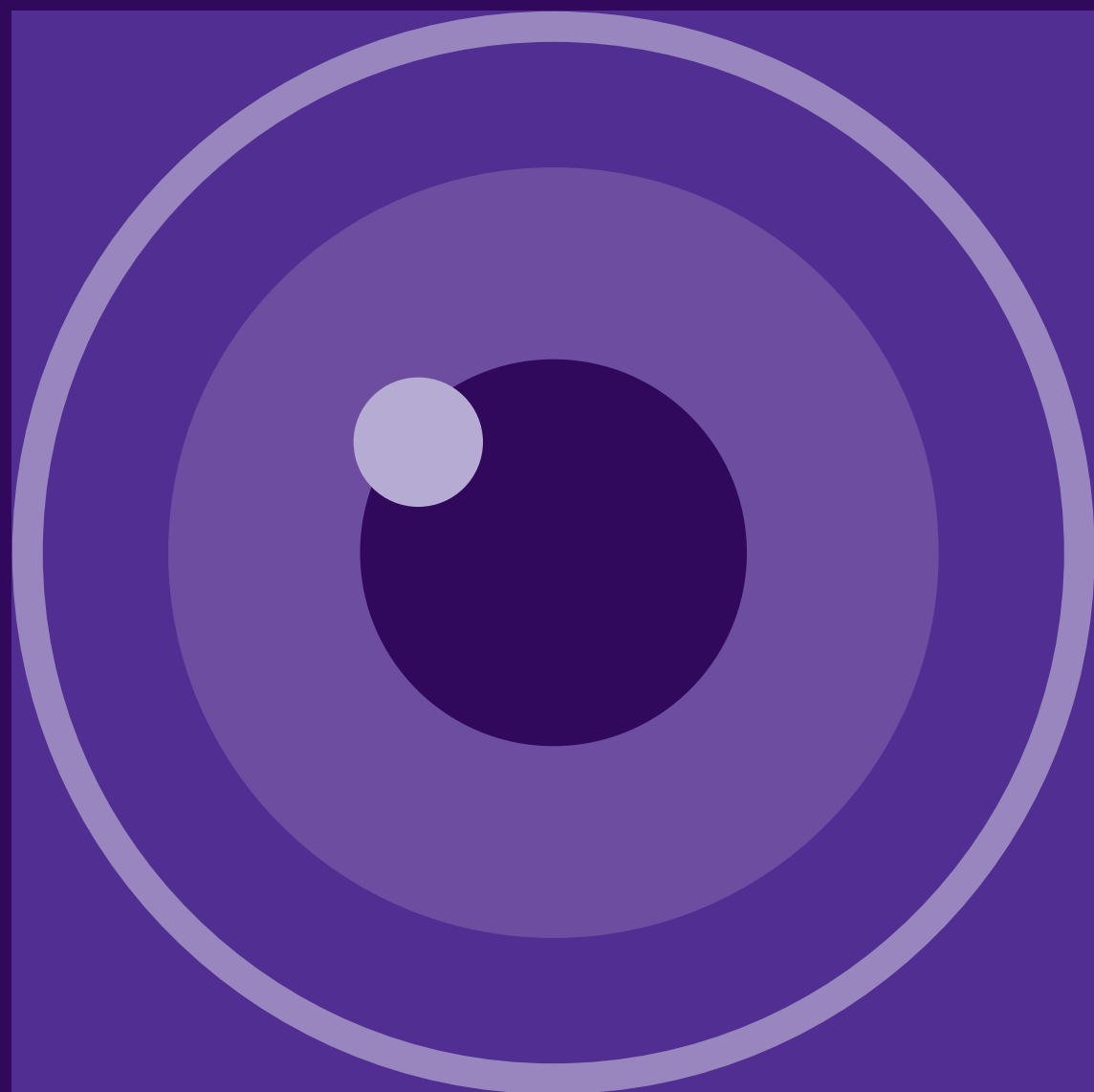
THE SUN DOESN'T SHINE ON ALL SIDES

Duration: **26 MIN**
Author: **Gligor Kondovski**
Production: **Revolution Production**
Contact: **Dejan Miloshevski** | revolutionmkd@gmail.com
Production Country: **North Macedonia**
Co-production Country: **Australia**
Production stage: **Postproduction**

Synopsis:
A story about the Macedonian Elvis Presley who lives and works in Australia. Vane Crngarov comes from the village of Kuklish, Strumichko, and currently lives and works in Australia. His life and his musical journey began in his native Kuklish, Strumichko, and the first accordion from childhood. The poor and rural life forced him to play and earn money. That's how he met his current wife, Elizabeth Liz, who stayed in Australia and became a parent of two daughters. His resemblance to Elvis Presley will take him to a festival in Las Vegas, America. In Australia, he works as a bus driver and thus animates children and adults dressed in the style of Elvis Presley, and also has a musical band with which he performs in restaurants and clubs. Through photographs, poems and narration, Vane talks about nostalgia for his country and about life in Australia and the fact that, of course, the sun does not shine on all sides at the same time. There's money in Australia, but home is always where we come back to. Hence the title, as the sun cannot shine on all sides at the same time. In Australia, he has material security in life, but he is still in a foreign country, outside his native land.

Logline:
"The stone weighs itself in place. Wherever you go, return back home."

Looking for: **Financing for postproduction**
Total budget: **€ 28,510**
Amount still requested: **€ 9,310**



WHO
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RUDY BUTTIGNOL | CA
NXT - Broadcast Strategy & Brand
President
rudybuttignol@outlook.com

Rudy Buttignol, C.M., is an independent broadcasting executive, and moderator at documentary forums in Asia and Europe. He was President & CEO of Knowledge Network, British Columbia's public broadcaster, from 2007 to 2022. Concurrently, he was President of the BBC Kids channel from 2011 to 2019. His award-winning documentary commissions include series Emergency Room: Life + Death at VGH; The Space Suites; British Columbia; An Untold History; Emmy/Grammy-winner Yo-Yo Ma: Inspired by Bach; and Afghanistan; The Wounded Land. Feature documentaries include Manufactured Landscapes; Dark Red Forest; and Oscar-nominated Writing with Fire. Buttignol was the Commissioning Editor and Head of Network Programming at TVOntario from 1993 to 2006. From 1975 to 1993 he was an independent writer, director and producer of documentaries and children's programs. Buttignol is the winner of nine Canadian Academy Awards, an Honorary Doctor of Letters, and a Member of the Order of Canada. He was born in Pordenone, Italy, graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Toronto's York University, and completed executive programs at Stanford and Harvard Business Schools.



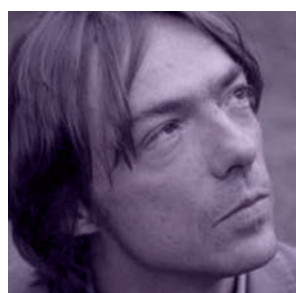
ZDENĚK BLAHA | CZ
Institute of Documentary Film
Programme Director
blaha@dokweb.net

The Institute of Documentary Film (IDF) has been supporting creative documentary films from Central and Eastern Europe since 2001. The IDF provides both emerging and experienced filmmakers with training, financing, networking and pitching opportunities, helps them get international attention and co-productions, rewards the exceptional projects with Awards and further opportunities and improves their orientation on the international market.



ANĐELIJA ANDRIĆ | RS
Film Center Serbia
International Relations Coordinator
andjelija@fcs.rs

Anđelija Andrić was born in 1971 in Belgrade, where she finished high school and entered the Faculty of Dramatic Arts. She has been working as International Relations Coordinator at the Film Center Serbia (formerly Film Institute) since 1998. At the same time, she has been the Program Coordinator of B2B - Belgrade FEST (2006-2008) and Head of Belgrade FEST Forward since 2016. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Film Center Serbia.



THIERRY DETAILLE | BE
VISIBLE FILM / Belgian Docs
Founding Manager
thierry.detaille@visiblefilm.com

With a Master degree in Journalism & Mass communication, Audiovisual Dpt. and a European special studies master in Film writing and analysis, Thierry was a radio and printed press journalist prior to initiating Belgian documentary indie's export catalog Ventes-CBAWIP-Sales in 1997 (Now Belgian Docs), bringing it on the world map, continuously participating since then to main coproduction forums and TV markets. Founding Visible Film in 2014, Thierry opened reach to foreign films, actively taking part in tutoring, decision making and experting. Bringing distribution upstream with a pre-sales, he has since 2018 developped Visible Film into an international coproduction activity while offering feature lenght documentaries with TV hour reversions, with confronting society and art programs, as well as revealing current affairs and history contents, series and mini-series.



STEPHAN RIGUET | NL
Andana Films
Manager
sriguet@andanafilms.com

After communication and audio-visual studies in France and Spain Stephan Riguet moved to Lussas (France) in 1996 to work for the documentary Festival "Les Etats Généraux du film documentaire". After this experience, he started working in production and slowly turned to the international market by representing different independent French producers. In 2003, he launched AndanaFilms, an international sales company dedicated to independent documentary films. Since the beginning, he has built a strong relationship with filmmakers, and focused on working hand in hand with them on the financing front on their new projects. The editorial line consists of one hour programmes in the fields of investigative issues, politics, history and art, and feature length documentaries with an international scope. AndanaFilms works with Televisions, Festivals, Platforms and Distributors worldwide with such films as "Downtown to Kinshasa" by Dieudo Hamadi, "The Grocer's Son, the Mayor the Village and the world" by Claire Simon, "Zinder" by Aicha Macky, "The Filmmaker's House" by Marc Isaacs, "That Which does not Kill" by Alexe Poukine ... but also investigative documentaries like "Insecticides, a Licence to Kill", "The Great Toilet Battle".



KEN-ICHI IMAMURA | JP
NHK Enterprises / Office IMAK
Producer
imamura-ke@nhk-ep.co.jp

Imamura entered NHK in 1983. He was the commissioning editor of the slot "World Documentary" from 2009 until 2012. Since 2012 he has been working with NHK Enterprises and is in charge of co-production, pre-buy and commission of TV programs mainly documentaries. He is one of the founders of Tokyo Docs which started in 2011. He is also the producer of his own production unit called Office IMAK.



VLADIMIR BRNARDIĆ | HR
Hrvatska radiotelevizija/Croatian Radiotelevision
Urednik Dokumentarnih sadržaja HTV-a/Head of Documentary Department
vladimir.brnardic@hrt.hr

Vladimir Brnardić was born in 1973 in Zagreb. He have a MA in History from the University of Zagreb and since 1997 work in Documentary department of Croatian television as a journalist, screenwriter, director and editor. Until 2017 he worked as a journalist and editor of the television newsreel TV kalendar but also produced many documentaries. Since 2016 he is Head of Documentary department of Croatian television.



MOJCA PLANŠAK | SI
Slovenian Film Centre
Public Relations Representative and Film Commissioner
pr@sfc.si

Mojca Planšak, MSc – in various professional capacities, she has worked in the field of media, cultural management, and the cultural sphere for more than twenty years. Between 2008 and 2010, she was the Assistant Director at Zavod Maska – a non-profit institute for publishing, production (performances, interdisciplinary and visual artworks), education, and research. Between 2008 and 2010 she lectured at the University of Maribor and Ljubljana as an assistant (the subjects of media communications and journalism). During the last ten years she has been, on various occasions, a close associate of the Maribor Theatre Festival Borštnikovo srečanje and Maribor Puppet Theatre, where she was an executive producer, international coordinator, and public relations representative. Since 2018, she works as a public relations representative and Film Commissioner at the Slovenian Film Centre, a public agency of the Republic of Slovenia.



NATALIA ARSHAVSKAYA | CZ
Current Time TV
Commissioning Editor
arshavskayan@currenttime.tv

Natalia Arshavskaya is a Commissioning Editor for Current Time TV, overseeing acquisition and coproduction of the best world documentaries for the Realnoye Kino (Real Cinema) strand of the channel, which aims to make the world of documentaries more familiar to Russian-speaking audiences. Since the Realnoye Kino launch in 2017 it has become a real home to most daring documentary films and the biggest documentary platform for Russian-speaking world. Among the films commissioned or co-produced by Current Time TV are multi-award winning Putin's Witnesses and Gorbachev. Heaven by Vitaly Manski and State Funeral and Mr. Landsbergis by Sergei Loznitsa as well as films by prominent first-and second-time filmmakers such as Alisa Kovalenko's Home Games, Heat Singers by Nadia Parfan and Hey, Teachers! by Julia Vishnevetskaya. Current Time is a project of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) in cooperation with the Voice of America. CT TV broadcasts on Satellite, Cable and via 24-hour stream on its website and YouTube channel.



JEAN-JACQUES PERETTI | FR
Sunny Side of the Doc
Programming & Training Coordinator
jj.peretti@orange.fr

Peretti has worked many years in documentary production in companies such as Les Films d'Ici, 2nd Vague Productions, etc, before joining Sunny Side of the Doc in 2002. At Sunny Side, Peretti is in charge of the editorial line. He is also working as an expert with many international festivals and markets.



SANJA JOVANOVIĆ | ME
Film Centre of Montenegro
Program Policy Manager
sanja@fccg.me

Born on November 29, 1980 in Podgorica. She graduated from the Faculty of Dramatic Art at Cetinje in January 2006, and got MA degree from the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Leicester, UK, in 2009. She gained appointment of an associate professor in the field of audiovisual production during the engagement at the Faculty of Visual Arts of the University of Mediterranean in Podgorica, (2006 - 2018). She is one of the founders of the International Festival of Feature Documentary Film UNDERHILLFEST, where from 2010 to 2015 she was Director of Production. Since 2018 she has been employed at the Film Center of Montenegro, in the position of Program Policy and Planning Manager, while being in charge of research in the film industry (Gender Equality in Montenegrin Cinema; Viewing Habits Among Children and Teenagers in Montenegro; Cinema Going Trends, etc). She is national representative at the European Audiovisual Observatory of the Council of Europe, and national deputy representative of Montenegro in the Managing Board of Eurimages. Regular member of the Association of Film Producers and Directors of Montenegro.



OLIVIER SEMONNAY | FR
Java Films
Festivals & Features Manager
olivier@javafilms.tv

Having previously worked for 15 years in sales and marketing in the media & music industry in England and Spain, Olivier moved to Paris in 2013. He is now in charge of marketing and promoting Java's feature documentaries to festivals, educational & institutional platforms/organizations, as well as to VOD platforms. Olivier is a native French speaker and is fluent in English and Spanish.



ELINA KEWITZ | DE
NEW DOCS
CEO
elina.kewitz@newdocs.de

Elina Kewitz graduated from university with a degree in media planning, consulting and development. She gained her first professional experience as a PR consultant and artists' manager. She spent almost seven years working as an International Sales Manager for documentary and factual films with the world distributors united docs GmbH, the distribution subsidiary of Germany's public broadcaster ARD and its regional channels such as WDR, NDR, SWR and HR (formerly German United Distributors GmbH and since 2012 part of Global Screen GmbH), where she was responsible for the sales areas of Scandinavia, eastern Europe, Benelux and Asia, among others. Elina Kewitz founded her own independent company in 2012 and since then has been managing director of NEW DOCS – a Cologne-based world distributor of international documentary films. She is a regular lecturer at the Documentary Campus Masterclass, Masterclass Non-Fiction at ifs Filmschule and at the Mediengründerzentrum NRW. She reviews film submissions for the Zurich Film Foundation.



ANNA FERENS | PL
Telewizja Polska TVP
Documentary Films and Archives Commissioning Editor
Anna.Ferens@tvp.pl

Documentary filmmaker and screenwriter. Laureate of Awards: Main Prize of International RomaFictionFest in Rome, Main Prizes at Polish Film Festivals in New York & Los Angeles and Gold Medal at Chicago International Television Festival, among others. Expert of the Polish Film Institute. From 2016 Head of Documentary Films Production Unit in TVP (Polish Public TV). From 2020 Documentary Films and Archives Commissioning Editor in TVP.



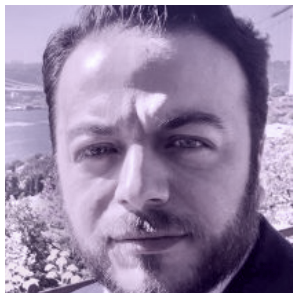
GUNNAR DEDIO | DE
PROGRESS Film GmbH
CEO
dedio@progress.film

Gunnar Dedio, born in 1969, grew up in Rostock, on the eastern side of the Wall. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, he studied in Germany and France and founded the film production company LOOKSfilm (www.looks.film) in 1995. LOOKSfilm became famous for archive-based documentaries and series about world history. Then, in 2019, Dedio took over one of Europe's largest film archives, PROGRESS, which contains, among other treasures, the entire film heritage of East Germany - thousands of previously unseen 35 mm films shot across the globe covering the history of the 20th century. PROGRESS archive grows every month and digitizes film and photo collections from all over the world. With the help of human and artificial intelligence PROGRESS makes this audiovisual heritage accessible to the worldwide community of filmmakers through the platform www.progress.film. From 2023 on, PROGRESS will host the annual History Filmmakers Congress which will offer History Filmmakers from across Europe and beyond, including authors, directors, archivists, broadcasters, streamers and historians, a place of mutual exchange and growth.



NADJA TENNSTEDT | DE
DOK Leipzig
Director DOK Industry
tennstedt@dok-leipzig.de

Nadja Tennstedt is director of DOK Industry at DOK Leipzig. From 2019-2021 she coordinated DocSalon, the documentary platform of the EFM. Nadja held positions in marketing, sales and acquisitions at US distributors Zeitgeist Films and Milestone Films. After her return to Europe in 2011 she worked for international film festivals and markets such as the Locarno Film Festival and the Berlinale.



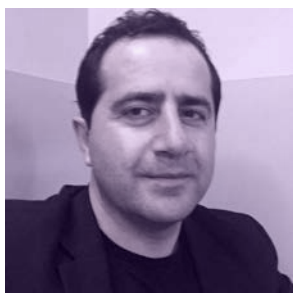
FARUK GÜVEN | TR
The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation - TRT
Head of TRT Sinema

Faruk Güven started his career as an assistant producer in 2008 at News and Sports Department in TRT. Produced over 100 episodes of news/sport/economy and documentary programs. Güven did his first Master's degree in business and finance in Turkey. He went to Los Angeles for 2nd Master's degree. He graduated from the New York Film Academy Master of Fine Arts in Filmmaking. He produced and directed several short movies in LA. Since 2014, he has been working for TRT Television Department as an executive producer. He has worked as an executive producer for more than 10 Tv Movies/Mini-Series/Movies. Between 2017-2020 he worked as the coproduction manager in Trt and now he continues his career as the Head of TRT Cinema in TRT. For three years, he was a juror in the Tv Movies/Mini-Series category for International Emmy Awards and has been a member of the TV Committee in EBU for 3 years.



BEN PACE | IT
MIA Market
Doc & Factual - International Programming Manager
b.pace@miamarket.it

Ben Pace has worked for Mia Market since 2016. He has been coordinating the documentary division and has been appointed International Programming Manager in 2022. Ben is well-experienced as a curator for a variety of film festivals including Capalbio International Short Film Festival, Milano Film Festival and the renowned SXSW where he assisted the VR/AR track production team. Ben studied Journalism at the University of Palermo and he received a Master's degree in Film at the Edinburgh Napier University where he was awarded the university medal for his short film Mura; which has been screened in many film festivals around the world.



KENAN ALIYEV | CZ
Current Time TV
Executive Editor
AliyevK@currenttime.tv

Kenan Aliyev is the Executive Editor of Current Time TV, the 24/7 Russian-language digital and TV network, responsible for content acquisition, commissioning, and marketing strategy. Under his supervision, Current Time, the largest independent platform for independent Russian-language feature content, has commissioned more than 100 unique, independent films, including those by prominent directors Vitaly Mansky (Putin's Witnesses, Gorbachev:Heaven) and Sergei Loznitsa (State Funeral, Mr. Landsbergis). These films, together with numerous other feature-length documentaries by some of the most important emerging talents in Russia, Ukraine, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, have attracted wide acclaim and awards at the world's most prestigious international film festivals.



PATRIZIA MANCINI | FR
Deckert Distribution GmbH
Sales & Acquisitions
patrizia@deckert-distribution.com

Patrizia Mancini arrives in France at the end of 2010 after a master in History and Critic of Cinema at the University of Rome. She works at CHALET POINTU, DVD distribution company specialized in short-films. became Head of Sales. At the end of 2016 she left WIDE HOUSE and, after an experience as selector for PARIS CO-PRODUCTION VILLAGE, she starts working with the Italian sales company SLINGSHOT FILMS. At the end of 2017 she joined the team of SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC as International Development Executive and at the begining of 2022 she came back to sales joining Deckert Distribution.



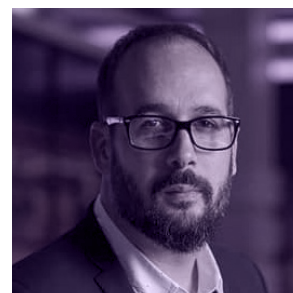
GUDULA MEINZOLT | CH
Visions du Réel
Industry Consultant
gmeinzolt@visionsdureel.ch

Gudula was born and raised in Germany, is currently living in Lausanne, Switzerland. She has been trained and active in cultural management/cinema in areas such as investigation, promotion, organization of festivals, distribution, exhibition and executive / (co-) production. Gudula has been working on coproduction with the production companies Autentika Films, Germany and Vollbild Film, Switzerland. She was manager of the Mannheim Meetings, Germany and Head of Industry at "Visions du Réel" in Switzerland, where she still collaborates as Industry Consultant. Gudula is now specializing in consulting and outreach & impact production/ distribution as well as working as Green Consultant for sustainability in the film world. Gudula has been invited as jury by festivals and financing institutions and as consultant for project development and (post-) production in Latin America, Europe and Asia. She teaches film development pitching and how to reach audiences. She is alumna of Eurodoc, EAVE, Erich Pommer Institute (EPI) and others.



IEVA ŪBELE | RS
Beldocs IDFF
Head of Industry Programme

Ieva Ūbele is an experienced creative producer from Latvia. She has produced and worked as a scriptwriter and offline editor on more than 20 documentary films mainly focusing on social and environmental issues. Her most well-known projects are HOMO@LV (2010, dir. Kaspars Goba), the first documentary from Latvia ever screened at Berlin International Film Festival, and INGA CAN HEAR (2018, dir. Kaspars Goba), which had its international premiere in Hot Docs 2019. In 2019 Ieva established her own production company Baltic Balkan Productions and is currently producing and co-producing four creative documentaries. In addition to her work as a producer she is also a Head of Industry programme of the IDFF Beldocs in Belgrade, Serbia.



VUK PEROVIĆ | ME
Radio Television of Montenegro
Editor of Film and Series Program
vuk.perovic@rtcg.org

Editor of film and series program on Public service RTCG. Co-founder and art director of UnderhillFest, the festival of feature length documentaries. Author of tv show about film "The Seventh Continent". Member of juries on various film festivals (Los Angeles, Bratislava,Belgrade, Herceg Novi...). Member of FEDEORA (Federation of Film Critics of Europe and the Mediterranean) and FIPRESCI (International Federation of Film Critics). Member of Panel of European film critics on International film festival Cinematik with colleagues from 17 countries. Former editor of film and series program on TV Atlas and author of a TV show about culture. Done interviews with well-known film authors at prestigious film festivals (Cannes, Berlin, Venice). Wrote about film and culture for various media. Lecturer.



SINIŠA JURIČIĆ | HR
Nukleus film
Producer/ CEO
sinisa@nukleus-film.hr

Born in 1965 in Zagreb, graduated in production from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb in 2009. Founded Nukleus Film in 2002. His focus is on the production of films by talented filmmakers from Southeast Europe. The films he has produced have been awarded and funded in and outside the country, winning awards in Cannes and Berlin. In 2012, he was awarded the annual Albert Kapovic Award by the Croatian Producers Association for his contribution to the international promotion of Croatian film. He is a member of the European Film Academy and the production networks of EAVE, ACE and Inside Pictures.



BABETTE DIEU | DE
Cannes Docs - Marché du Film
Cannes Docs Coordinator
bdieu@festival-cannes.fr

Babette Dieu holds a master's degree in anthropology. She has been working in festivals and film markets since 2016. She has had the chance to be part of the teams of Doclisboa (Portugal), FIFF (Belgium), DOK Leipzig (Germany), and she is currently working for Marché du Film - Cannes Docs (France) and the European Film Market - Toolbox Programme (Germany). She works and collaborated as a documentary programmer in different film festivals: FIDÉ (France), Montreal Feminist Film Festival (Canada), and Festival En Ville (Belgium).



MARTICHKA BOZHIROVA | BG
AGITPROP
Producer
producer@agitprop.bg

Producer of AGITPROP, Bulgaria. Her high-end author-driven films have been selected and awarded at Cannes, Berlin, IDFA, Toronto, Sundance, Tribeca, Pusan, and broadcast all over the world. Among her films are: Touch Me Not (Golden Bear Winner, Berlinale), Palace for the People - film (DokLeipzig, Dok Buster Award) and four-part TV docu series for ARTE, aired on BBC, ARTE, MDR, NHK, SVT; Exemplary Behaviour (DokLeipzig, Golden Dove), Georgi and the Butterflies (Silver Wolf, IDFA), The Mosquito Problem and other stories (Cannes), The Boy Who Was a King (Toronto), Dad Made Dirty Movies (sold to more than 30 territories). Producer of successful factual TV series for National Geographic and HBO. Producer of Father's Day high-end drama series for Bulgarian National Television. Producer of The Cars We Drove into Capitalism (Dok Leipzig 2021, CPH:DOX 2022). Jury member at prestigious film festivals and lecturer at a number of international documentary workshops. Mentor at European Women's Audiovisual (EWA) Network. Commissioner at Re-Act Co-Development and Malik Bendjelloul Memorial Foundation's Fund. Director of Balkan Documentary Center behind two acclaimed training initiatives - BDC Discoveries and Docu Rough Cut Boutique, in collaboration with Sarajevo Film Festival. Director of Sofia DocuMental Film Festival. Member of the European Producer's Club.



THOMAS MATZEK | AT
ORF Austrian Broadcasting Corporation
Head of Specialist Factual
thomas.matzek@orf.at

Thomas Matzek, born 1964 in Vienna, is basically a journalist and documentary filmmaker. He has been working for ORF for more than 30 years, his record includes all fields of TV factual programs, such as magazines, reportage series and documentaries. He authored and directed more than a dozen films on Austrian contemporary history. After ending his career as filmmaker, he worked nearly decade as commissioning editor for the Natural History Unit as well as series editor for ORF's Universum History strand. His current post is Head of Specialist Factual - his department covers science and educational programs in all TV formats - from News to magazines and documentaries.



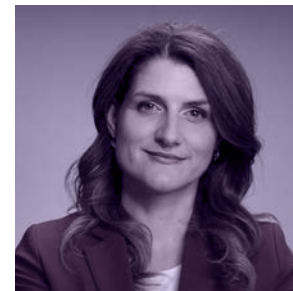
TIM KLIMEŠ | DE
Deutsche Welle (DW)
Head of Documentaries

After finishing journalism school in Munich, Tim Klimeš wrote for various newspapers (Frankfurter Rundschau, Tagesspiegel, a.o.) before switching to television in 2008 and joining AVE Publishing, the production company of the Holtzbrinck publishing group. There he held various positions for several years, including chief of staff (2009-2012) and editorial director (2012-2019), most recently he was the CEO of the company (2019-2020). He has been heading the Department Documentaries at DW since January 2021.



AXEL ARNÖ | SE
SVT
Head of Documentary

Axel was recently appointed Head of Documentary and Science at SVT. Before that, he was a commission editor at SVT's documentary department, dealing mainly with international current affairs, special series and creative documentaries. He has commissioned numerous award winning international co-productions. Since many years, Axel chairs the EBU Documentary Group. He is a regular at the big documentary festivals and forums where he is frequently seen as moderator. Axel is 59, married, has three grown-up kids, two cats, six bikes and lives just outside Stockholm.



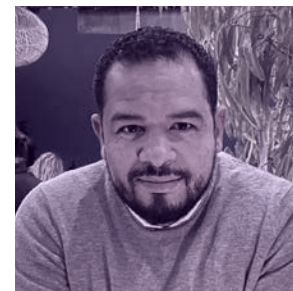
DRAGANA RADOIČIĆ | ME
Film Centre of Montenegro
Head of Legal Department

Dragana Radoičić, graduate lawyer. Born in Podgorica on September 1, 1978, where she completed primary and secondary school. Graduated from the Faculty of Law in Podgorica in 2003 and she continued her work at the secondary vocational school. In 2016, she started the employment at the Film Center of Montenegro encompassing the duties of secretary of the institution, where she is responsible for the implementation of EU directives, the Labor Law, the Law on Culture, the Law on Cinematography, the Law on Administrative Procedure, the Law on State Aid Control, the Law on Prevention of Corruption, The law on public procurement. Participation in working bodies: In 2017 - member of the Commission for the verification of knowledge, abilities, competences and skills - Human Resource Administration; 2019 - lecturer Legal and political system of the EU and Legal regulations in the field of tourism for the profession tourist guide; In 2019 - secretary of the Commission for the return of part of the funds used for the production of a cinematographic work; 2020 - work in the NGO sector, work on the integration of vulnerable categories of society; 2021 - member of the Working Group for EU accession for negotiation chapter 26 - Education and culture 2022 - member of the Working Group for the development of deficit programs of professional qualifications and professional development programs in cinematography.



MAXIMILIAN DOBBYN | GB
Pitch Productions
Head of Documentaries and Development

I am the head of documentaries and development at a documentary production company Pitch Productions. Prior to joining Pitch, I completed a degree in Spanish and worked on a number of Spain-based productions before segueing into development. In 2017, I joined two-time Oscar winning documentarian Simon Chinn's production company Lightbox. There, I developed feature documentaries like the Harvey Weinstein biopic Untouchable for Hulu and series like Discovery ID's Til Death Do Us Part. I have worked on developments with Oscar winning directors like Sam Mendes and Dustin Lance Black and, since joining Pitch in 2020, I have developed four commissioned feature documentaries and a limited series. Most recently, I developed and acted as Consulting Producer on Netflix's El Caso Figo, launched on 25th August. I also developed Sky's upcoming documentary series, The Window (w/t).



KHALIL AITBLAL | NL
Rotterdam Arab Film Festival
Managing Director
Khalilaitblal@gmail.com

Rotterdam Arab Film Festival is one of the longest existing Arab film festivals in Europe. Providing an opportunity for new talents and professional filmmakers to be part of the mission of the Rotterdam Arab Film Festival, which is: Widening the window to the Arab world by sharing documentaries and films with the Dutch and European audience.



ERKKO LYYTINEN | FI
Yle - The Finnish Broadcasting Company
Commissioning Editor

Erkko Lyytinen has worked for Yle since 2010 first as producer of documentary films and after 2015 as commissioning editor.



RADA ŠEŠIĆ | NL
Sarajevo Film Festival/ IDFA/ Trieste Film Festival
Programmer/Film Selector/Curator/DOX Consultant
radasesic@yahoo.co.uk

Festival programmer, film lecturer, critic and film director, previously lived in Sarajevo, now is based in The Netherlands. For 10 years on the selection competition committee at IDFA, on the selection of the IDFA Bertha Fund and at Hubert Bals Fund of IFFR. One of the readers of the Doha film fund. Head of the Documentary Competition at the Sarajevo FF where she started 12 years ago Docu Rough Cut Boutique and co-heads it with Martichka Bozhilova. In Italy at Trieste festival, she heads Last Stop Trieste platform for eight years and is from this is the documentary competition programmer. For 20 years was selector of South Asian films at the IFFR Rotterdam. Lecturer at The Master of Film at The Netherlands' Film and TV Academy Amsterdam. One of the founders and the artistic director at 14 year old Eastern Neighbours Film Festival in The Hague. Was teaching for 7 years at the University of Amsterdam at the Media studies and a lecturer at The Dutch Institute for Film Education (NIF). Member of the NETPAC and of EFA. Was a jury member for documentaries at EFA in 2020 and 2021. Film mentor and consultant at several international workshops/pitching sessions in Europe and Asia. Directed several dox films in Yugoslavia. Was assistant director at fiction feature films. Directed four films in the Netherlands: Room Without a View, 1997, Soske, 2001, In Whitest Solitude, 2001, The Way to School, 2007. Her films were screened at 60 festivals worldwide and got several awards. Her work was also presented and archived at MoMA New York. Published articles as a film critic in various film magazines in The USA and Europe and collaborated on several books on cinema.



LYNDA BELKHIRIA | TN
Cairo Film Festival
Festival Programmer, Industry Consultant

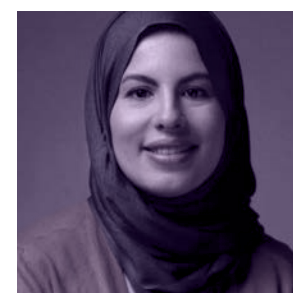
French-Algerian Festival programmer, industry consultant and project manager Active in the audiovisual production field since 2002, collaborate with several festivals and international industry platforms as Cairo Film Connection of Cairo International Festival, Oslo Arab Film Festival, Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia and Head of the industry Carthage Pro 2016-2021, IFDA, Durban Filmmart, Ouga-filmlab, Royal Jordan Commission Co-creator of the cinematographic event No Means No! Violence against women organized in Tunisia, Jordan, Palestine, and Algeria 2022 Was in charge of the Tv program acquisitions at Al Jazeera Children's Channel and Baraem Tv (2006-2009), Industry event coordinator of the Doha Tribeca Film Festival. Jury member in international festivals: CPH Dox, Luxor African Film Festival, FIFOG, Kolkata international Film Festival, Jaffa International Cinema Festival, Yemen Human Rights Film Festival, Kimolos International Film Festival...

MEET AL JAZEERA MEDIA NETWORK DESICION MAKERS



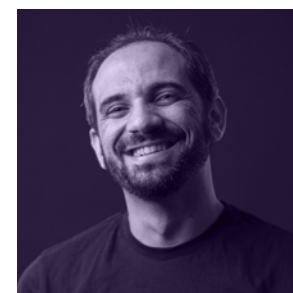
AHMED MAHFOUZ NOUH | EG
Al Jazeera Documentary
Managing Director

Ahmed Mahfouz is an Egyptian filmmaker who has been working in this field for more than 20 years. He joined Al Jazeera Media Network in 2008 as Managing Director of Al Jazeera Documentary Channel. Mahfouz was born on June 15, 1970 in Cairo. He completed high school at al-Fistat military school in Cairo. He studied Law at Cairo University but then preferred to study Cinema at the High Cinema Institute, at the Arts Academy in Egypt. He graduated in 1995. Mahfouz worked as an assistant director and a film director with several Egyptian and foreign production companies. He worked in 2003 at the Egyptian ministry of culture and was appointed as head of cinema and video tech at the Cairo-based arts creativity centre for three years. In December 2005, he was appointed as a documentary filmmaker at Al Jazeera Media Network. He has been occupying the post of managing director of Al Jazeera Documentary Channel since 2008 until the present time. Ahmed Mahfouz has special professional expertise as he has worked in all kinds of audio-visual production; including commercials, documentary films, TV and cinema drama series. He has worked as an assistant director with many Arab and foreign filmmakers and later directed many TV commercials. He directed his first TV series in 1998/1999 entitled "Boys and Girls". In 2002, he wrote the scenario and directed a documentary film entitled "A One-way Trip" in Rome, Italy. Mahfouz directed an 18-episode documentary series on the political history of Islam, which was produced by Al Jazeera Channel in 2009. Mahfouz participated in distinguished international cinema festivals as a member and head of the arbitration committee. He has been honoured at several distinguished international documentary film production festivals and was awarded Egypt's State award for creativity, granted by the Egyptian Academy in Rome.



FATMA RIAHI | QA
Al Jazeera Documentary
Commissioning Editor/Producer/Director

Fatma Riahi, A Tunisian producer and filmmaker. She joined the production unit at Al-Jazeera Documentary Channel in May 2011 as a producer and commissioning editor who produced a number of documentaries from all around the world and contributed in their development into ready-to-broadcast films. The essence of Aljazeera Documentary Channel is to promote documentary culture in the Arabic language, to nurture its creators in the industry worldwide, and to seek real partnership with Film Makers and Broadcasters being the first of its kind in the Arabic-speaking world.



MUHAMMAD REFAAT | QA
Al Jazeera Documentary
Producer

Born in Cairo, Muhammad Refaat studied film production in Egypt and then The Netherlands. He developed his enthusiasm for cinema through screenwriting. He then focused on production through his work with AJD as an in-house producer or commissioning editor. His projects covered multiple territories, such as MENA, Europe, and Africa, and they were selected for notable film festivals such as Sundance, Locarno, IDFA, and Hot Docs. Refaat is an avid participant in international industry platforms and a faithful devotee of independent cinema.



DEAN ADAMS | GB
Al Jazeera English
Documentary Filmmaker/Digital Awards Specialist

Dean Adams is an Emmy nominated, award winning Producer/Director of documentary content. His work on the 2009 documentary Burma VJ: Reporting from a Closed Country was nominated for an Oscar in the 2010 Academy Awards. He went on to win a Media Excellence Award at the International Association of Broadcasters (AIB) for his coverage of the troubles in Rangoon. In 2009, the ARTE film he shot and produced - Burma On the Edge - was nominated for Best Documentary at the Bayeux-Calvados Prize for War Correspondence. Dean spent four years as South-east Asia correspondent for France 24 covering military crackdowns, people's uprisings and war crimes tribunals. During this time, he trained a group of Burmese dissidents intent on using video to expose the abuses of the longstanding Myanmar military. He later joined his students to film during a 2007 popular uprising that ended with a deadly military crackdown. Dean currently leads the awards unit at Al Jazeera Digital with its video, print, VR and interactives teams winning record numbers of awards, year in and year out. He comes to AJB DOC Industry Days with an eye to quality long-form documentary content that can be adapted to shorter-form work across Al Jazeera's digital platforms.



FIONA LAWSON-BAKER | QA
Al Jazeera English
Executive Producer of Witness

Fiona Lawson-Baker is the executive producer of Witness, the flagship global documentary strand on Al Jazeera English (AJE). Since 2015, she has led a small team commissioning, acquiring and co-producing documentaries while overseeing the curation and broadcast of more than 100 international documentaries annually. In that time, Witness documentaries have won dozens of awards, and have been nominated for the Academy Awards, Grierson Awards and International Emmys. With more than 20 years' experience working with documentaries for broadcast, Fiona has commissioned and executive produced films by independent filmmakers from across the globe. Prior to Witness, Fiona worked at the BBC in the UK, SBS in Australia and is an award-winning graduate of the prestigious Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS). Her career spans living and working in the United Kingdom, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Qatar, where she is currently based.



EDHEM FOČO | BA
Al Jazeera Balkans
AJB DOC Film Festival Managing Director

Edhem Fočo, Director of the Al Jazeera Balkans Documentary Film Festival studied law at the International Islamic University in Kuala Lumpur and has lived in Asia for nearly twenty years. As the initiator of the idea to bring Al Jazeera brand to this region, he was one of the founders of Al Jazeera Balkans, a news channel surpassing the boundaries of the turbulent Balkan region whose work and success was recognized by a great number of awards. During his business career, Edhem Fočo gained considerable experience in various business sectors such as Consultancy, Oil and Gas, Food and Beverages, as well as Investments, through which he established himself as an experienced manager and a visionary. He participated in many international conferences dealing with media, economy, and Middle East politics.



DANI HASEČIĆ | BA
Al Jazeera Balkans
Head of Reversioning

Dani Hasečić was born in Sarajevo in 1986. He graduated from the Cairo University in Egypt, Faculty of Mass Communication. He has been working in the media sector for the last 15 years. He currently works in the Programme Department of Al Jazeera Balkans as the Head of Reversioning.



LEJLA DEDIĆ | BA
Al Jazeera Balkans
Programme Producer, Acquisitions

Lejla Dedić was born in Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1972. In 1997 she graduated from the London South Bank University, in Media and Society. She has over 20 years of experience working in the media sector. She worked at BBC World Service Trust / Media Action, and since 2011, Lejla has been working at the Programme Department of Al Jazeera Balkans as a Programme Producer, Acquisitions.



SEAD KREŠEVLJAKOVIĆ | BA
Al Jazeera Balkans
Commissioning Producer

Sead Kreševljaković was born in 1973 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Between 2007 and 2012, he worked as a producer and editor for the Documentary and News Program at TV Sarajevo. At the same time, he worked as an independent producer and filmmaker. Since 2012 he has been working at the Programme Department of Al Jazeera Balkans as a Programme Producer, Commissioning.



IDA MAKAREVIĆ | BA
Al Jazeera Balkans
Executive Producer

Born in Sarajevo in 1984. Studied Product design at the Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo. Executive Producer of the AJB DOC Film Festival since 2019. Worked as Event Manager at Sarajevo Film Festival for 6 years. From 2014 started working in film production SCCA/Pro.ba as a part of the production team. Still working in film production as a production manager and collaborates with many production companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad.



NEJRA KOZARIĆ | BA
Al Jazeera Balkans
Executive Producer

Nejra Kozarić is an executive producer of AJB DOC Film Festival since 2019. Prior to that she worked as journalists and TV producer at Current Affair section of Al Jazeera Balkans. Nejra also worked as a journalist and reporter for AJB-Business Magazine, covering different business/political related stories. She has 10 yearlong work experience on different projects in different backgrounds. Nejra has also worked 4 years as International Relations coordinator for Sarajevo Film Festival. Nejra Kozarić has obtained Bachelor of Arts in Business Studies degree at Griffith College Dublin and in October 2015 became Master of Science of Faculty of Business and Economics in Ljubljana.

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