

Protocol Eurovision Documentary Scheme (EDS)

When it was first launched, the **EUROVISION DOCUMENTARY SCHEME** set out to award development funding to projects that might otherwise have gone to the emerging streamers. The aim was to become a *one stop shop* for documentary filmmakers working on big films that would attract attention and big audiences to public service broadcasters across Europe. The idea was to try and make their lives easier by working together to streamline the commissioning process. After one and half years of work and adjustments, the EBU Documentary Community has now reviewed the practicalities of the *one stop shop* dream, concluding that whilst the initiative remains a great way to help producers to maximise the funding they can raise for projects, there are so many different requirements and constraints on individual broadcasters, often making it impossible to reach any kind of working compromise, we need to make some significant changes to the way the scheme works.

Those changes mean we now have two clear paths to funding. These are;

EUROVISION DOCUMENTARY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (EDS) is a Development LOAN coming from the EBU to support projects during their development phase.

EUROVISION DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTION SCHEME (EDPS) is for projects that are beyond the development stage and closer to production. It is a financial contribution coming from broadcasters directly which should be 25% higher than their usual contribution to a project.

EBU broadcasters will collaborate to develop, commission, and (co)produce several high-end documentary films and/or series for broadcast on a linear and non-linear basis in their respective territories.

The EDS frame is not a development fund but a way to get a *bridge loan* at the development stage (EDDS) and/or to get extra support from the EBU/Group, with a possibility of *25% extra budget for production* (EDPS).

1/ Eurovision Documentary Development Scheme - EDDS:

Development is a crucial part of the production process, but most broadcasters do not have significant development money and so the EBU will provide support. The EBU's governing Television Committee has set up the **Eurovision Documentary Development Scheme (EDDS)**, to allocate EBU funding (as a loan) up to a maximum total of CHF 500,000 to finance Development Projects with a maximum of CHF 50,000 (fifty thousand Swiss Francs) each. To remain sustainable, the scheme is based on the idea the loan will be reimbursed as soon as the financing of the production is in place or, on or before the first day of principal photography (in case of a series, the loan is considered granted for the whole series vs. individual films). As long as the loans are reimbursed, the EBU will be able to continue with the scheme.

Criteria:

The EDDS loan/funding allows EBU member broadcasters to pursue projects that may not have been possible to produce otherwise. The projects need to be unforgettable; have a Unique Selling Point (USP), and really stand out from the other high-quality projects presented at regular EBU pitches.

We are looking for:

- Documentaries and series that are universal and relevant across Europe.
- Films and series that audiences, and in particular substantial young, diverse audiences will want to watch and engage with on TV and online.
- Films and series that will have real impact, with exceptional marketing potential and the ability to create a real noise on social media and in the wider world.

The films or series might:

- push the boundaries with daring and captivating new forms of storytelling.
- be binge-worthy series, accessible crowd pleasers.
- potential A-list festival contenders.

Projects that could have been in the Big 5:

Feature documentaries: Navalny, The Mole, I am Greta, The Cleaners, The Forum, Flee, The Act of Killing, For Sama, Three Identical Strangers.

Series: Once Upon a Time in Iraq, The Staircase.

What do we ask from the EBU broadcasters?

To commit to vote for projects going into development and to support in principle these going forward into production.

2/ Eurovision Documentary Production Scheme - EDPS:

This is intended for projects that are beyond the development stage and closer to production. Project might previously have benefited from the EDDS fund or they might be applying straight to this one.

Criteria:

To be considered as EDPS ones, projects need to be extraordinarily ambitious big European stories (formerly known as *the big 5*).

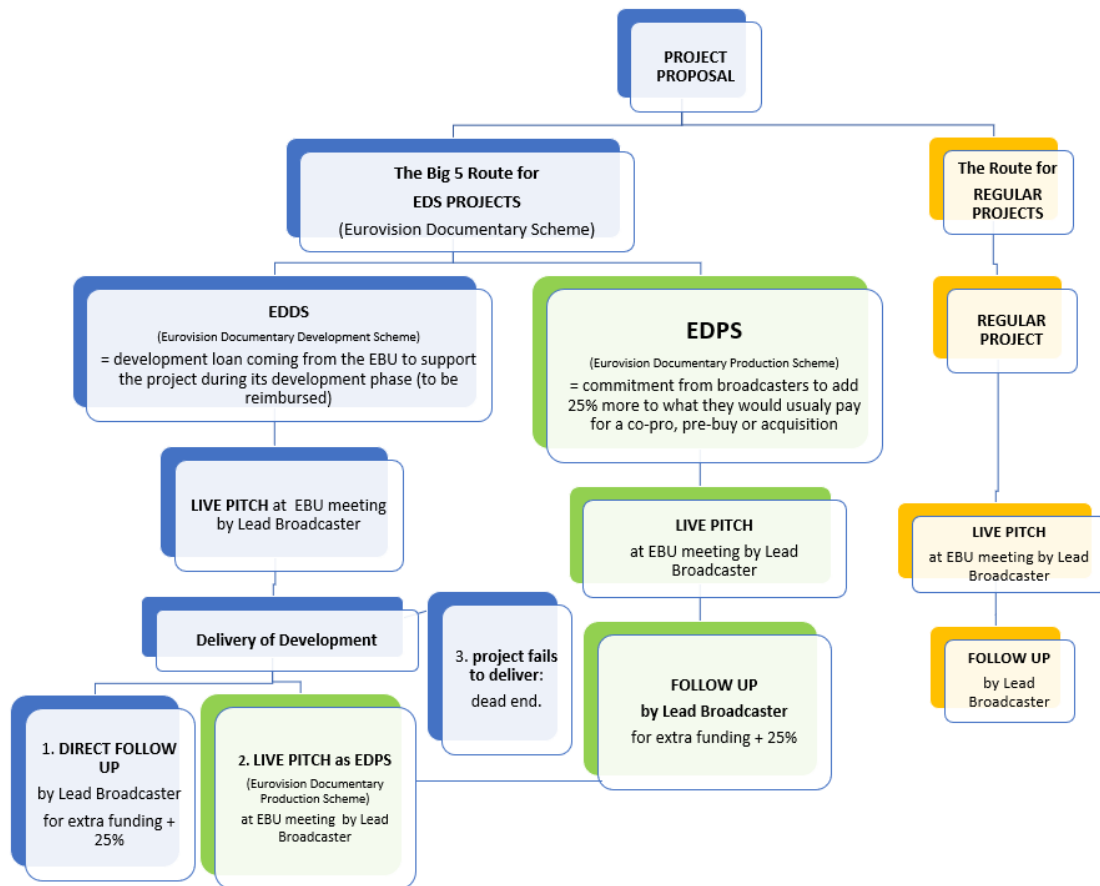
What do we ask from the EBU broadcasters?

Given the nature and profile of the projects under the scheme, where projects do go into production (EDPS), we ask that members commit to pay 25% more they would usually do. For broadcasters who work with a range of budgets, we would hope they would invest at the top end of their range.

FROM DEVELOPMENT TO PRODUCTION – THE PROCESS

Given the differences between the stage at which projects applying either for EDDS or EDPS funding might be at, there are three different possible routes that each might take (see organigram on the [EDS page](#)).

1. Development is delivered and the project moves into production – the Lead Broadcaster (LB) can **follow up directly** with the broadcasters having expressed an interest, the ultimate goal being to get the extra 25% through direct commitments.
2. Development is over and the project moves into production – the LB can decide to **pitch it live** (through EDPS) - the ultimate goal being to get the extra 25% through direct commitments.
3. The project never goes into production: the process stops!



A project at a production stage can apply directly for EDPS, without first doing EDDS. If an EDDS project pitches for EDPS, it will be the LB who is the one pitching and attendance is mandatory. If the LB wants to bring the producer and filmmaker for the live pitch/presentation/update during a meeting to answer questions rather than pitch the project again, this is possible. All related costs will need to be supported by either LB or filmmakers

directly. There is no EBU funding for costs incurred for pitching. This pitch/update, is intended solely for the purpose of presenting new information.

1. By the end of the pitch a 30-days window opens during which interested broadcasters/commissioners can commit to the project on the basis of a deal memo (their own deal memo rather than anything issued collectively by the EBU).
2. Material delivery (incl. feeding the platform), project pitch and preparation (incl. related costs) and follow-up is the responsibility of the LB at all times.

1/ The Application Process

- All projects must be submitted by an EBU member broadcaster. They will become the LB.
- Each broadcaster can submit up to three projects to be considered for pitching in each round.
- We ask broadcasters to be as pro-active as possible, actively seeking out ideas that they think would be a great fit. Projects could be from their own country or another.
- To submit a project, the LB needs to fill in the (new) Submission Form which template can be found here on the [EDS page](#).
- Projects can only be submitted by the LB acting as an EBU Member representative, during the submissions window.
- The LB is the one who decides whether to submit a project for EDDS (development loan) or EDPS (production contribution), or both, ie one following the other, and this will depend on the status of his project and its ambitions.

EDDS (development loan) applications:

- It is the decision of the LB whether to apply for development funding, ie the EDDS
- The development materials (including milestones and deliverables) will have to be ready and submitted to the EBU at least two weeks before the meeting (incl. production budget).

The materials to be delivered will consist in (non-exhaustive list):

- A deck of no more than 4 pages,
- A 'taster' tape/scenes/a mood board, or other visuals,
- A development and/or a production budget,
- A development plan, including timeline for the development (milestones) that extends to no more than six months after the funding has been received. The plan will include details of how the money will be spent, a timeline for the development process, details of what the deliverables will be at the end of the development period.

EDPS (production contribution) applications:

It is the decision of the LB whether to apply for production funding, ie the EDPS

Pitching session

Twice a year, the EBU organizes an in-person pitching session for projects that are either in development or have already been commissioned by at least one member broadcaster.

2/ Selection of projects to pitch

- Selection of all projects will be made by the board members plus two others working for two other EBU broadcasters.
- Members of the selection committee will not be able to vote for projects coming from their own broadcaster (and will not be able to express his/her opinion until all the other board members have done so).
- The selection committee decides which projects are to be pitched as potential EDS projects but the ultimate final decision about whether a project is an EDS or not will be made by a vote of those with voting rights who are present during the pitching event by the big group).
- On occasion the selection committee might promote a project proposed as a REGULAR one to be pitch as an EDS one. In such cases, the selection committee will liaise with the LB who will make the final decision.
- Board Members (as Ambassadors of the initiative) remain available at all times to explain the EDS framework and process to their peers LB and to provide guidelines and advice on “how to submit” and accompany the project(s) all along the way.

3/ Final selection of EDS projects

- It is important for LBs pitching a project to get a clear and clean overview of the potential interests in their project proposal so as to ensure smooth and efficient follow-up after the pitch.
- During the pitching session (and after each pitch) each broadcaster (not each person) will vote for the projects.
- The ultimate final decision about whether a project is an EDS or not will be made by those who qualify to vote at the pitching session.

The **voting system**:

1- Voting on your *interest in a project for your broadcaster*:

- A broadcaster is not allowed to vote on a project that they or one of their own team have submitted.
- Every vote should be a genuine one and reflect the real intentions of the broadcaster
- Voting scale: From 0 to 5
 - 0 = rights not available in the territory (*ex. Germany, France, etc..*)
 - 0 = own project
 - 1 = No interest
 - 2 = Maybe
 - 3 = Possible acquisition
 - 4 = Possible pre-buy
 - 5 = Possible co-production
- German broadcasters ARD should count as ONE broadcaster/partner (independent of what the group of broadcasters does internally). The same goes for ZDF.
- In France, FRANCE TV, ARTE FRANCE or ARTE GEIE each have a voice.
- The final score of a project will be calculated based on the average of points (if marked 0, this will not be counted in).

2- Voting on the **potential to become part of EDS** either for EDDS (development loan) or EDPS (extra production grant from broadcasters +25%):

- Do you think it's an EDDS/EDPS project for your broadcaster? **YES/NO**
- Show of hands (Marks of Interest (Mol)) to remain at the end of each pitch - kind of Docs group's DNA/signature!
- If a series is pitched, commissioners can mention if they are interested in the one off, a new box has been added on the voting sheet.
- There will be a comments section on each voting sheet where broadcasters can note any particular thoughts on a pitch.
- The new voting sheet template can be found on the [EDS page](#).

Final Selection

- In the event of a draw, the selection committee will look at the scores and suggest which projects should receive EDS funding.
- These results will be discussed with all the EBU members present.
- The final decision lies with the EBU Documentary Board.

LEAD BROADCASTER'S (LB) ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES: How do we keep up with the projects in development?

- To be transparent, the details of each vote will be shared with all the broadcasters who were in the meeting with minutes circulated by email after the event.
- The LB will share the relevant information with Producers whose projects were pitched at the meeting, including any feedback, on the provision that this information is kept confidential.
- When a project has been signed off by the EBU Documentary Board, the LB will follow up with other broadcasters who have expressed an interest in it, sharing details of the timeline and deliverables. It will be the Broadcaster and not the Producer who takes the lead!
- The LB will oversee the development work and delivery of it.
- In the event that another broadcaster is keen to be actively involved in the development, they may be able to share the responsibility with the agreement of the LB.
- The LB will update the participating members on the progress of the development work every quarter, and earlier should the need arise.
- The LB will aim to provide the EBU Documentary Board with all the deliverables agreed in the development contract no later than six months after the funding has been received. If an extension to the six months is required, it can be applied if the circumstances justify it.
- For a period of two years following delivery of all the materials agreed in the development contract, the LB will provide the EBU Documentary Board with an update every quarter on the status of the project and whether it has been commissioned and thus when/whether the Development funding has or will be reimbursed.

DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

- As a principle, submission of a project by an EBU member broadcaster acting as LB implies full and unconditional acceptance of the terms of the development agreement that is provided as part of the application process. In the event that the LB has not signed and returned the development agreement to the EBU within three (3) months of the date of submission to the LB by the EBU, the development funding will no longer be available for the project and a new one will need to be filed following the process described herein.
- The EBU will finance the development stage with max CHF 50.000 per project. A realistic budget should be made as well as a contract on expected development deliverables.
- The EBU will pay the amount agreed for the development within 30 days of receipt of an invoice from the LB. In the event that the LB does not provide an invoice to the EBU within a six (6) months period, the EBU will no longer be obliged to pay the Development Funding, rendering the contract null and void.

REIMBURSEMENT

The EDDS funding shall be reimbursed as soon as the film or series is fully financed or on the first day of principle photography, whichever comes first.

The reimbursement will constitute:

- **100%** of the Development Financing awarded if five EBU Members have commissioned the project, or
- **120%** of the Development Financing if no EBU Members are involved or if a commercial party commissions the project instead.
- **0%** of the Development Financing if for some reason the project has to be cancelled by the LB. For avoidance of doubt, the Development Financing shall not be reimbursed if the project is not produced. In this case the LB shall provide the EBU with all supporting documentation explaining the cancellation (i.e. no access, withdrawal of main characters, failure to have obtain the required funding).

FAQs:

What is the difference between a regular EBU pitch and an EDS (Big 5) pitch?

A regular EBU pitch is a good TV pitch with potential in a few countries whereas a Big 5 (EDS) pitch should have the potential to work in most countries.

Can projects also raise money from other sources?

Yes, national funds, creative media or streamers can join the project too, providing EBU members have a first right of refusal. Some producers may also have plans for festival rollouts and theatrical releases. Producers will need to be clear at the pitching stage what their financing strategy is likely to be as this could well influence EBU members when voting.

Can producers work with the EBU and streamers?

Yes, providing exclusivity in the territory for an agreed period of time.

Who will issue the contract?

A single development agreement will be issued by the EBU to be signed by the LB (on behalf of the EBU).

How will producers get their development funding?

Under the terms of the contract, the funding will be paid by the EBU to the LB who in turn will pass it on to the Producers.