[AT] New Austrian Film Aid System Launched

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FISA (Filmstandort Austria), the new Austrian film aid system (see IRIS 2010-7: 1/5) based on the Deutsche Filmförderfonds (German Film Fund - DFFF), has begun to operate. Applications, which can be submitted online, have been accepted since 16 August 2010.

Applications can only cover costs incurred since 1 July 2010. They are processed by the Bundesministerium für Finanzen (Ministry of Finance), with the help of the Austrian Wirtschaftsservice GmbH (AWS) and Location Austria.

The application process comprises two stages. In the first two-week phase, the admissibility of the application, including any corrections, is verified. This is followed by the actual assessment. This particularly covers the plausibility of the information provided by the applicant, whether the proposed film passes the eligibility test, and the film's profitability and eligibility for aid. If the criteria are met in accordance with the aid guidelines, approval is granted by the Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend (Ministry for the Economy, Families and Youth) and the decision is announced. This second phase should be completed within seven weeks of the submission of the complete application.

The FISA system is largely the same as the DFFF model in terms of content-related requirements. It is also intended to serve as a form of "gap funding" for projects that have secured the remaining funding, i.e., for which sufficient funding has been promised by other funding bodies or private sources, and for which the budget is known. It is designed to promote Austria as a film-making location, particularly to boost co-productions having Austrian involvement and the related expenditure that is spent in Austria. Supported films must pass a (relatively low-threshold) cultural eligibility test. The content is not checked by a commission, for example. The aid fund has an annual budget of EUR 5 million for 2010 and EUR 7.5 million for 2011 and 2012.

Aid is available to Austrian feature and documentary films, as well as international co-productions and jointly-financed films that are at least 79 minutes long (59 minutes for children's films) and have a budget of at least EUR 1 million for feature films or EUR 200,000 for documentary films. Support will only be offered if at least 25% of the production costs are spent in Austria. This proportion may be reduced to 20% for large productions with a budget of more than EUR 10 million. Production costs that are eligible for aid must, in principle, be spent in Austria.

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The maximum level of support for an individual project is 25% of the eligible production costs spent in Austria, which may not exceed 80% of the overall production costs. Applicants must be legal entities (producers) with their headquarters in the European Economic Area and at least one office or subsidiary in Austria, and must have an appropriate level of experience. Payments are made in three instalments (40% at the start of filming, 40% when the rough cut is ready and 20% when the final costs are known).

Further information:

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