

Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab guidelines

1 What is Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab?

Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab is a laboratory for all audiovisual narrative formats: from feature films to series, from virtual reality to games. The funding focuses on the path to realizing an idea. We support projects during the development of the material with flexible modules that continuously respond to change in the film industry - these include, among other things, financial support, coaching and networking.

We create scope for experimentation and trial and error and thus promote exchange between the individual players within and outside the industry. We stand for new material, new processes and new formats. We are particularly interested in projects that break new ground in these three fields and move away from traditional approaches.

The focus is always on the story: we want to enable the telling of stories that are socially relevant across different formats. The funded projects are to reflect and represent different perspectives and backgrounds.

The current cooperation partners of Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab can be found at: storylab.migros-culture-percentage.ch

2 General provisions

- 2.1 Writers, directors, producers, actors, freelance artists, designers and technicians in the audiovisual narrative field are eligible to enter.
- 2.2 Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab focuses on the early story development phase. We encourage the beginnings of creative processes and offer the freedom to pursue different approaches.
- 2.3 Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab offers two different submission options: In spring for Stage I (early story development) and in the autumn for Stage II (consolidation). Only projects that have already received funding in Stage I are eligible for submission in Stage II (see chapter 3).
- 2.4 Applications are open to individuals resident in Switzerland and organizations based in Switzerland. Exception: Swiss nationals based abroad are permitted if the project is mainly implemented in Switzerland.
- 2.5 Simply meeting the formal criteria is not enough to be accepted into Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab. The project's quality and the proposed process' feasibility are decisive.
- 2.6 Applications are accepted exclusively via the Migros Culture Percentage online application portal: The portal can be accessed via storylab.migros-culture-percentage.ch.
- 2.7 The **Stage I application** contains the following elements:
 1. **Application form** with a brief summary of the key questions
 2. **Content exposé** – what kind of story do you want to tell? (max. 3 A4 pages, formulated anonymously and uploaded as a separate file):
 - Idea outline
 - Character description and story abstract (for film and series)
 - User role and simulation description (for XR and games)
 - Possibly visualizations
 3. **Exposé process** – How do I want to develop my idea and whom do I want to reach and how? (max. 2 A4 pages, formulated anonymously and uploaded as a separate file)

4. CVs, filmographies and portfolios of the responsible persons and main participants
5. If available: Detailed overall budget and financing plan
6. If available: LOIs, contracts with production companies, etc.
7. If available: Commitments from other financing partners

Documents 4 to 7 will not be presented to the jury prior to the meeting. The jury will only have access to these documents after the decision has been made. Please note: Applications that exceed the maximum number of pages will not be considered.

2.8 The **Stage II application** contains the following elements:

1. **Application form** with a brief summary of the key questions
2. **Project dossier:** How do I want to consolidate my story? / Where am I in the process, what has changed since the final report was submitted and what are the next steps? (max. 12 A4 pages including visualizations)
3. CVs, filmographies and portfolios of the responsible persons and main participants
4. Detailed overall budget and financing plan
5. LOIs, contracts with production companies and/or project partners
6. Commitments from other financing partners
7. If available: Treatment, screenplay, production dossier, visualisations/clips, etc.

3 Two input options

- 3.1 Each spring, entry is open to all those who meet the general provisions. Stage I funding focuses on the **early phase of story development**. There is one entry option per year. Every autumn, entry is open to all those who have already had Stage I Story Lab support. Important: Entry to Stage II is only possible once the funding phase of Stage I has been completed. This is possible in the following year at the earliest.

The focus of funding at Stage II is the consolidation phase: Projects are funded that are already at an advanced stage of story development.

3.2 Conditions for entry at Stage II

- The project has already been funded at Stage I of the Story Lab and the corresponding funding phase has been completed (final report accepted, second tranche paid out). It is the same project.
- The project is in a consolidation phase (interface with production is possible under certain circumstances, but must be well justified). No production costs are covered.
- Additional partners were acquired for the project (a production company, a director, a studio, etc.)
- For film and series projects, the following also applies: The project has received further funding since the Story Lab support (FOC, regional funding, etc.; this does not include automatic funding such as Succès funds).

4 Jury

- 4.1 The submitted Stage I applications (*see 2.6, documents 1, 2 and 3*) are presented to an external expert jury following a formal internal review. In order to account for unconscious bias and achieve the greatest possible diversity in the selected projects, the jury only receives anonymized documents. The anonymity will be lifted after the decision.

- 4.2 The submitted Stage II applications (see 2.7) are presented to an external expert jury (not anonymized) after a formal internal review. A selection of the projects will be invited for presentation. The project managers have a total of 30 minutes to pitch their project and answer the jury's questions.
- 4.3 The jury consists of six international experts. For current names see: storylab.migros-culture-percentage.ch.
- 4.4 The jury decides whether a project will be accepted or not. All decisions are final and uncontestable.
- 4.5 Reasons for a rejection: When asking for feedback, applicants can request a verbal explanation of why their project was rejected. The reason will be communicated by the Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab.
- 4.6 Upon request, the Story Lab will carry out a formal review of a decision.

5 Eligibility criteria

- 5.1 The story development phase is supported in the audiovisual narrative area. The Stage I funding focus is on the early phase of idea development. The Stage II funding focus is on the middle to late phase of story development (consolidation phase). Production planning/production should begin immediately after this phase.

The following formats are eligible: Feature film (documentary, fiction film, animated film, etc.), short film, series, XR (AR, VR, 360°, etc.), cross-media projects, games. Open-format development is also supported.

- 5.2 The Stage I story development phase is supported with contributions for individual elective modules.

Budget elective modules:

Research:	minimum CHF 2,000	maximum CHF 10,000
Retreat:	minimum CHF 2,000	maximum CHF 5,000
Group work:	minimum CHF 5,000	maximum CHF 20,000
Sparring:	minimum CHF 2,000	maximum CHF 6,000
Joker:		maximum CHF 20,000

The minimum grant per project for Stage I is CHF 10,000, the maximum grant per project is CHF 25,000.

The contribution is paid out in two installments. 70% of the contribution is due when the work starts, 30% after submission of the final report.

- 5.3 The Stage II consolidation phase is started with contributions for individual elective modules.

Budget elective modules:

Research:	minimum CHF 10,000	maximum CHF 40,000
Set:	minimum CHF 10,000	maximum CHF 40,000
Audience:	minimum CHF 10,000	maximum CHF 40,000
Sparring:	minimum CHF 10,000	maximum CHF 15,000
Joker:		maximum CHF 40,000

The minimum grant per project for stage II is CHF 20,000, the maximum grant per project is CHF 40,000.

The contribution is paid out in two installments. 70% of the contribution is due when the work starts, 30% after submission of the final report.

- 5.4 **Assessment:** Applicants selected by the jury will be invited to an assessment after the jury meeting. Then it is determined which modules could be most helpful for the applicants and any contacts with experts are established. The details are set out in a contract.
- 5.5 The objectives, content and contributions of the selected modules are jointly agreed. The project partners are responsible for the application and implementation of the modules. Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab supports the project partners with the agreed financial contributions.
- 5.6 The current **module catalog** can be found at: storylab.migros-culture-percentage.ch
- 5.7 The modules are freely selectable in agreement with Migros Culture Percentage. Participation in the Story Lab events is mandatory (details of the events will be communicated directly to the selected projects).
- 5.8 In addition to the elective modules (see 5.2 and 5.3), newcomers can undergo coaching to accompany the story development process (this offer applies to Stage I and II). This isn't an advisory session on dramatic performance, but support with entering the industry. The costs are borne by the Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab. An overview of the coaches can be found on the website: storylab.migros-culture-percentage.ch
- 5.9 Besides the elective modules (see 5.2 and 5.3), projects taking the format of animation, game, series or XR (AR, VR, 360° etc.) can benefit from the **Festival Booster** to explore the format-specific industry and network (the offer applies to Level I and II). The Story Lab supports festival participation in the Industry Programme with a lump sum of CHF 1,000 per project.
- 5.10 The duration of the assessment until the final report submission is set at four or eight months.
- 5.11 **Multiple submissions:** At Stage I, production companies and individuals can submit a maximum of one project per submission deadline. Multiple entries from production companies are possible at Stage II.

6 The following are not supported

1. Projects that discriminate against people
2. Amateur culture, semi-professional work
3. Projects in the production and post-production phase
4. Completed projects
5. Incompletely filled out application forms
6. Projects that do not take the Story Lab approaches (new material, new processes, new formats) into account.
7. Bachelor's theses from film and art schools (Master's theses by students, however, are permitted)
8. Projects in which the artistic aspect outweighs the narrative approach, for example experimental films, audiovisual installations, video clips, video art or casual games
9. Advertising, commissioned work
10. Projects already rejected by the Story Lab

7 Final provisions

- 7.1 Entry is possible in spring (for Stage I, story development) and autumn (for Stage II, consolidation). Please note: Only projects that have already received funding in Stage I are eligible for submission in Stage II. Entry at Stage II is possible in the following year at the earliest.
Current submission deadlines and session dates at: storylab.migros-culture-percentage.ch

- 7.2 Applicants may request funding from other institutions for the development work supported by Migros Culture Percentage Story Lab. If these funds have already been allocated at the time of application, they must be stated in the application.
- 7.3 These guidelines came into force on 22 January 2021.
- These guidelines were updated on 20 January 2023.
- These guidelines were updated on 13 May 2024.
- These guidelines were updated on 12 December 2024.
- These guidelines were updated on 3 June 2025.