

Terms and Conditions

Definitions

For the purposes of these regulations, the following definitions apply:

- a) Series: A continuous audiovisual work consisting of several episodes that are related in terms of content or form.
- b) Episode: A self-contained unit within a series.
- c) Submitting person: The natural or legal person who officially submits the project to the festival and acts in a legally binding manner vis-à-vis the festival.
- d) Rights holder: The person or institution that owns the rights of use and screening rights to the submitted series.
- e) Production: The company or organization that is officially responsible for the submitted project and manages its production status.
- f) DCP: A “Digital Cinema Package” consisting of image, sound, and metadata suitable for screening in cinemas in accordance with the DCI standard.

1. Permitted formats

Only fictional series formats may be submitted. Documentary series or documentary formats are excluded from participation.

2. Publication status in Germany

Submitted series must not have been previously broadcast on German television or made publicly available on German streaming platforms. Exceptions apply exclusively to the Spotlight: Narratives of Tomorrow and Short Form sections (see individual regulations there).

3. Submission and selection process

The selection process is as follows:

1. The series is submitted on time and in full accordance with the submission guidelines and meets all the specified eligibility requirements.
2. The festival team nominates a set number of projects for each competition category.
3. An independent jury selects the winner of each section from among the nominees.
For the Spotlight: Narratives of Tomorrow section, there is no jury decision; instead, a curatorial selection is made by the festival team.

4. Screening eligibility within the competition sections

In the Official Competition and Short Form sections, only the winning project will be shown during the festival. Nominated projects will receive an official laurel, but will not be part of the festival program.

5. Submission fees

No fees are charged for submission.

6. Rights clarification

By submitting an entry, the submitting person or company confirms that they hold all necessary rights to enable public screening at the festival. This includes, in particular, copyrights, ancillary copyrights, music and image rights, and all licenses necessary for public presentation. Any legal claims by third parties shall be borne by the submitting party.

7. Language and subtitles

All series will be shown in their original version (OV/OF). All submitted series must have at least English subtitles, regardless of the original language. German subtitles are preferred but not mandatory. All subtitles must be grammatically correct, synchronized, and of high technical quality. During the festival all series will be shown in their original version (OV/OF) with English subtitles.

8. Technical Specifications / DCP

A DCP (Digital Cinema Package) must be provided for all series selected for screening. The submitter is responsible for providing a suitable DCP or bearing the costs of creating a DCP themselves. The festival will not cover any costs for the creation, conversion, or adaptation of a DCP.

The minimum technical requirements are as follows:

- Image: 4K or 2K, flat or scope (exact specifications will follow after selection)
- Sound: 5.1 or 2.0
- DCPs should be provided unencrypted if possible.

Further technical information on format, data delivery, and upload will be communicated to the participants concerned after the jury's decision and the determination of the winners or screening titles.

9. Confidentiality

Submitted series and viewing materials will be used exclusively for the purposes of selection and jury evaluation. They will not be passed on, duplicated, or used publicly without the express consent of the rights holders.

10. Notification and schedule

The winners of each section will be determined no later than 7 weeks before the start of the festival. All nominated projects will be notified in writing immediately after the decision on their nomination and/or win. The nominees will be announced on March 24, 2026. The winners will be announced on April 21, 2026.

11. Return and data deletion

After the festival has ended, all submitted DCPs and all digitally transmitted materials, viewing links, press documents, and video files will be permanently deleted. No archiving will take place.

12. Multiple submissions and eligibility

- a) A submitter may submit several different series.
- b) Only one season may be submitted per series.
- c) A series can only be submitted and considered in a single section of the festival. Parallel participation in several sections is not permitted.

13. Work in progress and obligation to complete

- a) The festival accepts work-in-progress material in the form of a meaningful rough cut for submission, provided that the content, structure, and artistic intent are clearly recognizable.
- b) The submitter undertakes to provide fully completed episodes for the festival period from June 9–11, 2026; As a rule, one to three episodes per series will be shown during the festival.
- c) The final, completely finished episodes (image, sound, subtitles, master) must be submitted to the festival by the DCP submission deadline on May 26, 2026, at the latest.
- d) No work-in-progress versions will be shown at the festival.

14. Selection of episodes shown at the festival

The festival reserves the right to select one to three episodes to be presented in the festival program in the event of a win. The final, fully completed versions of these episodes must be submitted by the deadline specified in section 13.

15. Liability in legal disputes

The submitting person shall be liable in the event of disputes, claims, or infringements arising from the submission, public screening, or use of the materials provided. The festival accepts no liability for infringements by third parties.

16. Prohibited content

The festival reserves the right to reject series whose content is racist, discriminatory, incites hatred, glorifies violence, or is otherwise illegal. The same applies to series whose production violates applicable law.

17. Privacy

Personal data submitted as part of the application will be used exclusively for the purpose of organizing and running the festival. It will not be passed on to third parties unless required by law or absolutely necessary for technical reasons.

18. Transmission of the DCP and physical data carriers

- a) DCPs can be sent to the festival's technical service providers digitally or physically (e.g., CRU data carriers).
- b) All costs incurred (transport, shipping, return shipping, customs, etc.) are the sole responsibility of the person submitting the entry.
- c) The festival accepts no costs or liability for loss or damage during transport.

19. Participation of talents and attendance requirements

The participation of selected talents (e.g., directors, lead actors, producers) in Q&As, panels, or festival events may be mandatory. Travel and accommodation costs will be agreed upon in advance between the production company, broadcaster, and festival. The festival will only cover a portion of travel and accommodation costs (e.g., hotel).

20. Use of materials for promotional purposes

By submitting an entry, the submitter grants the festival the non-exclusive, royalty-free right to use the following materials for festival communication, promotion, and documentation purposes:

- Press photos / stills
- Posters / key art
- Trailers / teasers
- Project descriptions (e.g., logline, synopsis, press releases, etc.)

This use includes the festival website, social media, press materials, and program booklets.

21. Accessibility

Submitters may optionally provide accessible materials (e.g., audio descriptions, SRT subtitles). The festival supports their use within the limits of technical feasibility.

22. Communication and screening information

- a) The nominated projects will be informed of their nomination on March 24, 2026.
- b) The winners will receive notification of their win on April 21, 2026, along with all technical information (e.g., format specifications, deadlines for material delivery).
- c) The specific screening slot (date and time) will be announced on May 19, 2026.
- d) The festival will decide on screening times, theater allocations, and the final program positioning.

23. Revocation of selection (revoke clause)

The festival may revoke a selection or invitation if:

- a) essential information in the submission was false or misleading,
- b) rights issues arise,
- c) technical materials are not delivered on time,
- d) the series violates legal provisions or the festival's code of conduct.

Revocation does not entitle the applicant to compensation.

24. Disclaimer for technical problems

The festival is not liable for technical malfunctions or failures that may occur during the screening, provided that there is no intentional or grossly negligent behavior. The responsibility for technically flawless DCPs lies with the person submitting them.

25. Force majeure / Festival cancellation

In the event of force majeure, official requirements, or unforeseeable events that make it impossible to hold the festival, the submitter shall not be entitled to any compensation, damages, or compensatory measures.

26. Note on the section “Spotlight: Narratives of Tomorrow”

- The Spotlight: Narratives of Tomorrow section is based on a theme that changes annually. See below for a description of the theme for the 2026 edition.
- Only series whose content fits the defined theme are eligible to participate.
- The program team reviews all submitted projects and selects four series for screening during the festival.
- This selection is not competitive; no winner will be chosen.
- Series that are not eligible for other sections may also be considered here, provided they qualify thematically.

Specific Terms and Conditions: Official Competition

1. Completion date

Only series whose production was completed after January 2024 are eligible to participate in the Official Competition. Productions completed before this date cannot be considered.

2. Premiere status

Submitted series must have at least German premiere status. Series that have already been shown on German television, on German streaming platforms, or as part of other public screenings in Germany are not eligible to participate.

3. Length and format of the series

Submitted series must include at least two (2) completed episodes or a meaningful rough cut. Each episode must have a running time of more than 20 minutes.

4. Approved seasons

Only the first seasons of a series are eligible for submission in the Official Competition section. Second or subsequent seasons cannot be considered.

5. Mandatory attendance in the event of a win

The winner of the Official Competition section undertakes to present at least two (2) representatives or talents from the production on site during the festival. The winner will be announced no later than 7 weeks before the start of the festival so that travel plans can be made in good time.

6. Selection and jury process

A total of six (6) projects will be nominated for the Official Competition section from all eligible submissions. An independent jury of experts will review the nominated series and select one (1) winner. Both the nominees and the winner will receive an official festival laurel. Only the winner will receive a screening slot in the festival program.

7. Communication and screening information

a) The nominated projects will be informed of their nomination on March 24, 2026. The winners will receive notification of their win on April 21, 2026, along with all technical information (e.g., format specifications, deadlines for material delivery). The specific screening slot will be announced on May 19, 2026.

b) The festival will decide on screening times, theater allocations, and the final program positioning.

Specific Terms and Conditions: Short Form

1. Completion date

Only series whose production was completed after January 2024 are eligible to participate in the Short Form section. Productions completed before this date cannot be considered.

2. Premiere status

No premiere status is required for the Short Form section. Series that have already been shown on German television, on German streaming platforms, or as part of other public screenings in Germany are eligible to participate.

3. Length and format of the series

Submitted series must include at least two (2) completed episodes or a meaningful rough cut. Each episode must be less than 20 minutes long.

4. Approved seasons

Only the first seasons of a series are eligible for submission in the Short Form section. Second or subsequent seasons cannot be considered.

5. Mandatory attendance in the event of a win

The winner of the Short Form section undertakes to present at least two (2) representatives or talents from the production on site during the festival. The winner will be announced no later than 9 weeks before the start of the festival so that travel plans can be made in good time.

6. Selection and jury process

A total of nine (9) projects will be nominated for the Short Form section from all eligible submissions. An independent jury of experts will review the nominated series and select one (1) winner. Both the nominees and the winner will receive an official festival laurel. Only the winner will receive a screening slot in the festival program.

7. Communication and screening information

a) The nominated projects will be informed of their nomination on March 24, 2026. The winners will receive notification of their win on April 21, 2026, along with all technical information (e.g., format specifications, deadlines for material delivery). The specific screening slot will be announced on May 19, 2026.

b) The festival will decide on screening times, theater allocations, and the final program positioning.

Specific Terms and Conditions: Spotlight: Narratives of Tomorrow

1. Completion date

The completion date is irrelevant; there is no time restriction.

2. Premiere status

Premiere status is not required.

3. Length and format of the series

At least 4 fully completed episodes, or a meaningful rough cut.

3. Theme relevance & director's statement

This year's theme for the Spotlight section is **Narratives of Tomorrow**.

Spotlight: Narratives of Tomorrow showcases fictional series that push boundaries and explore "what's next." This section is for creators who challenge old tropes and find fresh ways to build characters and worlds.

Whether set in a changing present or a distant future, these stories help us make sense of today's world and where we might be headed. We welcome everything from eco-thrillers and dark comedies to high-concept sci-fi as long as the work is forward-thinking and curious. We aren't picky about genre, production date, or tone; whether your project is poetic, funny, or totally surreal, there's a place for it here.

As part of the submission process, a director's statement must be submitted explaining why the series fits this theme in terms of content or form.

4. Approved seasons

Only the first seasons of a series are eligible for submission in the Spotlight: Narratives of Tomorrow section. Second or subsequent seasons cannot be considered.

5. Selection and jury process

Four (4) projects will be selected by the program team from all thematically relevant submissions. Each of these will receive a screening slot and an Official Selection Laurel.