



Development and Pitching of Audiovisual Projects

A guide for independent filmmakers



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for independent
filmmakers

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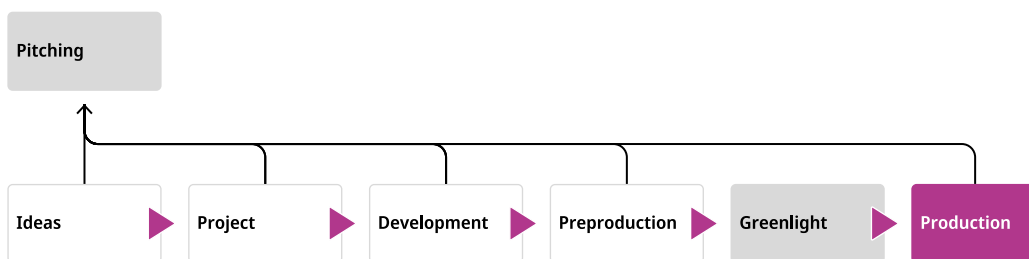
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Contents

1 Introduction	6
How to use this guide	6
2 From an idea to the final cut	7
How to start	7
First steps: content and planning	7
3 Conceptualization	9
The business model	9
IP in the business model	10
4 Pitching	12
Considerations to pitch a project	12
IP in the pitch	13
Pitching at festivals and markets	14
5 Development	15
Plan and budget	15
IP in development	15
6 Conclusion	17
Essential planning and producing checklist	18

1 Introduction

Fiction and nonfiction movies, television and streaming series or documentaries usually start with one person and one idea. Transforming this idea into a well-planned audiovisual project requires not only effort but convincing many people. A filmmaker needs to show the feasibility and potential success of a project long before the first scene is shot. The convincing is normally done through meetings, formal and informal, presentations and pitching. These presentations and pitching don't happen necessarily at one precise moment but over many different stages. Therefore, the advice mentioned on pitching takes into account that the filmmaker might be pitching a project that is still in its conceptual stage or that is in preproduction.



To help filmmakers and producers transition from an interesting idea to a well-structured project, this guide lays down a roadmap to help small independent filmmakers in two areas:

1. Structuring the project in line with the best practices from the international audiovisual market including key elements related to intellectual property (IP)
2. Reflecting a well-structured project in a successful pitch

How to use this guide

One of the most important questions an audiovisual producer will need to answer is: will I have the legal right to tell that particular story? Hopefully the answer will be yes, but this is more likely to happen if a filmmaker takes intellectual property into consideration in the development of the project. That is why this guide is jointly published with a detailed guide on IP clearance. Both guides are complementary and should be used together.

For those that would like to learn more about the audiovisual sector and its relation with intellectual property, WIPO has made detailed information available about some of the elements of the audiovisual sector included in this practical guide. Due to the nature of this document, please refer back to those publications for an explanation of the concepts and the industry as a whole:

- *From Script to Screen. Copyright for Audiovisual Industry Professionals*, available [here](#)
- *Rights, Camera, Action! Intellectual Property Rights and the Filmmaking Process*, 2nd edition, available [here](#)
- Overall guides on intellectual property for business, available [here](#)

2 From an idea to the final cut

How to start

You might have an excellent story and compelling characters but, ultimately, an audiovisual project is, in practice, a business proposal, and in the vast majority of cases, a risky one. A filmmaker needs not only a story worth telling but also one that it is feasible to tell the way he or she proposes to tell it. That is why several elements must be considered to elements not initially considered but that could render audiovisual project unviable or unattractive. The three main elements to consider from a practical perspective are artistic, financial and legal. These are always interrelated as a change in one area may impact another area. For example, the choice of one song as the theme for a character can impact the schedule and script and the legal authorization needed for the song's use.

The large list of needs for a project might be overwhelming, especially at the start when resources are not yet guaranteed. That is why strategic planning plays an important role in project development. This planning will help with attracting and managing partnerships, talents and funding. The first step is to think of the overall aspects of the project as follows:

1. Understand the entire process.
2. Have clear and defined goals.
3. Know what resources are needed to achieve those goals.

First steps: content and planning

You now have a clearer picture of what would you like to achieve at the end of your audiovisual project. You have also started to think about what you will need to do to achieve that. The next step is to start working on the details and transform your idea into a concept.

To help you advance, reflect upon six aspects that will eventually need to be included in your project:

1. **Concept:** what is your project about? This will be one of the most common questions when presenting or pitching your project, at least in the initial phase. Artistic elements of the project need to be reflected in a structured manner: central concept, story, characters, narrative and visual style.
2. **Script:** some projects don't necessarily have a script at the very first phase and others start with a full script. Either way, ensure that your script is formatted as per industry expectations and standards and in line with the concept that you are presenting. With a finalized script in your hands, your planning and budgeting can be more precise. Do not forget about managing the IP rights over any script developed at an early stage as well.
3. **Budget development:** how much money do you need? Financial feasibility is a requirement for any project to become a reality. Any investor will need to understand the overall costs of the project, sources of financing, projections and how much the investment represents in terms of percentage of the total costs. A realistic budget includes the costs associated with production, including crew wages, production, equipment hire, postproduction, marketing and, of course, IP clearance.

4. **Production planning:** understanding the requirements of the production is crucial for the optimal use of resources, both creative and financial. The planning should be in line with the goals and, of course, the script and the schedule. It includes when and how you will use the resources to avoid surprises but also when the content will be ready for distribution. Contractual deadlines, periodical transfers of money from financiers and postproduction time and cost should be kept under control. Think of stages and milestones, for example, the green light.
5. **Risk management:** risk is inevitable in audiovisual projects. While elimination of risk is virtually impossible, its management is a must for any production, small or big. A filmmaker might be asked to show that he or she has undertaken steps to manage specific risks, especially those that might affect distribution. The risks can be of different natures including financial, creative, contractual, logistical and so on. A range of insurance types is available for audiovisual projects to protect them from some of the larger risks. This should not only be considered but also included in budgeting and planning.
6. **Viability assessment (green lighting):** a “green light” or a positive viability assessment is a major milestone in most audiovisual projects with private financiers. It is the final go and commit the financing necessary to make a film, series and so on. The condition for green light is normally established by a distributor or financier. Other elements of the contract with the financier might only be triggered in case the green light is given such as ownership, future payments and deadlines. Such conditions, payments or other elements should be reflected in the planning in terms of the requirements to achieve approval and the resources that will be made available only after the green light. It is important to incorporate these requirements as early as possible in the project to ensure the efficient use of resources.

3 Conceptualization

You have already started developing several elements of your project. Your initial idea is gaining structure, and you might even start planning how to obtain the respective resources needed, discuss it with possible partners and approach talents. The concept is the first moment where core artistic elements are defined and it will set the basis for the movie or television series. This is the moment to define the architecture where the artistic, logistical, legal and financial aspects will be further refined. In other words, it is time to define the business model.

The business model

One of the elements that often receives less attention in the conceptualization, and in audiovisual projects in general, is the formulation and definition of the project's business model. The business model explains how your project brings value and ultimately what the reasons are behind undertaking your project the way you are proposing to achieve the ultimate goal: the content. For that reason, the different elements of the concept need to be in line with the business model. Think of the business model as the logic behind the infinite number of decisions that a filmmaker needs to take during the project.

Remember, as you move toward production, many aspects that go beyond the artistic choices become crucial for your project to become a reality. When presenting your project to partners and investors, core elements of your business plan will help you to "sell" your project.

In some cases, a business plan essential is needed for further analysis. A **business plan essentials** is a formal document that outlines the objectives, structure and feasibility of your project and it can be a powerful tool for convincing others to support you. In this document, the details of the business model (listed below) should be included together with an executive summary, a company overview and the content overview. The goal is to appeal to the business sense of people. Especially when combined with good research, this shows your competence to steer the project.

Below are the main elements to define your business model:

Value proposition and purpose: what is the purpose of your content – the message that it will convey and who it is aimed at? This will help you clearly define the value that your content will offer, including the features that make your movie or television series unique and why it may be attractive to your target audience. Ensure that the quality of your project is in line with your goals and expectations, in both technical and creative terms. A list of crew positions that have been set or are proposed with information about them could be important in showing value.

Market segment and target audience: assess who your potential viewers are and how they would access the content. Identify and segment your audience to adapt your business model to their needs and preferences, or to those of your potential investors and distributors. Reflect upon current and future industry trends, comparable performances for the genre you are proposing and creative elements of your project that respond to the market and audience.

Sources of revenue: how much revenue do you need? How much are you investing in the project, including money, time, staff and any other necessary resources? The moment when the resources are needed is an important factor and a cash flow chart showing how much is needed at each stage might provide a better view of the project needs. For investors, make the economic viability of the project clear at all phases and the return on investment (ROI) expected when the final product is being marketed.

Budget: calculate the costs associated with the production, distribution and marketing of your movie or television series. Be sure to take into account all costs in order to establish a price that enables you to deliver the project and, of course, make a profit on it. Check your budget against your revenue expectations and the cash flow chart. Those estimates should be in line with the chosen business model or the commercial possibilities presented by the project. For example, if a government grant is available but will only be transferred during the postproduction phase, this should be taken into account in the budget and cash flow chart.

Distribution channels: determine how you will reach your audience, whether through streaming platforms, cinemas, television, live events, festivals or other distribution channels. Choose the most appropriate channels for your project. Research what each of them require and the coproduction or financing opportunities that could be useful for the movie or television series.

Marketing and promotion strategies: planning how to raise awareness of your project and how to attract and retain your audience are important elements. Options such as digital marketing, public relations, social media and partnerships with other talent should be considered and reflected in your strategy.

A robust business model adapted to the characteristics of your movie or television series will be laying the foundations for its financial viability and success in the market. It is not rare for there to be cases where the producer will be faced with the need to adapt or change the concept/ project or business model in order to comply with a financing opportunity, financier requirement or market opportunity. Language, genre, distribution channel and even business model are frequently revisited before a concept becomes reality and receives the green light.

IP in the business model

Your concept or project will tell a story. You need to be able to tell that story in your film or series. This means that you need to own the IP rights necessary to include some materials, adapt other materials and, ultimately, own the final product without any legal gap. This is further detailed in the guide on IP clearance mentioned earlier. For example, if your project is an adaptation of a book, your project will only be viable if you own the rights to adapt that book.

Besides being a core element in assessing the viability of the project, IP also impacts budget, planning and distribution. Taking music as one example, the use of any music will need to be licensed with the respective time and money necessary. How you use that music (for exam, can you use it in the promotional materials?) is also a factor. In many cases, producers will need to find alternatives and it can take a long time before the final authorization for the lawful use of content is finally in place.

On the other hand, while a project might use content protected and owned by third parties, IP is also fundamental for the filmmaker involved in creation and production. The producer should ensure that the necessary steps are in place to own the final product and that it can be distributed without incurring in any infringement. In most cases, this is also a contractual obligation assumed with partners, investors and distributors. This includes, for example, agreements with scriptwriters that worked on the script even in its initial phase.

As the project evolves, more details could be annexed to the business plan. Here are some of the common elements (information and not necessarily documents) related to IP that could be annexed to the business plan in order to prove the legal viability of the project:

- Title report: a search for all prior uses of the same title used in films, television shows or another multimedia project that could be relevant.
- Copyright search report: any existing works (books, films, etc.) that have similarities with your project.
- Chain-of-title documents: this is a crucial aspect in IP clearance as explained in the IP clearance guide mentioned previously. These documents are an indication that you own the materials that are part of your project so far. Probably the most important at conceptualization stage would be the screenplay, storyboard, images and any material that was adapted into your project (news articles, book, etc.) and promotional materials (trailer, images, etc.).
- Copyright registration: if you registered any element such as the screenplay, also indicate that.
- Agreements for music in the film: if you secured any license to use music in the film you can also indicate that.

4 Pitching

Presenting what is still merely an idea, concept or project to future partners, investors and distributors is part of the activity of a filmmaker. Pitching is a selling technique based on an oral presentation, usually between one and seven minutes long. On a practical level, it is the most efficient way to connect your project to people looking for interesting projects, such as commissioning editors. The pitch is a condensed description of what your project (film, series, documentary, etc.) is about. The pitch should be adapted to the occasion, audience and opportunity and it is imperative that you nail down the pitch that works for your project. Think carefully about your pitch and work on it. Do your research and be ready for questions and requests for further clarifications. Sometimes, you may have little more than a few minutes to pique someone's interest and that could be enough to "sell" a good project.

Visual support is an important element of convincing, so always have a **pitch deck** ready: a compelling thumbnail sketch of the main aspects of your project. Your message needs to travel well. When you pitch your project to an executive, he or she in turn will have to pitch or explain it to someone else (sometimes several days later). If your pitch is vivid, memorable and clear, your project is more likely to be well-received. Remember, you do not need to include every detail of the project in the pitch. The key is to aim for what will draw the listener in and leave him or her wanting to know more. High-concept stories are usually the easiest to pitch and character-driven tales are the most difficult to sum up. Know the strong aspects of your project in general and reflect them in the pitch to generate a higher impact. This could be an IP element, for example, the right to adapt a book to which you have secured exclusivity for a number of years (also known as an option agreement).

Considerations to pitch a project

Don't forget that a pitch will also be considered as a business proposition and legal viability is very much an aspect to be considered in pitching. Many aspects of the legal viability rely on the IP clearance practices and elements that you incorporate in your project from the start. For example, if you plan a biopic about a famous artist but have not started to look into obtaining the rights to some of his or her music, the project will be either unattractive (no soundtrack in line with the project) or not legally viable (using the songs will lead to copyright infringement and prohibition from distributing the final content).

For unknown partners and professionals without a prior reputation in the audiovisual market, the pitch is also the opportunity to show professionalism, an important factor in high-end and smaller projects equally. It is a sample of what you are capable of.

Financers often consider the following elements when deciding whether to invest in the project:

Solid narrative: you must have a convincing, well-structured story that is clearly and concisely expressed. Define your central proposal and ensure that it is easy to understand and possible to achieve through your project. There are many different ways to order the content of the pitch, one common option is to start with the genre, then the setting, the logline, the synopsis, the director's vision and then finally introduce the main characters, outline the conflict and give an idea of the resolution.

Trailer, sample reels or content sample: include visual material that shows your project's potential and how it might look once it is produced. A well-produced trailer or fragments of important scenes can be effective at conveying the tone and quality of the production and the strength of the characters, in particular for nonfiction projects. In case there is no time or resources for a trailer, synopsis, storyboards and/or concept photos and any other selling points might be helpful.

Essential facts and figures: provide relevant information about the target market, recent trends, competition, potential audience and possible ROI. Financers will want to see that you have done your research and that you are well-prepared (see elements of concept and business plan as explained above).

Talented crew: highlight the skills and experience of your creative and technical teams. Showing that you have a skilled, committed crew – ideally with contracts already signed – can give potential investors confidence. If you mention professionals, make sure they are aware and are on board with the different aspects of the project. If you have not chosen a key person, for example, the main character, look for alternatives to show your vision (description, character bible, photos, etc.).

Plan, business model and budget: explain how you plan to implement the project, from preproduction to distribution. If you already have investors, coproducers, preliminary agreements that have an impact on rights management and the budget, include this information. Pitch a detailed, realistic budget and a plan that shows how you will use funds efficiently.

Distribution and marketing: explain how your content will reach the audiences. Showcase that a strategy for promotion and dissemination is in line with the business plan and how you position the content in the market. Create a website and start engaging consumers from the start. Create memorable promotional materials, word-of-mouth campaigns by hosting screenings and look for organizations that could become a vehicle to distribute the movie.

IP in the pitch

With pitching you are proposing a process and result. IP is very much linked to both creative and business sides and should not be forgotten even in your pitching.

Remember, your proposal needs to be considered to be viable and IP will help you to tell the story in the way you propose. As your concept evolves and the number of meetings and pitches grows, here are the main key aspects to keep in mind:

Financing and distribution: understand the different options in terms of the obligations you assume in exchange of financing and distribution. As you start to enter into agreements or negotiate them, keep that in mind any parallel discussions with other sponsors financiers. Some deals might be incompatible in terms of conditions related to the IP over the final content. The options are diverse but normally relate to exclusivity, window, territory or time period.

Creation of content: the evolution of the project means that more materials are included and generated and more people are collaborating directly or indirectly at the different stages. Ensure that contractual agreements are in place. Be sure to closely manage the issues of ownership and authorship of the new materials or content that was adapted.

Protection of content: the film might not be finished but a number of materials already exist. While copyright does not require registration for protection, several measures could be taken to ensure you have proof of ownership over those contents you created or financed for the purposes of your project. For example, the script, character bibles and other materials could be registered at the competent national authority to provide more security for your rights. If merchandising is part of your business model, think about registering trademarks as well. If you believe your project is actually a format (a tv or series format, for example), ensure that you take the respective measures in place to own that format. Remember to think about retaining some of the ownership over the results of the project both in case of financing or if there is no green light.

Confidentiality: you might want to keep several elements of your concept or project confidential. The first step is to treat those elements as confidential information and undertake the necessary measures with them. Be aware who has access and with whom you share those elements. This is particularly true for materials that are not protectable by IP (for example, ideas). Nondisclosure agreements with those with access might be advisable to formalize and protect this confidentiality.

At the same time, some of the confidential elements might make your pitch more attractive. If the pitch takes place at a public event, such as a festival, the recommendation is not to reveal any information you would like to keep confidential. If the pitch takes place behind closed doors, you may want to pitch ideas or elements without the fear of them being used without your authorization.

An “agreement to evaluate” is when someone, such as a production company, agrees it is receiving confidential information for the purpose of evaluating the material. If the production company passes on the project, it agrees not to use the material. If it wants to use the material, it must enter into an agreement with the person that brought that information. Alternatively, when someone does not want the risk of receiving information about a project and wants to ensure they can use ideas similar to the ones in the pitch, they might propose a “submission release.” Sometimes you might not be able to convince the counterpart to sign formal agreements before a pitch. Still, you might need to take the risk not to lose that opportunity. That is the reality in many cases. If a formal written agreement in advance is not possible, any discussion or understanding could be formalized in written restatement, through email for example, to keep a record of what was agreed (or not agreed) in the meeting for future reference.

Pitching at festivals and markets

Attending festivals and markets to meet with industry representatives provides innumerable opportunities to pitch your project or concept, or to gather ideas about the market needs and interest for your next project. More frequently than not, the setup and the location to undertake your pitch is not ideal. It could happen over a coffee in a crowded space, or even standing in an open area. The best advice from experienced producers is to be prepared. This not only means to do the work before traveling to the festival/market – the business plan, the concept, the IP-related aspects, but also to have your pitch deck ready on your laptop, tablet or even phone. You could also have it online and share a link with people you would like to grant access (this is also a way to control who can access your pitch).

At more advanced stages, you might even be ready to negotiate and agree on basic terms. In those cases, a written summary of what you are ready to offer might help you advance the negotiations. This is done through a “**deal memo**” where you include the contractual basis that you are ready to enter into in terms of territories, windows of distribution, deadlines, collections calendar and so on.

One important element that is commonly disregarded is that to have a good first impression, the presentation or pitch should contain no errors or typos. If it is in a foreign language, make sure to check the text and avoid spelling and grammatical errors.

5 Development

You started with only an idea. That idea gained concrete elements and became a concept. The next phase is to include tangible aspects that will allow you to create a project. In summary, development consists of two elements: obtaining finance and development of the actual audiovisual project. It is the conversion of idea into reality, from script synopsis to outline proposal to schedule. Of course, not every project is the same nor do they start the same but by the time they become an audiovisual project they should have everything needed to go into preproduction phase.

Plan and budget

During development, ideas and concepts are turned into screenplays; literary rights are acquired or exercised in case of option agreements, and technical and creative teams are defined. In short, this is the stage of a film's life cycle in which the ownership over the film first takes shape. All this is of course managed and controlled in a plan and with a budget.

Many of the hidden costs of production will become evident during the preparation of the **schedule**: a comprehensive, chronological document transforming the script into scenes ensuring the right people and resources are available at the right time. Plans and budgets also include expert-calculated items like finance costs, insurance (including completion bonds) and a contingency fund to cover unexpected expenses.

For dealing with this planning and budgeting, it is vital to efficiently manage all the third-party rights entrusted to the producer as well as the ones arising from the project, by paying close attention to the terms of relationships between the producer and each stakeholder involved in the project: from actors and script writers to investors and insurance companies, and from composers and performers of the music played in the project to broadcasting organizations and streaming platforms that will showcase it to the public.

Here are the main reasons for and uses of the detailed plan and budget:

- To determine the cost in time and money for a production
- To share the information with potential partners
- To decide whether it makes sense to pursue the project under the proposed conditions
- To discover the information needed to shape the project and present it in pitching
- To create the financial information needed to format into a specific template that is required by a particular call for public incentives

IP in development

While you are putting everything in place to move into preproduction, IP clearance becomes even more relevant in order to avoid costly surprises during the production phase. At this stage, the paperwork is continuously increasing and you have assumed different obligations and deadlines (and payments), some of them related to IP clauses. An effective plan includes the mapping of the contracts that are essential for the development of a movie or television series

in a way that is robust and, of course, allows you to explore your content without infringing third-party rights.

For example, if the script says that the lead character will sing a song during the first scene of the movie and you have not yet secured the rights over that song, that is a problem not only in your plan but potentially in your budget due to the need to either obtain a license for a higher price than budgeted or to rework the script. In the case you have already moved into production, you even might need to reshoot the scene with consequences in terms of time and money.

Some of the essential stages of an effective plan are as follows:

Identification and management of contracts: make an exhaustive list of the contracts that will be necessary for the project. You should have a better vision of the needs of the project now. Prepare drafts (ideally with the advice of an entertainment lawyer) so you don't have to prepare them at the last minute. Also dedicate time for record-keeping and the management of those contracts. Sometimes, you will look for a contract 10 or 20 years after the end of the project. Anything important, such as conditions that impact your project and payments triggered by milestones, should be carefully tracked.

Negotiation of terms: when negotiating contracts, be clear and specific about the rights obtained and about each party's responsibilities and remuneration. It is important to ensure that contracts are signed before the materials and rights in question are incorporated in the project. When it comes to IP rights, think about how you plan to use the content and reflect that in the conditions such as purpose, duration, exclusivity, territory, termination causes, warranties, indemnity and penalties for infringement. Remember that, in case of conflict, you might end up in a lengthy and expensive lawsuit unless you have included an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) clause. WIPO offers not only ADR clauses to include in your contracts but also detailed information about this alternative.

Content protection: as more content is created and the list of collaborators grows longer, keeping track of all the intangible assets involved in the project must be ensured and that all rights over new materials are governed by a written contract. This is essential for the producer to maintain all the IP rights necessary for marketing and distribution. This also includes secondary elements of the project, such as characters, soundtrack, fictional brands and designs. Some of those elements might become an interesting source of revenue such as through merchandising and licensing, or spin-offs in the future.

Legal consultancy: aim to obtain legal advice before it is too late. Appropriate legal advice can often prevent problems that might damage the whole project. While you can do a lot of the laborious work yourself, it is important that you check with a lawyer on core elements of your project, as well as the IP clearance aspect dealt with in the separate WIPO guide mentioned before.

Communication: in addition to written contracts, clear communication with all partners involved in the project is very important. They should be aware of the contractual needs of the project and the measures they need to implement (for example, not to use a painting or a brand in a scene because there was no agreement from the right owner). In some cases, it is also important that they know the terms and conditions governing their involvement. For example, some of your collaborators might have expectations to appear as coauthor of the script or coproducer, while you might think differently.

While the concept was the basis of your project development, the key issues mentioned before also remain true for the development of the project. Ensure you update all the elements mentioned therein. If, during the development of the project, you move into a different genre, market or even business model, make sure to update accordingly. If you are still looking for partners, it's important to mention your existing agreements when you pitch your current project, for example, through the type of agreement you are willing to offer in the deal memos as mentioned before.

6 Conclusion

Filmmaking is a collaborative effort. While one person, or a group of people, will come up with the initial aspects of the concept, a number of elements are still missing. Showing that you have a plan with an efficient process in place to deliver a result is the first step. This guide should help you to achieve that. With the basis of a project in hand, you need to communicate with others and obtain their collaboration, financing or support. This guide will also help filmmakers achieve that.

IP should be considered at all stages from two perspectives: your project will use a lot of content protected by IP and you will own a range of content protected by IP. Reflect these two perspectives in the planning and budgeting process. Ensure you pass on the message that you have those aspects covered when pitching your project. Remember, legal viability is a crucial element for you to be able to tell your story.

Essential planning and producing checklist

The following list covers the essential elements of planning and producing a movie or television series. Most of these elements should be clear for the filmmaker; investors might want to know more details about them.

1. Before the start

- Understand the whole process
- Have clear and defined goals
- Know the resources needed for your objectives

2. Conceptualization

- Define the project: central concept, story, characters, narrative and visual style
- Establish the principal message
- Check the viability of the project
 - Financially: how much will you be able to raise and how much do you propose the project will need?
 - Artistically: the elements you propose are compatible with the resources – high salaries for talents, use of famous music and expensive locations, costly postproduction
 - Legally: contracts, IP clearances, union and labor laws compliance, other legislation, etc.

3. Business model definition

- Value proposition and purpose
- Market segment and target audience
- Sources of revenue
 - Identify sources of financing
 - Prepare financing proposals
- Budget
- Distribution channels
- Marketing and promotion strategies

4. Plan and budget

- Set out the key milestones of your planning
- Create a cash flow chart in case the resources are not available immediately
- Review as much as necessary
- Establish a production schedule and agree it with the team
- Assign dates to each stage of the development and production
- Produce the final budget and adjust the planning according to the budget

5. Legal and administrative matters

- Select and manage confidential information related to the project
- Produce a copyright record for everything created in the project
- Evaluate applicable insurances for the project and ensure these costs are reflected in the budget
- Draw up the necessary legal documentation
- Consult a legal professional as early as possible in project development
- Undertake IP clearance good practices from the start
- Identify and mitigate existing risks
- Ensure the chain-of-title

6. **Confirmation of the crew**
 - Define roles and responsibilities
 - Select your creative and technical teams for their written formal engagement
 - Conclude contracts and legal agreements including IP clauses from the creative crew
7. **Production design**
 - Review or finalize your script. Ensure IP clearance in the last version
 - Develop your storyboard
 - Ensure that any changes in the script or storyboard are reflected in the schedule, budget, planning, etc.
 - Produce sketches and art design
 - Plan the visual effects and graphics
 - Consider promotional materials
8. **Locations and permits**
 - Select locations
 - Be aware of the time and money constraints of the project
 - Explore research permits and regulations
 - Obtain filming permits
9. **Casting and talent selection**
 - Conduct auditions and screen tests
 - Select the cast and other talent
 - Negotiate the contracts
10. **Develop promotional materials**
 - Create a marketing plan, e.g., contacts, partner institutions, screenings, etc.
 - Design promotional materials, e.g., posters, trailers, website, etc.
 - Produce a launch and distribution strategy

Pitching checklist

1. **Preparation**
 - How long is your pitch?
 - Who is the audience?
 - What is the main point of your project?
2. **Content**
 - Solid narrative
 - Trailer, sample reels or content sample
 - Essential facts and figures
 - Talented crew
 - Plan, business model and budget
 - Distribution and marketing
3. **Possible annexes (depending on the needs and circumstances)**
 - Deal memo
 - Business plan
 - Detailed budget
4. **Pitch deck**
 - No grammatical errors or mistakes
 - Choice of visual identity in line with the project (images, palette of colors, etc.)
 - When convenient include real elements from the project (trailer, scenes, script, storyboard, scene locations, real photos of characters in case of biopic, documentary, etc.)
 - Talents contractually engaged or proposed for the project
 - Work on your logline
 - Think about the order of the content of your pitch (genre, the setting, the logline, the synopsis, the director's vision, introducing the main characters, outlining the conflict and an idea of the resolution)
 - Have the pitch ready on your laptop, tablet, phone and some copies if useful

How to structure and present audiovisual projects is one of the main concerns of small audiovisual producers and can contribute to the success in securing financing and distribution of a project.

Emphasizing three key elements: artistic, financial, and legal considerations, the guide details pitching strategies, the importance of solid narratives, visual materials, talented crews, and realistic budgets to show that the project is not only artistically interesting but also legally and financially viable.

Throughout, the guide stresses intellectual property considerations that should be embedded in the development phase from the start.