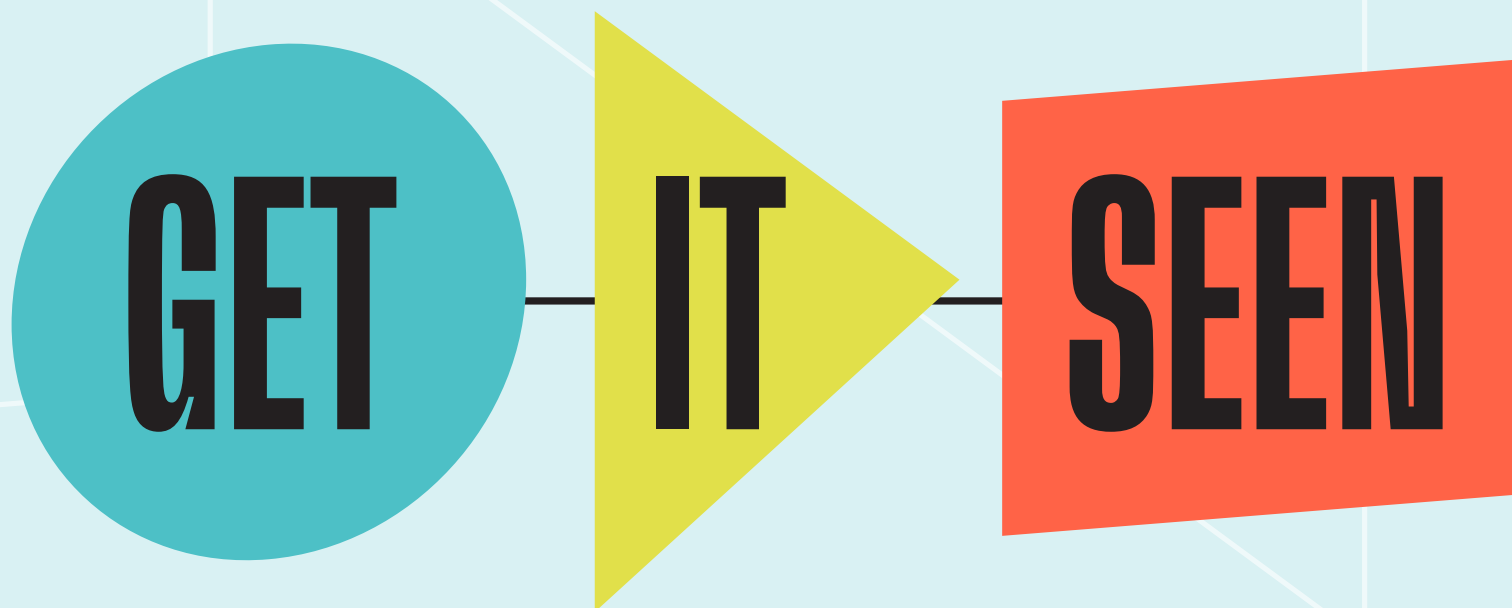


Planning your film's journey to audiences



SALES, DISTRIBUTION AND EXHIBITION LAB

Guidelines

Funded by



Created by



Contents

About the Independent Cinema Office	3
About the BFI Creative Challenge Fund	4
What is the Get It Seen programme?	5
Am I eligible?	6
What will I gain from the programme?	7
Programme structure and dates	8
Fees payable to participants	9
Our commitment to inclusion	10
How to apply	11
Assessment criteria	12
Decisions and feedback	13
Complaints and appeals	14
Contact us	15

About the Independent Cinema Office

The Independent Cinema Office (ICO) is the UK's support organisation for independent cinema. We want all communities to have access to a thriving independent cinema culture. We champion the broadest range of cinema, and develop audiences, venues and talent.

We offer film programming services to cinemas, bring films into distribution and are the main provider of events, training and advice for the independent cinema sector. We work with the main funding bodies in film exhibition, and we are a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

We are also the lead organisation for Film Hub South East. Providing resources, training and funding for film exhibition – with an emphasis on growing new audiences for British independent and international film. Film Hub South East also delivers talent development activity for aspiring filmmakers and raises awareness of film culture in the region through our BFI NETWORK activities.

About the BFI Creative Challenge Fund

The [BFI Creative Challenge Fund](#), awarding National Lottery funding, was developed to decentralise project development and support the wider ecosystem in which emerging UK filmmakers can develop new projects.

Get It Seen has been awarded funds to respond to the BFI Creative Challenge Fund's third 'challenge' and seeks to increase opportunity for projects that have scale and/or a greater chance of a bigger audience impact domestically or internationally (or both).

Recent industry research shows that just 10% of UK producers made more than one film between 2014 and 2024 – and 92% of those made no more than three. Many producers experience a four-to-five-year gap between debut and second features, due to limited development support and challenges accessing the market.

What is the Get It Seen programme?

The programme is for sixteen emerging and established UK-based producers who are developing ambitious independent feature films with the potential for commercial and audience success. 'Emerging' and 'Established' are defined in line with the BFI Creative Challenge Fund guidelines as follows:

- 'Emerging' is defined as having produced between one and three feature film projects.
- 'Established' is defined as having produced four or more feature film projects that have achieved commercial distribution in the UK.

Delivered by leading industry professionals, Get It Seen is designed to provide you with a thorough understanding of film distribution and exhibition so you can develop a clear strategic plan for your film's release.

The programme focuses on the UK sales, distribution and the exhibition landscape, with practical insights into how films reach audiences. Participants will hear directly from sales agents, distributors, exhibitors and festival programmers on topics including contracts, acquisitions, marketing, audience behaviour and recoupment.

The programme also looks beyond the UK, with case studies on co-productions, international distribution, and the role of festivals and markets in positioning a film globally. Each participant will bring a feature film project in active development (narrative, documentary or animation) to apply learning throughout the programme.

The programme will be delivered through a combination of intensive workshops, one-to-one support and networking with a specific focus on getting your film to an audience. The programme will consider and contrast differing needs and perspectives from all parts of the film value chain – makers, buyers, sellers.

You will receive a fee for your time to participate in the lab. Travel and accommodation subsidies (up to a capped amount) will be available for producers not based in London.

Speakers, advisors, and further programme information will be uploaded to the main website for the programme as they are confirmed.

Am I eligible?

Get It Seen welcomes applications from emerging and established producers, defined as follows:

- 'Emerging' - having produced between one and three feature film projects.
- 'Established' - having produced four or more feature film projects that have achieved commercial distribution in the UK.

Please note that this programme is not designed for early career producers. For the purposes of this opportunity, you are considered early career if you have not written, directed, or produced a feature film that has received UK distribution.

Additionally, to be eligible for the programme, you must:

- apply with a specified feature film project in active development that you will develop a strategy for during the programme
- be a UK resident
- be over 18 years old
- not be in full-time education
- be applying with a project that is an original work or the necessary rights have been acquired from the rights owners
- be applying with a project that, once made, must be capable of obtaining a BBFC certificate which is no more restrictive than BBFC 18 and qualifying for certification as a British film through the applicable cultural test. You can read more information on British certification on the BFI website <https://www.bfi.org.uk/apply-british-certification-expenditure-credits>
- not be the director or writer of the project you have applied with
- be applying with a project that has not already gone into production
- be applying with a project that does not have a sales agent or distribution already in place
- in addition to the film project you apply with, have at least one other feature film project at a stage where meaningful discussions can be had at international markets (you will be asked to outline this project as part of the application process).

What will I gain from the programme?

The programme starts with an intensive three-day in-person lab in London, to help participating producers gain a thorough knowledge and understanding of:

- the film value chain, including finance models for distribution and exhibition of film productions
- traditional, alternative and emerging models of distribution in the UK
- traditional, alternative and emerging models of exhibition in the UK
- international markets and exhibition models, including the opportunities and challenges of co-production in Europe
- key industry professionals in the distribution and exhibition sector
- the current and future landscape of the UK film industry and audience behaviour
- the marketplace for your identified project and slate - who the audience is and how to reach them
- how to grow a professional network of peers and potential partners

After this, you will be paired with an appropriate advisor for two one-to-one sessions to support you in designing the best route to an audience for your current project.

By the end of the programme, you will have developed and written a clear strategic plan for your film's release, including a festival strategy, marketing positioning outline and curated list of potential sales agents and distributors. You will share this plan in the round with other participants in a final group session.

Please note - the programme does not include sessions on project financing or creating finance plans. We expect applicants to already have the skills and knowledge needed to put together the finance for their projects.

Programme Structure and Dates

We expect participants to be able to commit in full to these dates

Please note the intensive lab in London takes place over three days and requires an overnight stay for two nights. Travel and accommodation subsidies (up to a capped amount) will be available for producers not based in London.

Application Deadline	11am, Monday 3 November 2025
Decision on applications	Tuesday, 18 November 2025
Intensive Lab in London	Tuesday, 20 January- Thursday, 22 January 2026
Participant network dinner	Tuesday 20 January 2026
Session 1 with advisor	February 2026 (exact date TBC)
Session 2 with advisor	March 2026 (exact date TBC)
Final group session	March 2026 (exact date TBC)

Fee for participants

The programme is funded by the BFI Creative Challenge Fund, so there are no fees for participants to pay. Successful applicants will receive a fee of £415.50 in total for their time to participate in the Lab, which is currently estimated to be 30 hours.

Our commitment to inclusion

Get It Seen is designed to reflect the diversity of the UK and is committed to supporting underrepresented voices in the screen industries. We welcome and actively encourage applications from producers from all backgrounds.

To support equitable access to the programme, travel and accommodation subsidies (up to a capped amount) will be available for producers not based in London. Additionally, participants will receive a fee for the time involved in participating. Additional support is available for anyone with access requirements, for example, BSL interpretation, live captioning, alternative-format programme materials, or help with caring responsibilities and other barriers to participation.

As part of the Get It Seen programme, we aim to select a cohort of producers that aligns as closely as possible to the BFI's key performance indicators used to measure the success of the BFI Creative Challenge Fund. Therefore we are particularly keen to receive applications from people based outside London and the South East, people who have not previously received Lottery funding, disabled and neurodivergent people, Black people and people from the Global Majority, LGBTQIA+ people, and people from working class and low-income backgrounds.

Get It Seen will prioritise projects that engage with the BFI Diversity Standards and make a significant contribution to improving equity, diversity and inclusion across the industry.

How to apply

Please complete [the online application form here](#).

The deadline for applications is Monday, 3 November at 11am.

If you have access needs (for example, Easy Read documents), would prefer to submit your proposal in a different format, or have any questions about the process, please email training@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk

Once you have submitted your application, you will be sent an email confirming that it has been received. If you have not received an email confirmation within two working days of your submission, please contact us.

We are unable to progress ineligible or incomplete applications.

We aim to let you know the result of your application by Tuesday, 18 November.

Assessment criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed by the programme leaders and the delivery team, with input from the BFI Creative Challenge Fund team members. Decisions will be made against the benefits of the programme for the applicant and the strength of the project submitted. We will specifically look at:

- Benefits of the programme for the applicant.
- How participation will support the applicant's professional development.
- Strength and potential of the project – including clarity of creative vision, distinctiveness, and feasibility.
- Target audience – how clearly the intended audience is defined and how effectively the project aims to reach them.
- Market positioning and value – whether the project is budgeted at a realistic level to achieve its vision, and how you understand its potential worth in the marketplace.

We anticipate that Get It Seen will be oversubscribed and therefore very competitive. With numerous eligible proposals we must take into consideration how closely applicants and their project align with the priorities of Get It Seen, the geographic spread of support across the UK, the range in types of projects being supported as well as the audiences they are trying to engage.

We hope this doesn't deter you from submitting a proposal but rather provides wider context if you are not successful.

Decisions and feedback

Unsuccessful applications

If you are unsuccessful in your application, you will be contacted by email. Being unsuccessful does not prevent you from accessing relevant future BFI or Independent Cinema Office opportunities. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide individual feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Successful applications

If your application is successful, the assessment panel may request further information before confirming your place on the programme. This process can take additional time. It is possible that we may interview some applicants.

If your application is successful, you will be sent an email confirming your place and an agreement setting out the terms and conditions attached to the opportunity. These will cover payment information, crediting guidelines, minimum participation terms and monitoring and reporting requirements.

Complaints and appeal

Get It Seen is organised by the Independent Cinema Office (ICO), supported by the BFI Creative Challenge Fund, made possible with National Lottery funding.

In relation to Get It Seen, decisions made are final. Whilst we would like to support a range of applications, the total funding available is limited. Inevitably, this means some applications will be turned down and applicants may be disappointed by this result. Formal appeals against the final decision will not be considered unless you have good cause to believe that the procedures for processing the proposal were not adhered to or applied in such a way as to prejudice the outcome.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us on training@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk.

If this is not appropriate for any reason, please refer to the ICO's [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).

If you have a specific concern or issue with the ICO as a British Film Institute (BFI) awardee and feel unable to contact us directly, or if you're unhappy with the response we provided, please refer to [this guidance](#) on the BFI website.

Contact us

If you have any questions about the guidelines or applying for Get It Seen, please get in contact with us.

Email

training@independentcinemaoffice.org.uk

Telephone

+44 207 636 7120