



*« If two boys each have an apple and they exchange apples  
then they will still each have one apple.  
But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas,  
then each of us will have two ideas. »*

Plato



**FOCAL 2016 – 2020**



*Lausanne, January 2016*

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## Foreword

The FOCAL foundation was established 25 years ago and has since developed into a creative hub for the film and audiovisual sector. To date, over 20,000 people have participated in 1,000 or so events, benefitting from FOCAL's services and then reinvesting these impulses in Swiss and European film production.

As the audiovisual sector is facing deep change and rapid evolution (there are approximately 7,000 professional filmmakers in Switzerland today), FOCAL is seeking to continue its development into a leading centre of innovation in the field, and support top quality audiovisual production through high level internal and international CPD.

The aims of this paper are to:

- clearly identify the challenges facing the sector,
- introduce the tools for achieving our goals in the years ahead and to affirm that FOCAL must offer a high level CPD programme to give the sector a decisive boost.

If Swiss film and audiovisual production is to continue to develop, it needs to be able to stand up to international competition in a globalised environment. FOCAL can provide essential support here. If FOCAL is to become a key hub for networking and cooperation between professional groups, linguistic regions and among film-makers from Switzerland and abroad, it is vital that investment in professional development in Switzerland keeps pace with that development in the audiovisual sector. Otherwise, there is a danger that FOCAL will no longer be able to fulfil its required function, which would inevitably erode the services we offer.

« *Creative people are top-level researchers* »

Alain Berset, federal councillor



# Who We Are, What We Do

## General Purpose

- As a CPD provider, FOCAL contributes to the cultural and economic development of film-making and audiovisual creativity in Switzerland and Europe by boosting its quality and diversity, and by increasing professionals' creativity and competitiveness.
- FOCAL therefore provides particular support to Swiss film and audiovisual production by encouraging integration in the European film and audiovisual landscape.

## Specific Goals

- Encouraging knowledge transfer and enabling professionals to share their experience among themselves and with the new generation in order to develop their talents and their artistic, technical and entrepreneurial skills.
- Coaching for audiovisual projects ranging from arthouse films to commercial productions to improve their quality, creative potential and marketability
- Promoting networking and cooperation between the various professional groups, Swiss linguistic regions and among film-makers from Switzerland and abroad
- Becoming a cutting-edge space where future film and audiovisual production can be shaped, new ideas can be developed and habitual models, ways of thinking and working methods can be challenged, while creative alternatives are put forward
- Ensuring that knowledge continues to be handed down through the generations

In the 25 years since it was founded, FOCAL has pursued this goal, and developed into a unique platform for continued development in the film and audiovisual sector. It is known in Switzerland and throughout Europe as a creative thinking lab and a leading institution for knowledge transfer and networking.

FOCAL always strives to keep up with the latest developments and to help the sector adapt to artistic, technological and commercial trends, particularly in the following fields:

### Digitalisation, new workflows

A few examples from the period 2012 to 2015 (in the language of the seminars):

- DIT-Workshop – Digital Imaging Technician
- Editing mit AVID Media Composer
- AVID FX – Die Effekt-Palette im AVID Media Composer®
- Visual Effects: Digital Imaging for Film Professionals – Möglichkeiten und Kosten von VFX
- Digital Production Challenge – How to Choose the Best Digital Workflows for your Films
- Lighting the Night – Nouvelles conceptions de la lumière – théorie et pratique
- Introduction à la Motion Capture – De la capture au traitement des données
- Digital Film Marketing 2. Presenting your Film in the Digital World
- Transmedia Storytelling for Scriptwriters
- Production and Distribution of a Transmedia Project
- Transmedia Architecture
- Kurs für Vorführtechnik und Kino-Betrieb (Elektrotechnik und Grundlagen Informatik, Digitale Projektion, 3D und HFR, usw).

## Changes in the context of production

Development, finance, distribution, e.g.:

- Neue Auswertungsformen und ihre Folgen
  - Film im digitalen Zeitalter – Digitalisieren, sichern und bewirtschaften
  - The Power to Compete: A Guide to Working with Completion Bonds
  - The Challenges that the Digital Media, Film and Television Pose for the Authors and Directors of Creative Documentary Films
  - Der Weg zum eigenen Showreel – Die Entwicklung eines unentbehrlichen Arbeitsinstrumentes
  - International-Level Acting: How to Become an International Film Actor
  - Crossmedia / Transmedia: Multiple-Platform Storytelling
  - Régimes d'encouragement 2012–2015. Nouveaux outils et processus
- etc.

*« Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration. »*

Thomas Alva Edison, inventor, discoverer of thermionic emission

FOCAL is constantly offering new services in response to the current needs of the sector. We continually assess the quality of our professional education and our network of specialists gives FOCAL has a solid base from which to pass on subject knowledge of both classical and experimental forms.

Thanks to its horizontal structure and the dedication, passion, skill and efficiency of the committee members, heads of department, the administration and many colleagues (an average of 250 speakers, technicians, experts, translators, etc. per year) FOCAL has developed into a creative, solution-oriented, flexible and interactive organisation.



Given that more than 20,000 participants have been involved in around 1,000 events in the last 25 years, we can assume that every Swiss film has benefited in some way from FOCAL's services, whether directly (thanks to project-based events) or indirectly (via CPD seminars). FOCAL's contribution to the development of the European film industry, e.g. with Production Value and Medici, is also uncontested. It has often attracted praise and envy from foreign partners. FOCAL's international programmes are an invaluable support to Swiss film production, stimulating contacts and promoting collaborations. Many foreign speakers have agreed that FOCAL is unique.



## About This Document

This framework paper is the result of various discussions which took place during Committee meetings, with heads of department and the Film Section of the Federal Office for Culture, and was approved by the Foundation Council at its meeting on 26 March 2015. To define the objectives for 2016 – 2020 and their implementation, (pages 8 – 10), we have considered the challenges to be expected for film and audiovisual production in the four to five years ahead (page 7). We have defined measurable intervention fields and services (pages 11 – 12) and calculated additional costs.

This paper does not pretend to reinvent the wheel, but aims to show that in its ambition to become a centre of innovation for the whole sector, FOCAL provides services that are both original and creative. After all, audiovisual production needs creative and practical solutions on all levels... just as it needs air to breathe.

*«When the wind of change blows, some build walls, while others build windmills.»*

(Proverbe chinois)

## Where We Are Heading

### Challenges facing audiovisual professionals in the years ahead

Since FOCAL was established in 1990, film and TV production in Switzerland has more than doubled, as it has throughout Europe, and the number of professionals working in the field has also risen sharply, currently numbering around 7,000 in Switzerland.

These professionals now face major challenges in adapting to change, strengthening their competitive ability and consolidating their working structures (production companies, technology firms, etc.):

- Improving project development  
both in storytelling (from the initial idea to the screenplay) for “classical” audiovisual works – particularly scriptwriting – and in packaging (from casting to finance).
- Coproduction as an indispensable mechanism,  
from development to finance to distribution of audiovisual works. There is a need for specific knowledge of legal matters, financial systems, techniques, etc.
- Active networking in the European and international audiovisual landscapes,  
particularly since the Swiss withdrawal from the Creative Europe-MEDIA programme.
- Adapting independent production to television’s changed needs,  
to preserve its ability to compete with other media, e.g. web series and the development of interactive products for the secondary release of documentary films.
- Integrating new formats,  
particularly transmedia and interactive products.
- Integrating digital workflows  
with their new tools, procedures, standards and working methods – from the camera to promotion and distribution.
- Integrating new distribution media, channels and exploitation platforms,  
Internet, IPTV, mobiles and tablets, VOD, etc. vs. cinema and television.

On one hand, these challenges offer the audiovisual sector a chance to develop further and discover new fields of activity; the history of film shows that it has frequently encountered and mastered such situations. On the other hand, they also involve change to working methods and professional profiles, structures and the tools of the trade, and a need to acquire new knowledge and skills.

Of course classical film and television production will not disappear overnight, but new formats, products and media channels will arise and film-making will have to adapt to them.

*« Biologists think that squirrels forget where they’ve stored their food.  
In reality, they’re planting trees for future generations. »*

Helmut Glatz, author of children’s books and fantastical tales

## Consequences for FOCAL — Objectives 2016 – 2020

One of FOCAL's tasks is to support professionals in this adaptation and train them in areas from team management to creative and technological aspects through to marketing – thus ultimately strengthening the quality, market presence, diversity and sustainability of independent audiovisual production.

Another of FOCAL's roles, besides CPD for film-makers, is to anticipate developments in the audiovisual landscape through the kind of research and development activities familiar to all industries. In short, FOCAL must become even more of an innovation centre.

We would like to underline at this point that, in our opinion, “success” depends primarily on people, their creativity, their experience and their ability to work as a team: qualities that need to be developed and fostered. In other words, technical innovation alone is not enough to make interesting films. The “human factor” is and always will be central to production, and is also crucial to the knowledge transfer that FOCAL offers.

### Objectives for 2016 to 2020

FOCAL will become

- ❶ *a first port of call for further training for audiovisual creators and a centre of innovation in the field*

in other words: a central space for reflection, networking, practical experience and sharing trends and training, a creative lab in the interplay between tradition and innovation

- ❷ *2. a hub for networking and collaboration among professional groups, linguistic regions and sharing international expertise*

This will also:

- ❸ *cement the foundation's national and international position and*
- ❹ *consolidate its financial situation*



## Implementation

### ❶ *First port of call for further training and centre of innovation*

Proposals relevant to current issues:

- Exploring new professional fields, particularly in cross media
- Using new formats, platforms and digital workflows
- Acquiring new narrative forms
- Applying “cooperative processes”
- Adapting production structures and tools
- Deepening skills and abilities in project management (for producers and distributors, and also for cultural organisations)
- Consolidating team and business management
- Applying creative thought processes and methods
- Deepening knowledge of technical innovations
- Discovering new means of expression through self-knowledge
- Tackling controversial questions, e.g. “art or commerce?”

Consolidating the structural framework:

- Continuing development for speakers and organisers
- Speakers chosen on grounds of quality and reputation
- Developing “Workshops on Demand”, if e.g. ten or more people sign up for a seminar suggested by them
- Specifying the level of participants for every measure
- Accentuating exclusivity (top level, high quality) and intimacy (no big groups)
- Creating safe spaces for experimentation and frank discussion
- Creating a direct link between professional practice and CPD by continually sharing experience
- Refining web presence and promotional tools, setting up an online think tank in the form of an interactive forum
- Capitalising on experiences by making selected seminar results available on line, with additional visual content
- Pointing out that the seminars on offer represent excellent value for money (partly thanks to grants)

*«All creativity assumes sensitivity.»*

*And – talent apart – sensitivity is based primarily on knowledge.*

*Therefore greater knowledge equals greater creativity. »*

Wolfgang Beinert, Graphic designer, typographer, author and teacher

### ❷ *Networking and cooperation*

National coproductions are constantly developing, partly due to the increasing significance of regional funding, so it is important that FOCAL continues to offer bilingual provision for all professionals. This entails considerable translation costs but enables encounters and collaborations across linguistic barriers.

Professional profiles and functional specifications for a film crew are growing increasingly detailed, making smooth teamwork more important than ever. Positive cooperation between production and post-production directors is becoming more important given that the equipment and workflows (cameras and post-production software) on the market are constantly changing. A seminar such as Digital Production Challenge gets to the bottom of these difficulties.

By contrast, other borders are becoming increasingly blurred, as with non-linear distribution, for example, and collaboration between distribution and production is taking new forms. Film

Marketing Coaching enables producers to discover the options open to them here, and find out how to redefine their roles and those of the distributors. FOCAL needs to help film professionals to adapt to and anticipate changes of this sort.

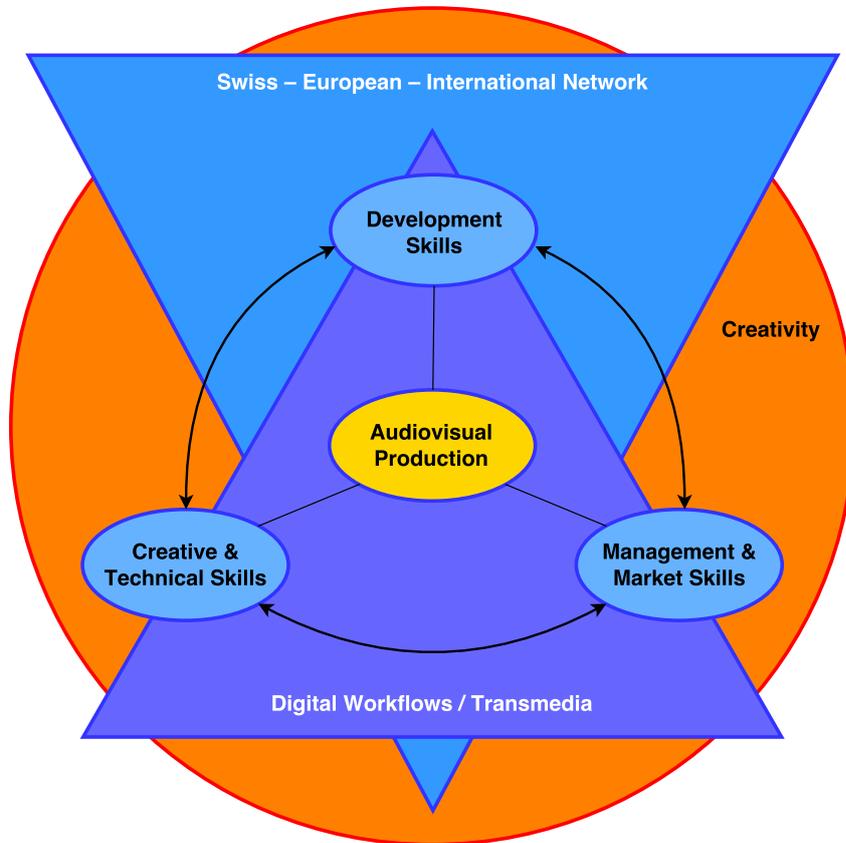
③ *Cementing the Foundation's national and international position*

- Organising four or five European programmes a year, within our financial means (currently Production Value, Digital Production Challenge II, Medici and Constellations).
- Coproduction and co-financing of European programmes (currently EKRAN +, ACE, Essential Legal Framework, eQuinox, Drehbuchwerkstatt München / Zürich, Atelier Grand Nord, «Sind Sie schon filmreif?» – Intensivkurs Filmschauspiel, ACE Network, etc.) to enable Swiss film-makers to attend top-quality events, which could not be organised in Switzerland alone as the number of potential participants would be too low.
- Organising events at key film festivals (e.g. meetings between producers and backers at the Swiss embassy during the Berlinale; From Producers to Producers in Locarno).
- On a national level it is also important to follow up possibilities for collaboration with film schools. Although they have varying missions, financial mechanisms and target audiences, we must ensure that the training events on offer are complementary rather than overlapping. Similarly, we should seek collaboration in fields such as scriptwriting (e.g. the fruitful cooperation between ZHdK, SRF, the Teleproduktionsfonds, Drehbuchwerkstatt München and FOCAL), which would be of interest to schools and FOCAL alike.

④ *See costs and finances, page 13*

## Intervention fields and services

With creativity as our backdrop, FOCAL's current five fields of intervention can be maintained in the years ahead because they continue to correspond to the reality of professional development, both in terms of challenges and perspectives. They are also reliable and verifiable indicators.



Investment percentages and corresponding areas

**Development Skills:** 25 % Screenplay, production, directing feature and documentary films, animation

**Management & Market Skills:** 30 % Production, distribution/exploitation, animation

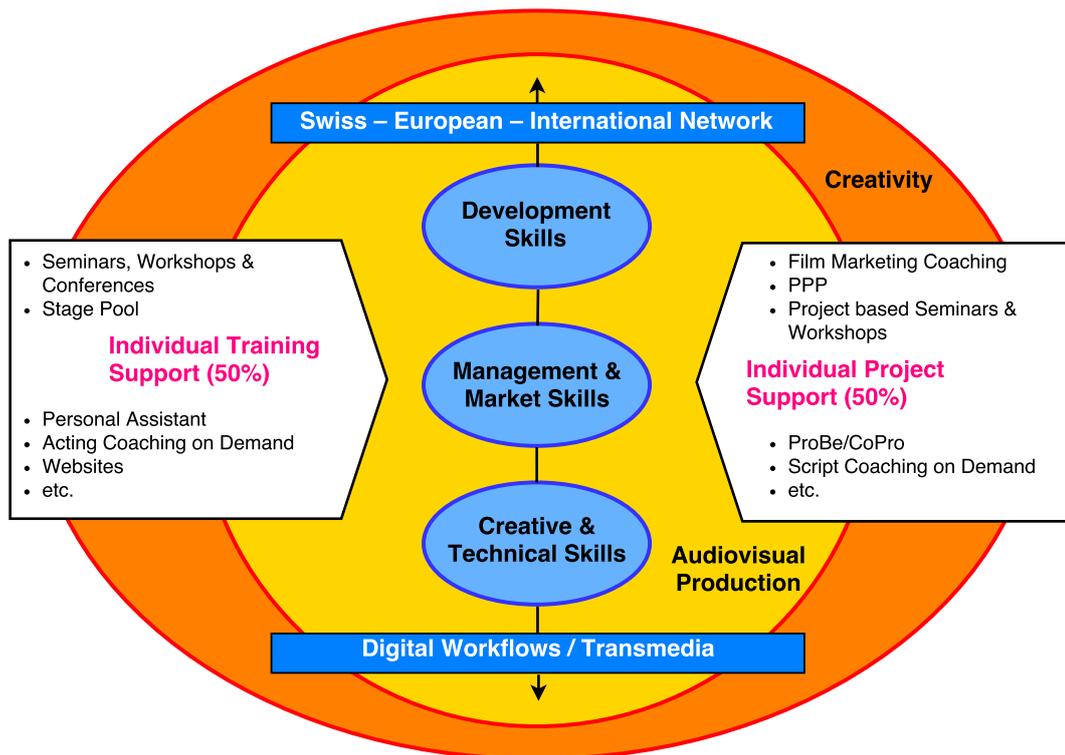
**Creative & Technical Skills:** 45 % directing feature and documentary films, performance, technique, animation

Percentage of activity

**Swiss – European – International Network** 25 %

**Digital Workflows** 15 %

The current division into two forms of service will be maintained as a reliable and verifiable indicator:



- Individual Training Support: 50 %** Ongoing and individually-focused training, e.g. technical seminars, workshops for actors, etc.
- Individual Project Support: 50 %** Training and appraisal focused on individual projects, e.g. story development programmes, Film Marketing Coaching, PPP, Stage Pool, etc.

«Individual Training Support» and «Individual Project Support» are, of course, closely linked and each involves elements of the other. Consequently any individual training will sooner or later affect a project, and conversely, every project-focused programme will also involve personal development.

*« Working creatively means constantly reordering the chaos in your head. »*

Aba Assa, Essayist

### Quality Seminars

Dr. Phil. Dominicq Riedo analysed the quality of FOCAL seminars using the evaluation questionnaires filled in by participants from 2010 to 2014. The results show, among other things, that FOCAL has continued to build on the exceptional quality established by the evaluation of 2005 to 2009.

## What We Need

### Costs and Finances

In summary, FOCAL provides Switzerland with a highly acclaimed structure that is unique in Europe. It serves as a bridge between Swiss and European professionals, and is the envy of our neighbours. This undoubtedly comes at a price, but FOCAL's quality and efficiency are widely appreciated.

To keep up with the increasing number of film-makers in need of further professional development, the challenges of the period 2016–2020 and, last but not least, the increased costs of our activities, FOCAL is in need of extra funds. We estimate that we will require a further CHF 250,000 per year compared with the position in 2015. This calculation is not straightforward, however, because we do not know whether or when Switzerland might re-enter the Creative Europe/MEDIA Programme. If it were to do so, we would also have to find additional funds for the two European programmes currently supported by compensating measures. This would bring the shortfall for 2016 – 2020 to CHF 500,000 per year.

Failing to shore up the financial resources would hamper the Swiss audiovisual sector's competitiveness in the medium term both at home and abroad, which would be damaging in cultural and social terms as well as from an economic point of view. Catching up at a later date would be considerably more complicated and expensive than providing systematic support in good time.

*« Public investment in these strengths will always have a positive effect because they awake curiosity, encourage diversity and a society that is open to the world. »*

Vaudois aphorism



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