

AVANTI

A PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE SOUTH CAUCASIAN FILM COMMUNITY ON CREATIVE AND LEGAL LEVELS

AVANTI is a training and funding program for filmmakers and lawyers in South Caucasus. Tailored and managed by professionals for professionals, it is a program that addresses a unique combination of creative and legal issues.

This updating program combines creative and legal aspects in a series of 4 professional training sessions consisting of lectures, workshops and master classes. These will address the needs of the different categories of participants to be selected in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia by independent juries. All classes will be mixed. The language will be either English or Russian.

Within the sessions, 27 projects (12 feature films, 9 short films, 6 documentaries) will be developed from the original concept to the final production package. Lawyers will address areas of law that are relevant to film business in a market economy.

All sessions are to be held in Tbilisi. For lawyers, national sessions will also be held in Baku and Yerevan.

During the sessions, international mentors and high-level consultants will assist the selected filmmakers and producers to develop their projects properly in terms of concept, content, format, financing and distribution, from concept to final draft. Selected lawyers will attend both regional and national legal forums and work with high-level consultants and international experts.

Once all the projects have been developed, financial contributions will be awarded to the best projects by independent juries.

Travel, food and lodging are provided by the program.

AVANTI has an equal opportunity policy: the call for applications is open to all professionals in the region. All applicants will be selected on the basis of their artistic project and/or personal file, as well as the strength of their motivation to participate.

INDEX

- :: [What is Avanti ?](#)
- :: [Who can participate ?](#)
- :: [Group A - Producers](#)
- :: [Group B - Directors / Feature Films](#)
- :: [Group C - Directors / Short Film Series](#)
- :: [Group D - Directors / Documentaries](#)
- :: [Group E - Lawyers](#)
- :: [Funding](#)
- :: [Calendar](#)
- :: [How to apply ?](#)
- :: [FAQ Frequently Asked Questions / Ask a question](#)

AVANTI is proposed and implemented by **FOCAL** -
 Foundation for Professional Training in Cinema and
 Audiovisual Media (Switzerland)

AVANTI is funded by **SDC** - Swiss Agency for
 Development and Cooperation



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WHO CAN PARTICIPATE ?

In each of the 3 countries, the same number of participants will be selected for each group:

- 6 producers to develop their production skills and to be attached to one of the feature film projects, to be reduced to 4 producers after a second selection at the end of Session 1.
- 6 directors (also writers of their own project) with a feature film project whose budget comes to US\$ 100000 to US\$ 250000 maximum, to be reduced to 4 directors after a second selection at the end of the Session 1.
- 3 directors (also writers and producers of their own project) with a short film project based on the theme "Losing/Winning".
- 2 directors (also producers of their own project) with a documentary film project.
- 4 lawyers with professional experience.

For all applicants in any group, AVANTI seeks strongly motivated individuals with a high level of potential and a willingness to participate actively in the debates and exchange of knowledge held throughout the program sessions.

Candidacies from associations, unions, government offices, etc. will be accepted, but priority will be given to personal applications by individuals.

The selection of projects and participants will be organized and monitored by AVANTI with international and regional experts. The juries may call on applicants for interviews.

Please note that any film project with nationalistic propaganda will be excluded from the selection process.

The call for applications is run only by FOCAL under the auspices and with the support of the local Swiss Agency Development and Cooperation (SDC) offices.

 [INDEX](#)

GROUP A - PRODUCERS / FEATURE FILMS

This group will develop the production skills that the independent producers to be attached to the feature film projects will need. It will start off with 18 participants, to be reduced to 12 producers (4 per country) after a selection at the end of the Session 1.

The selection at the end of Session 1 has been designed to allow producers lacking a project and filmmakers lacking a producer to meet during the session and then team up to develop a feature film together under the best conditions.

Producers and directors will work on 12 feature film projects in teams of 2 (1 producer with 1 director), divided into 3 classes of 4 projects each, led by 3 mentors: a production mentor, a writing mentor, a directing mentor. Each mentor will tutor his own class but also discuss the projects in the other classes, so that all aspects of filmmaking are covered.

Classes will be held in English, without translation.

Specific Master Classes on production will be held in Sessions 2 and 3.

This producers' group entails a 38-day program: Session 1: 12 days, Session 2: 10 days, Session 3: 9 days, Session 4: 7 days.

For Group A, AVANTI seeks highly motivated individuals in the field of film production. Previous experience as a producer is not a must, but strong organizational skills and basic knowledge of the filmmaking industry are necessary. English is a requirement.

Please note that AVANTI is designed particularly for producers ready to work on low or

medium-range budget productions (US\$ 100000 to US\$ 250000).

Together with their entry form, all applicants are required to submit the following personal documents in English, in 5 copies:

- Curriculum Vitae
- Vision statement for film production in South Caucasus (2 pages)
- Motivation statement for AVANTI (2 pages)
- VHS PAL tape (not exceeding 15 minutes, with proper dubsheet attached), with excerpts of previous works (if any).

Pre-selected applicants will be invited for a meeting with the jury.

 [INDEX](#)

GROUP B - DIRECTORS / FEATURE FILMS

Participants in this group will develop their own feature film project from synopsis to final draft. This class will start off with 18 directors (also writers of their own project), to be reduced to 12 directors (4 per country) after a selection at the end of Session 1. The projects may have co-writers.

The selection at the end of Session 1 has been designed to allow producers lacking a project and filmmakers lacking a producer to meet during the event and then team up to develop a feature film together under the best conditions.

Directors and producers will work on 12 feature film projects in teams of 2 (1 producer with 1 director), divided into 3 classes of 4 projects each, led by 3 mentors: a production mentor, a writing mentor, a directing mentor. Each mentor will tutor his own class but also discuss the projects in the other classes, so that all aspects of filmmaking are covered.

Classes will be held in Russian and English, with translation.

Specific Master Classes on directing will be held in Sessions 2 and 3.

This directors' group entails a 43-day program: Session 1: 12 days, Session 2: 12 days, Session 3: 12 days, Session 4: 7 days

For Group B, AVANTI seeks talented individuals who have demonstrated great artistic value in at least a first short fiction work. Willingness to collaborate with a producer is essential. Russian is a requirement, English is a plus.

Please note that AVANTI is designed particularly for directors ready to work on low or medium-range budget productions (US\$ 100000 to US\$ 250000).

Together with their entry form, all applicants are required to submit the following personal documents in English, in 5 copies, plus 1 copy in their national language:

- Curriculum Vitae, including filmography
- Synopsis for a feature film of 5 pages at the maximum, with an artistic statement and estimated budget
- Motivation statement for AVANTI (2 pages)
- VHS PAL Tape (not exceeding 15 minutes, with proper dubsheet attached), with excerpts of previous works.

Pre-selected applicants will be invited for a meeting with the jury.

 [INDEX](#)

GROUP C - DIRECTORS / SHORT FILM SERIES

Under the supervision of 1 writing mentor, the 9 directors (also writers and producers of their own project), 3 per country, will develop their idea into a 12-minute short film that will be part of a series on the theme of "Losing/Winning"

Classes will be held in English only, without translation.

Specific Master Classes on directing will be held in Sessions 2 and 3.

This short film group entails a 38-day program: Session 1: 12 days, Session 2: 12 days, Session 3: 12 days, Session 4: 2 days

This series represents an effort made by AVANTI to encourage collaboration between the 3 countries, even though each film will be produced separately.

For Group C, AVANTI seeks creative individuals with the ability to produce their own fiction film on a small scale, but with a high production value.

English is a requirement.

Together with their entry form, all applicants are required to submit the following personal documents in English, in 5 copies:

- Curriculum Vitae, including filmography
- Synopsis of 3 pages at the maximum, with a short artistic statement and estimated budget
- Motivation statement for AVANTI (2 pages)
- VHS PAL tape (not exceeding 15 minutes, with proper dubsheet attached), with excerpts of previous works.

No personal interviews will be held, but phone interviews may be arranged.

 [INDEX](#)

GROUP D - DIRECTORS / DOCUMENTARIES

Under the supervision of 1 documentary mentor, the 6 directors (also producers of their own project), 2 per country, will develop their documentary projects from the initial idea to a complete concept, ready-to-go for production.

The projects will need to have highly creative and original content. They must be thought-provoking and visually striking to find their place on the international market.

Classes will be held in Russian only, without translation.

Specific Master Classes on documentary will be held in Sessions 2 and 3.

This documentary group entails a 38-day program: Session 1: 12 days, Session 2: 12 days, Session 3: 12 days, Session 4: 2 days

For Group D, AVANTI seeks creative individuals with the ability to produce their own documentary on a small scale, but of high production value.

Russian is a requirement.

Together with their entry form, all applicants are required to submit the following personal documents, in English, in 5 copies, plus 1 copy in their national language:

- Curriculum Vitae, including filmography
- Film project description (including research and documentation) of 10 pages at the maximum
- Tentative financial statement for a budget of US\$ 30000 - US\$ 50000 maximum (1 page)
- Motivation statement for AVANTI (2 pages)
- VHS PAL tape (not exceeding 15 minutes, with proper dubsheet attached), with excerpts of previous works.

No personal interview will be held, but phone interviews may be arranged.

 [INDEX](#)

GROUP E - LAWYERS

The Avanti Legal Program provides professional training for lawyers in main areas of national and international business law, i.e. intellectual property, contract and competition laws pertaining to the audiovisual sector.

The Avanti Legal Program is a unique opportunity for lawyers to set up a network among legal professionals on international and regional levels.

The Avanti Legal Program shall facilitate and promote the interaction with a highly sophisticated client base constituted by producers and filmmakers as well as other professionals in the culture and entertainment sectors (cinema, television and "new media").

Under the supervision of 1 legal mentor, the 12 lawyers (4 per country) will work together to address the areas of law that are most relevant to the film business in a market economy:

- Laws: Intellectual property laws, with a focus on copyright/authors' rights.
- Contracts: Legal aspects of the financing and commercial exploitation of films.
- Policies: Laws and policies aimed at maintaining and promoting cultural diversity in the audiovisual sector.

These 3 pillars will be covered on the basis of a comparative law and policy approach through lectures, interactive seminars and practical case studies.

In addition, a 5-day session will be held in each country to allow participants to focus on their own country's particular needs with respect to national laws, co-productions, agreements, authors' contracts and royalties, public financing schemes, and distribution regulations.

Classes will be held in English only.

This lawyers' group entails a 28-day program: Session 1: 12 days, Session 2: 3 days, Session 3: 3 days, Session 4: 5 days, plus one National Legal Forum Session: 5 days.

For Group E, AVANTI seeks individuals with a law degree, preferably with postgraduate degree, and professional experience as a lawyer or legal adviser in the private or public sector. Good legal knowledge in intellectual property, commercial laws or audiovisual laws and policies are required. English is a requirement.

Together with their entry form, all applicants are required to submit the following personal documents in English, in 6 copies:

- Curriculum Vitae (with academic record and professional experience)
- Vision statement on legal development for film industry in South Caucasus (2 pages)
- Motivation statement for AVANTI (2 pages).

No personal interviews will be held, but phone interviews will be arranged.

For more detailed information on the AVANTI legal program, also check the web page www.focal.ch/avanti/legal-forum

 [INDEX](#)

FUNDING

At the end of the project development process, and as far as:

1. The participant has attended all sessions and has completed all assignments
2. His/her project has been selected by the International Jury,

SDC will co-finance some films with the following grants, in each of the 3 countries:

- 2 feature films out of 4 projects will be granted the amount of US\$ 50 '000 each.
- 2 short films out of 3 projects will be granted the amount of US\$ 10 '000 each.
- 1 documentary film out of 2 projects will be granted the amount of US\$ 20 '000.

In addition an amount of US\$ 10 '000 will be available for projects devoted to further legal research and building up capacity in the audiovisual field.

 [INDEX](#)

CALENDAR

February 15th, 2003: Application deadline

April 2003: Selection Process

June 2003: Session 1 (12 days)

September 2003: Session 2 (12 days)

December 2003: Session 3 (12 days)

March 2004: Session 4 (7 days)

 [INDEX](#)

HOW TO APPLY ?

Choose a category: application is permitted to one group only.

All applications must be in English.

All applications must be submitted to the SDC local office with all required documents by February 15th, 2003.

Any exception to the above rules will lead to the application's exclusion from selection.

Full and committed participation in all sessions is expected of selected applicants.

> ENTRY FORM - CALL FOR APPLICATIONS <

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 [BACK](#) -  [INDEX](#)

[\[www.focal.ch\]](http://www.focal.ch)[\[AVANTI / ARCHIVES\]](#)[\[info@focal.ch\]](mailto:info@focal.ch)

AVANTI

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

INDEX

- :: [Read the questions and answers](#)
- :: [Ask a question](#)

- :: Russian version:
[questions and answers about AVANTI](#) ( PDF file)

AVANTI : FAQ

[Q: Can the applicant submit several synopsis or only one? \(for directors\)](#)

A: You are allowed to submit several projects but bear in mind that proposing too many projects will suggest to the jury that you don't know which one you really want to do!

[Q: Is there any special format to present a budget? \(for producers and fiction directors\)](#)

A: No. The best presentation is to make a precise list of all costs with the estimated amount in US dollars for each category.

[Q: What should include a letter of motivation? \(for all candidates\)](#)

A: It is a personal statement from the candidate about his commitment towards the South Caucasus film industry : why does he want to make films, how does he see the future in the region for film & TV, the hopes and difficulties ? It should also tell the jury about the importance of his project : why must this film be made ? (Remember that nationalistic content will be excluded from the selection!)

[Q: The movies \(documentary, short and long-feature films\) at the end of training should be shot in digital video or on film? \(for producers and fiction directors\)](#)

A: This doesn't depend on AVANTI but on each individual participant, according to the money available to him and his artistic choices. AVANTI has no responsibility in making the films, it is only training participants and supporting financially some of their films. However, considering the few financial resources available in South Caucasus, a strong emphasis on digital video transferred on 35mm will be proposed.

[Q: About the format of the films: 35mm or Digital Video. Which format is supposed to be preferable? And what do you mean by "Digital Video transferred to 35 mm"? And which format from Digital Video is appropriate? For instance, we are used to shoot in DVCAM.](#)

A: As you know for low budget you can use DVCAM and get it transferred onto 35 mm to have at the end a film in 35mm for cinemas. This "kinescoping" technique may help to reduce production costs, depending on the project. Projects should be in the format that the director thinks is the best for his film, taking into account low budget necessity...

[Q: If somebody decides to apply as a producer does that mean that afterwards, he should be grouped with a director and cannot produce his film as a producer-director at the same time? \(for producers\)](#)

A: Producer apply as persons, which means without a film project. If they wish to produce a specific film, then they should encourage a director to apply in GROUP B, with whom they will "officially" team up from the end of Session I. But it must clear that AVANTI is not a program for writer-director-producers. It is a program for producers (GROUP A) **OR** directors (GROUP B).

[Q: Is language the main concern and limiting fact for further participation? \(for fiction directors\)](#)

A: English should not be a limitation for the feature film group, because classes will be held in English AND in Russian, with translation. Only the applications must be submitted in English. For the directors of the short film series, a fair level of English still remains a requirement.

Q: What does it mean: "18 directors (also writers of their OWN project)" in practice? (for fiction directors)

A: It means that AVANTI is training directors that are also writing or co-writing their own films. It is not a program for directors who don't have a project or don't want to write a single line on it.

Q: Is it possible for a director to be the producer of his own films? (for fiction directors)

A: In AVANTI, we aim to train producers to produce different films, to develop their companies and work with different directors. AVANTI is not a program for directors who want to produce their own films because they cannot attend the 2 classes at the same time and because it is not a good investment for AVANTI to teach producing to a director who only produces his own films.

Q: Can the candidate bring his own interpreter at their own expenses? (for producers and fiction directors)

A: For Producers (GROUP A), English is an absolute requirement. It makes no sense to train somebody to be a producer if they are not autonomous in English because they will not be able to work afterwards. So the answer is NO.

For short film directors (GROUP C), an additional interpreter is a possibility. This situation will be discussed if the candidate is selected, so it should not be a reason not to apply to AVANTI.

Q: What does it mean "the project may have co-writers"? (for fiction directors)

A: No writing is done during the sessions so there can be a co-writer who writes the script between the sessions, but for AVANTI, the person who represents the project artistically is the director.

Q: What does it mean "research and documents"? (for documentary directors)

A: It means that, depending on the kind of documentary project, the candidate must present some research (background information from books, newspapers, pictures, etc.) on his subject. The jury must be able to assess the reality beyond the documentary project to understand the point of view, the originality and pertinence of the project.

Q: What's FOCAL's business? (for all candidates)

A: FOCAL is a non-profit foundation set up to run the continuing education in film and audiovisual media in Switzerland. It runs workshops for the whole chain : from projectionists to directors, including digital techniques and scriptwriting. Because FOCAL has 12 years of experience in setting up programs in film training, the Swiss Development Agency has asked FOCAL to create a program for the specific needs of South Caucasus.

Q: Is AVANTI involved with the respective Ministries of Culture and the professional associations? (for all candidates)

A: AVANTI is under the strict guidance of FOCAL and SDC. Contacts with all film organizations, public or private, have been established but are not formal. The juries and experts of AVANTI are independent and most of them are not from South Caucasus.

Q: As a lawyer interested in your program, I am afraid that my English is not good enough. (for lawyers)

A: A glossary of the main legal terms will be given to all selected lawyers.

Q: As I understood directors (Group B) should apply with film project with approximate budget US\$ 100 000 to 250 000. But in case of successful selection, the film project will be granted US\$ 50 000 only. Does it mean that the director (or producer) should get the rest of money from other sources?

A: Absolutely. The funding of the film will request different sources of finance. AVANTI will try to train producers to find the missing money, but to finance completely the project will be the producer's job and responsibility.

Q: If the film project will be granted (partly?) by SDC, who will have the copyright for the final product?

A: The producers. AVANTI and SDC are not asking for any rights.

Q: Group C - Directors / Short Film Series: Do 3 pages of synopsis include a short artistic statement and estimated budget or 3 pages can be dedicated to synopsis and budget and a short artistic statement can be provided on a separate sheet?

A: For the category "short films", you can add one more page for artistic statement to your three-pages synopsis. You can add one separate page for budget as well.

Q: Group C - Directors / Short Film Series: Should be the budget restricted to \$10'000 or proposals can exceed \$10'000 with referring to the other sources of financial support?

A: Of course your budget can exceed \$10'000, especially if you have ideas of where to

look for additional sources... Just be aware that it remains difficult to finance short films and it is probably best to think of a low budget production design. But if your project requires more money on artistic grounds, you can explain it in your application.

AVANTI : ASK A QUESTION

If you have any question about AVANTI program, please [send us an email](mailto:webmaster@focal.ch) :
webmaster@focal.ch

We will reply to you by email and display your question and it's answer on this page.

[◀ BACK](#) - [▶ TOP](#)

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