



Regulations 2026 Edition

17 – 26 April 2026

1. About the Festival

Visions du Réel, International Film Festival Nyon, aims to showcase bold and unique works that, through their formal and aesthetic choices, embody contemporary creative documentary cinema in all its diversity, while freely interpreting its very definition and execution. Furthermore, the Festival is committed to discovering new works as well as emerging filmmakers and artists.

2. Sections

International Feature Film Competition

The International Feature Film Competition brings together singular works from around the world that explore creative documentary cinema through personal and/or original perspectives. These films are driven by strong authorial visions and ambitious formal exploration.

Only films having their world, international, or European premiere are eligible. The winner of the Grand Prize is eligible for the Oscar® for Best Documentary Feature, upon submission by the rights holder.

Burning Lights Competition

Dedicated to the boldest forms of creative documentary, the Burning Lights Competition highlights works that probe and challenge the language, narrative structures, and aesthetics of contemporary cinema. It includes feature and medium-length films by filmmakers who dare to blur boundaries between genres, formats, or techniques, and who break free from established frameworks.

Only films having their world, international, or European premiere are eligible.

National Competition

The National Competition showcases the most striking works produced or co-produced in Switzerland. This section aims to promote the vitality and diversity of contemporary Swiss filmmaking. Open to feature and medium-length films, it focuses on works driven by a singular and strong vision, demonstrating a bold artistic freedom.

Only films having their world, international, or European premiere are eligible.

International Medium Length and Short Film Competition

The International Medium and Short Film Competition features shorter-format works selected for their artistic quality, formal originality, and cinematic uniqueness. Carried by emerging or established voices, these films reflect a diversity of strong perspectives within contemporary creative documentary.

Only films having their world, international, or European premiere are eligible. The winner of the Best Short Film Award is eligible for the Oscar® for Best Documentary Short Film, upon submission by the rights holder.

Wide Angle

Grand Angle spotlights feature films that have already captivated audiences at other festivals or are expected to make a strong mark in the coming year. This competition celebrates a compelling form of creative documentary capable of forging an immediate connection with viewers, without ever compromising on the precision of the perspective nor the rigour of the cinematographic storytelling.

Films must have at least a world, international, European, or Swiss premiere.

Opening Scenes

Open to first shorts or short films made within an academic context, Opening Scenes is a section dedicated to the next generation of international creative documentary filmmakers. It highlights promising works that are often bold and distinctive. Selected filmmakers present their films as part of the Festival's official selection and also participate in the Opening Scenes Lab, a tailored professional program within VdR-Industry.

Only films having their world, international, or European premiere are eligible.

3. Selection

The Artistic Direction of the Festival selects the films for the official programme, assisted by a Selection Committee made up of Swiss and international experts.

The Artistic Direction of the Festival reserves the right to choose the section in which the films will be presented.

4. Film Market

The films selected for the Festival are included in the Film Market (VOD service for accredited professionals) free of charge and buyers and professionals can view them in situ during the Festival, online during and after the Festival.

The Festival may invite films that have not been selected for the official programme to be entered in the Visions du Réel Film Market to be viewed by buyers and professionals. These films are featured in a separate catalogue and can be viewed in the Film Market. Inclusion of these films in the Film Market is subject to a fee.

5. Conditions for admission

5.1 Production Deadlines

Production of the selected films in competition must have finished in the 12 months prior to their screening at the Festival.

5.2 Premiere policy

Visions du Réel gives priority to films presented in World Premieres and, secondarily, to International and European premieres. Swiss premieres are only eligible for feature films in the Wide Angle.

Definitions that are applied to films presented as premieres:

- **World premiere:** the film has never been screened before nor been broadcast on television or online.
- **International premiere:** the film has only been screened in one of its production countries and has preferably never been screened either on television or has had a theatrical release. Distribution on a VOD platform is acceptable in the context of an event located in one of the film's production countries and if it took place with limitations, as much in terms of the number of spectators as of the duration.
- **European premiere:** the film has been screened outside Europe, but has never been shown in any European country. It has preferably never been screened either on television or has had a theatrical release. Distribution on a VOD platform is acceptable in the context of an event located in a country outside Europe and if it took place with limitations, as much in terms of the number of spectators as of the duration.

- **Swiss premiere:** the film has been screened in Europe, outside its production country, but never in Switzerland. It has preferably never been screened either on television or has had a theatrical release. Distribution on a VOD platform is acceptable in the context of an event located in a country outside Switzerland and if it took place with limitations, as much in terms of the number of spectators as of the duration.

5.3 Duration

The call for films is open to films of any duration.

Definitions applied to duration of films:

- **Short film:** up to 30'
- **Medium length film:** between 31' and 70'
- **Feature film:** over 60'

6. Submission and deadlines

6.1 Form and entry fees

All films submitted for preselection must be registered online using the submission form. A fee will be charged for each submitted film according to the submission timeline. The registration is considered complete once the submission fee has been received by the Festival.

The Festival reserves the right to disqualify any submission that does not meet eligibility criteria mentioned in these Regulations, without refunding registration fees.

6.2 Submission deadlines

- **17 October 2025:** early deadline
- **15 December 2025:** final deadline

The entry form must be filled in and the entry fee received before these deadlines.

6.3 Screener for preselection

A password-protected link (valid until the end of March 2026) to view the film must be provided, including the possibility for the film to be downloaded in order to facilitate the viewing process for the Selection Committee.

Films sent for preselection must be in the original language with English subtitles (and French if they exist). The online screeners must reach Visions du Réel by **31 December 2025** at the very latest.

6.4 Participants' obligation

The production that submits a film to the Festival's selection must keep Visions du Réel informed of any changes to the film or of any public screenings.

7. Conflict of interest and disputes

7.1. Conflict of interest

In order to avoid any conflict of interest in the film selection process: Members of the selection committee who are decision-making collaborators in the development of a film may not take part in discussions concerning it.

7.2. Disputes

The applicant must inform Visions du Réel without delay of any dispute, unresolved and ongoing after submission, whether it arose before or after submission of the film, between parties involved in the direction, production, distribution or financing of the film. In all the aforementioned cases, Visions du Réel reserves the unilateral right to withdraw the film in question from its selection, without the applicant being able to claim any compensation or any other consideration from Visions du Réel. The decision taken by Visions du Réel to withdraw the film from its selection may not be the subject of any appeal or complaint.

8. Confirmation of selected films

Should the Selection Committee find a film of interest, the applicant will receive a letter of interest.

Films that are not selected will receive a refusal notice. However, if they are considered to be pertinent for the Film Market, producers will receive an invitation to register the film in the Film Market (see number 4 of these regulations).

Notification of final selection (with indication of the section) will be sent to the applicant by the beginning of March 2026 at the latest.

The official selection will be announced on Visions du Réel's website on 25 March 2026. Disclosure of a film's selection is not allowed before that date.

9. Hybrid Festival

In addition to the festival screenings, the Festival presents a selection of the 2026 selected films on its online platform (for a broadcast limited in time, duration and geoblocked in Switzerland), in discussion with and after confirmation by the concerned right holders.

10. Documentation for selected films

For each selected film, the following material must be sent after receiving the selection notice. Visions du Réel reserves the right to use this material for the promotion of the film and the Festival.

- At least three horizontal stills from the film (digital images, 10 cm x 15 cm, 300 DPI, JPG)
- A photo of the filmmaker(s) (digital images, 10 cm x 15 cm, 300 DPI, JPG)
- A dialogue list with timecodes in English and/or French
- A file or a password-protected link of the final version of the film in high quality with English subtitles
- A file or a link to the film trailer (three minutes maximum)
- An international title in the language of your choice (which will be used by the Festival for all communication)
- Posters, flyers and other promotional material

11. Screening copy for the selected films

11.1 Screening format

All films selected in the Visions du Réel programme (with exceptions in the parallel sections) must be delivered in DCP format, unencrypted. Other formats are not accepted.

11.2 Versions and subtitles

The films selected in the following sections — International Feature Film Competition; Burning Lights Competition; National Competition; International Medium Length and Short Film Competition; Wide Angle; Opening Scenes and Highlights — will be screened in their original language with English and French subtitles.

A copy of the film with embedded English subtitles must be provided by the production company at its own expense.

The French subtitles, if these exist, must also be provided. In the event that they do not exist, the Festival will create electronic subtitles in French. These French subtitles will remain the property of the company that produces them (Visions du Réel (an external service provider is mandated by the Festival).

11.3 Logo on the DCP copy

The producers and distributors of all selected films are required to add the Visions du Réel logo to their final DCP copy (as well as on the online version) and systematically mention, in their promotional material (poster, press kit, trailer, website, etc.), the selection of the film at Visions du Réel, using the official logo supplied by the Festival. Under no circumstances must the logo be modified without the permission of the Festival.

11.4 Deadline for the screening copy

The screening copy (DCP) of the selected film must be uploaded onto Visions du Réel's private and internal server by 21 March 2026 at the very latest. To minimize environmental impact, all applicants are required to limit the creation of multiple versions of the film. A single, final version should be prepared and submitted whenever possible. This deadline must be respected without fail in order for the Festival to ensure the best screening and subtitling possible during the Festival.

11.5 Sending the screening copy

The screening DCPs must be uploaded to Visions du Réel's private and internal server. In the exceptional case that the screening copy has to be sent by post, the shipping costs, including return, and import duties to Switzerland shall be paid by the sender.

12. Participants of selected films' obligations

12.1 Provision of films free of charge

All selected films are made available to the Festival free of charge by their rights holders.

12.2 Prohibition of withdrawal

No invited film may be withdrawn from the Festival once the rights holders have confirmed its participation in Visions du Réel. Once the film has been selected, the rights holder commits to not showing it, broadcasting it or making it available on the Internet before the first screening at the Festival.

12.3 Copyright guarantee

By registering a film, the applicant guarantees that he, she or they hold(s) all the necessary copyrights to the film submitted, in terms of ideas, images, sounds, etc. In any event, the submitter warrants that he/she/they has(-ve) obtained permission from the copyright holders of all copyright material included in the submitted film and of all submitted photographs relating to the film for all purposes for which the material will be used, including screening, promotion, press publications and distribution in the online Film Market. By registering the film, the applicant undertakes to release Visions du Réel from all claims of copyright, image right or any similar claim made by a third party who purports, rightly or wrongly, to be the owner of an intellectual property right on the film submitted and to pay all amounts that Visions du Réel may be ordered to pay in this respect. All such claims are the sole responsibility of the applicant. If it appears that the applicant did not have all the rights related to the film submitted, he, she or they will be liable for any additional damages that Visions du Réel may claim. Visions du Réel also reserves the right to disqualify any film containing the unauthorised inclusion of material protected by copyright.

13. Authorizations

After selection of a film, the Festival has the right to:

- Keep the high-res video files of selected films in its archive for non-circulating use
- Include the film on the VdR at School online platform (edu.visionsdureel.ch) for educational purposes only and geoblocked to Switzerland, if it meets the curation criteria of the platform, in discussion with the rights holders
- Share the film privately with selected journalists ahead the Festival
- Use all publicity material to promote the Festival
- Use short excerpts of the film for its video clips promoting selected sections of the Festival

14. Screening Schedule

The Artistic Direction of the Festival decides when the selected films will be presented. This decision is final. Each film selected can be screened several times during the Festival.

15. Hospitality

The filmmakers whose films have been selected in the following sections — International Feature Film Competition; International Burning Lights Competition; National Competition; International Medium Length and Short Film Competition; Wide Angle and Highlights are invited to Nyon as follows:

The Festival pays for accommodation (number of nights defined by the Festival) and meals for one person per film. In case of a co-direction, the Festival will pay for one double room as well as meals for two filmmakers.

The Festival does not cover travel nor any other expense. However the Festival will lend support in the search for funding through national institutions likely to financially contribute to travel costs. The requests to these institutions will have to be made by the filmmakers directly.

Filmmakers invited to the Opening Scenes Lab can benefit from a contribution to their travel costs, while their accommodation and meal costs are covered.

16. Festival jury and prizes

16.1 Prizes

The International Feature Film Competition Jury will award the Grand Jury Prize to the best feature film (CHF 20,000) and the Special Jury Award (CHF 10,000) in the International Feature Film Competition.

The Burning Lights Competition Jury will award the Jury Prize to the best medium length or feature film (CHF 10,000) and the Special Jury Prize (CHF 5,000) in the Burning Lights Competition.

The National Competition Jury will award the National Competition Prize to the best medium length or feature film (CHF 15,000 – of which CHF 2 500 for the acquisition of online rights to the film) and the Special Jury Prize (CHF 10,000 – for a feature length film directed by a filmmaker with Swiss nationality or living in Switzerland) in the National Competition.

The International Medium length and Short Film Competition Jury will award the Best Medium Length Film Award (CHF 6,000) and the Best Short Film Award (CHF 4,000).

The Youth Jury, composed of students from the region, awards the Youth Jury Prize – Medium Length film (CHF 3,000), as well as the Youth Jury Prize – Short film (CHF 2,000) in the International Medium Length and Short Film Competition.

The Prix du Public is awarded by the audience's vote for the best feature film in the Wide Angle section (CHF 10,000).

The Opening Scenes section offers access to prizes in kind, in addition to the filmmakers' participation in the Opening Scenes Lab.

16.2 Payment of prizes

Unless otherwise indicated, the prize money is paid (in CHF) directly to the filmmaker. They are responsible for redistributing this money according to the contracts they have with their partners.

16.3 Promotion and publication of prizes

All films that are awarded prizes in Nyon, in accordance with Article 11.3, must include in full view the official 2026 Visions du Réel award winner logo on their DCP, on their promotional materials and on the documentation for the national and/or international distribution of the DVD.

17. Conclusions and conditions of participation

Participation in the Festival implies the unconditional acceptance of all articles set out in these Regulations. The Artistic Direction of the Festival alone is permitted to grant exemptions from these Regulations and to make exceptions.

The Festival reserves the right to change these Regulations at any time and without notification.

In the event of differences between the texts in the various languages, only the French version of these Visions du Réel 2026 Regulations is binding.

August 2025