



Regulations VdR–Development Lab

VdR–Industry: 19 - 22 April 2026

1. Presentation

The VdR–Development Lab is conceived as an incubator for the development of non-fiction and hybrid projects from certain countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. It offers the directors and producers the opportunity to be tutored through the development phase to more easily reach and access the international market. The lab takes place online from March 2026 until October 2026, with a four-day intensive workshop and mentoring during the VdR–Industry days in April 2026.

To see the complete list of eligible countries, [click here](#).

The VdR–Development Lab is supported by policy implemented by the SDC, the Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation.

2. VdR–Development Lab Activities

The VdR–Development Lab is designed to stimulate the creative documentary sector in regions where independent filmmaking is particularly challenged and help new projects reach the international market. The lab selects four projects annually, providing to each project:

- A grant of 2'000 CHF to support the development phase for research, development of the treatment or script or production of promotional material (such as the production of a teaser).
- Paid travel and accommodation for the director and producer to attend Visions du Réel in April 2026.
- A four-day lab tailored lab that takes place during the festival.
- Mentorship and personal guidance throughout the duration of the program with industry professionals.
- Additional follow-up sessions and masterclasses to take place throughout 2026.

3. Conditions for admission

Eligibility Criteria

- The main producer and director attached to the project must have be of one of the nationalities as listed on the eligible country list [here](#).
- The Festival welcomes directors to submit projects with or without a producer attached.
- Projects should be planned as a feature length film (duration over 60'. Please note, short films, series and interactive projects are not eligible).
- Applications must be accompanied by visual material of the project. It can be a teaser, select scenes or selected research material. A link to at least one previous work is also requested.

- Projects must be in the development stage with a fully fleshed-out story, ideally with a draft of the treatment already written and some scenes already shot.
- The applicant producer or director must own the copyright of the project.
- Projects that have entered production or completed shooting are not eligible to apply.
- Projects do not need to have financing attached at the time of submission.
- Directors must have completed a minimum of one short film.
- If selected for the VdR–Development Lab, the director is expected to participate in the lab in English, with costs covered by Visions du Réel. Producers are encouraged to attend and in some cases their costs will also be covered.

4. Submission of a project

To apply, a submission form must be completed online. It is free to submit for this programme.

- All submission forms must be filled out in English, including additional written materials. Audiovisual materials should include English subtitles if in another language. For the detailed list of all required elements for the submission, click [here](#).
- Incomplete submissions or submissions entered after the deadline may not be accepted. However, Visions du Réel will work hard to ensure that you can submit updated materials up until the time your project is assessed.
- Shortlisted projects will be required to participate in an interview online with the selection committee, which will be conducted in English.

Submission deadline

Final Deadline: 17:00 CET 6 November 2025

We encourage you to apply as soon as you are ready to increase your chances for selection.

5. Selection of a project

Selection Process

The selection process will take place from November to December of 2025 and will include an online interview with shortlisted candidates. The Head of Industry, together with an international selection committee, selects the projects for the VdR–Industry activities.

Selection Criteria

The main criteria for selection include:

- The artistic quality of the project including strong directorial vision.
- International potential in terms of production and distribution.
- The strength of the submitted materials to demonstrate that the project is in the development stage and that the director will benefit from participating.
- The previous work(s) of the directors and/or producers.

To avoid any conflict of interest in the project selection process, members of the selection committee who are decision-makers in the development of a project may not take part in discussions concerning it.

Confirmation of selected projects

The final selected and unsuccessful projects will be notified via email no later than mid-December 2025.

6. Participation to VdR–Development Lab

Selected projects will be asked to confirm their participation via email acceptance. There is no fee to participate.

Travel costs, hotel costs and meals for the director and producer while attending the onsite component of the Lab in Nyon Switzerland. Two accreditations will be provided to participate in additional VdR-Industry activities as well as broader activities in the Festival.

The participation of the director is compulsory for all sessions throughout the full program (including sessions online and onsite).

7. Financial contribution and Promotion

In addition to the accompaniment during the development phase, each participating team will receive a grant of 2'000 CHF. Visions du Réel will send the money to the project representative according to a signed agreement. In accepting to this grant, the submitter agrees to:

- Recognise the Visions du Réel by placing the logo on the credits of the final film and all publicity material. Specific details will be outlined in the funding agreement
- Guarantee rights to use material from the project for promotional purposes by Visions du Réel.
- A first look deal for the Swiss premiere of the completed film and the right to screen the final documentary in any Visions du Réel related (non-commercial) screening.
- Grant Visions du Réel the worldwide non-exclusive internet rights of the film for a period of 10 years (after the first public screening) on any current and future online platform operated by Visions du Réel (such as the existing VdR at School). Visions du Réel will take into consideration any arrangement made by the applicant with various distribution partners.

8. Copyright of Materials

If selected, the submitter will be provided with a timeline regarding the submission of written and visual materials for publication (web and print), publicity and communications as well as for the actual lab.

For each selected project, information and material sent for the selection process can be updated any time before their publication (web and print) and for VdR–Industry communication. The selected projects will be published in the VdR–Industry catalogue. This catalogue will be sent by e-mail to the potential partners registered for the event prior

to the Festival. During the Festival, a printed copy will be available for VdR–Industry participants. The information about the selected projects will also be published on Visions du Réel website, in a part accessible only for the professionals accredited within VdR–Industry. By providing these materials, the submitter gives Visions du Réel the permission to use them at www.visionsdureel.ch and for various promotional purposes of VdR–Industry 2026. The submitter guarantees that Visions du Réel will not be held responsible for any claim from copyright holders in relation to the use of the submitted project by Visions du Réel for the agreed purposes.

The submitter guarantees that they hold all the necessary copyrights to the project submitted, in terms of ideas, images, sounds, etc. In any event, the Submitter warrants that it has obtained the permission of the copyright holders of all copyrighted material included in the submitted project and all submitted film stills related to the project for all purposes for which the material will be used, including screening, promotion, and press publications. By providing these materials, the submitter gives Visions du Réel the permission to use them at www.visionsdureel.ch and for various promotional purposes of VdR–Industry 2026.

The submitter guarantees that Visions du Réel will not be held responsible for any claim from copyright holders in relation to the use of the submitted project by Visions du Réel for the agreed purposes.

The submitter undertakes to indemnify Visions du Réel against all claims of copyright, image right or any similar claim by a third party who claims, rightly or wrongly, to be the owner of an intellectual property right on the submitted project and to take charge of all the amounts to be paid by Visions du Réel in this respect. All these claims are the sole responsibility of the submitter. If it appears that the submitter did not have all the rights related to the project submitted, they will be liable for any additional damages that Visions du Réel may claim. Visions du Réel reserves the right to disqualify any project containing unauthorised inclusion of copyrighted material.

9. Obligations of the participants of the selected projects

If selected for the VdR–Development Lab, the following terms and conditions apply:

- The selected project will be made available to the VdR–Industry programme free of charge and without compensation by their rights holders.
- The selected project cannot be withdrawn from the VdR–Industry programme after the confirmation of participation by email following the final selection notice.
- Once the project has been selected, the rightful owner undertakes not to present it in any other development lab, broadcast it or make it available on the Internet before its presentation in the context of VdR–Development Lab.
- The submitter agrees that the director will be available to be onsite in Nyon, Switzerland from Sunday 19 April to Wednesday 22 April 2026 inclusive and to participate in all additional online activities associated with the lab (including the induction session, mentoring sessions and masterclasses).

- In addition to the accompaniment during the development phase, each participating team will receive a grant of 2'000 CHF which will be paid to the project representative according to a signed agreement.

10. Conditions for participation

Participation in the official VdR–Industry programme implies the unconditional acceptance of all articles set out in the regulations above. The 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.

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July 2025