The Distribution Questionnaire

The distribution questionnaire

As a broadcaster or distributor, you want the stories you bring to the screen to reach the widest audience. You choose content that can entertain, fascinate or challenge viewers, and you have the power to include new references more in line with the concerns of our time.

This guide provides questionnaires based on the cornerstones of the stories you bring to the screen (the characters' profiles and mission as well as the societal model that serves as a backdrop for the film) and the sustainability of your distribution and communication methods.

Its quick and easy-to-use format allows you to better understand the impact of the content you broadcast and to initiate conversations with the production and communications teams. This questionnaire is not an exhaustive list. Feel free to make it your own and use it to guide you in your goals and needs.

You'll find the underlined words in the glossary at the end of the guide.

ABOUT THE SCREENS OF TOMORROW MOVEMENT

Screens of tomorrow is a movement initiated by a hundred French audiovisual and film professionals who want to tell stories that highlight a more inclusive and sustainable society. These works of fiction, whatever their form, are not necessarily militant or dogmatic in nature. They preserve the narrative arc of stories that are captivating, intriguing, moving, compelling, and successful. They take inspiration from current concerns to normalize sustainable behavior on screen and contribute to raising general public awareness.

This non-profit approach, initiated by Sparknews (environmental and social storytelling expert) and Get the Moon (film industry expert), was funded by industry stakeholders and several foundations. None of the participants had a private interest in this collaborative project, but all have found it to be of collective interest for their work and their teams.

1. How can you take environmental and social issues into account with the stories you distribute?

This first chapter aims to identify if and how underlined environmental and social issues are addressed in the script, treatment, or bible you receive, or in the brief you write.

This quick analysis will enable you to direct the production teams towards possible changes to the story line, and verify that you want to address the same issues.

It also provides an opportunity to initiate conversations about sustainable film production and communication, so that the approach is supported by all the trades involved.

A FEW KEY FIGURES

2.8% of the characters in prime-time TV series in the US in 2021 have a disability, whereas disabled people represent 26% of the American population.
Source: GLAAD, 2022

38.9% of lead actors in theatrical and streaming Hollywood films produced in 2021 are people of color. This proportion was reached in 2020, and has been maintained ever since.
Source: UCLA, Hollywood Diversity Report, 2022, Part 1: Film

3 films nominated for the 2024 Oscars are set in a society where climate change is present.
Source: Climate Reality Check, 2024

28.5% of films released in 2022 met the challenge set by GLAAD of reaching 20% LGBTQ inclusion, down from 20.8% the previous year.
Source: GLAAD, Studio Responsability Index, 2023

1. HOW CAN YOU TAKE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES INTO ACCOUNT WITH THE STORIES YOU DISTRIBUTE?

While reading story presentation documents (the script, treatment, bible, etc.) or writing your brief, did you pay particular attention to the following items and how they might be perceived by your viewers?

CHARACTER PROFILES

- whether they include diversity (age, name, gender, sexual orientation, geographical origin, perceived origin, occupation, physical characteristics and distinguishing features, values, cultures, traditions, spirituality, etc)
- the stereotypes that may be associated with these character profiles

CHARACTER MISSION

- the characters' aspirations (their search for power or wealth, what money represents to them, what makes them happy, etc.)
- their awareness of environmental and social issues and the impact of this awareness on their behavior and relationships with others

SOCIETAL MODEL

- the societal model and social organisation portrayed on the screen, and the stereotypes that may be associated with them?
- the role of consumption (the characters' behaviors and emotions associated with consumption)
- how consumption is represented (lifestyle, on-screen accessories and their environmental impact, etc.)?
- the role of nature and how characters interact with it (does it just serve as a backdrop or is it part of the story, role and treatment of animals, etc.)?

1. HOW CAN YOU TAKE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES INTO ACCOUNT WITH THE STORIES YOU DISTRIBUTE?

Have you spoken with the production team to form a collaborative sustainability effort, including sustainable film production, teams that reflect the values of parity and diversity, eco-friendly communications strategy, etc.?

Does the story specifically address an environmental or social issue? Or does it normalize sustainable behaviors and inclusive representation on the screen?

2. How can you use sustainable communication strategies during distribution?

Sustainability efforts implemented by the production team (which can be spearheaded and supported by you) during the filmmaking process should extend to the communications campaign and tools used to enhance the film's distribution. By paying special attention to these elements prior to broadcasting/distribution, you contribute to the establishment of a collaborative and coherent approach to sustainability.

These 5 questions will help you ensure that your campaign's communication elements (displays, events, digital elements, etc.) have been designed with sustainability in mind, in order to limit their carbon footprint.

A FEW KEY FIGURES

24% is the percentage contribution of air travel to the overall carbon footprint of big-budget films, across all productions studied between 2016 and 2019.
Source: Sustainable Production Alliance, Close Up: Carbon Emissions of Film and Television Production, 2021

77 metric tons is the average carbon footprint of the production of one series episode, equivalent to a 506,712 km flight.
Source: Sustainable Production Alliance, Close Up: Carbon Emissions of Film and Television Production, 2021

2. HOW CAN YOU USE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES DURING DISTRIBUTION?

Have the teams responsible for promoting the work been informed of the project's sustainability commitment?

Has the number of copies been optimized for the items that must be printed (posters, complimentary tickets, etc.)? Is the print shop eco-friendly (sustainably-sourced/recycled ink and paper, etc.)?

Has film promotion-related travel (press junket, premiere tours, on-set interviews, etc.) been optimized to limit its carbon footprint (soft mobility, travel by train, electric car, etc.)?

If an event/cocktail party will be held, is the caterer eco-friendly (local/organic/short supply chain products, recycled/bio-based/recyclable trays, etc.) and/or socially engaged (staff with disabilities, food made by refugee chefs, etc.)?

Have you planned to use eco-design in your digital communications campaign (site design, limiting the size and number of videos shared, etc.)?

3. How can you implement an impact strategy to connect fiction with concrete actions in the real world?

An impact campaign is a set of actions carried out in connection to a film with the goal of creating bridges between the topics seen on the screen and real life. It aims to challenge the viewer, lead him or her to take action and provoke debate. It can also contribute to the work's visibility. It is created in collaboration with relevant civil society stakeholders and decision-makers and extends the film experience by giving viewers tools to take action. It is complementary to a traditional marketing campaign that accompanies the film's release in theaters or on TV.

These 7 questions aim to help you identify, understand, and optimize your impact strategy by accentuating the issues addressed in your film and their communication, while identifying the networks and partners to include.

A FEW KEY FIGURES

44% is the increase in the number of Americans who said they are aware of the existence of forever chemicals after the film Dark Waters and its impact campaign (from 18% before the film to 26%).
Source: National Water Quality Survey, 2020

$400,000 is the amount raised in the United States as a result of Marvel Studios' 2018 "Black Panther Challenge" impact campaign, which gave thousands of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the chance to see the film for free.
Source: CBR.com – Black Panther Challenge Collectively Raises Over $400,000, 2018

3. HOW CAN YOU IMPLEMENT AN IMPACT STRATEGY TO CONNECT FICTION WITH CONCRETE ACTIONS IN THE REAL WORLD?

What environmental or social issue(s) does your story address?

What types of debate and concrete changes could this story provoke in society, and who is the target audience? What impact do you want to have on your viewers?

Have you identified how (by creating a website, organizing an event, creating a communications campaign, etc.) you would like to implement this impact campaign?

Do you want to make this issue a major element of your communications strategy, through one or more awareness-raising initiatives to bring it into the public debate?

Have you identified partners (scientific experts, institutions, members of civil society, etc.) and/or stakeholders involved in this issue who can relay your content "off screen" and extend the film's message into the real world?

If applicable, have you considered deploying the campaign outside of France, accompanying the work's international distribution?

Have you budgeted for this impact campaign and the tools you plan to develop? Have you identified who will finance (private partners, the producer, the distributor, etc.) and coordinate it (internally or externally)?

Glossary

Carbone footprint
A carbon footprint is an indicator that measures the impact of an action or activity on the environment. It is based on the amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emitted during the action or activity, whether it is performed by a person, an organization, a company, a government, an object, or a process. Contrary to popular belief, the carbon footprint doesn't only measure CO_2. It actually includes the combined emissions of three greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (N_2O). However, to simplify its understanding, we express the carbon footprint in tons of CO_2 equivalent (CO_2e). (Source: Les Horizons)

Disability
"Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others." (Source: United Nations) The World Health Organization classifies disabilities into 5 broad categories:
- Motor disability
- Sensory disability (visual and auditory)
- Psychological disability (illnesses affecting personality)
- Cognitive disability (intellectual disabilities)
- Disabling illnesses

Diversity
All persons who differ from one another in terms of geographical, sociocultural, or religious origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, etc., and make up the national community to which they belong. (Source: Larousse)

Environmental and social issues
This expression represents the challenges related to planetary limitations and social justice perceived as needing to be taken into account to promote a sustainable society that respects living beings. These challenges include climate change; biodiversity preservation; the transition to sustainable agricultural and food systems; sustainable mobility; well-being, health, and quality of life; the commitment to equality, parity, and inclusion for all; the fight against poverty and exclusion; waste reduction; etc.

Impact Campaign
Set of actions carried out in connection to a film with the goal of achieving concrete change by extending the film experience and giving viewers tools to take action. It is created in collaboration with relevant civil society stakeholders and decision-makers and is complementary to a traditional marketing campaign that accompanies the film's release in theaters or on TV.

Parity
Parity means that each gender is represented equally. It is an instrument at the service of equality, which consists in ensuring the access of women and men to the same opportunities, rights, opportunities to choose, material conditions while respecting their specificities. The notion of parity constitutes the foundation of policies to combat the disparities between women and men (Source: INSEE)

Perceived origin
This refers to the assimilation of individuals into common-sense categories ("white", "black", "Asian") according to subjective perception criteria (appearance, name, etc.).

Stereotypes
A ready-made opinion reducing individual characteristics. Synonyms: clichés, prejudices. (Source: Le Robert)

Sustainable film production
An approach aimed at organizing environmentally-friendly film production in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This approach takes into account all the roles involved in film production, and attempts to limit their carbon impact by reducing waste and energy consumption, optimizing transport, preserving natural filming locations, sourcing sustainable or second-hand sets and costumes, implementing a recycling policy, using local food, sourcing sustainable materials, etc.
It also involves raising awareness of these issues and promoting parity, diversity and inclusion within production teams.
This approach should be used as much as possible, starting at the scriptwriting stage, to identify elements with a carbon impact that could be modified.