



The Production Questionnaire

The production questionnaire

You're a producer or director looking to highlight stories that incorporate characteristics of a more inclusive and sustainable society while anticipating the consequences of these choices on your media's production.

This guide includes three guiding questions based on the cornerstones of the stories you produce/direct: the characters, the societal model and the characters' mission. Its quick, easy-to-use format invites you to think about the substance and form of your story without hindering your creativity, and without any right or wrong answers.

It also allows you to amplify the power of your work through sustainable film production and the film's impact campaign. 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. Who are your characters?

Parity, inclusion, disability, and cultural, ethnic, and social diversity... Our history and societies are the product of a profound diversity that contributes to their strength and value.

The goal of this chapter is to reflect upon how your main and secondary characters are established and whether they reflect our social diversity. Without imposing quotas, these questions allow you to explore the diversity of your characters and how it impacts your story.

They also allow you to anticipate and adapt your casting calls.

What are the profiles of the main characters in your story? What is their age, name, gender, sexual orientation, geographical origin, perceived origin, occupation, physical characteristics and distinguishing features, values, cultures, traditions, spirituality, etc.?

Have you created profiles at the intersection of several identities?

What are the profiles of your secondary characters and extras? Think about the same characteristics listed above.

Could the characters in your story be embodied by profile types other than those already identified?

A FEW KEY FIGURES

47.2% of lead actors in films released in 2021 are women.
Source: [UCLA, Hollywood Diversity Report, 2022, Part 1: Film](#)

3.57% of interactions involving three characters are between 3 women, compared with 40.74% between three men.
Source: ["Using data science to understand the film industry's gender gap" 2020](#)

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](#)

1. WHO ARE YOUR CHARACTERS?

If your characters are not from different cultures, traditions, or backgrounds, could changing their profiles enrich your story?

Does your story include characters with disabilities, impairments or illnesses (visible or invisible, physical or mental)?

- If so, do you treat the disability as an integral part of the story line to challenge viewers' perceptions of this disability? Or is it a component of one of the characters, without being the focus, so as to «normalize» disability? Are you planning to recruit an actor to match the character's profile or to call upon a certain actor?
- If not, could including a character with a disability add value to your story?

Does your story include LGBTQIA+ characters? Is the issue of gender and sexual orientation given any particular consideration in your story? How is it addressed? Why is it addressed?

Do the stereotypes and misconceptions typically associated with your character profiles (protagonists and antagonists) add value to the story? If not, could you update their profiles to include other characteristics that are less expected?

How do the words (dialogue and interjections) and actions of each character contribute to the story? Do characters speak and behave differently based on their gender, perceived origin, geographical origin, etc.? Do they convey stereotypes? Could making changes pleasantly surprise viewers and/or enrich your character's profile or background?

1. WHO ARE YOUR CHARACTERS?

Have you consulted experts/people directly concerned by the characteristics and issues assigned to your characters, to ensure they are represented as realistically as possible?

Can the characteristics of some of your characters evolve with the final casting, to suit to the profiles of the selected actors and actresses?

Does the way your characters are portrayed (camera angle, body language) convey stereotypes about them? Could changing how they are depicted convey another message?

Have the intonation, tone of voice or accent used by the actor for his character or for the dubbing been approved before shooting (to avoid conveying stereotypes not approved by the whole team)?

Is your artistic team made up of diverse profiles?

2. What is your characters' mission?

The concept of “success” includes many facets that go beyond those conveyed by the current dominant models (financial gain, the appeal of power, etc.). This part of the guide offers ways to explore and highlight new sources of personal and collective fulfillment and development by reflecting upon characters' aspirations and their understanding of current issues.

These questions give an opportunity to explore the spirit of contradiction in human beings through the lens of contemporary reflections, and to create complex characters far from being smooth or predictable.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHARACTERS

What is the primary goal (power, wealth, freedom, social connection, love, travel, comfort, stability, survival, etc.) of your main and secondary characters?

Do they have a certain awareness of environmental and social issues?

- If so, how is this awareness embodied in their behavior? Does it evolve throughout the story?
- If not, do they become aware of these issues at a certain point in the story? How do they react?

A FEW KEY FIGURES

64% of the world's population considers climate change to be an emergency.
Source: [UNDP & Oxford University, 2021](#)

77% of survey respondents report having learned about a social or environmental issue through fictional TV or film.
Source: [Research A Glaring Absence: the Climate Crisis is Virtually Nonexistent in Scripted Entertainment, 2021](#)

0.6% of the 37,453 film and TV scripts analyzed by researchers at the University of Southern California (USC) specifically mentioned “climate change”.
Source: [Research A Glaring Absence: the Climate Crisis is Virtually Nonexistent in Scripted Entertainment, 2021](#)

3 films nominated for the 2024 Oscars are set in a society where climate change is present
Source: [Climate Reality Check, 2024](#)

2. WHAT IS YOUR CHARACTERS' MISSION?

Does this awareness have an influence on their relationships with the other characters and on the narrative arc?

How is it perceived (positively, negatively, neutrally) by the other characters?

How do you think your characters might evolve by the end of your story?

RELATIONSHIP WITH SUCCESS AND POWER

What does money represent (success, pleasure, anxiety, power, freedom, constraint, taboo, an objective, etc.) for the characters who mention it?

Do the characters depend upon one another or show mutual support and collaboration?

Which elements of the story (abundance, belonging to a community, cultural heritage, possessions, social connection, connection to nature, the part played by technology in everyday life, etc.) make the main characters happy?

Which elements make them unhappy?

How do secondary characters perceive these elements?

3. Which societal model serves as a backdrop for your story?

Our consumption of natural resources exceeds what the Earth is able to replenish in a year. According to Earth Overshoot Day, it would take 1.75 Earths to regenerate what we consume.

Because humanity will have to adapt to these fixed planetary limits, the goal of this chapter is to reflect upon your characters' habits and lifestyles (their relationship with consumption, nature, etc.) in order to identify other models that are more compatible with the resources actually available.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

What societal models and social organisations would you like to see on screen?

Have you consulted experts/people directly concerned by the characteristics and issues of the social organisations you describe, to ensure they are represented as realistically as possible?

A FEW KEY FIGURES

80% This percentage represents the relative average duration of nature scenes in Walt Disney films in the 1940s. In the 2000s, the duration dropped to 50%, highlighting a decrease in nature representations over time.

Source: [Public Understanding of Science. Historical evidence for nature disconnection in a 70-year time series of Disney animated films, 2015](#)

We would need **1.75** Earths, at current global consumption levels, to meet our needs, 5.1 Earths if every human consumed like an American.

Source: [How Many Earths? How Many Countries? - Earth Overshoot Day article](#)

25% of the world's population lives in a country facing extremely high water stress throughout the year, using more than 80% of available water resources, resulting in a high risk of water shortages.

Source: [World Resources Institute, 2023](#)

69% of vertebrate populations disappeared between 1970 and 2018.

Source: [WWF Living Planet Report 2022](#)

3. WHICH SOCIETAL MODEL SERVES AS A BACKDROP FOR YOUR STORY?

MODEL OF CONSUMPTION

What lifestyles, settings, accessories and hobbies (types of food, transportation, housing, clothing, tourism, etc.) are inherent within these societal models?

What image do they project? Do the stereotypes usually associated with these lifestyles bring added value to the story, or could they be developed in a less anticipated way?

Under what conditions, and to meet what need(s), do the characters in your story become consumers? Do they consume to meet their daily needs, for enjoyment, to compensate for a disappointment, etc.?

How do your characters respond (in an immediate, reasonable, or unreasonable way) to this need to consume?

What emotions (joy, hysteria, addiction, instability-related distress, etc.) are associated with moments of consumption?

Do you mention local, seasonal food?

Are waste and recycling taken into account?

If you want viewers to question your characters' behaviors and the reactions they elicit, would you prefer to call attention to behavior that is incompatible with our current limitations (e.g., a character who throws their cigarette butt on the ground and is caught) or normalize more sustainable behaviors (e.g., all the characters throw their cigarette butts in the trash without calling attention to it)?

3. WHICH SOCIETAL MODEL SERVES AS A BACKDROP FOR YOUR STORY?

WHAT ROLE DO LIVING BEINGS (FAUNA AND FLORA) PLAY IN YOUR STORY?

How is flora represented? Is it non-existent, an arena (a simple backdrop), or are there scenes dedicated to flora?

Is it domestic or wild?

Do the characters interact with the flora?

What emotions are associated with these scenes?

Are there animals in your story? Do they have a specific role?

What types of animals (wild, domestic, or captive) are there?

How do they relate to the characters? How are animals treated in the story?

What behaviors or situations can be associated with scenes that include animals? What image do they convey to viewers?

Do the animals and plants convey stereotypes?

For example, are spiders or swamps shown negatively by default? Could changing these perceptions bring added value to the story?

4. How can you engage in sustainable film production and communications?

Managing a film set has a significant ecological footprint and environmental impact. How can you ensure that your production methods are consistent with current issues and your story?

These 15 questions explore various topics (responsible sourcing, food, energy, waste, etc.) to allow you to anticipate how sustainable film production methods will impact your work. They also aim to engage your entire team in the process and help you choose service providers who share these ethics.

These questions can represent a starting point for a larger-scale eco-production approach, supported by professionals.

It's important to note that while sustainable production can complicate your work and reduce opportunities for product placement, it can also be a real asset for distributors and the general public, and can help reduce costs.

A FEW KEY FIGURES

21.8% of directors and 33.5% of scriptwriters in theatrical and streaming Hollywood films produced in 2021 are women.

Source: [UCLA, Hollywood Diversity Report - 2022, Part 1: Film](#)

19% of European films were films exclusively directed by women in 2017, compared to 15% in 2003. This growth was mainly driven by an increase in the number of documentary films.

Source: [European Audiovisual Observatory, Female Directors in European Cinema: Key Figures, 2019](#)

3,370 metric tons is the average carbon footprint of big-budget films, or about 33 metric tons per shooting day, across all productions studied between 2016 and 2019.

Source: [Sustainable Production Alliance, Close Up: Carbon Emissions of Film and Television Production, 2021](#)

82% of material was diverted from landfill through initiatives to properly manage waste and materials, which also reduced the overall carbon footprint of the project.

Source: [Disney, Call of the wild, 2020 - AMT Lab, The Impact of Emerging Sustainable Practices in the Film Industry, 2022](#)

4. HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE FILM PRODUCTION AND COMMUNICATIONS?

Societal approach:

- Is diversity/parity/inclusion reflected in your technical and artistic teams as well as by your service providers?
- Have you thought about adapting production infrastructure to suit your team's profiles?

Responsible sourcing:

- Do the products and services used meet real needs both in front of the camera (accessories, sets, costumes, etc.) and behind the camera (control room, wardrobe, makeup, hair, travel, hotels, meals, etc.)?

Food:

- Have you planned meals that are local, seasonal, balanced (including vegetarian) and have a low carbon footprint?
- Could you implement an anti-waste approach that encourages reasonable portion sizes, donation of surplus food to organizations, etc.?

Waste:

- Can the waste produced (containers, consumables, etc.) be reduced, and the circularity of accessories and decorations be encouraged?
- Can unavoidable waste be treated and recycled with local partners?

Mobility:

- Have you structured your team's transportation to limit its carbon footprint through choice of filming locations, carpooling, train travel, public transportation, soft mobility, etc.?
- Can unavoidable carbon emissions be offset?

4. HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE IN SUSTAINABLE FILM PRODUCTION AND COMMUNICATIONS?

Energy:

- Has your film set's power consumption been optimized, particularly through partners who provide green electricity?

Impact on the natural ecosystem:

- Has the impact of your film's production on local flora and fauna been considered and limited?
- How are animals "casted" and treated during and after filming?

Local approach:

- Have you taken into account the local context of the region where you will be filming and contacted local partners?

Internal administration:

- Have internal communications (team training, sharing of best practices and results, etc.) been planned to highlight the project's sustainable production goals?
- Has the printing of film production items (call sheets, bible, schedules, etc.) been designed to be eco-friendly (limited number of copies printed, use of sustainably-sourced/recycled ink and paper, etc.)?

5. 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 also identifying the networks and partners to include.

A FEW KEY FIGURES

46% 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](#)

5. 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

Captive species

In this context, this expression refers to animal species that have become accustomed to the presence of human beings but retain their characteristics as wild animals (e.g., A wolf may have been tamed by human beings, but it will never be fully domesticated).

Carbon 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 CO₂. It actually includes the combined emissions of three greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), and nitrous oxide (N₂O). However, to simplify its understanding, we express the carbon footprint in tons of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e). (Source: Les Horizons)

Circularity

This expression refers to the circular economy. The circular economy is an economic system of production that aims, at all stages of the product (goods and services) life cycle, to increase the efficiency of how resources are used and reduce environmental impact while improving individuals' well-being. Circularity is based on 7 pillars involving public authorities, private stakeholders, and citizens. These pillars include sustainable sourcing, eco-design, industrial and territorial ecology, functional economy, responsible consumption, extended useful life, and recycling. (Source: ADEME) It is often summarized by the 5 Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot.

Daily needs

This definition is not static, as it is subject to interpretation by each individual. It is used in this guide to designate the physiological needs associated with rational and necessary consumption. Abraham Maslow, an American humanistic psychologist (1916-1972), identified five types of basic needs that are still referred to today and that he classified as follows:

- Vital or physiological needs (eating, drinking, sleeping, breathing, etc.)
- Safety and protection needs (personal security, employment, health, property, etc.)
- Social needs (love, friendship, belonging, etc.)
- Self-esteem needs (confidence, respect for others, etc.)
- Self-actualization needs (personal accomplishment)

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.

Green electricity

This term refers to electricity produced from renewable energy sources. Electricity is deemed “green” if the supplier can prove that an amount of green electricity equivalent to the customer’s electricity consumption has been injected into the grid. (Source: Energies info) It’s important to note that just because an electricity source is referred to as “green” does not mean its production does not emit any greenhouse gas (GHG).

Inclusion

Act of integrating a person or group by putting an end to their exclusion, particularly their social exclusion. (Source: Larousse) Social inclusion is about changing how we view our relationship with others and with differences. Rather than wanting “nonconformists” to come as close as possible to the “norm,” the norm itself is re-evaluated.

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.

Intersectionality

Theorised by Afro-feminist activist and lawyer Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, this sociological term refers to the situation of people who simultaneously experience several forms of discrimination or domination in a society. For example: A Black, lesbian woman is likely to experience three types of discrimination related to her gender, her perceived origin, and her sexual orientation.

LGBTQIA+

This acronym refers to a generally marginalised set of gender identities and sexual and romantic orientations.

L for lesbian

G for gay

B for bisexual

T for transgender: A person whose sex at birth does not correspond to their gender identity (the opposite of cisgender: A person whose sex at birth corresponds to their gender identity).

Q for queer: A former insult reappropriated by people who do not identify with heterosexual or cisgender norms. This term now refers more broadly to the LGBTQIA+ community as a whole.

I for intersex: The term intersex is used to describe those presenting one or more sexual biological characteristics (genital, gonadal or chromosomal) not considered “typically male” or “typically female”. Being intersex does not mean that a person is transgender, as a person’s sexual characteristics do not define their gender identity.

A for asexual: A person who has little or no sexual attraction to anyone; and for aromantic: A person who has little or no romantic attraction to anyone.

+ for all other marginalised romantic or sexual orientations and gender identities not covered by the acronym

Living beings

In the strict sense, this term refers to beings animated by life, as opposed to inert objects. From a biological point of view, this term includes human beings, plants, and animals. To this we can also add the definition of biodiversity as defined by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which was signed in Rio in 1992: "Variability among living organisms from all sources, including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems."

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.