



The 8th West Lake International Documentary Festival

“IDF Competition”

Call for Entries

This announcement is an open call for entries of documentaries for “IDF Competition” of the 8th West Lake International Documentary Festival (IDF 2026).

1. Introduction

1.1 West Lake International Documentary Festival (IDF)

The 8th West Lake International Documentary Festival (IDF2026) will be held in Hangzhou, China from 23rd to 25th October 2026. IDF stands for “I-Documentary-Fact” and aims to explore the relationship between documentary creation subjects, objects, and methods.

IDF’s mission is embracing core values of innovation, pioneering spirit, academic rigor, and non-fiction cinema, IDF aims to unlock boundless possibilities as new technologies revolutionize documentary filmmaking. We believe that documentary is a medium ingrained in humanity’s wisdom of “observation and decision-making”. Our society serves as the best observation arena of this medium, where filmmakers, characters and audiences collectively shape its subjects. We cherish time and space captured within images, and appreciate inner thoughts and souls depicted therein. We champion documentaries as gateways to the real world, rather than mere replicas of reality. What matters is whether these gateways lead to new revelations and profound insights. We will delve into the intricate relationship between creating fictional content and documenting reality, and highlight their interplay and collision. This exploration will offer both

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filmmakers and audiences with greater freedom to interpret and envision reality, ultimately injecting new vitality into China's documentary industry.

1.2 IDF Competition

IDF Competition is aimed to highlight outstanding documentary filmmakers as well as films, all the while encouraging documentary filmmakers to be curious and persistent on their journey of creation. The festival conducts an open call for submission. The submission opens to feature-length documentaries (60 minutes and above) and short documentaries (less than 60 minutes) completed after 1st July, 2024. After two rounds of evaluation and selection, the outstanding documentaries will be shortlisted for IDF Competition of the 8th West Lake International Documentary Festival. The finalists will be evaluated by an international jury committee and compete for awards.

1.3 Entry Qualification

IDF2026 openly calls for documentaries around the world, including feature-length documentaries and short documentaries. Entries must satisfy the following conditions:

- 1) The documentary must be completed after 1st July, 2024;
- 2) The duration of feature-length documentary should be over 60 minutes; the duration of short documentary should be within 60 minutes.
- 3) The work must be directly participated by the entrant, and the entrant must be the copyright holder or representative of the copyright owner of the work.
- 4) Priority to documentaries with World Premiere/ International Premiere/

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Asian/ Chinese Premiere status.

5) The documentary which has been shortlisted in the previous “IDF Competition” or has been selected in the previous “Glory of Documentary” Screening Section, cannot be participated in again with the competition.

1.4 How to Enter

The documentaries must be entered online at the official website of West Lake International Documentary Festival (www.westlakeidf.com). No entry fee is required. Please fill in the application form carefully, once the information being uploaded, the entrant can not re-edit it.

2. IDF Awards

- 1) IDF Best Documentary
- 2) IDF Jury Award
- 3) IDF Best Chinese Documentary
- 4) IDF Best Short Documentary
- 5) IDF Special Mention

3. Entry Requirements

3.1 Deadline for Entry

Entry for the 8th West Lake International Documentary Festival registration is open from now. The deadline for entry is 25th August, 2026. The documentaries submitted beyond this deadline will not be included in the evaluation process.

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3.2 Entry Process

The documentaries must be entered through the official website www.westlakeidf.com of the West Lake International Documentary Festival within the entry period. Please read *the Announcement of IDF 2026 The 8th West Lake International Documentary Festival “IDF Competition”* carefully, fill in the required information, submit the requested materials, upload the full-length documentary according to requirement, and complete the entry.

If you prefer to submit the hard copy, please send USB or Mobile Hard Disk Drive to IDF Office (Please mark “IDF Competition”, film title, name of the entrant and the contact number). If you send cross-border materials through international express, please fill in customs declaration value within 10 dollars, and mark “only for cultural purposes” and “no-commercial value” on the mail parcel.

All materials that been sent to IDF Office must have paid the mailing fee and customs duties, otherwise, the organizing committee has the right to reject the parcel. You can also deliver the hard drive to IDF Office in person (Please contact the organizing committee in advance to check the office hour).

All submitted materials will keep in the archive and won't be returned. The organizing committee shall not bear the mailing cost and the insurance cost of the materials, nor shall it bear the responsibility for loss, error or damage of the materials caused by the mailing process or other irresistible factors.

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3.3 Required Materials

1) Version required for Competition Evaluation

The version for “IDF competition” evaluation must be no less than 1920*1080, no more than 3GB MOV/MP4 format; at least two episodes of documentary series are required to be uploaded; all the documentary must have English subtitles, all Chinese documentaries must be subtitled in Chinese except for no dialogue films; if you need to add watermark, please mark “IDF Preview” in the upper right corner of the screen, no other watermark is allowed.

2) Additional Materials

- Synopsis and director’s statement (around 300 words)
- Trailer (within 3 min): MOV or MP4 format, resolution no less than 1920*1080
- 1 poster, 3 to 5 film stills, JPG format (the pixel shall not be lower than 300 dpi)
- A recent photo of director, JPG format (the pixel shall not be lower than 300 dpi)
- Subtitles with time-code in “.srt” or “.ass” format or in “.doc” or “.txt”

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format

Please upload the documentary for competition evaluation together with the required materials on IDF official website www.westlakeidf.com within the registration period. The entrant will receive the notification email from the organizing committee after processing the materials. Otherwise, it means the application has not been completed (including incomplete information, missing required materials or uploading failure, etc.) After the application process, documentaries that have been registered shall not be withdrawn or quit from the competition for any reason.

3.4. Legal Liability Statement

The entrant must be the copyright holder or representative of the copyright owner of the work and will guarantee that the materials used in the documentary, including but not limited to music, recordings, videos, images or other works and materials, are original or have been authorized by the copyright owner according to law. If there are other people's portraits, the entrant will guarantee to obtain the shooting license and the right of portrait of the photographed person. Once there are any legal disputes, including intellectual property disputes, arising from the above-mentioned reasons, the entrant shall take all legal liabilities, including entire liability for intellectual property right infringement and liability for compensation. The Committee reserves the right to refuse the documentary when the documentary involved in any copyright disputes or portrait right infringement.

4. Selection and Screening

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After two rounds of evaluation and selection, West Lake International Documentary Festival will decide the shortlist for “IDF Competition”. The organizing committee will formally notify the entrant by email and announce the official shortlist.

The entrant should provide a 422HQ MOV or DCP file for screening. In addition to the technical adjustment of subtitle translation, the version must be consistent with the initial review version. The digital file must be sent to the organizing committee through hard disk (equipped data lines, power lines, transfer interfaces, and other necessary accessories), and the deadline will be noticed on the official invitation letter. The mailing cost should bear by the entrant. If the screening version isn’t provided according to the requirement, the organizing committee has the right to cancel the screening of the documentary during the festival.

Before the screening in IDF, no public screening for shortlisted documentaries, which probably affect the premiere status, is allowed.

Information, stills, trailers and other promotional materials of nominated documentaries will be presented in the IDF catalogue, official website, online and offline promotional materials. The organizing committee has the right to edit and translate the information, stills, trailers and other promotional materials for public use. The organizing committee has the right to reserve high-resolution film video file in IDF’s archive, in purpose of education program and non-commercial use.

The organizing committee will invite the filmmaker of nominated documentaries to attend the 8th West Lake International Documentary Festival including the opening ceremony, award ceremony, post-screening Q&A, IDF Forum and related events. The organizing committee will cover

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the expense of round-way transportation and accommodation for the invited filmmaker (if the nominated documentary has more than one filmmaker, the organizing committee will only cover the expense for one filmmaker).

The nominated documentaries will be publicly screened during the festival, and the schedule and the location for the screening will be determined by the organizing committee. After the award ceremony, the winning documentaries will be publicly screened again on the last day of the festival, and the organizing committee keeps the rights to negotiate and explain on the schedule and location for the screening.

For all nominated and award-winning documentaries, the organizing committee will provide the corresponding laurel. The laurel with the logo of West Lake International Documentary Festival must be presented in subsequent promotional materials.

5. Right to Interpret

By submitting the application, the applicant shall be deemed to have read and agreed to all provisions of this announcement.

The organizing committee of the 8th West Lake International Documentary Festival (IDF 2026) reserves the right to amend this charter, rules, terms or other related conventions. If there are any revisions or matters not mentioned in this announcement, the IDF Committee will promulgate it separately. The IDF organizing committee owns the final right to interpret on this charter without public discussion.

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The Organizing Committee
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August, 2026

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