MediaFutures

D1.6 – Summary of Calls v3

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Executive Summary

This document – D1.6 Summary of calls v3 – is part of the Work Package 1 (WP1 – Open Calls) and summarises the results of MediaFutures' third Open Call.

In the third and last Open Call, MediaFutures was seeking applications that responded to the MediaFutures single challenge. This challenge invited creative and impactful ideas which address the issues of online misinformation and disinformation in different domains.

The third Open Call opened on the 28th of June 2022 (10:00 AM CEST) and closed on the 30th of August 2022 (10:00 AM CEST) with 113 finalised applications received: 55 applications for the Artists for Media track, 40 for Startups for Citizens and 18 for the Startup meets Artist track.

While the call was open, two webinars followed by two matchmaking events were held. Following the Open Call, the evaluation team selected 24 proposals: the MediaFutures support programme welcomed 10 applications from the SmA track, 9 applications from the SfC track as well as 5 applications from the AfM (directly to the BUILD phase). As in the second Open Call, MediaFutures collected data regarding the gender and the ethnicity of its applicants. Regarding gender, on average, there was good balance amongst the selected applicants in all three tracks. Regarding ethnicity, there was good balance amongst the first stage applicants, although the majority of successful applicants identified themselves as "White / Caucasian".

As a novelty in the third Open Call, the MediaFutures consortium had decided to change the application form from the F6S platform to a SurveyMonkey application form, to improve the user experience for applicants, and the reporting process for the consortium.

It was concluded in this deliverable, that the third and last Open Call was completed successfully. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement. The issues regarding the application and evaluation process as well as the overall management of the call were analysed in order to be considered for future cascade funding calls. The main points to be improved are the following:

- Application and submission process, including its data analysis.
- Communication and outreach to Startups/SMEs.
- Improve/increment diversity.
- Clarify/simplify evaluation process, specially for the evaluators.

This report is produced as part of T1.6 "Monitoring of the open calls" and it is essential to monitor adequately the results of the third MediaFutures Open Call, in order to provide continuous feedback to the process and understand which aspects need to be improved and which ones are to be re-iterated for subsequent cascade funding calls.

1 Introduction

This deliverable provides a summary of the results of MediaFutures' third Open Call (OC), including relevant statistics and findings.

This deliverable does not provide the individual results of the evaluation of the OC. These results are published on the MediaFutures website after conclusion of the subgrantee agreements with each applicant.

The following sections of this deliverable present the given below:

- Section 2, "Open Call", includes a description of the third Open Call (OC3) and the activities and work done during this time until the evaluation and selection of the applicants, such as promotion of the call, webinars, matchmaking and support for applicants.
- Section 3, "Open Call Results", includes statistics about the call, giving information on the number of applications received and the finalised applications, the profile of applicants, the number of applications per track and per country. Furthermore, this section includes statistics about the gender and ethnicity of the applicants. Lastly, this section provides information about the evolution of the submission and the number of proposals selected for OC3.
- After the description of the results, the following section 4 "Findings" includes the conclusions obtained from the results.

2 Open Call

At the end of August 2022, MediaFutures' third OC closed. The OC was open between the 28th of June 2022 and the 30th of August 2022. During this time, like in the past OCs, the MediaFutures team carried out several activities to promote the OC and support interested applicants throughout the application process. The promotion activities were especially important and challenging for OC3, due to it being open during summertime, when there are a high proportion of holidays taken. However, this timing was required to complete all deliverables, and run the support programme smoothly within the funding period of the MediaFutures project. The activities that have been carried out are described in the following sections.

2.1 Promotion Activities

Because the OC3 was open during summer-holiday season, it was anticipated to provide an additional communication effort to catch the attention of potential applicants and ensure a competitive, high quality third Open Call. Therefore, the following promotion and communication activities were carried out:

- An intensive promotion through the project and partners' websites and social media channels, media campaigns, newsletters and networking activities were prompted.
- The MediaFutures website played a crucial role as the official information hub and applications entry point for the Open Calls (challenges, tracks, webinars and the Application Kit to participate in the support program were available through the website).
- Paid advertisement campaigns were carried out on Twitter and Facebook to support the Call-related information to reach new contacts.

- Online Webinars and matchmaking days were organised to foster the participation to the Open Calls, to explain the application process and give information about the support programme.

2.2 Webinars

Like in the two first OCs, MediaFutures organised two webinars, which were held at the beginning and towards the end of the OC period. The first webinar, on the 12th of July 2022, was focused on presenting MediaFutures and its third OC to the prospects, as well as providing information on how to apply to the OC. The second webinar, on the 9th of August 2022, was a Questions & Answers (Q&A) event. Here the frequently asked questions collected from the MediaFutures help desk mailing service were presented and answered, followed by an open Q&A session, where questions coming directly from the participants were answered.

Both webinars were followed by a matchmaking event. The purpose of the matchmaking event was to provide a space where entrepreneurial parts and artistic parts could meet and ideally team up to collectively apply for the Startup meets Artist (SmA) track (the most challenging, but also the track with the highest chance of getting funding). To maximise the possibility of interaction between Startups/SMEs and artists, the DealRoomEvent platform was held open from the first webinar to the OC closure (as it was made in previous OCs).

During this time, a total of 84 active users were registered, from which 68 attended the webinars (20 to the first webinar, 48 to the second Q&A webinar). The number of registration and attendees were lowest compared to OC1 and OC2 (355 registrants and 206 attendees for OC1, and 196 registrants and 100 attendees for OC2). Regarding the type of registrants for the webinars of the third OC: 19 registered as Startup/SME, 27 as artist, 23 as “unknown”, 10 as organisers and 5 as speakers.

In general, the numbers state that there were less participants than in the webinars from OC1 and OC2. This can be explained on one hand by the fact, that the OC3 was open during summertime, but on the other hand it could also be because the webinars from last OCs were available on the MediaFutures platform (and linked in the open call page) so the teams could already have access to the main information.

Even if fewer people attended the webinars, they did lead to interesting questions and discussions with the attendees showing a quite mature audience.

It is also worth mentioning that the two webinars were recorded and uploaded on YouTube, thus disseminating the popular questions and answers to the public in video format (including “anchoring” links to the different contents of the sessions). The first video has 207 views and the second one 109 views (last checked on 18/01/2023, 09:56:00).

As a summary, we can extract that even though the attendance was lowest for the webinars of OC3, the webinars and open matchmaking platform, combined with the Q&A session, which got a total of 316 views, had a broad outreach to potential applicants.

2.3 Matchmaking

In parallel with the two webinars, MediaFutures organised a matchmaking process for artists and startups to promote applications in the “Startup meets Artist” track. Being the most innovative track of the project and at the same time the most complex one, the MediaFutures team considered it essential to organise a high-quality matchmaking process.

To this end, MediaFutures made available to all applicants a platform free for them (DealRoomEvents), where each applicant could create a profile describing who they are, what they offer and what they are looking for, to meet other applicants and organise calls through this platform. Two matchmaking events were organised, right after each webinar. There were 12 meeting requests for SmA matchmaking, from which 8 meetings were realised. Applicants had the opportunity to organise meetings and have at least 15-minute calls to meet other applicants and look for collaborations. We cannot trace if these meetings led to extra exchanges outside the platform. Apart from these events, the platform was open from the first matchmaking until the OC3 closure, allowing applicants to talk via private chat in case they were unable to participate in the matchmaking events.

2.4 Help Desk

It is important to highlight the support provided to applicants through the help desk mailing service. Applicants had the opportunity to contact the MediaFutures team through the email address opencall@mediafutures.eu, for any questions related to OC3 and the application process. As a result, the MediaFutures team has answered and solved more than 185 inquiries. For comparison, in OC1 about 250 and in OC2 about 290 inquiries were received and solved.

2.5 Evaluation and Selection Process

There is a specific deliverable (D1.2) devoted to providing a summary of the evaluations that is due in Month 30. As the evaluation and selection process is a big part of each OC, we consider it interesting to include some basic information about the evaluation and selection process in this document, so as to provide a better link with D1.3 (Subgrantee Agreement Template).

The main data and steps followed in the process were:

- Eligibility check: 113 finalised applications were screened for eligibility between August 30 and September 2. The outcome of the eligibility check was 99 eligible applications to proceed to written evaluations.
- Written evaluations: 99 applications were reviewed by evaluators with varied expertise, and with 14 evaluators being internal to the consortium (4 art, 5 business, 5 technical) and 8 evaluators being external (4 art, 1 business, and 3 technical). These written evaluations took place between September 5 and September 12. Following this stage, 44 applications (16 AfM, 12 SmA and 16 SfC) passed through to the jury panels.
- Jury panels:
    - “Artists for Media” jury panel (September 21), with one internal panellist from IRCAM and two external panellists, chaired by ODI, and with an observer from LUH. 10 artists were selected for interview.
    - “Startup meets Artist” jury panel (September 22), with one internal panellist from IRCAM, one internal panellist from NMA and one external panellist, chaired by ODI and with an observer from LUH. 10 projects were selected for the START phase.

    - “Startups for Citizens” jury panel (September 23), with one internal panellist from KCL, one internal panellist from NMA and one external panellist, chaired by ODI, and with an observer from LUH. 9 projects were selected for the START phase.
- Artist interviews: (September 27 to September 30), with one internal interviewer from EUT, one internal interviewer from IRCAM and one external interviewer from ODI, 5 artists were selected to join the BUILD phase.

2.6 Summary of Changes from the First and Second Open Call

MediaFutures Open Call Challenge(s)

After the successful simplification from the three challenges in OC1 to the one challenge scheme in OC2, it was decided to repeat the latter for OC3. So, for the third Open Call, MediaFutures opted once more for a single challenge very focused on the main objective of the project (misinformation and disinformation), in particular looking for projects that actively engage citizens through co-design, user testing, or other participatory processes that give citizens a stake in the project’s development.

Different period of submission: summertime

Unlike the previous OCs, the third OC was open during summertime. This decision was taken by the consortium. The reason for this decision was twofold: on the one side it allowed a better timing of the OC3 MF Support Programme (START: Nov-Dec’22; BUILD: Dec’22-May’23; EXHIBIT: Jun’23) and on the other one it makes possible to finalise all the impact analysis within the Grant Agreement duration (before Aug’23).

The detected problematic timing of the call being open during summertime was that potential applicants would be on vacation and thus not applying to the third and last MediaFutures Open Call. This risk was expected to be especially true for potential applicants coming from southern-European countries.

As this challenge was anticipated when rolling out the plans of bringing the OC3 forward by five months, mitigation/contingency actions were developed and put in place accordingly.

Different times for final submission

Unlike the previous OCs, the third OC was closed at 10:00 AM (CEST). Both in OC1 and OC2 the time set as limit for submissions was 12:00 PM noon CET, and this resulted in a number of confused applicants (less than 10) that did not reach to submit a valid proposal before the official deadline.

Improved application kit

The updated application kit included a simplification of the general explanations to make the document easier to understand and included for the first time some examples (mock-up proposals) visualising best practices, as well as recommended extensions of the proposals.

Communication to former applicants from the second MediaFutures Open Call

One of the changes made from OC1 to OC2 was that in the application form of OC2, applicants were asked to tick a box if they wanted to receive future information about the MediaFutures programme. This enabled the possibility to directly contact with the former applicants that applied to the OC2 but were not selected, as well as participants that reached the START phase but did not qualify for the BUILD phase of OC2. This way 186 former applicants were contacted via email, inviting them directly to participate in the OC3.

Webinars and Matchmaking
Similar to OC2, in OC3, two webinars and matchmaking events were held. The focus of the webinars was twofold. The first webinar focussed on the presentation of the MediaFutures project, what it offers, how to apply and best practices for the proposal preparation. The second webinar was a Questions and Answers (Q&A) event, where frequently asked questions from the help desk mailing service were presented and specific questions from applicants were answered. Both the first and the second webinar were followed by the Matchmaking event. Moreover, both the webinar and the Q&A event were recorded and uploaded to YouTube, where they reached a total of 316 views.

Application process/platform: From F6S to SurveyMonkey
For OC3, the application process was changed. The major change was to move the application form away from the F6S platform and use an embedded SurveyMonkey form to collect the applications on the MediaFutures website itself. This decision was motivated by critiques from applicants of OC1 and OC2 on the F6S platform, and thus by wanting to innovate/improve in this matter.

The general critique from applicants of the F6S platform was the user experience of the application process, especially as filling out the application form sometimes resulted in confusion.
On the F6S platform the design possibilities of the application form are limited. Therefore, one form per track had to be created instead of just one for all applicants. Furthermore, the applicants had to register or be already registered to the F6S platform to apply to the OC. This meant an additional step in the application process, away from the main source of guiding information that was provided through the MediaFutures website.

With SurveyMonkey, the above-mentioned critiques regarding the user experience were addressed. SurveyMonkey provided the additional functionalities to create one form for all applicants with an improved design and user experience. Furthermore, the SurveyMonkey form could be embedded into the MediaFutures website, centralising in this way the entire application process (except for the elaboration of the proposal) in one place. As for facilitating the evaluation work, the SurveyMonkey form allowed to restrict the format of the uploaded files, which reduced the probability of applications submitted using the wrong format and being considered ineligible. This could be seen reflected in an increase of 12% eligible applications received in comparison to OC2.

To track the feedback from applicants regarding the application form, a rating option was included at the end of the OC3 form. The form scored an average of 4,6 out of 5 stars rating, approving the measures taken to enhance user experience.

However, it is important to mention that the switch to a new application platform also had its downsides. For one, since the platform was new to the persons involved in the open call preparation, it did take some time to adapt to it. It took more time in preparing the form, and also the analysis of the data after the closure of the open call was slightly more time consuming. Furthermore, extensive testing was performed, to ensure the proper functioning of the form as well as the correct embedment of the form into the MediaFutures website. Another point that was mentioned by several applicants, is that they did not receive any formal confirmation of submission for their proposal. Furthermore, due to the nature of the SurveyMonkey form, the information on how much time was invested into the preparation of the proposal was lost. Information that F6S provided since the time of registering to the open call and the actual submission of their application was tracked. Moreover, numerous test applications (approx. 180) were registered, which later on had to be filtered out, requiring additional

work. The reason for the test applications was likely due to the fact that applicants had to have all the information and the finished written proposal ready before starting to fill out the application form. Therefore, it is to be expected that applicants wanted to test the form first, to know what it would require from them.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that, as a mitigation route, the F6S forms were prepared as well, in case the platform was to fail.

3 Open Call Results

3.1 Number of Applications

There were 139 (219 in OC2; 207 in OC1) expressions of interest and 113 (137 in OC2; 133 in OC1) finalised proposals submitted to the third MediaFutures Open Call (see Figure 1). This document analyses the 113 submitted (finalised) proposals, which represent 81% (63% in OC2; 64% in OC1) of the applications that were started.

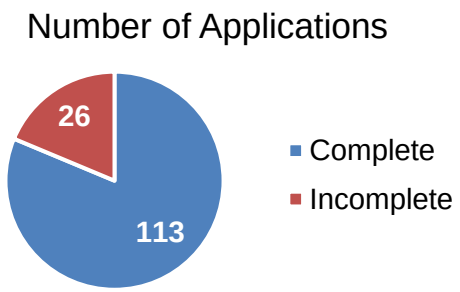

Figure 1: Number of applications complete and incomplete.

3.2 Finalised Applications

Of the 113 applications submitted, 99 (88%; 76% in OC2; 91% in OC1) of them met the eligibility requirements and 14 (12%; 24% in OC2; 9% in OC1) of them did not (see Figure 2). The reasons for ineligibility of applicants were that they were not using the proposal template provided (11) and/or were applying from an ineligible country (1 from Colombia, 1 from Kenya, 2 from Russia, 1 from South Africa).

The number of ineligible applications in OC2 was almost a fourth of the total finalised applications. This issue was addressed in OC3 by reiterating and emphasising the eligibility criteria at different stages of the application process, especially regarding the use of the proposal template. This was done by implementing measures such as:

- including a check box in the application form asking the applicant to confirm that they have used the correct proposal template for their track,
- restricting the upload format in the application form to PDF,
- providing a mock-up proposal included in the Application Kit, and
- presenting good practices and clear dos and don’ts in the webinar.

From the decrease in ineligible applications (from 24% to 12%), it can be seen that the measures have been effective.

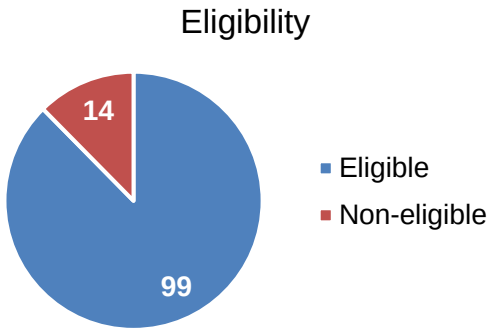

Figure 2: Eligible and non-eligible applications.

3.3 Profile of Applicants

In OC3, applicants were asked whether they were applying as an individual person, a startup/SME, a group of individuals or a combination of two of them (only for SmA track). For the AfM and the SfC track, applicants have chosen the following: Out of the 99 eligible proposals, 27 (32%) have applied as an individual person, 28 (33%) have applied as Startup/SME, 30 (35%) have applied as a group of individuals and 14 (16%) have applied as a combination of two of them.

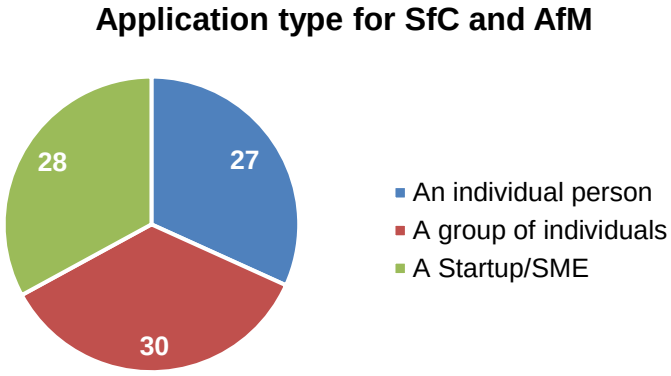

Figure 3: Application type for SfC and AfM applicants.

For the SmA track, the 14 applicants chose the following combinations for their proposals (see Figure 4): 4 (29%) have applied as a combination of two organisations (one Startup/SME for the business part and an artistic company for the artistic part), 3 (21%) of SmA applicants chose an organisation (Startup/SME) as business part and a group of individuals for the artistic part, also 3 (21%) SmA applications were received combining a Startup/SME and an individual person (artist), 2 (14%) SmA application chose a combination of Group of individuals for the entrepreneurial part and an individual person as artistic part, and also 2 (14%) chose two groups of individuals (one group for the entrepreneurial part and one group for the artistic part).

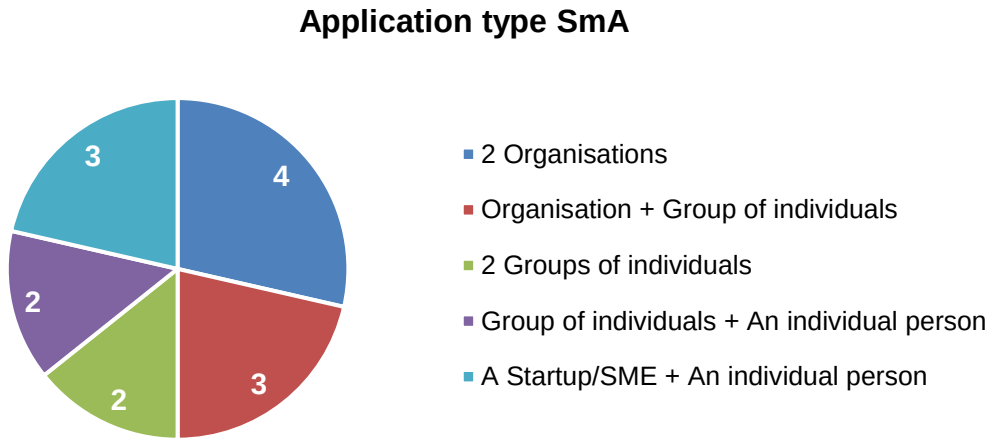

Figure 4: Application type for SmA applications.

3.4 Applications per Track

During three OCs over the course of three years, MediaFutures selected Startup ideas and creative projects to participate in the programme. Each call had three tracks:

- Startups for Citizens (SfC): For Startups to build a product or service that encourages novel, more meaningful ways to engage with media content. They participate in a six-month Accelerator programme.
- Startup meets Artist (SmA): For teams of Startups and artists to collaboratively develop new concepts of data technology and the arts. They take part in a six-month mixed Residency and Accelerator programme.
- Artists for Media (AfM): For Artists with an innovative artwork concept and production process, that critically and materially explore data and technology to question and comment on its impact on individuals and society. Artists participate in a six-month Residency programme.

The following chart (Figure 5) shows the distribution of applications per track for the MediaFutures third Open Call, with AfM being the predominant track with 55 applications (49%), followed by the SfC track with 40 applications (35%) and finally the SmA track with 18 applications (16%). Note that these values are prior to any eligibility screening.

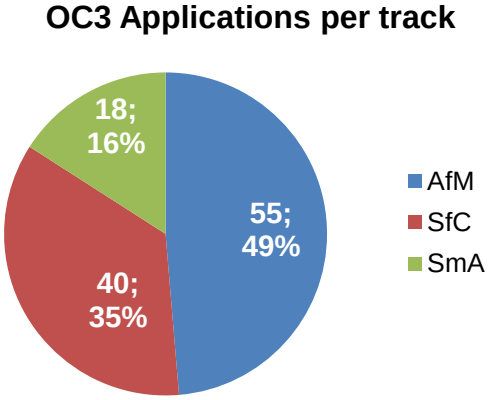

Figure 5: Applications per track.

As shown in the following Table 1 below, there was an increase in applications in the AfM track from OC1 to OC2 (+8) and to OC3 (+1). In the SmA track, although there was an increase in applications (+4) from OC1 to OC2, there was a significant 40% (-12 applications) decrease in applications from OC2 to OC3. For the SfC track, applications decreased from OC1 to OC2 (-8) and further from OC2 to OC3 (-13).

Table 1: Applications per track and per Open Call.

Track	Total			Eligible			Non-eligible		
	OC1	OC2	OC3	OC1	OC2	OC3	OC1	OC2	OC3
AfM	46	54	55	43	44	49	3	10	6
SfC	61	53	40	57	39	36	4	14	4
SmA	26	30	18	21	21	14	5	9	4
Total	**133**	**137** +3%	**113** -15%	**121**	**104**	**99**	**12**	**33**	**14**

Table 1 shows a slight increase in applications received (+3%) from OC1 to OC2, although the challenge was more “restrictive” (single challenge). However, the number of eligible applications of OC1 to OC2 decreased as well. Overall, OC2 has been the “worst” in terms of eligibility rate (76%). For the evolution of applications from OC2 to OC3, the “summer effect” meant that less proposals were received (-18%), but with a good performance of the EU southern countries and with an "improved" submission system that managed to increase the eligibility rate from 78% (OC2) to 88% (OC3), with almost the same number of eligible proposals (99 to 104, only -5%) having -18% of applicants.

3.6 Applications per Country

The third Open Call received proposals from 37 countries. As it can be seen in Figure 6, the predominant countries were the United Kingdom (14), France (13), Spain (11), Germany (10), Italy (7) and The Netherlands (6), followed by applications from USA, Belgium, Russia, and Greece among others. Thanks to the great communication and dissemination efforts of the MediaFutures team, applications from numerous countries were received, including most of the EU member states.

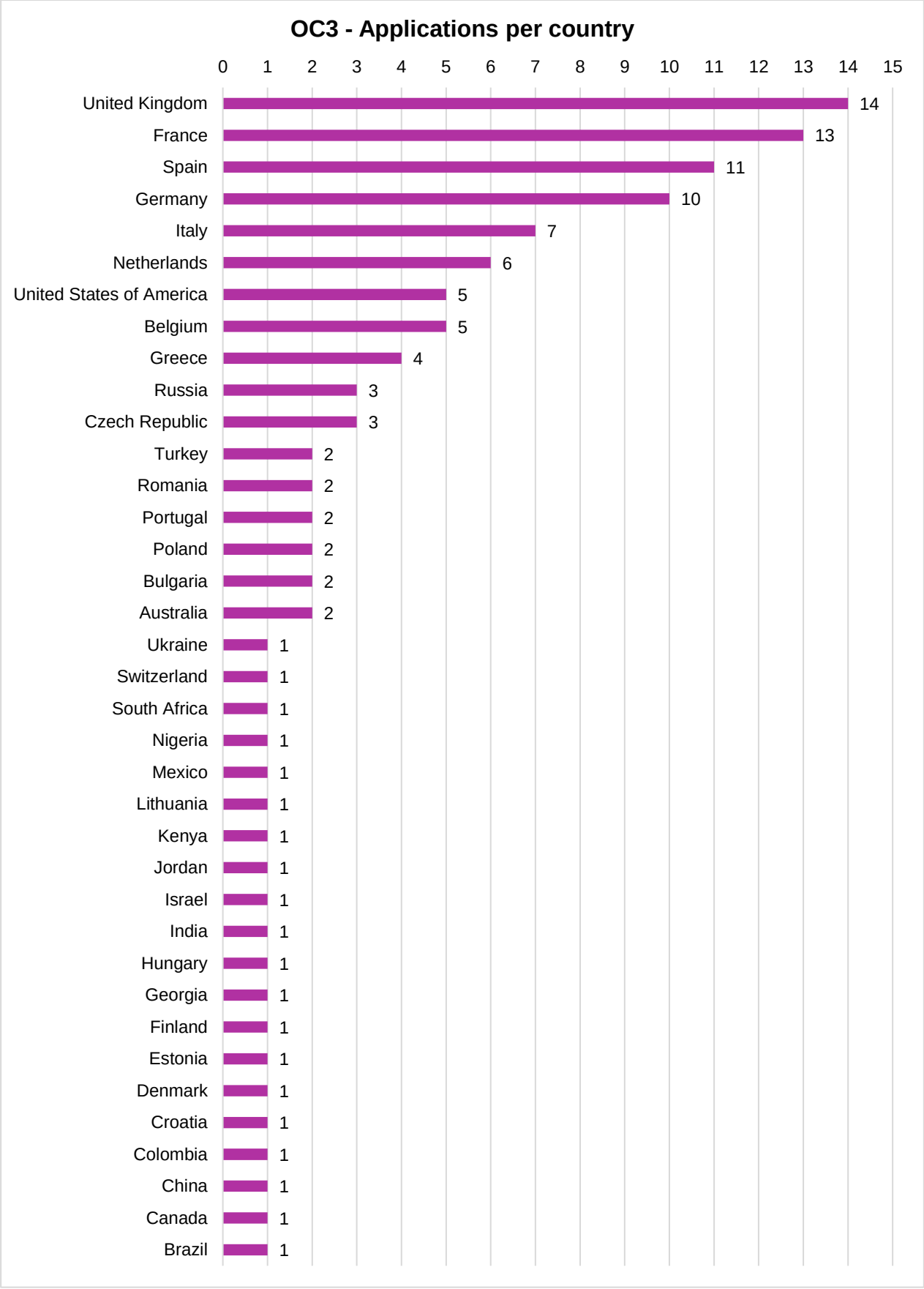

Figure 6: Applications per country.

One item of note is the proportion of applicants applying from the top (wealthiest) quartile of countries by GDP per Capita. While there are restrictions on the countries from which applicants can apply, we have noticed a disproportionate number of applicants applying from the wealthier eligible countries. In the eligible applications coming from 32 countries:

- 18 (56%) are from the top quartile,
- 9 (28%) are from the second quartile,
- 5 (15%) are from the third quartile,
- for SMEs/Startups, no fourth quartile countries are eligible for MediaFutures funding.

However, we can note that from the second to the third open call, the percentage of applications from top quartile countries by GDP per Capita dropped from 60% to 56%, and the number of countries from second or third countries by GDP per Capita rose from 40 to 43%. This shows a small improvement in reaching applicants from less affluent countries, although the total range of countries dropped from 42 to 37 in OC3.

For SfC, 100% of successful applicants were from the top quartile, for AfM this was 80%, and for SmA it was 88%. This suggests that although we were successful in attracting more applications from less affluent countries, these applicants still faced additional barriers in producing applications that were of a high enough quality to receive funding. It should be reiterated that residency of the applicants was not shared with evaluators to avoid unconscious bias on this basis in their decision making.

The following Figure 7 shows the 15 countries of the selected applications. It can be seen that the majority of participants come from the UK, followed by Italian participants and Dutch as well as Spanish applicants.

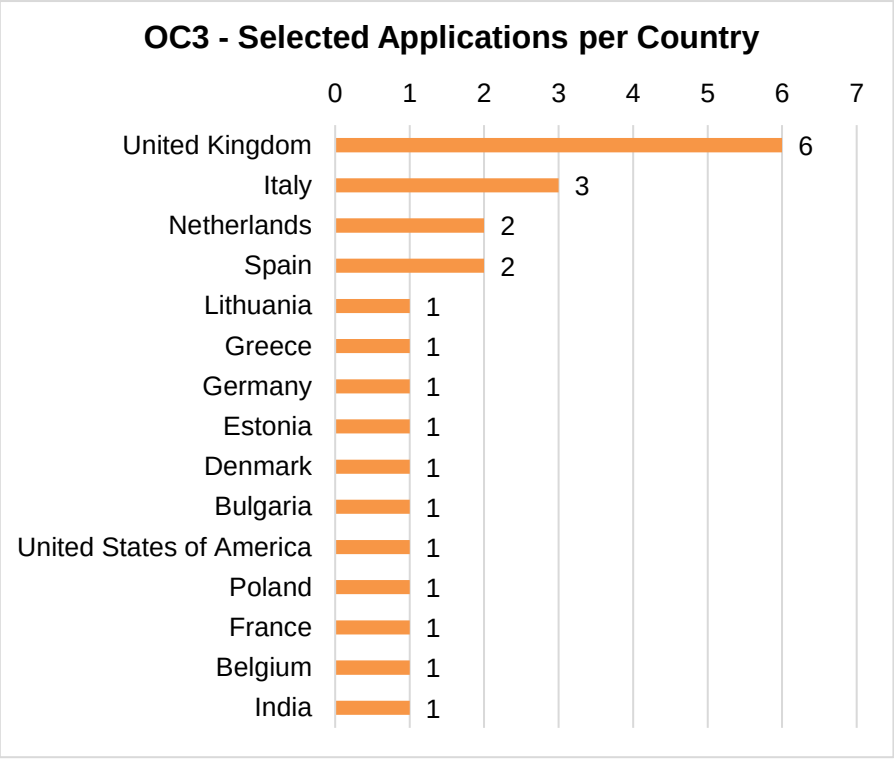

Figure 7: Selected applications per country.

The selected applications per country for each track are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Selected applications per country and track.

Track	Country	Occurrence
AfM	India	1
	Netherlands	1
	United Kingdom	2
	United States of America	1
SfC	Belgium	1
	France	1
	Lithuania	1
	Poland	1
	Italy	1
	Netherlands	1
	UK	1
	Spain	2
SmA	Bulgaria	1
	Denmark	1
	Estonia	1
	Germany	1
	Greece	1
	Italy	2
	United Kingdom	3

3.7 Gender of Applicants

After the MediaFutures first Open Call, the consortium decided to collect data about applicant gender, to monitor diversity in this respect and to gather insights on how the programme can improve in terms of reach and/or support. This was repeated for the third Open Call. The following subsections present a first analysis of this data. It is important to point out that such demographic data was not shared with the evaluators at any time during the evaluation process, in order to reduce the potential for conscious or unconscious bias assessment.

3.7.1 SfC Track

Figure 8 shows gender data from the ‘Startup for Citizens track’, for all applicants, the ones that finalised their applications, those that were eligible, and those that were then selected from evaluation. For the latter, there were 11% more men among the finalised applicants and a significant amount of 18% of participants that chose the “prefer not to say” option.

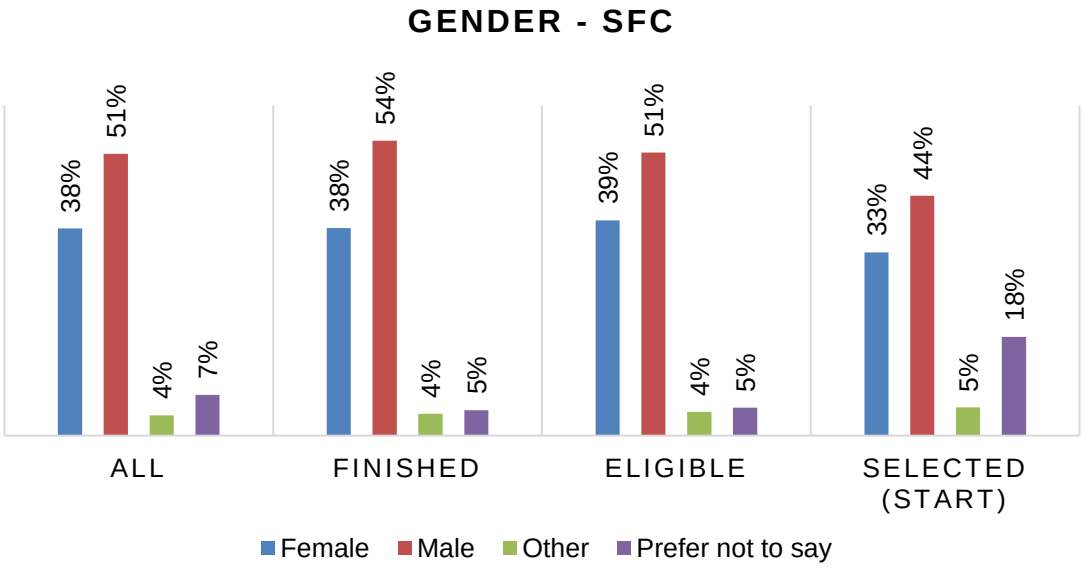

Figure 8: Gender distribution from applicants of the SfC track.

3.7.2 SmA Track

Figure 9 shows the gender distribution of applicants in the 'Startup meets Artist' track. Once more, looking at the gender of applicants selected from the evaluation process, the percentage of male applicants (51%) is higher than female (23%), and as for the SfC applicants there was a significant percentage of applicants that chose the "prefer not to say" option.

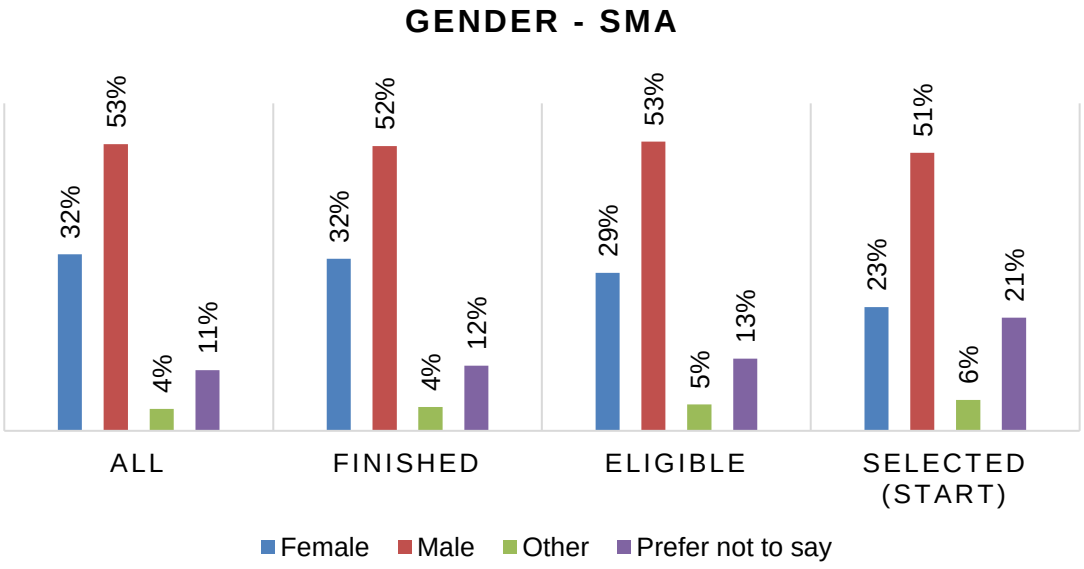

Figure 9: Gender distribution from applicants of the SmA track.

3.7.3 AfM Track

Next, Figure 10 shows the gender distribution of applicants in the 'Artist for Media track'. In terms of finalised applications, there were significantly more females (54%) than male applicants (31%), with a difference of 23%.

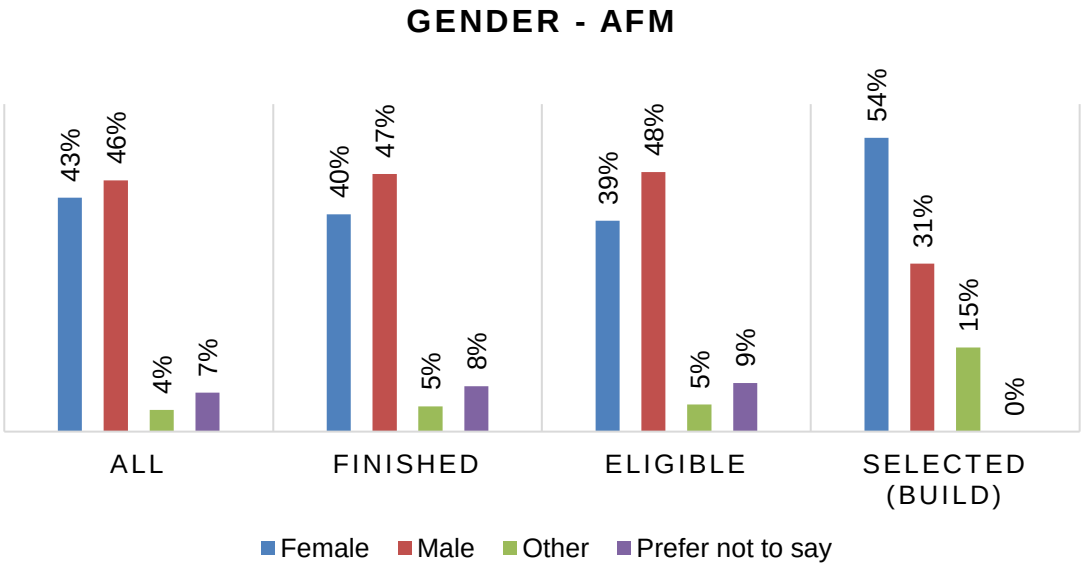

Figure 10: Gender distribution from applicants of the AfM track.

This data shows that the evaluation process does not create any additional barriers to female applicants, but further research will be to understand if the application process is contributing to gender inequality at the application stage.

3.7.4 All OC3 Participants

The following Figure 11 shows the gender of all the participants of all applications registered in the system for the OC3.

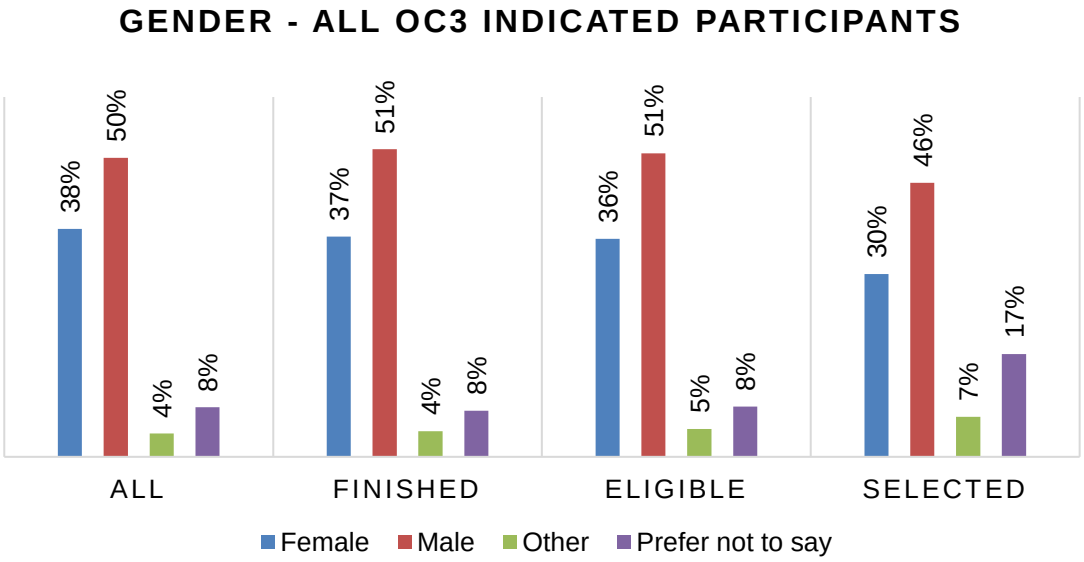

Figure 11: Gender distribution from all indicated participants of the third Open Call.

In the following Table 3, the gender data from OC2 and OC3 are listed for comparison. It can be observed that the number for male applicants has been similar in both OCs. For the female applicants however, the number of selected female applicants suffers a significant drop of 20% from

OC2 to OC3. At the same time, the number of applicants that chose to indicate “Other” and “Prefer not to say” increased by 5% and 15% respectively. A direct improvement of gender equality from OC2 to OC3 can not be denoted.

Table 3: Gender comparison between OC2 and OC3.

	All		Finalised		Eligible		Selected	
Open Calls	**OC2**	**OC3**	**OC2**	**OC3**	**OC2**	**OC3**	**OC2**	**OC3**
Male	52%	50%	54%	51%	53%	51%	45%	46%
Female	41%	38%	40%	37%	41%	36%	50%	30%
Other	4%	4%	3%	4%	2%	5%	2%	7%
Prefer not to say	4%	8%	3%	8%	4%	8%	2%	17%

3.8 Ethnicity of Applicants

In addition to data about applicant gender, data about applicant ethnicity was also collected in the MediaFutures third Open Call, again to provide insights about applicant’s diversity. It is worth noting that this was optional data for applicants to provide, and they had the choice not to provide it if they did not wish to do so.

3.8.1 SfC Track

The ethnicity breakdown of the ‘Startups for Citizens’ track is presented in Figure 12 below. It can be seen that in all four areas of application status (all applications started but not finished, finalised, eligible, and selected) the majority of applicants identified themselves as “White/Caucasian”, followed by applicants that chose “Hispanic / Latinx” as well as applicants that chose the “Prefer not to say” option. Taking a closer look at the selected applicants, every ethnic group was represented except for “Middle-Eastern/North African” and “Other”.

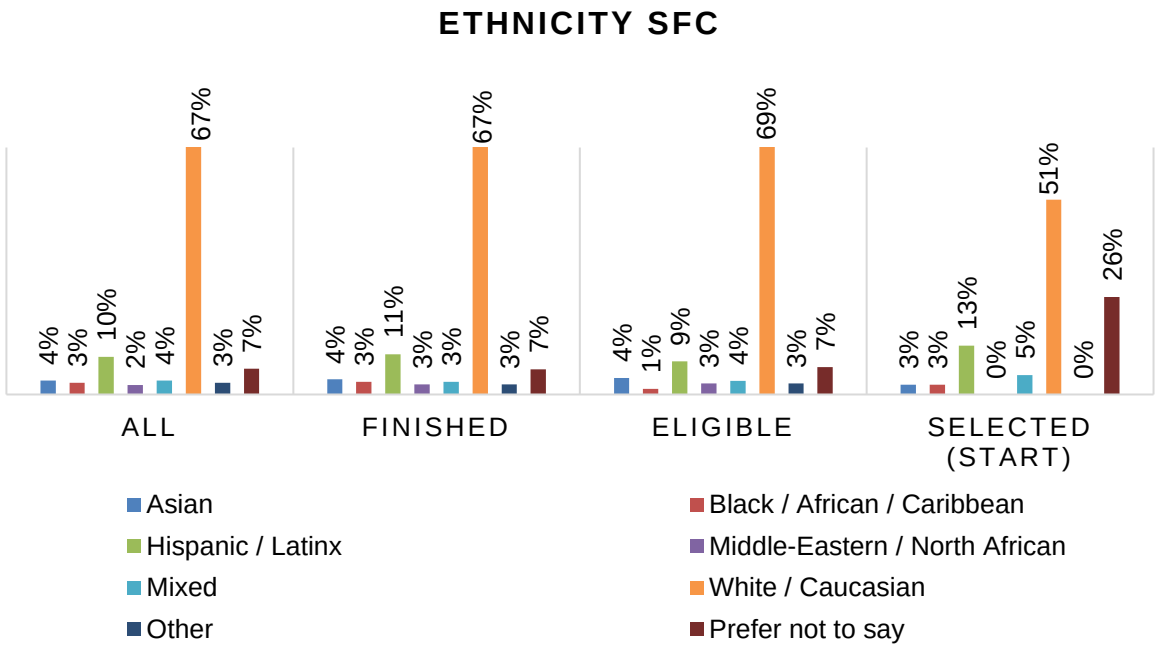

Figure 12: Ethnicity distribution from applicants of the SfC track.

3.8.2 SmA Track

Figure 13 shows the ethnicity breakdown of the 'Startup meets Artist' track. It can be seen that in all application stages, the majority of applicants identified themselves as "White/Caucasian". Compared to the SfC and AfM tracks, the numbers of selected applications of the SmA track had a higher difference between "White/Caucasian" and other ethnic groups.

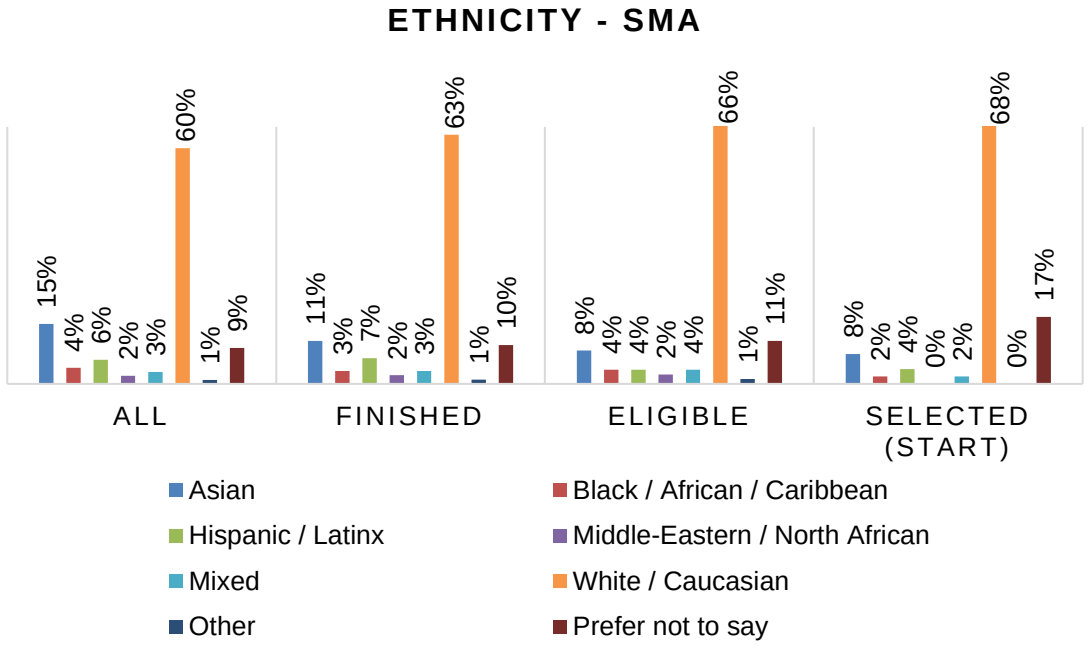

Figure 13: Ethnicity distribution from applicants of the SmA track.

3.8.3 AfM Track

Figure 14 shows the ethnicity breakdown of the 'Artist for Media' track. Similar to the other tracks, the majority of applicants defined themselves as "White/Caucasian". Among the selected applicants, 62% identified as "White/Caucasia" followed by applicants identifying as "Asian" (23%) and by "Black / African / Caribbean" as well as "Middle-Eastern / North African" (both 8%).

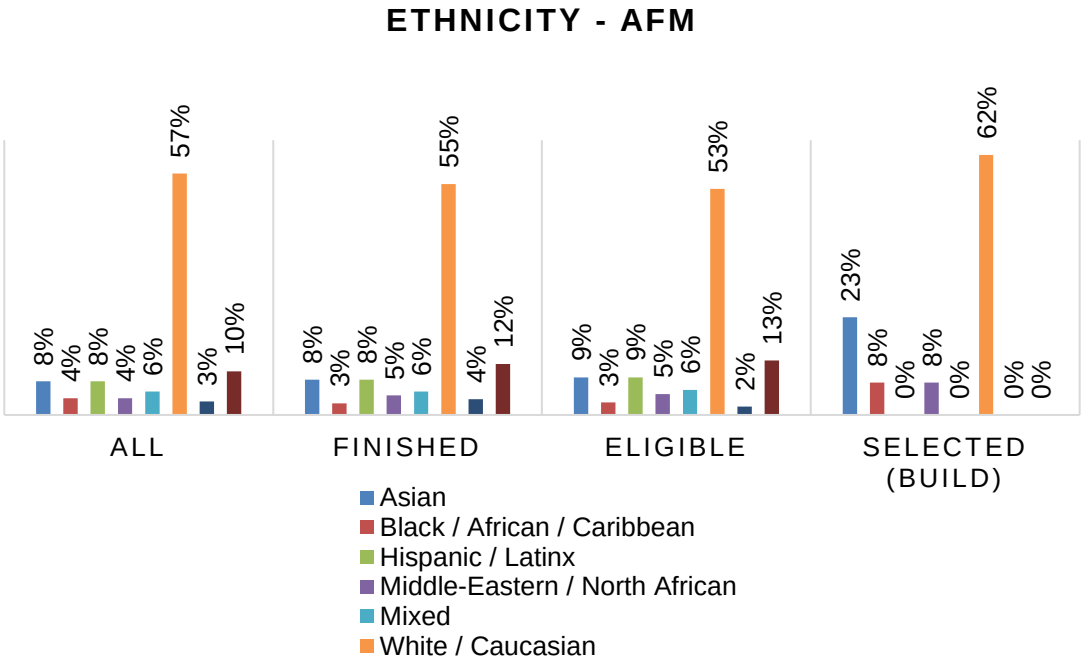

Figure 14: Ethnicity distribution from applicants of the AfM track.

3.8.4 All Tracks

In the following Figure 15, the ethnicity of all the participants registered in the system for OC3 are represented. Overall, a clear majority of selected applicants (61%) identified as "White / Caucasian" followed by 18% of applicants that chose the "Prefer not to say" option and 8% of applicants that identified as "Asian" followed by a 7% that identified as "Hispanic / Latinx". Furthermore, it can be seen that all ethnicities were represented among the OC3 applicants.

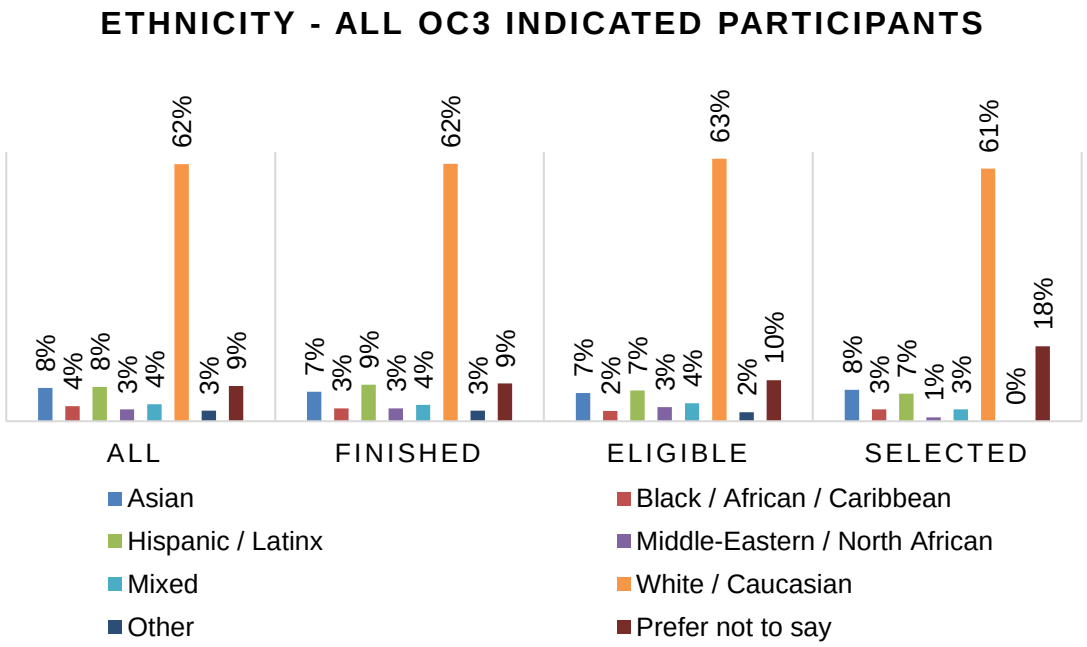

Figure 15: Ethnicity distribution from all indicated participants of the third Open Call.

MediaFutures was active in the promotion of the third Open Call by reaching out to a more diverse audience, making an extra effort by activating specific networks of underrepresented groups in the promotion of OC3 (Women and innovation; Ethnic minorities organisations; LGBT community; Cultural institutions in other countries).

In the following Table 4 the ethnicity of OC2 and OC3 applicants are listed for comparison. The data in general is relatively similar from OC2 to OC3, with only minor discrepancies. When analysing the selected applicants, the only number that differs by more than 5% is the one for the applicants who chose the “Prefer not to say option”. The number states that 10% more applicants preferred not to give any indication in regard to their ethnicity. A significant improvement in diversity can not be deduced from the data.

Table 4: Ethnicity comparison between OC2 and OC3.

	All		Finalised		Eligible		Selected	
Open Calls	**OC2**	**OC3**	**OC2**	**OC3**	**OC2**	**OC3**	**OC2**	**OC3**
Asian	10%	8%	7%	7%	7%	7%	5%	8%
Black/African/Caribbean	8%	4%	5%	3%	2%	2%	5%	3%
Hispanic/Latinx	6%	8%	6%	9%	5%	7%	4%	7%
Middle-Eastern/North African	6%	3%	7%	3%	7%	3%	1%	1%
Mixed	6%	4%	7%	4%	6%	4%	6%	3%
White/Caucasian	52%	62%	58%	62%	61%	63%	65%	61%

Other/Prefer to specify	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	5%	0%
Prefer not to say	8%	9%	8%	9%	9%	10%	8%	18%

3.9 Selected Proposals

From the full evaluation process beginning with 113 submitted (complete) proposals (eligible and ineligible), 24 proposals were finally selected, representing 21% of the initial intake (see Table 5).

Table 5: Selected proposals per track.

Track	Number of selected proposals	As a percentage of submitted proposals in the track
Startups for Citizens (SfC)	9	20%
Startup meets Artist (SmA)	10	45%
Artists for Media (AfM)	5	7%

3.10 Evolution of Submissions

For the third and last MediaFutures Open Call, the submission system was moved from the F6S platform (used in OC1 and OC2) to an integrated form on the MediaFutures Website, developed on the SurveyMonkey platform. This change was made as an initiative to improve the application process. The main improvements that were wanted and reached were:

- the user experience for the applicants in general,
- making it more intuitive and easier to fill out the application form,
- avoid potential applicants mistake, such as uploading the proposal in a wrong format,
- make the application reporting process more efficient for the evaluators,
- simplifying the analysis and reporting process for the consortium.

Figure 16 shows the evolution/accumulation of third OC submissions for all finished applications. In comparison with the data from OC2, the trend of the submission rate is similar, with an exponential increase of applications incoming towards the closing of the OC. However, because of the change in the application process to the SurveyMonkey form, information on the duration of an application being open was lost. In consequence, the information on the time invested in the proposals was lost as well.

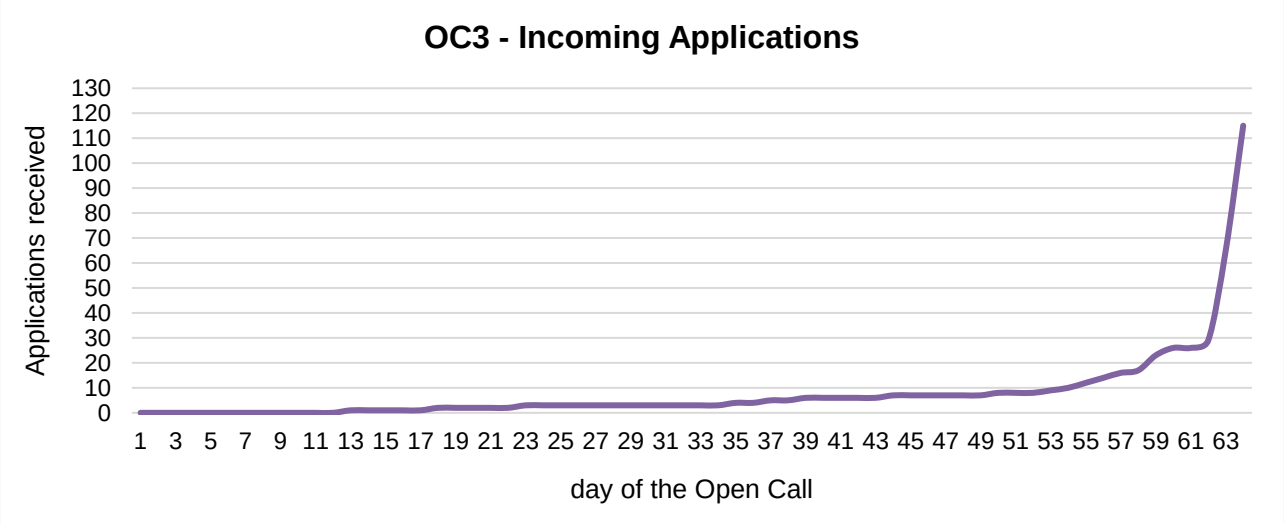

Figure 16: Application received during OC3.

4 Findings/Conclusions/Lessons Learned

In this section, findings, conclusions as well as lessons learned regarding the third and last MediaFutures Open Call are presented.

The experiences gathered throughout the successful preparation and evaluation of OC1 and OC2 provided a founded basis for OC3. It gave the opportunity to go one step further and take a chance to innovate, to try something new. Hence, this was done for OC3, resulting in additional findings, and gained experiences that are of great value for future cascade funding activities.

The OC1 opened the doors for applicants to submit their proposals to one of three challenges and choose one of three tracks. From OC1, it was concluded that several challenges combined with several tracks resulted in confusion. Applicants were not sure which track to choose or what challenge to address. Therefore, the number of challenges was reduced to one single challenge for OC2 but maintaining the three tracks (AfM, SfC, SmA). The results of OC2 showed that this had been the correct decision. **The single challenge approach set more focused scope, but the projects were much more aligned with general aim, while keeping a similar level of applicants** (Testimonial: “The second call for MediaFutures was clearly well formulated and had an inspiring level of reflection. An inspiring starting point for the attempt to qualify what I think is a concern for us all: dis- and misinformation”). In consequence, this scheme was implemented as well for OC3.

As a novelty, the third OC was open during summertime (from the 28th of June to the 30th of August 2022) and changed the closure time to a less confusing one (OC1-OC2: 12:00 PM noon CET; OC3: 10:00 AM CEST). This change was necessary to achieve a **better timing of the OC3 MF Support Programme (START: Nov-Dec’22; BUILD: Dec’22-May’23; EXHIBIT: Jun’23)** and to finalise all the project impact analysis within the Grant Agreement duration (before Aug’23). It was expected that the number of applicants was going to decrease. This was indeed the case, but the eligibility rate rose significantly from 76% from OC2 to 88% for OC3, resulting in almost the same number of eligible applications: 99 in OC3 compared to 104 in OC2, which is only 5% less. Furthermore, it was expected that especially applications from southern European countries would be less. This was not

the case. The southern European countries Spain, Italy and France were under the top 5 countries with most applications submitted to the OC3. This result is the fruit of the improved application process and the promotion activities performed in preparation of the Open Call.
As a further novelty, it was decided to use SurveyMonkey as an entry door for OC3 applications. **The switch from F6S to SurveyMonkey as a submission platform** had its pros and cons: on one hand, **it did improve the user experience, scoring 4,6 out of 5 stars.** Furthermore, it was possible to gather all applications from all tracks with one single form in one place: the MediaFutures website. This was not possible with F6S. On the other hand, switching away from the F6S platform also had its negative side. The new platform did need some time for the persons involved to adapt and learn the ropes. This made the overall preparation, monitoring and evaluation of the Open Call more time consuming. In the end, the whole new process achieved **less problems/complaints with last minute applications (OC3) (-50% wrt OC2) and higher eligibility rate (OC3) (+13% wrt OC2).**

Like in the past OCs, several activities were undertaken to support artists and startups with their applications. In this context, two webinars and matchmaking events were organised. For OC3 the first webinar focussed on the presentation of MediaFutures and how to apply to OC3 and the second webinar was structured as a Q&A session. The number of attendances to the webinars of OC3 was the lowest compared to the webinars from the past OCs. Both webinars were recorded and uploaded on YouTube, where they were viewed a total of 316 times. Therefore, it can be concluded that the webinars were helpful and had a positive impact. Main conclusions from the improved support for applicants approach (including the improved Application Kit) were:

- **Proposals with less formal defects (both in terms of eligibility and practical mistakes) and more aligned with the call requirements**
- **Higher quality of proposals**
- **Better valuation from applicants about the "Support service"** (Testimonials: "Lots of background information and instructions on how to fill out the long but informative application form helped. By the way, the application form helps a lot to better define the nature of the project - thanks to its good structure")

Regarding the third Open Call results, 139 (real) expressions of interest (219 for OC2 and 207 for OC1) and 113 completed proposals (137 in OC2 and 133 in OC1), from 37 countries (39 for OC2 and 32 for OC1) were registered. Although the number of total proposals was lowest, it is worth mentioning that the number of eligible applications was only 5% fewer than in OC2. Considering the Open Call being open in summertime, this is a good result.

In the OC3, the applicants were asked to indicate their gender and ethnicity in the application form. The collected data showed that 46% of all registered participants from selected teams identified as men, followed by 30% that identified as female, 17% that preferred not to say and lastly 7% of participants identified as "other". Comparing the gender between the different tracks, it showed that for the SfC and for the SmA track the majority identified as men, as for the AfM, the majority identified as female. Regarding ethnicity, the majority of all participants from the selected projects identified as "White / Caucasian" (61%).

When comparing the diversity data of OC2 and OC3, it was observed that the numbers were relatively similar, except for the number of applicants that opted for the "Prefer not to say" option. In this case an increase was observed (15% increase when asking for gender and a 10% increase when asking for the ethnicity of applicants). A direct improvement of diversity could not be denoted.

In this sense, the diversity is a point that could be improved in future cascade funding calls with similar focus and structure. Especially regarding the artistic part, which has no eligibility restrictions regarding the country of residence.

5 Abbreviation List

AfM	Artists for Media
SfC	Startups for Citizens
SmA	Startup meets Artist
OC	Open Call

6 More Information about this Document

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Deliverable number	D1.6
Deliverable title	Summary of calls v3
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Work package and task	WP1, T1.6
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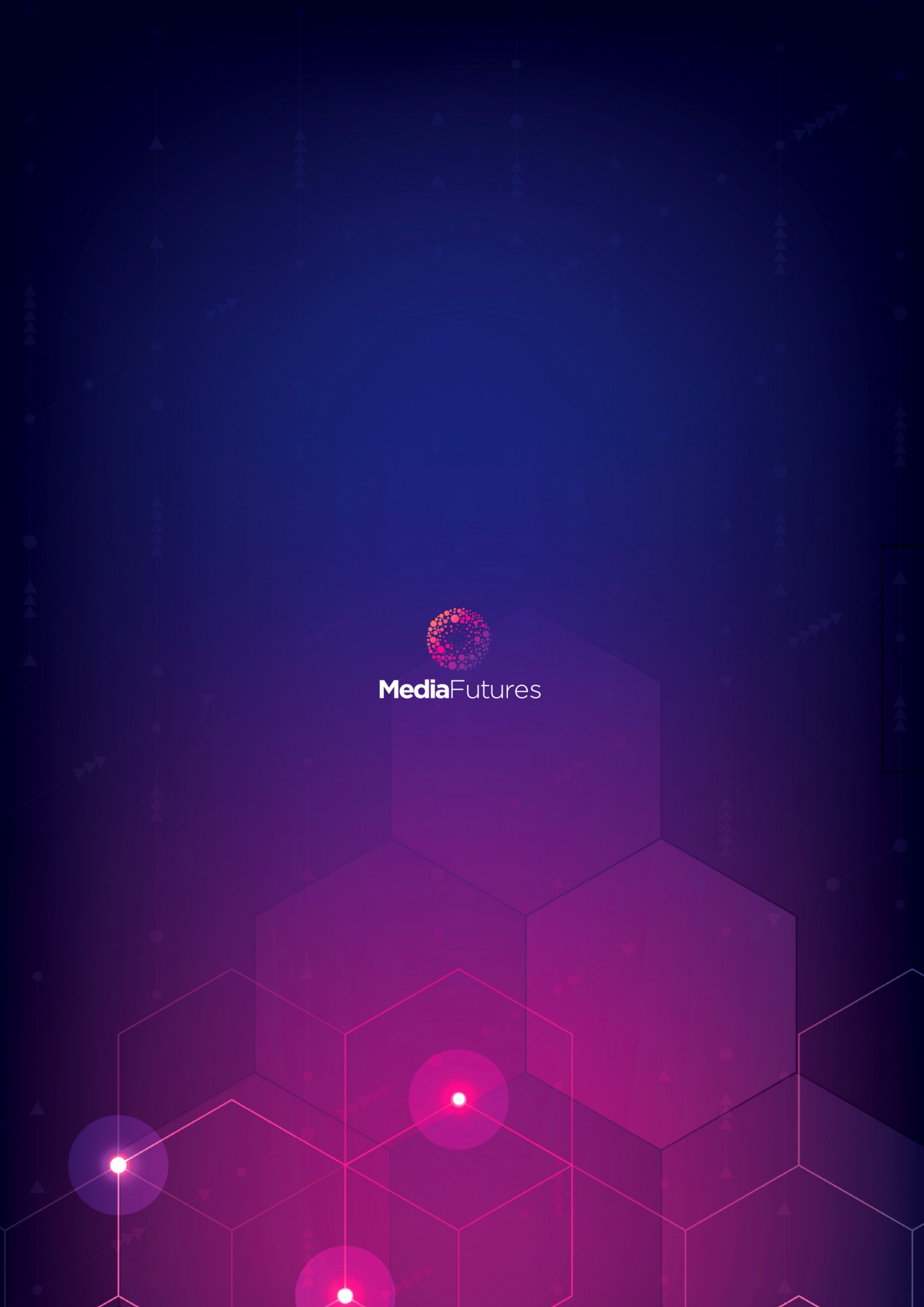
MediaFutures