Story Development Premium Fund FAQs

What kind of things can we apply for?

The Fund covers Development costs. The development budget may include whatever the team needs to advance their project towards production stage including, but not limited to, a treatment, scriptment, draft script, bible, research, writers' rooms, workshops, table reads and/or the production of a Proof of Concept (POC) or sizzle reel. It may also include late-stage development support such as funding for a budget or schedule.

How much should I apply for?

There is no cap on funding but requested amounts must be reasonable relative to:

- The project's scope, scale, anticipated production budget and intended platform (e.g.; film, broadcast television);
- The length and format of the material (e.g.; half-hour episode, one-hour episode, feature, , series bible, treatment,);
- The current phase of development and the development strategy outlined in your Creative Vision and Development Plan;
- The stage of career or level of experience of the Key Creatives; and
- Any additional sources of development financing raised or expected.

Funding requests and Development budgets should reflect current industry and award standards for crew. Funding requests should also align with Screen Australia's contribution to development costs guide below. These are not official rates. Please discuss industry and guild rates with your relevant guilds and organisations – ADG, AWG, MEAA and SPA.

Screen Australia will only fund Australian creatives and costs of the development budget, but will also contribute to costs for international consultants, mentors or script editors.

Screen Australia development funding cannot be retrospective.

Screen Australia can contribute up to the following rates:

Role	Material	Screen Australia's Contribution
Writer(s)	Outline, Treatment or Scriptment	Up to $10,000
	Series Bible	Up to $10,000
	Drafts (including polish on each, and where required, shared between co-writers)	Up to $20,000 per draft, relative to format and length
Directors	To give notes on drafts and attend meetings	$3,000 - $15,000

Script Editor	Series Bible, Outline, Treatment or Scriptment	Up to $3,000
	Draft	Up to $6,000
Producer	Bible, Outline, Treatment or Scriptment	Up to $5,000
	Draft, Proof of Concept, Late-Stage Elements	Up to $10,000
Consultants	Story, Social Strategy, Digital, Mentors, Community, Subject Matter Experts, Authors of Source Material	Up to $3,000
Writers Rooms	With itemised budget, as per guidance below	Up to $50,000
Workshops	Table reads or other story development processes substantiated by the Creative Vision and Development Plan	Up to $10,000
Overheads	Room hire, facilities, catering (not including a company's own offices or facilities) substantiated by the Budget Breakdown submitted at time of application	Up to $3,000
Research	According to a research plan substantiated by the Creative Vision and Development Plan	Up to $10,000
Proof of Concept / Sizzle Reel, Shareable Content for Generate	With itemised budget, as per guidance below	Up to $50,000
Proof of Concept / Sizzle Reel, Shareable Content for Premium	With itemised budget, as per guidance below	Up to $100,000
Legal and Option Fees	Legal advice, contracting, source material option fees	Up to $3,000
Carers' Costs	As per guidance below	Up to $3,000

Writers' Rooms:

Writers' Rooms should be expressed within the budget with a reasonable level of detail in each line item, for example:

(Name of Writer 1) x (Number) days x brainstorming

(Name of Writer 1) x (Number) days x story conferencing

(Name of Writer 2) x (Number) days x brainstorming

(Name of Writer 2) x (Number) days x story conferencing

Note Taker x (Number) days

(Name of Consultant) x (Number) days x consulting

Where applicable, amounts may include fringes and should be rounded to the nearest $50.

Carers' Costs?

Screen Australia can contribute up to $3,000 per successful Screen Australia development application to cover the costs to replace care otherwise informally provided to the elderly (65 years and older), dependent or disabled persons or parenting/guardianship and other forms of unpaid childcare, by one or more of the team's Key Creatives.

The types of paid care that can be covered by Screen Australia's contribution to cover out of pocket expenses of an informal carer may include:

- Short-term before and after school care

- Casual preschool attendance

- In-home, residential or day care respite for elders and/or people with a disability or chronic illness

- Short-term in-home childcare support.

This can be shared if more than one person in the team is needing a contribution towards Carer's costs.

Screen Australia's contribution towards Carers' Costs must not cover care already paid for by other government support mechanisms or existing care arrangements. It is to pay for short-term alternative care to free up the time of funded practitioners so they can concentrate on the development of their screen project.

Proof of Concept (POC)?

A Proof of Concept is a visual demonstration or showcase of the longer form project. This might include:

- a pilot episode for a series e.g.; *Over and Out*, or

- a short film that speaks to a feature film e.g.; Jennifer Kent's *Monster* to *The Babadook*, or

- a sizzle reel that features a montage, clips or segments that clearly and efficiently outline the concept and tone of the project.

Screen Australia expects crew on a Proof of Concepts to be paid at award rates. Unless there is additional funding or a low- budget production methodology, we expect POCs to be no longer than 10 minutes long.

Please keep in mind, your development application needs to pertain to the long form project (i.e.; project duration, format and production budget) and not the Proof of Concept project. The application form specifies when the applicant should speak to the Proof of Concept and what information is required.

A script of the POC must be included in your application as additional Story Document materials.

What makes a compelling application?

Although Screen Australia has opened up eligibility, competition for funding is high. You will still need to think strategically about submitting a strong and convincing application for funding while considering the aims of each fund and the assessment criteria.

In general, you need to think about:

- What makes your story distinctive and stand out from all the others for an audience?
- Does the team or individual's experience and/or critical or commercial success make sense in regards to budget size?
- Is the budget size reasonable in regards to the potential audience and commercial returns? Although Screen Australia's main focus is not on commercial returns, we want people thinking about how they are building sustainable businesses and sustainable creative careers.

What do I need to provide in my application?

- **A simple pitch to camera, maximum four minutes.** This can take any form – people, pictures, text on screen, music, sound, etc. It does not need to be a highly produced video to 'sell' to assessors but it is an opportunity to talk through your submission. The Pitch to Camera can be presented by the applicant or the Key Creative team attached to the project (Writer/Director/Producer). You must upload the pitch directly to the application (maximum 200MB) but you may also include a link for the assessors to view at a higher resolution if necessary.

  Be sure to include the following details:
  - Please tell us about the long-form story.
  - Why are you and/or your team driven to make this project now?
  - What makes your story distinctive and stand out from all the others for an audience?
  - Tell us a bit about the key creatives and where you are all at in your careers.
  - If you are applying for a Proof of Concept (POC), please also tell us about the idea, how it connects with the long-form project and how it will raise awareness of the project and team, attract finance and/or build an audience for the long-form project.

- **A one-paragraph and one-page synopsis for the long-form project**. We need to see the core of the dramatic story engine that will support the long-form project. If you are also applying for a POC, please also include a one-paragraph synopsis for the POC.

- **A sample of your previous work.** Remember, you need to showcase the best of you and/or your team's work. We don't want to see everything you've ever made. For emerging key creatives, please supply:
  - A sample of your previous or current written work, maximum 10 pages, and/or
  - A link to the best example of your produced work, maximum 15 minutes.

- **Pathway to audience.** We want you to be thinking about reaching your audience and how you will finance your project right from the inception of your screen story concept and to build this into the development process.
  - Who is the target audience for your project?
  - Why will this audience want to see your project?
  - How will the audience find and engage with your project?
  - How will you finance the production of your project? How will the project generate revenue for the team/individual/production company? Or, if this project is primarily a talent escalator, how will this create audience and marketplace interest in the team and their next project?

  See our [Pathway to Audience Guide](#) for more information.

- **A Creative Vision Statement.** We want to know what the vision for your project is – what it will look, sound and feel like and how this will create an entertaining and satisfying experience for your intended audience.

- **A Development Plan**. The plan should identify where your project is currently, the challenges it has delivering the above and what you will do in in terms of the application of craft, research and imagination to address this and produce strong scripts that will be able to move into production. The plan also provides the opportunity for the applicant to outline the development methodology for the stage of development being applied for, and outline the thinking behind the development budget.

- **A story document or story materials** that effectively communicate and evoke the story for the long

form project. This could be a story outline (3-10 pages), treatment (10-20 pages), scriptment (10-50 pages), script(s) (for feature films max 120 pages), series outline or other documents relevant to the project's story, platform and length. See our [Story Documents Guide](#) for more information.

We recognise that screen storytellers may develop projects in different ways, so we are also open to receiving other kinds of story materials such as existing project footage, visual materials (e.g., sample scenes, story boards, artwork or images), underlying IP, as well as music and/or sound. If these are the only type of story materials submitted without there being an accompanying story document, then these materials must effectively convey the central story and/or the argument, provide a strong sense of the central characters and give a sense of the intended onscreen experience for an audience.

- If you are applying for the production of a POC, please also include the story document or story materials for the POC. Note: You must include story materials for the long-form project at the same time you apply for the POC funds, even if you are only applying primarily or solely for the funds for the production of the POC.

- **Additional materials** that will help communicate your creative vision, such as images, music or related material. You can also include supporting documents or materials that assist in speaking to one or all of the assessment criteria points.

- **A development budget:** You can apply for whatever the project and team need to feed the creative vision and develop the project towards financing and production. For example, you may apply for fees for:

  - key creatives - writer, producer, director
  - key heads of department
  - script editor
  - consultants – story, social media/online, marketing, financing
  - mentors –producer, writer, director
  - reader's reports
  - podcasts (as part of the development to screen) *

  - research
  - writers' rooms
  - legal costs & options
  - budgets, schedules and casting
  - visual materials - sizzle reels, look books, pitch materials
  - time critical filming
  - table reads & workshops with actor.

The development budget should be detailed, reasonable and strategic, reflecting what you need to effectively undertake a particular stage of development. Although there is no cap, a reasonable development budget for the **Generate** fund without the costs of a POC would probably sit between $10k and $30k. **Premium** development budgets may be higher, up to $100k, and may include multiple phases of development in the one application.

* Please note, Screen Australia doesn't provide funding support for standalone podcasts. Applicants requesting funding for podcasts to develop long form screen projects should outline the podcast's purpose and development strategy. Our primary support in any development application with a podcast element, is on the screen component of the IP.

What if I don't have a producer attached to my project? Can I still apply to the Premium Fund?

Yes, you can. The Premium fund is designed for applicants who have demonstrated know-how to develop the project, raise finance and execute on the vision in the anticipated production. All applicants will need to show they have thought about their pathway to audience and market and how they will reach them. For applications from writers or directors, this should include a strategy to attach a producer at a later stage of development.

How will my project be assessed?

You project will be assessed by a member of the Screen Australia Online Team. Screen Australia may also engage external assessors, and we base decisions on the published assessment criteria.

How long will I have to wait for a result?

Once your project is eligible, you will hear back from Screen Australia within 6 weeks. If this process is likely to take longer you will be notified of any delays.

If my project has previously applied for Development funding and been declined, can I apply again?

A project that has been declined once may apply again, but you must be able to demonstrate substantive changes.

If your project has been declined twice you are not eligible to apply with the same project again.

What if my project has already had Screen Australia development support in Premium? Can I apply for further funding?

If you have been funded previously through Story Development you can reapply. Please contact Development@screenaustralia.gov.au and speak with our Program Operations team or Story Development team member before reapplying.

Can I apply to Premium with more than one project?

There are no limits on the number of projects you apply for. However, as this is a highly competitive process, we expect applicants to be strategic about when they apply, and their projects to be rigorously thought through and strong against all the assessment criteria.

How does contracting, payment and delivery work?

Successful projects are contracted with a Development Grant Agreement (DGA), and within 7 days of execution of this agreement 100% of the funds are paid.

Generally, you will be expected to deliver in 6 months from the signing of the funding contract.

Do I have to repay any funding awarded under Premium?

Funding will be in the form of a grant and subject to a **non-negotiable** standard contract.

Under this contract, unless otherwise agreed, if the project also has production funding from Screen Australia, we expect the Development Funding to be repaid to us from the production budget for the project, on the first day of principal photography. The Development Funding will become part of Screen Australia's total production funding in the project and will be deducted from the first drawdown.

Where the project goes into production without Screen Australia funding, Screen Australia may require the producer to repay the development funding previously provided by Screen Australia in order to acquire any copyright interest held by Screen Australia.

If funded, your contract with Screen Australia will outline your obligations to Screen Australia regarding repayment, if produced, as well as requirements for acknowledging Screen Australia's grant in your funded project.

How is my project announced?

Successful projects will be contacted by a member of the Screen Australia Communication Team to discuss the announcement. This will most likely take the form of a media release along with multiple other development projects.

If I don't satisfy the requirements for Premium and/or have a project which is under the budget thresholds, which funding steam should I apply for?

The Premium Fund is designed for higher budget productions from experienced content makers with a significant track record on successful projects, and the ability to attract the finance required.

If you are a new or emerging applicant/team, you probably don't yet have the kind of market knowledge, relationships or success that would enable you to attract the finance needed for higher budget projects. Therefore, you would be best served by Generate Development Fund which is about identifying and supporting talent at realistic budget levels. Or, you will need to consider the make-up of your team and their range of experiences that are appropriate to the budget level of your project.

I don't know if I'm ready to apply, can I speak to someone?

Yes, you can chat to a member of the Program Operations Team to discuss eligibility criteria and application process, or a member of the Development Team to discuss where your project is at. Please email development@screenaustralia.gov.au and someone will be in touch. Please read the guidelines and this FAQ before contacting us.