
PILOT PROGRAM GUIDELINES: **GENDER MATTERS:** **BETTER DEALS**

ISSUED 28 JULY 2016

Contact the Distribution Manager

Before applying to Screen Australia it is essential that you contact the distribution Manager to discuss your project. Please call the Program Operations team on 1800 507 901 if you are unsure who to speak with.

We also encourage you to contact the Program Operations team before you submit your application to discuss any eligibility questions and ensure all of the required supporting material is in place. This will mean we can process your application as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Call them on 1800 507 901.

The Australian distribution landscape for feature films is challenging and securing a local distribution deal is particularly tough for female-driven productions.

Gender Matters: Better Deals is a pilot program that will create a new incentive for distributors considering quality female-driven projects. In exchange, the producer may share a small percentage of the film's receipts (to be negotiated between the producer and the distributor, with Screen Australia approval) returning revenue back to the industry to support the development of future projects.

This pilot program will give qualifying producers greater negotiating power to secure better deals with distributors. It will encourage healthy competition and lead to greater discussion and consideration of the gender makeup for commercial Australian projects in the local market. It also encourages positive collaboration between producers and distributors, giving the producer a voice throughout the distribution process.

This funding support will remove some of the barriers and disincentives affecting films that are perceived to be riskier in the marketplace and encouraging distributors to consider new and exciting projects from skilled female creative teams.

Who can apply?

Funding through this program is not limited to projects produced with Screen Australia production investment. Projects supported through this pilot program may also be eligible to apply for Screen Australia's [P&A Plus](#) Program, closer to their release date.

An application must be submitted by the Producer and must first meet the following eligibility criteria in order to be assessed for funding:

- The applicant must meet the general eligibility criteria for Screen Australia funding in the [Terms of Trade](#)
- The project must be a feature-length Australian fiction film
- The project must have an acceptable offer to theatrically distribute the project in Australia (with sufficiently detailed commercial terms) from an appropriate domestic distributor with a minimum guarantee of no less than \$100,000. The minimum guarantee must also be approximately 5% of the production budget
- The project's total budget is under \$10 million
- The project should have a viable and realistic finance plan showing that 75% of the budget has been covered (including the producer offset)
- The project must have at least three of the following elements to satisfy the Gender Matters 'Three Tick Test':
 - Female producer
 - Female director
 - Female writer
 - Female writer/director (counts for two ticks)
 - Female protagonist

What funding is available?

This pilot program has been allocated approximately \$1,000,000 over two years. Screen Australia will match the distributor's minimum guarantee of up to \$300,000, however matched funding is not automatic and each application will be assessed against the published criteria below.

Our support will be provided as a grant to be used as a non-recoupable contribution to the distributor's P&A budget. Funds must be used to boost the project's visibility in the market and preferably be allocated to paid media costs, for the Australian theatrical release. In exchange for P&A support it is recommended that the distributor share a small percentage of the distribution fees with the producer. This will encourage the producer to participate in the distribution process, gaining valuable insights into current feature film distribution strategies in Australia. This component is by negotiation and will be considered on a case by case basis, however, preference will be given to projects that reach a fee sharing agreement.

Screen Australia may exercise flexibility in the application of these guidelines and in exceptional circumstances projects that fall outside these benchmarks may be considered.

Meaningful consultation of the marketing strategy and P&A budget between the distributor and Screen Australia is required and Screen Australia must approve its contribution to the P&A budget. Funds cannot replace elements of the production's Dedicated Marketing Budget (DMB).

What is the application timing & process?

Applications for the Gender Matters: Better Deals pilot must be made before an application is submitted for Screen Australia Production funding or when at least 75% of the budget is in place. Applications must be made via the online application portal and include all supporting materials.

The application materials required include:

- Marketing document outlining:
 - The distribution strategy
 - The intended audience
 - A positioning statement
 - Key selling points
 - Comparative titles
- One page synopsis
- Finance plan in the standard format available from the Screen Australia website, indicating which sources are confirmed
- Evidence of any confirmed sources of finance or marketplace commitment
- Principal terms of the Distribution offer
- If applicable, any visual materials that may evoke the tone, mood and style of the project (mood reel, look book etc.).

What is the assessment process?

Complete and eligible applications will be reviewed by Screen Australia executives and/or external industry specialists as required.

Screen Australia will advise applicants in writing of the success or otherwise of their application.

Assessment criteria

Each eligible application will be assessed on its own merits, taking the following into account:

- The quality and track record of the team and distributor
- The viability of the marketing strategy and the realistic expectations of audience reach
- The level of the distributor's investment including the commercial terms of the distribution agreement and the details of the fee sharing arrangement as an indication of their commitment to the film.

The above criteria are all equally weighted. Other factors including availability of funds, diversity of slate and the gender and cultural diversity of the team may also influence Screen Australia's funding decisions.

Terms of funding

If a project has been approved for funding, Screen Australia reserves the right to withdraw such funding any time after four months of the date of such approval, if the project is not in production.