



Online Production: Guidelines

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Through the Online Production program, Screen Australia invests in the production of scripted, children's and documentary projects that take risks and push the envelope of storytelling in the online space.

This fund is aimed at lower-budget productions which may present talent development or project development opportunities. Online production values these benefits ahead of commercial gain, so it is expected that above-the-line fees and company overheads are budgeted modestly in accordance with those aims.

In most cases this fund applies to projects releasing on social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and TikTok, as well as Virtual Reality (and other Extended Reality) projects. Screen Australia recognises this part of the industry is fast-changing, so other release platforms may be eligible.

WHAT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

Applications may be for any amount up to \$500,000 per project. This should include all elements of the project through to release. Any development amounts previously paid by Screen Australia are repayable and should be included in the amount requested.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Applications cannot be from individuals, and must be from a team that includes at least two key creatives covering the roles of Writer, Director and Producer. At least one of the key creatives must have a credit in an equivalent role on a comparable project that has been publicly released at the time of application.

The **applicant company** must meet the General Eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#); in particular, it must be incorporated and carrying on business in Australia, and have its central management and control in Australia. Applications for Online Production can be accepted from sole traders, however, if successful in securing Screen Australia funding, the applicant must incorporate a company to be able to contract with Screen Australia, and there should be a minimum of two key creative members in the team.

Although marketplace attachments are not a requirement for Online Production funding, projects that include a television broadcast or commissioning platform component must have evidence of a current offer to license the content., The involvement of a relevant marketplace attachment may improve the competitiveness of the application.

Co-funding with state agencies, other government organisations, educational institutions, private investors or other partners is encouraged. Where crowd-funding is proposed as a source of funds, a contingency plan must be provided in case this does not eventuate. If the finance plan relies on significant third party finance, Screen Australia reserves the right to request evidence of its status, including basic terms, prior to assessment.

The following formats and projects are ineligible to apply through this fund:

- Short films (excluding single episode XR projects)
- Reality
- Light entertainment including panel and variety shows
- Primarily educational or internal training content
- Digital or online extensions to a film or TV program

Documentary projects will only be supported by the Online Production program if they have a primary release on a social media platform. Higher budget Documentaries with or without marketplace attachments may be eligible to apply through our [Documentary funding programs](#). Please speak to an Investment Manager in either department if you are unsure which funding program you are eligible for.

The Online Production program focuses on smaller scale, lower-budget projects. It is not the purpose of the fund to support larger TV projects that could attract large enough licence fees to be eligible to apply for Production Investment. Screen Australia reserves the right to require larger-scale projects to apply to the [General TV Drama](#) program. This also applies to the Children's Funding Program.

If a project has previously been assessed and declined for funding under this program, it is not eligible to apply again unless significant changes have been made, and a statement will need to be provided setting out the major changes made since the previous submission. Screen Australia will consider this statement when deciding whether or not to accept the application and assess it again for funding. Note: after two unsuccessful submissions, no further applications for this project will be accepted.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications can be made at any time via Screen Australia's [application portal](#). As part of your application you will need to submit:

- A completed Application Form
- A Pitch Document or Project Bible that outlines the creative elements of the project
- Scripts for at least half of the episodes (although a full set of scripts is recommended)
- A Marketing and Release plan of no fewer than 3 pages and no more than 10 pages
- A Business Impact and Measurements of Success document of no more than 2 pages
- A downloadable Video Pitch of no more than 3 minutes
- Separate CVs for each of the Key Creatives
- A full Budget to completion of the series using the relevant Screen Australia budget template
- A Finance Plan using the correct Screen Australia template

Applicants are also encouraged to include a relevant proof of concept or sample of previous work that speaks to the project in question.

The Program Operations team will review each application to ensure eligibility and required application materials. Once confirmed, the applicant will receive an email advising that their application has moved to assessment and an estimated timeframe of the outcome - generally around seven weeks from receipt of email.

HOW ARE APPLICATIONS ASSESSED?

Eligible applications will be considered by Screen Australia executives. Industry specialists may be consulted as required.

Funding decisions will be made against the following criteria:

- The creative strength of the project (25%)
 - Is the story unique and distinctive?
 - Are the scripts and other creative material engaging and demonstrate strong story craft?
 - Are the submitted creative materials production ready?
- The marketing and release plan (25%)
 - Is the project suited to an online release on the proposed release platform(s)?
 - Is the plan achievable within the scope of the budget and team?
 - Who is the audience for this project and how will you get them to watch it?
- The team (20%)
 - What is the capacity of the team for releasing a project of this size and scale?
 - What are the talent escalation and career development outcomes for the key creatives?
 - Does the team have a track record releasing successful content online?
- The budget and finance plan (15%)
 - Is the budget aligned with the scope of the project?
 - What is the proportion of financing provided through other sources, and the level of financial request on Screen Australia and the Online Production fund?
- Culture and diversity (15%)
 - Do elements of the project reflect gender equity and/or the diversity of people and experiences from around Australia?
 - Is the team appropriately placed to authentically tell this story, or are the appropriate measures in place for cultural safety and authorship?

Applicants will be advised of the outcome approximately seven weeks after email receipt of their project's eligibility.

POST PRODUCTION FUNDING

Applications can also be made for post-production funding, through the same application portal. These applications are expected to be for lower amounts of funding, as Screen Australia funding cannot be retrospective. Post production applications are required to supply a full budget for the entire production process, as well as a finance plan.

Applications solely for marketing funds are not eligible.

For any enquiries, please contact the Screen Australia Program Operations team on 1800 507 901 or online@screenaustralia.gov.au. Please note that we are not able to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.

Update Log

July 2023

- Assessment criteria changed - new criteria added and weighting adjusted
- List of ineligible projects updated
- Application materials updated. Business Impact Statement and Measurements of Success documents combined, Marketing and Release Plan now required to be between 3 and 10 pages in length, and Proof of Concept is now optional rather than required
- Inclusive attachment scheme updated to reflect that only projects funded for more than \$300,000 by Screen Australia require an inclusive attachment