



First Nations Game Studio Fund: Guidelines

Issued 8 May 2023

The First Nations Game Studio Fund aims to support the activities of businesses that are led by First Nations game developers by providing funding to stabilise and grow their studios.

This fund responds to the opportunity that is presented by First Nations-led game studios already working in the space. It aims to grow and strengthen game studios that are already invested in creating a culturally safe space for First Nations people to build their game development skills.

Up to two currently operating businesses will be selected to receive up to \$150,000 per financial year, spread across the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. There may also be opportunities for workshops and skills development, that will be determined in consultation with successful applicant companies based on their specific needs.

This fund is aimed at First Nations Games Studios already in operation in the industry, rather than new studios that have been operating for less than 6 months.

Who is eligible to apply?

This fund is aimed at established First Nations game studios seeking funding to grow and strengthen their businesses.

- The applicant company must meet the General Eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).
- The applicant company must be a private (incorporated) Australian company, and carrying out business in Australia and have its central management and control in Australia.
- The company must be primarily under the leadership and creative control of First Nations people.
- The company must be established, which here means that the company:
 - Currently employs at least 2 First Nations creatives; and
 - Has been operating for at least 6 months
- The applicant company must be engaged in game development as one of its core functions

The following types of companies are not eligible:

- Those engaged in the development of games that:
 - are substantially advertising or promotions;
 - are gambling or gambling simulations;
 - feature or link exploitative, or unethical play-to-win or play-to-earn mechanics;
 - contain or have a relationship to high risk and volatile trading products or technology;
 - contain [or link] any content or mechanic that is in breach of any law or regulation; and
 - in the reasonable opinion of Screen Australia, may have difficulties receiving an Australian classification, due to the inclusion of content such as:
 - instruction or promotion of crime, cruelty or violence; depictions of frequent and/or very high impact violence
 - sexual activity; sexual violence; exploitative depictions
 - instructional illicit drug use; encouragement of illicit drug use; illicit interactive drug use
 - any other content that contravenes prevailing community standards.

How do I apply?

Applications are now open and can be made through the [application portal](#). Applications will close 5pm AEST Thursday 1 June 2023.

Applications consist of the materials requested in the application form plus:

- The applicant company's ASIC extract;
- A budget, in the form of an Excel document, that indicates what expenses the grant will cover;
- A 3-to-5-page document containing information about the applicant company's business strategy. At a minimum this document will include the following information:
 - A mission statement
 - An overview of current business goals
 - An overview of the strategy or plan currently in place to reach those goals
- Professional development plans for First Nations creatives employed by the applicant company;
- A 2-to-3-page document demonstrating that the company is engaged in creating a culturally safe space for First Nations people to build their game development skills; **and**
- One or more of the following:
 - A playable prototype of a game;
 - A gameplay video of a playable prototype;
 - A pitch video demonstrating that the applicant company is engaged in game development; or
 - A written document or slide deck demonstrating that the applicant company is engaged in game development

Screen Australia may also request further materials during the assessment period, in consultation with applicants. The Program Operations team will review each application to ensure eligibility and that the required application materials have been correctly submitted. Once confirmed, the applicant will receive an email advising that their application has moved to assessment.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in late June 2023.

Assessment Criteria

Applications are assessed by Screen Australia executives, and industry specialists as required, using the criteria below:

- The quality and viability of the studio's business planning;
- The benefits of the studio's goals and proposed outcomes to First Nations game developers, and the wider games industry;
- The capacity for growth of the studio for the funding period and beyond, including building a pathway towards sustainability; and
- The quality of the planning and structures in place to ensure cultural safety

Terms of Funding

Screen Australia's funding will be provided as a grant. It is not repayable to Screen Australia. The funding agreement will set out the terms of payment.

The grant's intended usage is towards costs to run a First Nations game studio. Suitable expenditure could be (but is not limited): office rent, employee wages, employee training programs, equipment, creative

suite or other digital creative tool subscriptions or licences, participation in and travel to events or workshops aimed at staff development.

Applicants will need to provide a satisfactory acquittal of the grant against the expenditure. As the outcomes of this funding are people-based, as part of the acquittal process for this fund, Screen Australia will request materials that highlight the impact this funding has had on the studio's ability to support and grow the First Nations game developers who they employ.

Screen Australia acknowledges and appreciates the efforts that go into applications, but given the anticipated volume of applications, it will not be able to provide detailed individual feedback on each application.

For any enquiries, please contact the Screen Australia Program Operations team on 1800 507 901 or email games@screenaustralia.gov.au.

If you are a First Nations creative and would prefer to speak to one of our First Nations team members regarding your application, please email firstnations@screenaustralia.gov.au, and this can be arranged.

Please note that we are unable to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.