

Online Development Fund FAQs

Issued 1 July 2023

Updated 7 May 2024

Who can apply?

There are no minimum eligibility criteria for this fund. However, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate a strong understanding of their intended release platform and the ability to produce content of a similar scale to the intended project.

Can I apply as an individual?

Yes, however as the Online Development Fund is aimed at supporting projects to then be equipped to move into production, having a team in place is recommended as it is required for Online Production funding.

What do you mean by development?

Development can encompass any stage that advances a project towards production, including but not limited to; funding a writers' room, draft script writing, creation of a project bible, crafting a marketing and release plan, budget or schedule, research and more. It can also go towards paying appropriate fees for writers, producers, directors, script editors and legal fees for the proposed stage of development. Screen Australia can also make a contribution to Carers' Costs - more information on this below.

How much can I apply for?

Applicants can apply for up to \$25,000 for a single stage of development. Applicants can also apply for up to \$30,000 to create a Proof of Concept - more information on this below.

Screen Australia can contribute up to the following amounts for any line item in your development budget:

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
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	With itemised budget, as per guidance below	Up to \$30,000
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

*All funds need to go towards Australian key creatives, unless otherwise approved by Screen Australia.

What do you mean by “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 Carers’ 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.

Submission Materials:

What do you look for in a pitch video?

Competitive pitch videos do not necessarily need high production values. Instead, they should be clear, concise and communicate your enthusiasm for this project. There are a few key points that competitive pitch videos cover:

- The vision for the project
- The intended audience for the project
- Why this project will hook that audience
- The impact a successful application would have on the applicant
- Why you, why now, why this story?

What do you mean by “story documents”?

This means any materials you have at the current stage of development that can be assessed, for example draft scripts, project bibles, episode outlines - anything that demonstrates the creative stage the project is at when applying.

What do you mean by “development plan”?

This is the creative roadmap that outlines where the project is currently, where this stage of development will take it and how you intend to get there. The development plan should identify creative challenges and weaknesses, and propose solutions for these. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the current strengths of the project and to outline your creative/directorial vision.

What do you mean by “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 or comedy sketch for a series, 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 that crew on a Proof of Concept will be paid at award rates. Unless there is additional funding or a low budget production methodology, we expect Proofs of Concept to be no longer than 10 minutes in length.

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

How will my project be assessed?

Your project will be assessed by a member of the Screen Australia Online Team. Screen Australia may also engage external assessors. All decisions are made against 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 Online Development funding and been declined, can I apply again?

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

As the Online Development fund is new, and projects may have applied via Story Development in the past, the decline from Story Development also counts as one decline against the project. The same applies if your project has been previously declined through Documentary Development.

If you are applying again after one decline across any of the programs, you must be able to demonstrate substantive changes.

If I have previously received Online Development funding, can I apply again for more funding for that same project?

It is rare for projects to be funded multiple times through the Online Development fund. If you wish to apply for further development funds, Screen Australia would require clear demonstration of the progression of the project and what the additional funds are required to support. Each tranche of funding is capped at \$25,000. We recommend that you speak to an Investment and Development Manager before applying.

Can I apply with more than one project?

There are no limits on the number of projects you or your team apply for. However, this is a competitive process, and we expect applicants to be strategic about what they apply for, to only apply when their project is ready, and to ensure their projects are strong against all the assessment criteria.

Can I apply to the Online Development Fund and then the Online Production Fund?

Yes, however we require the Online Development Fund to be acquitted before an application is submitted for Online Production Funding.

Do I need to have received Online Development funding in order to apply for Online Production funding?

No, you can apply for Online Production funding having developed your project independently of Screen Australia.

Does Online Development Funding guarantee a project will receive Online Production Funding?

No, there is no guarantee that a project supported through Online Development funding will be successful in an application for Online Production funding. The creative materials are one part of the assessment process for Online Production Funding.

What if my project changes during development?

While we expect projects to change during development, if these changes are significant, please speak to your Investment and Development Manager.

I want to release my project on a streaming platform, can I apply to this fund?

No. Anything aimed at a streaming platform, broadcast or theatrical release should apply to either the Story Development Fund (scripted) or the Documentary Development Fund.

Can I apply with my panel/reality/game show/variety show/light entertainment project?

No, Screen Australia does not fund these genres. Please see our [Terms of Trade](#) for more information.

I don't have an online following. Can I still apply?

Yes. While having a strong online following can be beneficial to your application, it is not a requirement of this fund. We are interested in projects where the applicants know who the target audience is, how to reach them online and why this audience will continue watching their series.

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 Online Development?

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 or an announcement in the Screen Australia Newsletter along with multiple other development projects.

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 Online Team to discuss your project. Please email online@screenaustralia.gov.au and someone will be in touch. Please read the guidelines and this FAQ before contacting us.