



Australian Government



Emerging Gamemakers Fund - Guidelines

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Overview

Through *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place* - Australia's cultural policy for the next five years, the Australian Government is committed to delivering a complementary and integrated plan to support Australia's digital games sector. This includes \$12 million over 4 years of dedicated digital games funding through Screen Australia to support Australian independent games studios.

The Emerging Gamemakers Fund provides grants of up to \$30,000 to support the development of original, new projects from Australian independent gamemakers. It can fund the creation of a prototype or the completion of a micro-scale game. The fund is aimed at emerging creators, diverse voices, and/or established creators who are interested in creative and artistic experimentation. The fund will run as a series of rounds from financial year 2023/24 until financial year 2026/27.

For games that are already developed to the point of having a playable prototype, consider instead applying for the [Games Production Fund](#).

Given the scale of funding available and the obligation for teams to compensate themselves fairly under Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), this fund is aimed at smaller teams, although bigger teams are still eligible to apply.

Who can apply and what projects are eligible?

This fund is for projects that:

- are at the ideation or pre-production stage of development
- demonstrate creative innovation and experimentation in gamemaking
- represent or are developed by or are from teams with diverse and underrepresented backgrounds and experiences
- are for underserved audiences

All applicants and projects must also meet the eligibility criteria under Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).

Screen Australia can only fund Australian projects. The project must be under the key creative control of Australian citizens or permanent residents and be predominantly developed in Australia. Projects do not have to have an Australian theme or be set in Australia.

Projects must be for a digital game platform, including (but not limited to) PC, mobile, consoles, and VR.

Regarding XR (including VR and AR projects):

- If you are making an XR documentary, your project may be better suited to the [Documentary Production - Producer Program](#).
- If you are making an XR scripted narrative experience, your project may be better suited to [Online Production funding](#).
- If your XR project sits at the intersection of games and other genres of media, we expect you to contact us and discuss eligibility prior to applying.

Screen Australia requires a minimum level of interactivity for a project to be considered a game. If you are unsure whether the level of interactivity in your project constitutes a game for the purposes of the Emerging Gamemakers Fund, you must contact us and discuss eligibility prior to applying.

Applicants or applicant companies may only submit one application per round.

Unsuccessful applications may re-submit once with the same project to a future funding round, provided that the application materials have undergone meaningful updates since the last submission.

After two unsuccessful applications, a project is no longer eligible to apply for the fund. However, the same applicant or applicant company may apply with a different project.

What is not eligible?

The following types of projects are not eligible. These are games that:

- have already received funding from the [Games: Expansion Pack](#) or Emerging Gamemakers Fund
- have applied to, or have received funding from, for the Games Production Fund
- are not played on a digital device with a screen. That is, games that are not completely digital, including boardgames or hybrid digital/physical games
- are part of work-for-hire contracts or exploit (make use of) intellectual property not owned by the applicant or applicant company
- are being developed by companies employing students who are currently studying games, or a field related to games
- are business-to-business products (for example, training simulations or a game limited a small number of locations)

- are substantially advertising or promotions
- constitute gambling activities or are gambling simulations
- feature or link exploitative, or unethical pay-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
- in the reasonable opinion of Screen Australia, may have difficulties receiving an Australian classification, due to the inclusion of content such as:
 - the 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

This fund is not aimed at projects from established companies looking to offset project risk. It is not aimed at projects that already have significant funding or publisher support. Projects of a larger scale (but still under the \$500,000 budget limit) should consider instead applying for the Games Production Fund.

How do I apply?

Applicants need to create an account and submit an application via [SmartyGrants](#), attaching the following application materials:

- **Downloadable Pitch Video** (maximum 3 minutes in length) that articulates the concept of your project, the creative vision and aims of the team
- **Creative Pitch Deck** communicating the vision for your project
- **Project Plan**. 3 pages maximum length. The purpose of this document is to help assessors understand how you plan to measure the success and viability of your project. At a high level, this document should communicate:
 - Where you are now
 - Where you want to be
 - How this funding and project will help you get there
 Please see the template for further details on what to include.
- **CVs of team members**

Where a project involves First Nations content, stories, characters or community participation, specific requirements apply. These projects will need to provide the following, additional documents:

- **First Nations content statement:** A statement setting out how you are approaching the First Nations content or participation with regard to appropriate protocols, even if the content is not specific to a particular community or individual.
- **First Nations consultation:** Signed evidence of consultation to date.
- **First Nations consent:** Signed letters of consent from First Nations individuals or communities confirming their willingness to participate.

For more information on how to engage First Nations practitioners for collaboration or participation, please read [Pathways & Protocols: a film maker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts](#) and/or consider undertaking Indigenous Engagement training.

If you have access requirements that make it difficult to submit an application, please email [Games](#) and we will make arrangements to assist.

Applications for Emerging Gamemakers Fund must be submitted by 5pm AEDT/AEST on the published deadline date.

How will my application be assessed?

Before assessment, all applications must go through eligibility checks. The Program Operations team review each application to ensure eligibility and that required application materials are acceptable.

If eligibility is confirmed, the applicant will receive an email advising that their application has moved to the second step, assessment. **You can expect to receive the outcome of your application approximately 12 weeks from the 'Applications Close' date.**

Your application will be assessed by a panel of internal and external industry specialists, against the below criteria. The assessment panel consists of industry experts with varied specialisations. We employ a [Conflict of Interest policy](#) to ensure fairness for all applicants.

Applications are assessed based on the following four criteria, with examples of the relevant considerations listed for each:

Creative Merit

- The originality of the proposed game idea
- The level of experimentation, skill-building, and risk-taking to be undertaken by the applicant
- The strength of the application and support materials in being able to communicate the game idea

Viability

- The scope of the project is viable and realistic
- The project is timely and relevant to the applicant's practice
- The budget and timeline are feasible

Impact

- The project expands, deepens, or diversifies the creative practice of the applicant
- The project provides commercial and/or cultural benefits to the Australian games landscape, and contributes to its quality and reputation

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Where diverse groups are portrayed in the project, there is either appropriate representation in the creative team, or there has been meaningful collaboration and consultation with represented groups

- The project engages with an audience that is typically underserved
- The alignment of the application with the diversity, equity and inclusion aims of the fund

Screen Australia is committed to building equity into its programs. Gender equity, diversity, authenticity, and inclusivity are priorities for Screen Australia. We expect that any experiences portrayed in games that are aimed at illustrating diverse perspectives are reflected within the key creative team with appropriate representation and lived experience.

Terms of Funding

Funding is provided in the form of a grant. Successful applicants will enter into a project grant agreement (PGA) with Screen Australia. Screen Australia does not expect to recoup funds from successful teams. That is, you are not expected to repay the grant in any way.

Funds are generally expected to be spent on staffing costs (wages for people making the game) and other costs associated with the game's development, such as (but not limited to) game development software and creative licensing fees.

At least 90% of the grant must be spent on development expenditure that takes place physically in Australia.

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

For any enquiries, please contact the Screen Australia Program Operations team on 1800 507 901 or [Games](#). Please note that we are not able to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.