



Digital Originals 2025: Guidelines

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Screen Australia reserves the right to change its program guidelines. Applicants should check the website for the latest version. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), [Information for Applicants](#) and [Information for Recipients](#) on Screen Australia's website.

If applicants have accessibility requirements relating to submitting an application, they may contact Screen Australia's Program Operations team via email at online@screenaustralia.gov.au, or phone 1800 507 901, for assistance.

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1. About this funding program

1.1. Overview

Digital Originals is a joint initiative of Screen Australia, SBS and NITV, aimed at developing exciting and innovative online scripted series for SBS and NITV. These series contain 6 x 10-minute episodes for broadcast on SBS and NITV platforms.

Digital Originals is targeted at emerging creators working on exciting and risk-taking scripted projects. Following the success of past participants such as *Latecomers*, *Appetite* and *Moonbird*, this opportunity is aimed at episodic narrative series designed for SBS On Demand and NITV. Experience in writing for screen is not necessary.

Up to ten teams will be selected to attend an exclusive workshop run by Screen Australia, SBS and NITV, featuring a range of industry guest presenters.

From these ten teams, up to five will be chosen to take their projects into further development, and from these, up to three will be chosen for production funding and commissioning with SBS, NITV and Screen Australia. Teams will have the support and resources of SBS, NITV and Screen Australia through the development process.

Screen Australia, SBS and NITV aim to support practitioners and projects that reflect the unique diversity of people and experiences from around Australia, all of which are important culturally, creatively and economically.

This initiative is designed to support screen creatives currently under-represented in the sector, including people who are culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations Australians, d/Deaf and disabled, women and gender diverse, LGBTIQ+ and those who are located in regional and remote areas.

1.2. Available funding/support

The successful teams will attend a workshop focusing on short form narrative writing skills, and developing the projects to align with the SBS Charter and SBS OnDemand platform, culminating in a pitch to Screen Australia, SBS and NITV.

The workshop will be held 28 - 30 October 2025, with a Pitch Day following on 18 November 2025. All applicants must be available for this workshop and pitch day in order to be eligible for the initiative.

Teams outside of Sydney will receive flights and accommodation within Australia for two to three team members to attend the workshop.

Following the workshop, selected teams will be provided with funding to develop their project, with delivery required by May 2026. Decisions on next steps will be made thereafter.

2. Inclusive Storytelling

For Australian screen content to effectively deliver cultural and economic benefits it must speak to, and be for, all Australians. A diversity of ideas and a diverse workforce will enhance the Australian screen industry, making it more relevant to Australian audiences and more competitive internationally.

Screen Australia is committed to building equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility into its programs and into our engagement with the community.

Screen Australia encourages applications from applicants from all backgrounds, cultures and experiences. In particular, the agency welcomes applications from applicants who are First Nations, d/Deaf and disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQ+, women or gender diverse, regionally based, or those from other under-represented groups.

Screen Australia strives to make its programs accessible by removing barriers for people who are d/Deaf and disabled and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Screen Australia expects that any experiences portrayed through the narrative and characters which are aimed at illustrating diverse perspectives are reflected within the key creative team with appropriate representation and lived experience. It is vital that the creative team has the cultural authorship to tell the story so that the telling of the story is authentic.

3. Eligibility

Applicants and projects must meet Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), any general eligibility or other requirements set out on Screen Australia's website (see [Information for Applicants](#) and [Information for Recipients](#)), as well as the specific eligibility criteria set out in these guidelines.

Specific requirements apply to projects which involve [First Nations community participation or content](#).

3.1. Applicant Eligibility

- This program is open to companies and individuals (either alone or as part of a team as co-applicants). To be eligible:
 - an applicant company must be an incorporated company carrying on business in Australia, with its central management and control in Australia.
 - an individual applicant must be an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident (holding a permanent visa).

- Applicant teams must be made up of at least two key creatives (which must include at least one writer).
- At least one writer must identify as one or more of the following: First Nations Australian; culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD); d/Deaf or disabled; a woman or gender diverse; LGBTIQ+; or located in a regional and remote area.
- Applicants must have an active ABN at the time of application. Teams can apply with a company ABN or if the team has not yet established a company, they can elect one individual to apply as the lead applicant with their individual ABN for the workshop phase. Note, if successful for development funding, teams will require a company ABN to be established prior to contracting. If you do not have an ABN, please click [here](#) for information about how to apply for an ABN.
- Experience in writing for screen is not necessary. In recognition of the barriers and lack of professional pathways into the screen industry, applicants who do not have screen industry experience but who can evidence the relevant skills and potential in order to take advantage of screen industry career opportunities will also be considered.
- While you can be attached to more than one project that applies for Digital Originals, we strongly recommend you carefully consider which project or projects are best suited to your skill set when applying, and that it is not recommended that individuals are attached to more than two projects as a key creative.
- For teams provided with funding to develop their project after the workshop, the requirement is that two out of the three key creatives (writer, director, producer) identify as one or more of the following: First Nations Australians; culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD); d/Deaf or disabled; women or gender diverse; LGBTIQ+; or located in regional and remote areas. For First Nations projects, this means at least two out of three key creatives must be First Nations Australians in line with NITV commissioning guidelines.

3.2. Project Eligibility

Projects must be of a scale suitable for online audiences - immediately compelling, creatively outstanding and risk-taking in their nature. They can be of any scripted narrative genre, and cannot be documentary, factual or reality.

Specifically, we are looking for:

- Scripted narrative projects suitable for the SBS OnDemand platform (6 x 10-minute episodes, which together form a 1-hour program for broadcast)

- An awareness of **who** the project is for and **why** that audience will keep returning to watch it
- Unique stories that add to the cultural landscape of Australian content, for a global audience
- Projects that traverse new ground in the Digital Originals program - we encourage applicants to view the past Digital Originals commissioned, and to be bold and fresh in the stories they present to us.

4. Application Process

Before applying, applicants must read and understand these guidelines, Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#), [Information for Applicants](#), [Information for Recipients](#), and preview the application form on SmartyGrants.

4.1. How to apply

Applications close **5pm AEST on Thursday 17 July 2025** and can be made through the Screen Australia application portal.

4.2. Application Form

- Through the application form, applicants must:
 - provide all the information requested and answer the application questions
 - address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria
 - include all required supporting materials.

4.3. Required materials

Applicants are required to upload the following supporting materials with their application form:

- A pitch document, up to 3 pages, consisting of:
 - Information on the series format (how many episodes, length of episode)
 - Genre, characters, story arc and brief plot summary
 - Themes and tone of the project
 - The target audience, including demographics and viewing habits
 - The team and their past experience creating content
 - What is unique and exciting about the project
- A pitch video up to 3 minutes outlining the creators' personal connection to the project, why this project, why this team and why now.
- A script sample of previous work up to 10 pages (note: the script sample must not be part of the current project that is the subject of the application)

5. Assessment

5.1. Assessment process

Each application will be assessed by Screen Australia, SBS and NITV executives.

5.2. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed against the aims of the program, the following equally weighted criteria, against other applications in the round and in the context of Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#):

- **Creativity.** The creative strength of the project, and its ability to successfully engage the SBS and/or NITV audience;
- **Team.** The track record of the key team members and the likelihood that this program will develop their skills in content production;
- **Writing.** The standard of the supplied writing sample, and its demonstration of the capabilities and skills of the writer; and
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.** The alignment of the team and project with the diversity and inclusion aims of the initiative and with the SBS Charter, SBS Codes of Practice and Editorial Guidelines.

5.3. Decision and notification

Applicants will be advised of the outcome by Tuesday 16 September 2025.

Screen Australia, SBS and NITV acknowledge and appreciate the efforts that go into applications but, given the anticipated volume of applications, will not be able to provide individual feedback on each application.

Timeline:

- Applications Open: 3 June 2025
- Applications Close: 17 July 2025
- Applicants Notified: 16 September 2025
- Workshop: 28 October - 30 October 2025
- Pitch Day: 18 November 2025
- Successful Development Projects Notified: Week Commencing 2 December 2025
- Development Materials Due: 30 May 2026

6. Successful applicants

6.1. Contracting

If a project is approved, the applicant will receive an approval email with information about the contracting process and any applicable conditions.

6.2. Terms of Funding

Successful applicants will enter into a Participant Attendance Agreement with Screen Australia which will outline the terms of attendance at the Digital Originals Workshop and Pitch Day.

Following the workshop, those teams selected to receive funding to develop their project will enter into a further development agreement with Screen Australia and SBS/NITV which will outline the relevant terms of funding, with delivery required by May 2026.

SBS First and Last Right:

In applying for the Screen Australia / SBS / NITV 'Digital Originals' initiative, Applicants agree and acknowledge that in the event an Applicant team is successful in securing development funding for their 'Digital Originals' project, SBS and/or NITV has an Exclusive First and Last Right to acquire on standard SBS terms all Free Communication Rights in Australia in respect of their project continuing for 6 months following acquittal of their development funding.

7. Other Resources

Further information about Screen Australia funding and resources to assist with submitting an application is available on Screen Australia's website:

- [Terms of Trade](#)
- [Information for Applicants](#)
- [Information for Recipients](#)

8. Contact

If applicants have any further questions after reviewing these guidelines, the application form, and other available resources, they may contact Screen Australia's Program Operations on 1800 507 901 or via email at online@screenaustralia.gov.au.

Please note that Screen Australia is unable to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen an application.

9. Privacy

Screen Australia collects personal information from individuals in different ways, including via funding applications, acquittal reports, or supporting material supplied with forms. Screen Australia will handle any personal information provided in connection with a funding application in accordance with its [Privacy Notice](#) relating to funding applications and its [Privacy Policy](#).