**LIVE ANSWERED QUESTIONS**

1. Would we be better off pitching a new project, or current project that would benefit from additional funding to reach completion?

live answered

2. I work for Strange Animals a Digital Design studio,  almost all of our animals are avid gamers.

   Is there opportunity for a design studio to collaborate with game studios and provide required services as part of this initiative?

live answered

3. Are there any online templates/resources for the development plan requirement of the funding?

live answered

4. Can we get some clarification surrounding the required first Milestone "Close of Contracting" and what that requires etc?

live answered

5. Are there any online templates/resources for the development plan requirement of the funding?

live answered

6. Can we get some clarification surrounding the required first Milestone "Close of Contracting" and what that requires etc?

live answered

7. What are the milestone time frames? weekly/monthly/quarterly? and are the milestones set by the studio or SQ?

live answered

8. What are the limits on spending the grant money? What can the grant NOT be spent on?

live answered

9. If it's a small team and someone is handling multiple roles (eg. designer and producer) are those best to be split out separately in the budget? eg. X% on one role, Y% on another?

live answered

10. How does this fund work with Indie game teams, such as a group of graduates that aim to produce a commercial game that currently doesn't have outside funding from a publisher. If the company is producing its first game it doesn't have much money to work with outside of grants until the game sells

live answered

11. IP question

    We have some systems in our demo that we have developed, that until now we have not disclosed to anyone outside of the team: we plan on applying for IP for these systems. To confirm, are IP related costs able to be covered with a portion of the grant?

    Also these systems are at the core of our game design, so to showcase our demo it would also entail showcasing these systems. We are happy to showcase them but jut have some questions:
    - Is there any protocol during the assesment process that that take into account IP and external non-disclosure for the security of the IP?
    - If so, would we need to note these particular systems somewhere in the application?

live answered

12. Are small scale games considered for this fund? I have 2 projects I'm working on, one is a 15 minute long puzzle/rpg and the other is a 3-4 hour long rpg. Would both or either of these qualify for eligibility?

live answered

13. With the 3 Milestones set: contract signed, middle and end. Does end mean a v1.0 realease on the desired platform or can it be an earlier stage of release? E.g. alpha, beta or Early Access etc

live answered

14. You mention paying yourself as long as it's working on the game, but not for other business activities - can you clarify on that? Does this mean that business development for example or pitching would not be included or approved in that budget? Is there room for upskilling business skills through mentorship and similar as part of the projects development?

live answered

15. i'm a little confused - Lee said VR arcade type of games are eligible (where the studio would license it out) but on the screen australia website it says it isn't) :(

live answered

16. How free choice is the marketing? does the studio decide where its spent or does SQ influence where marking can be spent? also with events and showcases, do they need to be within Australia or is international showcases also okay to spend the grant on? e.g Tokyo sandbox?

live answered

17. Are there any requirements of funding - ie something other than Screen Australia credits?

live answered

18. Are in-kind applicant contributions to date (eg. development time) relevant? ie. should those be listed in the Finance plan as an in-kind contribution that has occurred? Or only ones that happen after milestone 1?

live answered

19. Hello! What format is preferred for the video pitch? Is this exclusively supposed to be a direct-to-camera pitch, or can it be perhaps a voiceover narration over gameplay footage and graphics? In short, which one would you most like to see? Thanks!

live answered

20. is it expected that the game launch by the end of the funding? or can it stand over more then a year?

live answered

21. If a studio has a game which meets the criteria for DGTO but is planning another smaller project which doesn't, are they eligible to apply for the Expansion Pass for the smaller game?

live answered

22. What about games that are planning to release with Early Access on Steam? Would they still be eligable?

live answered

23. Where is the line drawn for a game "aimed at advertising/promoting a product"? What if the game promotes merchandise as a tertiary part of the story?

live answered

24. is there a minimum level of funding for this grant? hyper casual games are games too :)

live answered

25. Is there any reason/benefit to asking for less than your budget? For example, if the budget is $200k, would asking for $100k be more likely to succeed than $150k, or is it best to ask for the maximum needed?

live answered

**LIVE ANSWERED AND CONTINUED IN CHAT**

1. If an application isn't accepted, can you reapply for the next round for the same project?

live answered. But also show us what is different from the previous application. If you haven't changed the application its unlikely to be competitive if its just resubmitted.

**QUESTIONS ANSWERED IN THE CHAT**

1. Would any previous state-government-based funding impact the grant application?

Lee will cover this, but the answer is it isn't a problem. SA can definitely co-finance with States (and for that matter with publishers, EPIC megagrant etc)

2. Is there any funding for those wanting to start up in the ACT?

Anyone located anywhere in Australia can apply for the fund, including the ACT. I believe Screen Canberra also has a fund that game developers can apply for too: https://screencanberra.com.au/funding/act-screen-arts-fund/

3. Can we obtain a direct link to the Budget Template file? It's currently broken when attempting to access via the downloadable Form Preview.

That is odd. We will look into that. You should be able to download it as an excel file. I've taken note.

4. How many grants will be offered?

$5-6m fund over two years and grants capped at $150k. So plenty of grants, however that gets carved up.

5. Please elaborate on the demo - is there flexibility if there isn't a digital demo? What would be acceptable if there isn't one?

    Is a grey box demo sufficient?

You need a demonstrable proof of concept - can be a demo or even just a video of gameplay or mechanics. But this is likely to be a key component of your proposal, so it needs to be as compelling as possible to be competitive.

6. Are there specific definitions relating to crime, cruelty, violence, sexual depictions & drug use? Does this instantly exclude games with generalised conflict/combat etc

We are not squeamish about conflict/combat - as Lee said the issue is all about a project maybe falling foul of classification which would be a problem for us.

Drug use in the game is far more problematic given the track record of any games with drug use being refused classification.

It will generally take a lot for a game to be Refused Classification. But make sure there is no drug use linked to incentives and rewards (illegal drug use gives a boost to the player character).

7. Do you need to be in NSW to apply for the job?

Screen Australia has offices in Sydney and Melbourne (Lee is in Melbourne).

8. Does the grant need to fully fund the game all the way to completion? Can the grant be used to build a high quality vertical slice that can be used to pitch to publishers?

Its a development-to-release fund. We fund things to release to the public. So no to a "vertical slice". but yes to, say, a early access public release.

9. Can you clarify VR escape rooms?

If its a video game played on a screen (sounds like it is) then its eligible to apply.

10. Also are board games included in the grant?

Its a video game initiative. So no.

11. Are you able to provide us with examples of pre-filled copies of the required applications documents so that we can ensure that we are filling them out correctly?

We don't have them. Don't be scared Amy. Its an emerging practitioner fund. Our admin team will come back to you if something doesn't make sense or hasnt been done properly.

12. Will this recording be available in case anyone has to leave early? ;)

Hey Dan. Yep.

13. are there certain genres of games that IGEA and screen australia want to see more of specifically?

Just to be clear its Screen Australia's fund. IGEA is helping us to promote it.

Screen Australia is open minded about genres. Typically what ever SA funds (films, television, online and games) we try and fund a broad slate of different things.

14. Would a solo dev looking to expand into a small studio with a new game IP be eligible and competitive for this grant?

You need to be a company to apply but if you set up your small studio that way and had a proof of concept game to show, then yep.

15. Ie are Virtual Reality escape rooms eligible as a digital product as opposed to physical

Think I've answered this. Thanks

16. Does this grant include a live-ops update to an existing released game?

Hey Neil. Lee will probably address this but the guidelines say that the focus is on new titles, but live ops of existing games are not excluded. So you'll need to be convincing in your app including how the live ops will address the goals of fund including building your studio capacity and ambition of the relevant game. I suspect that we will see something in the live ops space that we want to support.

17. Is this grant meant to fully fund a project, or just be one source of financing development.

Either. We could be it. Or we could just be part of the financing puzzle.

18. Is there an ideal studio size that you are trying to target with this grant?

Smaller to medium size. But the idea is that you are professionally creating games and have aspirations to grow.

19. Is there a more defined checklist regarding the Assesment Criteria that we can access to understand how and what specific mechanics/features might help or hinder our submissions?

Unfortunately not Robert. Assessment criteria tend to be relatively broad as the scope of different types of projects that come in can be quite broad.

20. If a sole-trader is contracting people, and this grant would allow them to employ these people fully for the project, would that be eligible or still be considered sole-trader regardless?

that would be ineligible for this first round as you'd need to be a company

21. Will games with a focus on narrative/story be given special consideration over games that do not have a focus on narrative/story?

Nope. Give us a good puzzle game and we'll be in heaven.

22. For "a financing plan and budget to completion and release (in the prescribed format)"

Are we to solely include the provided spreadsheet, or do we also create our own supplementary documentation?

I'd try and stick the spreadsheet but if you dont think that it tells the story then you should provide what documentation you think necessary to do so.

23. Would we present our full project budget(s) or just what we would propose for the $150k?

Full budget!

24. Is there a limit to how many times you can apply per project if you are successful? Hypothetically speaking, if you receive funding for this first round, how many more times would you be able to apply? You mentioned a two - strike policy for rejected projects, what about successful ones?

For ongoing live ops/DLC you could apply for the 2nd round of funding for a game that was funded in the first round, yes. But it is likely we will be preferencing applications for newer games that haven't previously received funding.

25. would the gamification of safety training Program (in VR) qualify.

If its for general release to the public. Yes.

26. What happens if a game gets funded with a $500k under budget, but then by the end of the project, more than $500k has been spent? This could happen due to scope expanding, development delays, etc.

the fund isn't aimed at those projects, but they are eligible as we appreciate things change, projects can grow in scope etc

27. The application mentions that the first milestone should be for "close of contracting". Is that referring to when funding is confirmed or is it also including things like having any required legal agreements in place re IP etc?

Its when SA and you sign the agreement and any "preconditions" under that agreement have been met. We are still working through what they might be!

28. Following up the question about reapplication, would we be provided with feedback required to improve the pitch for the second application?

Unfortunately due to the expected number of applications it is unlikely that we'll be able to give detailed feedback on unsuccessful applicants.

29. If someone applies and their application is not successful, will feedback be provided to why it wasnt?

Hi Michael, just answered a similar question if you check that out.

30. Is the funding amount relative to the over all budget. for example, if our over all budget is 200K can we still apply for 150K?

You should ask for what you need. You mightn't get it all, but that should always be the starting point.

31. If a company is registered in AUS but games created by team in NA --- ineligible or not?

We care about where the work is done. So nope.

32. What is the total funding available in this round? how many projects do you intend to fund?

Think I answered similar in the Q&A already. Check it out.

33. Outcomes seem to be notified in June - does that mean that funding the project could start mid 2022?

As Lee said, yep.

34. Hi. Is it ok to share hyper-links to supporting media within the answers of the application?

Yep.

35. are new studios with no game releases eligible to apply where they may have released bespoke business based mobile or web apps

Yep. But you do have to have a proof of concept of the game you are pitching. You cannot just come in with an idea.

36. Will the presence of state-based support already in place for a project factor into its competitiveness with Screen Australia?

Answered this in Q&A. Check it out. Short answer - no.

37. Are we able to apply to a publisher if we are a recipient of a grant?

Yes.

38. Would there be any issues with an application if the game was targeted at a more niche, but still general audience? As a broad example, if the game was targeted specifically at senior citizens?

Well, you'd need to convince us that there was a market, and that you had a convincing plan to connect with that market. But niche games can do well.

39. If a project is early on and hasn't completed visual development/reached a vertical slice phase will the sumbission be at a serious disadvantage with a prototype using placeholder assets showcasing core gameplay loops?

Not necessarily, but the visual pitch is obviously a key part of the whole application. If its too rudimentary you may not be doing the best thing for you application. You may want to hold off until you can put your best foot forward.

40. would this funding be exempt from tax?

Gotta get your own advice on this one Marty!

41. Do all sources of funding need to be cash or would in-kind time or portion of deferred fees at industry standard rates be eligible for inclusion in the finance plan?

this was answered live, we'd require phyiscal cash/money contributions to be included in the finance plan/budget but not in-kind if it wasn't actually money paid out

42. When you says that a studio must be a company to be eligible, do workers-co-ops also count since they are just a different type of company similar to a partnership?

You need to be a PTY LTD company. So partnerships aren't eligible. I'm not sure what you mean exactly by a "co-op". Maybe a incorporated association? Its not a PTY LTD company.

43. With the 3 Milestones set: contract signed, middle and end. Are the payments equally divided from the requested amount applied for within the grant? E.g. Applied for $150k, each milestone is $50k

To be honest, we haven't quite figured that out yet but to held developers we usually front load payments and then have a smaller amount due at the end.

44. I've been planing to create a company when it was time to employ artists and voice actors. If I were to create that company now would I be eligible or would that be looked at less favourably?

that would make you eligible - we're not concerned with how long the company has been around

45. Would spending for release trailer be considered marketing spend or development spend?

I'd say marketing.

46. Regarding "details of existing financing deals (such as grant agreements or deal memos)"

Does this require us to also show internal partnership agreements agreement? If so, what level of depth is required? A summary or the documents themselves? Otherwise is it solely for financing?

We are just talking more about the external (ie. publisher agreements, grant agreements) rather than your internal funding arrangements.

47. If we already have a publisher on board are we able to apply for this grant?

Absolutely.

48. Is there a possability that the Grant amount awarded differ from the Amount Requested should the applicant be successful? Is the requested amount locked in or are post "Round Close" negotiations possible to refactor a lower/higher figures?

we often fund proejcts for different amounts than requested, yes - especially if we are wanting to support a lot of projects an funds are limited (as they always are). We do aim to be realistic to make sure that the funding will be sufficient to achieve the required outcome though

49. Would Tim Phillips make the best NPC?

The best skin more like it.

50. How advanced visually does a POC have to be for the application? Is a grey box showing the main game loop enough with concept art or will the demo need to be more advanced "vertical slice"

Feel I've answered this in the Q&A - check it out. You need a compelling pitch!

51. Just want to clarify the stage eligibility for this grant - can pre-production or mid-production projects which may still need further funding from, say, a publisher after creating a compelling Vertical Slice or demo eligible?

this funding would need to take a game to some form of release for the public, and not a demo stage.

52. Are early-stage (prototype) projects from grassroots developers looked on favourably? Mostly thinking about Lee's comments on elegibility vs competitiveness

We are open minded. Put in an application.

53. Would a company eligable for the DGTO also be eligible for this grant if the pitched game's budget is lower than 500K?

The publicly announced threshold for the DGTO is more than $500k which is why we have targetted games under that.

54. what would you recomended as an appropriate length for the animated 'sizzle' video / trailer showcasing the game

Just a few minutes.

55. Would you prefer to see one game per studio - is it an advantage to pitch multiple games, or better to focus on a single project?

We are flexible on this.

56. Extending from the double-dipping question, has it been determined if DGTO expenditure is whole-company-based or project-based?

The Exposure Draft is due any day and this should answer your question.

57. If the money we asked for is more than screen australia want/are able to fund us for. But they want to fund us still, will there be another conversation that is had? Or is it a no?

Its usually a conversation.

58. If we apply for a game in this round of funding successfuly, are we able to apply for another game for the next round?

Yes.

59. Are legal expenses able to be used with the grant?

Yes.

60. what is the protocol around applying for this funding and state funding simultaneously? unfortunately our dev schedule doesn't allow time to wait for an answer on one before submitting to another funding body.

If you cannot wait, then push on without us. Its impossible to always get Fed and State funding arounds across the whole of Australia to line up beautifully.

61. from successful pitches in the past, is there anything in particular that you can talk about that made some pitches stand out from the crowd?

know your project, think about what's unique and exciting about it and communicate that effectively. Why this project, why now, why you.

62. Are solo developers that are incorperated as a company competetive? I understand the goal is to help companies grow, does that include becoming self-sustaining as a solo developer?

Depends on the game and the ambition. It can be competitive. You could be the next Stardew Valley.

63. Do you need a sizzle video/trailer if you have a playable prototype?

Thank you. We're having a technical issue so I think we'll need to wrap things up. But please send your question to games@screenaustralia.gov.au!