

THE INNOVATION PROGRAM

Screen Australia encourages innovation and the incorporation of digital media throughout its programs.

Screen Australia's Innovation Program supports projects that are cutting edge and visionary, exploring new platforms and methodologies. The program's aim is to grow the skills, audience, and economic viability of the screen production sector, by backing striking examples of innovation in form and content in screen-based media.

The program encourages (but does not demand) the formation of multi-disciplinary teams that embody convergence between traditional media and digital media, or other disciplines, for example, factual and documentary specialists collaborating with web developers, or experienced screenwriters and directors working with game developers.

The Innovation Program also aims to assist Australian digital practitioners to develop their own IP, and help experienced traditional media producers to work with digital media practitioners to scope the viability of exploiting existing successful Australian IP on digital platforms.

Funding is for

The development and/or production of innovative, dynamic multi-platform and single-platform interactive media of any duration, format, or type, including, but not limited to, content-rich websites, interactive television (iTV), applications and interactive content for handheld devices including smartphones, and online, PC, and console games.

Available funding

Development: Applicants may apply for up to \$30,000 per development stage, to be used to develop effective materials to trigger marketplace investment and, where appropriate, production finance.

Production: Applicants may apply for up to \$250,000 towards the total budget required for completion of a project, OR for the completion of a functioning prototype.

Marketplace commitment: Projects that have written expression of marketplace interest or commitment at the time of application will be viewed favourably. Commitment can be cash or in-kind. Screen Australia's production investment must ultimately be augmented by investment from third parties, except in the case of prototypes, where other funding is preferred but not essential. Whilst it is preferable, co-finance does not have to be sourced before applying to Screen Australia. However, Screen Australia funds will not be released until the full budget has been raised.

Specific advice for applicants

- Co-funding partners and/or marketplace investment may be sourced from private investors, telcos, hardware or software manufacturers, distributors, broadcasters, game publishers, portal managers or any other appropriate entities. Co-funding with State film agencies, other

government organisations, educational institutions or other partners is also encouraged.

- Any investment in the form of services and/or facilities must be provided by an established company that normally provides these services and facilities as part of its ongoing business. This facilities/ services company may be owned by the applicant(s). Internal services must not be charged at greater than market rates.

Eligibility

Applicants:

- Applicants may be individual producers or teams, including from game studios. All teams must have a producer attached.
- Key team members must have relevant credits in their chosen fields: for example, a filmmaker must have at least one project that has been theatrically released, broadcast on primetime national television, or screened at a recognised film festival; a game developer must have at least one produced and released game; and a web developer at least one major produced and released online project.

Applicants must also meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's Terms of Trade.

Projects:

For production funding: This program generally does not support the production of cross-platform content associated with linear film and TV series where the producer has secured, or intends to apply for, Screen Australia production investment. In such situations, the cross-platform costs would need to form part of the applicant's overall request for production finance (see www.screenaustralia.gov.au/production).

For development funding: Applications that include a linear TV series component will be viewed more favourably if they have a written letter of interest from a broadcaster. If you do not submit broadcaster interest you will need to provide reasons why not.

General:

- Content will not be considered innovative simply by virtue of using a certain delivery mechanism, but by how it utilises the features of that mechanism. For example, 'interactivity' must go beyond the 'point-and-click' ability to choose which order to engage with the content.
- This program does not support projects conceived primarily as ancillary marketing or promotional additions to existing non-interactive films or programs; i.e. companion websites. It also does not support projects or content in the areas of corporate communications, training or e-commerce.
- A low-budget project in any medium will not be considered innovative simply by virtue of the low budget.
- Predominantly art-based experimental projects are eligible to apply, but when applying for development will need to clearly outline a strategy for going from development to production.

- Educational projects must also demonstrate that they are innovative in content, approach and technology, and provide a professional development rationale for the applicant(s).
- Projects that are unsuccessful in applying for this scheme may only reapply if the project and application are substantially reworked. Projects that have two consecutive unsuccessful applications may no longer apply for this scheme without the written permission of the Development Department.

Application and assessment process

Applications for **development** or **production** funding should be made on the relevant Innovation Program application form, and include all material specified on that form.

Applications will be assessed by a combination of Screen Australia executives and industry specialists/peers as required. Screen Australia will advise applicants of the success or otherwise of their application. Where an application is unsuccessful, the reasons will be conveyed to the applicant, with a written statement of reasons provided on request.

Assessment criteria

Screen Australia will take the following considerations into account when assessing applications for this program:

- The level of innovation in the chosen medium
- The potential of the project to provide ongoing benefits to the industry, such as through developing the team's skills, enhancing business sustainability, or growing audiences
- The potential of the project to connect with the target audience.
- The skills and experience of the applicants, and their capacity to undertake the project.
- The level and quality of marketplace attachments (ie private investors, telcos, hardware or software manufacturers, distributors, broadcasters, game publishers, portal managers or any other appropriate entities),
or
- the capacity of the project to attract marketplace attachments to support further development or provide production finance.

In addition:

- Applications for **development funding** will also be assessed on the appropriateness of the proposed development strategy and use of funds at this stage of development.
- Applications for **production finance** will also be assessed on the feasibility of the project, taking into consideration the proposed budget, finance strategy, market focus, technical specifications and audience reach.

Application timing

Applications can be submitted at any time; turnaround time for application decisions will be approximately eight weeks.

Terms of funding

Development funding is in the form of a grant.

For production funding contracted after 11 March 2010:

- Where Screen Australia investment is \$200,000 or under, funding will be provided as a grant, rather than recoupable investment, and will not have to be repaid unless the terms of the grant agreement are breached. Screen Australia's contribution will be agreed upfront and not varied, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Where Screen Australia investment is more than \$200,000, funding is provided as a recoupable investment, with copyright and recoupment terms in accordance with the agency's Terms of Trade.

Where Screen Australia provides development funds and subsequently invests in the production, its investment in the development phase will be added to its production funding for the purpose of determining whether the \$200,000 grant threshold has been reached, and if so, the total investment will be recoupable.

Screen Australia will hold 1% copyright in all projects where its investment is greater than \$100,000.

Development funding recipients must deliver

- Final pitching materials such as paper-based screenplays, game design documents, proposals or graphics on hard copy or via web-based presentations from an existing website.
- Where applicable, an electronic proof of concept (EPOC) or prototype.
- A revised strategy detailing how the development materials will be used to secure further development or production finance, and what the next stage might be.

Production funding recipients must deliver

- the negotiated materials for which the funding was provided.