

CANBERRA SCREEN AND GAMES FUND

Direct-to-Audience - Production

Guidelines released: 4 December 2025

Last updated: 3 December 2025

1 Funding Program - Overview

The Canberra Screen and Games Fund is an ACT Government Program delivered in partnership with Screen Canberra. It has been established to support the creative industry within the ACT.

The Direct-to-Audience program aims to support content makers in the Australian Capital Territory who are producing and independently distributing "Direct-to-Audience" projects.

The fund's role is to finance productions that have not been commissioned by a third party and are released primarily on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. It aims to support creators who are in control of distributing their own work directly to an audience.

2 Available Funding

- The amount of funding provided will depend on the scale of your project, the first and primary platform and the amount of additional finance required or secured from other sources.
- Screen Canberra may decide to provide funding at a different level than that applied for based on the assessment of all projects submitted to each funding round.
- Other sources of finance need to be in place. The assessment process will take into account the percentage of funding requested from Screen Canberra as a proportion of the overall budget. Other contributions may come from marketplace entities, as well as from state/territory agencies, other government organisations, cultural institutions, international sources, private investors, philanthropy or other partners.

NON RECOUPABLE GRANTS - PRODUCTION - DIRECT TO AUDIENCE (DTA)

- Screen Canberra's contribution is intended to trigger significant additional expenditure in the ACT, with every **\$1** provided expected to trigger at least **\$4** in qualifying ACT expenditure.
- up to a **maximum of \$40,000**.

3 Inclusive Storytelling

Screen Canberra is committed to supporting a diverse and inclusive screen industry. Applications are strongly encouraged from:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Multicultural communities, including migrants and refugees;
- People who identify as living with a Disability;
- People of different age groups;
- People who identify as being part of LGBTIQ+ communities.

4 Environmental Sustainability

Screen Canberra is committed to the ACT Governments emissions reduction targets of achieving net zero emissions by 2045.

We encourage all productions filming in the Territory to consider the environment and strive to reduce their Carbon Footprints. Projects which can incorporate sustainable practices on and off screen are encouraged.

5 Eligibility

- Applicants and projects must meet Screen Canberra's Terms of Trade, as well as the specific eligibility criteria set out in these guidelines.
- Specific requirements apply to projects which involve [First Nations participation or content](#).
- Specific requirements may apply to projects which involve community participation or content with the following communities: d/Deaf, disabled, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTIQA+, or those from other under-represented groups.
- All projects must fit the ACT Government's [Ethical Investments Framework](#).

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

All applicants must:

- Have an active ABN and be registered for GST if required by law.
- Be based in the Australian Capital Territory or be able to display clear ACT economic benefit
- Meet the specific requirements of the relevant program guidelines.
- Not be engaged in a legal dispute related to the application.
- Have meaningful financial and creative control of the project.
- Have the capacity and resources to execute the project.
- Hold the necessary rights (e.g., copyright) to carry out the project.

INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS

An individual applicant must be:

- At least 18 years of age.
- ACT-based, or have at least two ACT-based Key Creatives (Producer, Director, Editor or Writer) on the project.

INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS CANNOT BE

- A full-time secondary or tertiary student.
- An individual must not have a real or conceived conflict of interest with ACT Government or Screen Canberra.
- An individual with an outstanding obligation to Screen Canberra unless an exception has been agreed upon.

ORGANISATIONAL APPLICANTS

To qualify for the Screen & Games Fund, a company must either be based in the ACT or be a non-ACT-based company genuinely co-producing with an ACT-based company, or meet a minimum qualifying ACT spend requirement.

ORGANISATIONS CANNOT BE

- An educational or training institution
- A gambling company
- An organisation with an outstanding obligation to Screen Canberra.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, the project must:

- Have applicant control the rights necessary to carry out the project, meaning that it must have clear chain of title and must generally be party to any underlying rights agreements;

- The team must include at least two key creatives covering the roles of writer, director or producer.
- The application must have at least one key creative (writer, producer or director) with one credit on a comparable project which has been primarily released on a direct-to-audience platform.
- The applicants have to demonstrate that previous projects have been able to find a successful audience online.
- If producing a documentary it must follow the ACMA Guidelines for the definition of 'documentary';
- Screen Canberra will not consider more than two funding applications for the one project.

The following are **not eligible** for funding:

- projects whose first and primary window is not direct-to-audience
- projects that have been declined twice for any of the Production funding streams by Screen Canberra.
- capital works or purchases
- retrospective costs
- purchase of underlying Intellectual Property
- educational and training programs and projects

6 Application Process

- Before applying, applicants must read and understand these guidelines, Screen Canberra's Terms of Trade, and preview the application form on SmartyGrants.
- A non-refundable application fee of **\$100** for applications.

HOW TO APPLY

Complete and submit the online application form prior to the application deadline through Screen Canberra's Application Portal on SmartyGrants.

APPLICATION FORM

Through the application form, applicants must:

- provide all the information requested and answer the application questions;
- meet, where required, all eligibility criteria; and,
- include all required supporting materials.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Applicants must upload the following required materials with their application form:

Creative

- Proposal
- Project Bible or Pitch Deck

Finance

- Finance Plan (using Screen Australia's template)
- Confirmation of decision dates for finance sourced from other Australian or international funding authorities
- Deal agreements

Production

- Production Budget*
- Production Schedule (including pre-production, production, post, and methodology details)

Market & Audience

- Business Impact and Measurements of Success document
- For subsequent seasons: audience data on previous season/s

Rights

- ASIC Company Extract (dated within 30 days of application submission), where applicable
- Summary of Chain of Title; if available, solicitor's opinion letter

Budget Requirements

* *The A–Z Budget template must be used.*

** *Any subsequent updates to the budget/schedule must be provided prior to contracting.*

Where a Production Budget is required, it must include:

- Production costs (including any development costs)
- Post-production costs
- Financing and indirect costs
- Dedicated Marketing Budget to support early development and creation of high-quality marketing assets, as well as audience testing
- Delivery costs relevant to platform and market partners, including requirements for the National Film and Sound Archive
- Cast and crew wages at or above award minimums
- Allowance for carer and accessibility costs (e.g. Accessibility Coordinator), if applicable
- Contingency (as outlined below):
 - Direct-to-Audience: 10% of below-the-line (BTL) budget

Incomplete applications will not be accepted. This includes applications without finalised finance plans in place with associated documentation for each item in the finance plan.

First Nations Participation or Content

Where there is First Nations community participation or content involved in the project applicants must provide:

- a statement setting out how they are approaching the First Nations content or participation with regard to appropriate protocols. Applicants must demonstrate that they have a consultation plan covering the full production process and are following it. The statement should be based on the checklists available in [Screen Australia's guide Pathways & Protocols: a film maker's guide to working with Indigenous people, culture and concepts](#);
- evidence of consultation undertaken to date; and
- if the project will involve particular First Nations individuals or communities, signed letters of consent confirming their willingness to participate and any relevant access agreements.

7 Assessment

PROCESS

- Once submitted, Screen Canberra will review each application to determine eligibility and ensure that required materials have been submitted.
- If there are missing materials in the application it will be rejected
- Once eligibility has been confirmed, the applicant will receive an email advising that their application has moved to assessment which will take approximately eight (8) to twelve (12) weeks.
- Applications are assessed against the published criteria by Screen Canberra delegates, with industry specialists as required.
- Applicants may be required to undertake a meeting with Screen Canberra delegates and industry specialists during the assessment process at mutually agreed times, either in person or online/phone.
- All projects involving First Nations content or participation will be assessed or co-assessed by First Nations Assessors.
- Some projects involving representation of communities and culture may be assessed by Specialist or Cultural Assessors.
- Screen Canberra reserves the right to refer any project with potentially contentious or sensitive subject matter to the Board for decision, regardless of the funding request amount.

- All funding decisions will be signed off by the responsible ACT Government Minister.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Story

- Is the story strong, distinctive and entertaining and does it demonstrate storytelling craft?
- Is the story suited to its platform and proposed audience?
- Does the story contribute to the creative/and or economic development of the ACT region?

Strength of Team

- Does the previous experience of the team position them to execute the vision?
- Does the team have an authentic connection to the content of the story, contributors and subject they are exploring?

Audience & Budget

- Will the story have the potential for commercial success?
- Does the project have the potential to reach the intended audience on its platform/s?
- Is the project budgeted appropriately and can the project be successfully realised for its budget and methodology?

Marketplace and Finance

- Is Marketplace and Finance compliant with industry standards and appropriate for the project and platform?
- Is the ask on Screen Canberra's direct funding appropriate to budget and audience impact.

Other Considerations

In making decisions, Screen Canberra may also take into account:

- Availability of funds;
- The overall range of projects supported (scale, budget, audience, genre, themes);
- The extent to which a project amplifies equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility;
- The extent the project amplifies environmental sustainability (in front of camera and behind)
- The project's likely contribution to the development of the ACT creative economy

Preference Will Be Given To

- Projects based on intellectual property created by Australian Capital Territory residents or companies;

Decision & Notification

- Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within ten **(10)** to twelve **(12)** weeks from the submission closing date.
- Where an application is successful, Screen Canberra will advise the applicant of the decision with a letter of offer (LOO) detailing the level and type of Screen Canberra's contribution, as well as information about the contracting process and any conditions.
- Where an application is unsuccessful, the applicant will be advised and can request a feedback call.
- Decisions on application outcomes are final.

Successful Applicants

- Successful applicants will enter into a Production Grant Agreement (**PGA**) with Screen Canberra.
- 70% of the funds will be given on execution of the PGA and 30% released with the final acquittal.

Terms of Funding

- Applicants must adhere to the Screen Canberra Credit Policy in any executed or future deals with any partners.
- For further information about Screen Canberra's standard conditions of funding, see Screen Canberra's Terms of Trade.
- Projects should register and complete the Everyone Project on delivery.

8 Deliverables

- As a condition of the grant, the applicant must deliver the materials set out in the funding agreement.
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9 Publicity

Funding for the CBR Screen and Games Fund is provided by the ACT Government. The Territory and Screen Canberra may disclose and publicise funding details (including recipient name, project title, funding amount and a brief description of the funded activities) as required under applicable [freedom of information legislation](#) and for reporting or promotional purposes, including websites, media releases, announcements and annual reports. Except for such disclosures, the applicant and Screen Canberra must keep all application and assessment information confidential and must not disclose it to any third party without prior written consent.

10 Other Resources

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

- Screen Canberra Terms of Trade
- Screen Canberra Credit Policy
- Information for Applicants
- Information for Recipients
- Screen Canberra's AI Guiding Principles
- [Finance Plan Template](#)
- [A-Z Budget Template](#)
- Qualifying ACT Expenditure

11 Contact

For any enquiries, please contact the Screen Canberra team. Please note that we are not able to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.

Email: info@screencanberra.com.au

Post: GPO Box 9, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia

12 Privacy

Screen Canberra collects personal information in various ways, including through funding applications, acquittal reports, registrations for events, program participation, and supporting documentation provided with forms. All personal information is managed in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2014 (ACT) and Screen Canberra's Privacy Policy, and may be used for assessment, administration, reporting, and other related purposes.

13 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure it remains consistent with Screen Canberra's operational objectives, national screen industry standards, and evolving technologies and creative practices.