



## Drama Slate Development Fund Guidelines

### Program overview

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Screenwest's Factual Slate Development Fund provides funding to prolific, established Drama Production Companies toward the efficient generation and development of high-quality, distinctive, marketable scripted television and film projects. The fund is designed to contribute to the growth and sustainability of the most experienced drama producers in Western Australia with the aim to increasing production in Western Australia.

The fund is designed to benefit companies as follows:

- Capacity to expand and diversify their slate of projects.
- Flexibility to develop ideas to the appropriate stage to present to market and the flexibility to react to market interest.
- Ability to respond to market notes in a timely manner.
- The ability to engage up-and-coming writers and directors.
- The ability to hire executives, engage researchers, and shoot key material to accompany projects.

### Funding available

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There is one (1) round per financial year. Successful applicants may be offered funding under the following terms:

- Up to \$150,000 for the creative development of a production company's slate over one (1) year ("**Slate Term**").
- The level of Screenwest's funding commitment will be determined by the assessment process and the total demand on available funds.

Applicants may submit a proposal for up to two years of funding. If approved for multi-year finance, funding beyond the first year will be contingent on Screenwest Board approval at the end of each Slate Term. Such proposals would need to include a prolific slate of strong projects, significant engagement with Western Australian key creatives, and would require reports to demonstrate substantial progress within the Slate toward production outcomes.

Multi-year companies will be required to submit materials for assessment including an updated development strategy, current slate of projects, revised budget, and other materials requested by Screenwest. These requirements will form part of the Development Investment Agreement (DIA).

If successful in receiving Slate Development Funding, the company or any company in which the applicant is a key principal, will be ineligible for all other Screenwest general development funds including Feature Film Track Funding, Emergency Funding, TV and Documentary Funding and Indigenous Project Development, however companies will **remain eligible for Matched Development Funding**.

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## Eligibility

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An application must first meet the following eligibility criteria in order to be competitively assessed for funding through this program.

The applicant must:

1. Meet the general eligibility requirements set out in the Screenwest Terms of Trade found [here](#).
2. Own or control a majority share of copyright in at least three (3) projects.
3. Be a Credited Western Australian (WA) Drama Production Company with at least two drama credits either previously broadcast, theatrically-distributed, or commercially released in the past five (5) years. Companies currently in production on projects that will be broadcast within the next calendar year may include project in required credits.
4. Have the experience and capacity to simultaneously develop a number of quality projects intended for production in Western Australia.
5. Demonstrate a substantial slate of commercial projects in various stages of development.

For animation companies, a similar level of credits with recognised distribution platforms will be considered.

To be competitive, an applicant's project slate must:

1. Include all projects (eligible under Screenwest's Terms of Trade) on the company's development slate.
2. Include the type of drama projects eligible for support through Screenwest's general development funding programs.
3. Include projects which the production company owns the underlying rights for.
4. Include at least one project that has confirmed **market interest**.

Screenwest will not fund projects that contain material that will bring, or is likely to bring the WA Government or Screenwest into public disrepute, contempt, scandal, or ridicule, or which might tend to reflect unfavourably on Screenwest.

### **Eligible Costs for Slate Development funding include:**

- Research and script work on all stages of development.
- Writer, director, producer fees for work toward the direct development of a specific project.
- Consultant fees (Script Editors, Heads of Department) for work toward the direct development of a specific project.
- Legal costs.
- Pitch materials.
- Teaser/promo or time critical filming when appropriate toward the development of a project.
- Workshops or story conferences associated with the direct development of a specific project.
- Other appropriate development costs may be considered on a case by case basis, depending on market requirements (Casting, Digital Elements).

In the case that the application is aimed at supplementing staff to increase the creative capacity of the company, the costs may go towards a salary for this person (this person may not be a partner in the company or an applicant for the funding). If this person is being funded through other Screenwest funding programs the duties of their position must be clarified to ensure no overlap in funding expenditure.

**Ineligible costs:**

- Costs associated with marketing and travel which would normally be funded through Screenwest’s Travel Assistance funding or other like funding programs.
- Any costs incurred before the date of submission of the application are ineligible.

Applicants who have an outstanding acquittal report and/or deliverable(s) or have not fulfilled their contractual obligations relating to prior Screenwest funding are not eligible to apply unless an alternative arrangement is agreed with Screenwest prior to application. Please contact Screenwest directly for advice on your specific situation.

**Terms of funding**

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Funding is provided as an **investment**. Successful applicants will enter into a Slate Development Investment Agreement (“**Slate DIA**”) with Screenwest, specifying the terms of the funding and what you will need to deliver to receive payments.

The Slate DIA will be for the one (1) year Slate Term. If an applicant receives provisional proposal for multi-year funding, Screenwest will issue a Slate DIA for the first Slate Term only. If the Screenwest Board approves further Slate funding at the completion of the Slate Term, a new Slate DIA will be issued for the next year Slate Term. It is a requirement that contracting is complete within **12 weeks** of the production company receiving a Letter of Offer. Screenwest will have the option to lapse the funding if contracting is not complete during this period.

The terms of these agreements will be dependent on the individual proposed plan of each successful applicant. In general, the terms of the investment will include but are not limited to the following:

**Repayment:**

Repayment of the Slate Development Fund differs from Screenwest’s other project Development Investment Funds.

When a recipient of Slate Development Funding goes into production on **any** project, the following fee is payable to Screenwest on commencement of principal photography:

- \$15,000 for projects with a production budget of more than \$300,000 and less than \$3million;  
and
- \$25,000 for projects with a production budget of more than \$3million.

The obligation to make the payments is due for any project the company produces for **five (5) years** from the Effective Date of the current Slate Agreement until the Slate Development Investment is recouped.

Should a successful applicant wish to repay a higher amount than the fees listed, they may do so.

For projects going into production that have already received development funding under a prior Development Investment Agreement (“**Prior DIA**”), the recipient will be required to satisfy the

repayment obligations under the Prior DIA in addition to the standard Slate DIA repayment, unless otherwise approved by Screenwest Management.

Projects which are excluded from the repayment obligations are:

- Those projects ineligible as per Screenwest's Terms of Trade.
- In exceptional circumstances, an individual project Screenwest agrees to exclude (such an approval to be noted in the Slate DIA).

**After the Slate Term:**

At the expiration of the Slate Term, successful applicants of Slate Development Investment Funding will be eligible to re-apply for slate funding, if available, or other development funding programs. The company's ability to repay their Slate Development funding and the progress of projects during the Slate Term will be taken into consideration in assessment for future project development funding or slate funding schemes, in addition to the published assessment criteria for the funding program.

**Screenwest Credit:**

Screenwest requires a credit for **any** project produced by the applicant excluding projects ineligible for support under Screenwest's Terms of Trade for five (5) years from the date of execution of the Slate DIA.

**No Screenwest Copyright Interest:**

Under the terms of the Slate Development Fund Screenwest will not take a copyright interest in any Slate projects; however projects which receive funding under other Screenwest development programs will be subject to the copyright requirements outlined in those program guidelines.

**WA-Specific Requirements:**

Successful applicants will be required to connect on a regular basis with less experienced WA screen practitioners through five self-generated meetings with the emerging sector and a minimum of three scheduled by Screenwest.

They are also expected to spend a substantial portion of their funds in WA.

**Reporting Requirements:**

Successful applicants must provide detailed reporting information in regards to the approved Slate Development Investment KPIs, Outcomes and Budget during the Slate Term.

The Slate DIA will include user-friendly KPI Performance Report and Expenditure Report templates which must be completed and submitted to Screenwest on a six (6) monthly basis for approval. Additionally, recipient companies will be required to provide Screenwest with a quarterly update on their progress via meeting or conference call.

It is the Producer's responsibility to obtain and renew (i) the entire copyright in all material commissioned and/or acquired by it for the development of the Project, (ii) all necessary consents to permit the development of the Project, and (iii) all necessary consents to permit the Project to be produced and exploited. Whilst Screenwest approval or sighting of these agreements may not be required at the time of contracting, Screenwest reserves the right to verify them at any point.

**Failure to fulfill acquittal and/or meet deliverable requirements as specified within the funding agreement is a breach of contract. If contractual obligations are not met, Screenwest has the right to recoup funds already paid to the applicant and it may disqualify the recipient from being**

**eligible for future Screenwest funding until outstanding funds are paid back and the matter resolved with Screenwest.**

## **Assessment Materials**

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**Please note that all required materials are listed in the Slate Development Investment Fund Application Form.**

**Applicants must ensure all requested material is completed and submitted together. Applications that do not include all requested material may not be accepted for assessment.**

## **Assessment criteria**

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Screenwest competitively assesses eligible applications against the following criteria:

1. Track record of company and the capacity of the company to develop and produce multiple high quality projects at a professional level.
2. Outcomes delivered from previous Screenwest investment (including Slate Funding if applicable).
3. Strength of the development strategy proposed and outcomes to be delivered if successful in receiving Slate Development Investment Funding.
4. Quality and distinctiveness of the slate of projects submitted.
5. Market potential of projects. Preference will be given to development slates where a production company can show that one or more projects have an expression of interest from a market partner, such as a bona fide national or international broadcaster or distributor, operating at arm's length from the production company.
6. Quality and detail of the development strategies to progress the identified slate.
7. Potential of the creative team, including the number of WA resident practitioners involved in developing the company slate.
8. Benefits to the WA industry (including company's plan to engage with WA creatives and the level of WA spend).
9. Ability and proposed plan for the production company to supplement the Slate Development Funds with other sources of funding.
10. Potential for the production and feasibility of the projects and outcomes for Western Australia.

Screenwest will take into consideration whether the applicant has a number of concurrent outstanding projects in development or production that may impact on the quality and timely delivery of further projects as part of its assessment of the application.

Screenwest seeks to reflect the diversity of Western Australia's community on screen and behind the camera, through projects funded and practitioners supported. The funding panel will take into consideration diversity elements of a submission during the assessment process.

## **Closing date**

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All closing dates are listed on the Screenwest website and are published in the Screenwest newsletter. To register for the newsletter go [here](#).

**All application materials must be submitted by 5:00pm on the specified closing date.**

Applicants should allow plenty of time to submit an application in case of unanticipated problems as late applications will not be accepted.

## **Submitting an application**

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### ***Emailed applications***

Applications can be emailed to [funding@screenwest.wa.gov.au](mailto:funding@screenwest.wa.gov.au). Applicants are to forward all required application materials in a single email. Application materials are not to be emailed directly to individual staff members.

For emails larger than 8MB, send via Screenwest's Hightail Account by following this link: <https://www.hightail.com/u/Screenwest>.

### ***Hard copy applications***

#### *Post applications to:*

Attn Development FAO  
Screenwest  
PO Box 3275  
East Perth WA 6892

#### *Hand deliver applications to:*

Attn Development FAO  
Screenwest  
30 Fielder Street  
East Perth WA 6004

Screenwest recommends that mailed applications are sent via registered post. No responsibility is taken for unregistered mail.

### ***Application receipt confirmation***

An application receipt will be forwarded to the applicant within two working days to confirm that Screenwest has received the application. **It is the applicant's responsibility to contact Screenwest if an application receipt has not been received within this timeframe.** Application material(s) will not be returned by Screenwest.

## **Program contact**

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Applicants should note that just prior to a closing date consultations can be in high demand. Consequently, it is best to telephone or email the program contact for an appointment or general advice well before the advertised closing date.