Digital Games Production Fund Guidelines

The Screenwest *Digital Games Production Fund* provides grants to Western Australian companies and key creatives to develop and release high-quality, diverse and engaging digital games. Pre-Production, Production and Post-Production phases of game development for PC, consoles, mobile, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) or extended reality (XR) can be supported.

This fund is designed to help Western Australian studios and developers bring their ideas and prototypes to a level that will gain interest from other investors and partners, have successful releases and achieve high player retention post launch.

Screenwest encourages applications from First Nations Australians and people from historically under-represented groups.

What You Can Receive Funding For

For Pre-production

- Development of a playable prototype of a game showing core game play mechanics.
- Improvements to existing game design documentation, marketing and release plans to increase marketability and pitch strength when approaching publishers.

For Production

- Development work necessary to a game's public release.
- Audience engagement and marketing strategies appropriate to pre-release of the game.

For Post-Production and Live Ops

- Ongoing content development and delivery post game release.
- Localisation or porting costs.
- Additional marketing or post-release audience engagement including strategy planning, press kits, user acquisition, social media, and community management.

Funding Available

Phases:

1. Preproduction: Up to 60% of the pre-production phase total budget (capped at $25,000 per application).
2. Production: Up to 70% of the production phase total budget (capped at $100,000 per application).
3. Post-Production: Up to 60% of total budget for the piece of work (capped at $25,000 per application).

To note:

- The total funding over the life of a game is capped at $150,000.
- An applicant can access no more than $200,000 per financial year through these guidelines.
- Screenwest funds are contributed to support Western Australian activity. Excluding marketing, **all Screenwest funding must be spent in Western Australia (100% Qualifying Western Australian Spend).**

Eligibility

To be considered eligible for this program, the below general minimum eligibility applies.

Applicant / Company Eligibility

The applicant / company must:

1. Be a Western Australian Resident with a registered Australian Business Number (ABN) or a Western Australian Resident Company, as defined in the Screenwest Terms of Trade.
2. Be able to demonstrate the ability and commitment required to deliver and commercialize the game. Examples of past games or relevant credits can be provided by applicants to assist with the assessment of their application.

Game Eligibility

The game must:

1. Satisfy the Screenwest Terms of Trade definition of a Digital Game.
2. Be for any platform, including, but not limited to PC, Mobile, Console, Tablet, VR, XR or multi-platform games.

Games with co-financing from market, commercial partners or other funding agencies are eligible to apply. Written evidence confirming the finance must be provided at the time of application.

For **Pre-Production** funding, games must have:
1. Early-stage concept or prototype materials showing the game's intended key elements such as mechanics, themes, art style, narrative, or other game features.
2. Development documentation showing the path to additional financing or full production.

For **Production** funding, games must have:
1. Concept materials showing the game's intended key elements and a playable digital prototype ready to move into full production.
2. A playable digital prototype or sufficient gameplay footage and screenshots to demonstrate the game has some core functionality developed.
3. Development documentation demonstrating a public outcome for the game, including a release schedule that includes dates for any public beta testing, demo releases, early access releases or platform publications.

For **Post-Production** funding, games must have:
- An existing publicly released game. This includes any game that is publicly available for purchase with the exception of games that are in Early Access or the equivalent and clearly state to consumers that they are not complete.
- Development documentation that shows a package of work that builds on the released game such as localisation, porting, downloadable content, or other game content.

The following activities/digital games will **<u>not</u>** be supported:
1. Interactive extensions or marketing sites of existing films, television games, brands or otherwise, unless the game directly relates to a licensed IP and the digital game, and its narrative demonstrate that the content being created is stand-alone and a substantially new work.
2. Re-packaged existing film, digital game and/or television content for delivery on any electronic platform, unless it represents a substantially new work.
3. Digital games that are site specific, event specific or date / time specific.
4. Educational games. This includes any game where the learning component of the game makes up the core experience and is aimed at a target audience with a specific learning outcome in mind.

Resubmissions

Any unsuccessful applications under the same project title may re-submit to a future funding round, provided the application material has seen significant updates since the previous submission.

Application Material

- All digital game applications must include:
    1. A game design document or equivalent that outlines the core experience of the game in detail and describes the content that will be delivered in the production phase that is being applied for. The game design document or equivalent must outline accessibility considerations and how these considerations are going to be implemented in the final game.
    2. A budget outlining how Screenwest funding when combined with any external or in-kind payments will contribute to the production of the game.
    3. A statement clearly describing the game's pathway to audience and placement in the market.

- All supporting documentation must be supplied in a non-live format that cannot be edited once submitted. Documents must be attached to the application form in their original format, for example: .doc, .pdf, .docx, .ppt, .xlsx etc. Links to cloud hosted repositories such as Google Drive, Dropbox, or OneDrive will not be accepted.

- If a playable prototype is available, zip the required content and attach the zip folder to the application form. If the folder is too large to attach you may upload it to a file sharing website or repository and attach a document with a link, provided the uploaded file and location does not change and remains accessible after the funding application deadline.

- If a new version of the playable prototype needs to be uploaded to fix a major bug or issue that prevents it from being assessed, contact Screenwest's Digital Games Manager to discuss.

- If your playable prototype is available online via a key activation for example via Steam, make sure you provide up to five unique keys to assist in the assessment process.

Assessment Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed against the following assessment criteria:

1. *Creative:* the quality and strength of the game - is it compelling and distinctive in terms of its mechanics, narrative, visual style, use of technology and/or other key creative elements.

2. *Commercial & Economic Impact:* how well the game will contribute to the long-term sustainability and commercial goals of the developer, including investment triggered, employment and commercial relationships.

3. *Planning & Delivery*: potential and/or likely ability of the team to deliver on the proposed plan and the overall viability of the game in reference to the development plan, budget, timeline, and milestones required to develop the game to the next stage.

4. *Benefits to WA:* the extent the game benefits Western Australia and contributes to developing WA key talent, growing WA businesses and/or increasing the number of successful shipped digital games from WA.

5. *Accessibility:* does the game include clear accessibility options and considerations, are the options / considerations meaningfully planned for, along with the suitability of proposed options.

Screenwest will weight the above assessment criteria as it deems appropriate to best serve the purpose and strategic priorities of the organisation.

First Nations Australian Content

Screenwest supports the telling of First Nations Australian stories by First Nations Australian creatives and storytellers.

There must be strong First Nations Australian representation on all Games that tell First Nations Australian stories, through the involvement of First Nations Australian key creatives and thorough consultation and collaboration that is adequately budgeted for.

Diversity Statement

Screenwest is committed to reflecting the broad diversity of Western Australia's community on screen and behind the keyboard, through content funded and practitioners supported.

It is important that you / your team of key creatives authentically represent the story and characters in your application.

Screenwest recognises diversity broadly as differences in gender; age; Indigenous identity; cultural and linguistic diversity (CaLD); disability; sexuality and gender identities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and ace (LGBTQIA+); location (including regional and remote regions) and socio-economic status.

Application Process

- Before applying, read these guidelines, the Screenwest Terms of Trade and check your eligibility.
- Discuss your application with the Screenwest Program Contact if you have any questions.

How to apply

1. Complete an online application form through the Screenwest SmartyGrants Portal.
2. Attach relevant documentation for the phase you are applying for. Refer to the 'Application Material' section above.

To note: Screenwest funding is not automatic; it will depend on the competitive strength of the application and the availability of Screenwest funds. Funding may be approved at a lesser amount than is applied for.

After you apply

- Eligible applications will be assessed by a panel consisting of Screenwest Management and experienced industry representatives.
- All funding recommendations over $25,000 will be presented to the Screenwest Board for approval.
- You can expect to be advised of the outcome of your application within eight weeks of the funding round closing date.

Terms of Funding

- Funding is provided as a grant.
- Successful applicants are required to enter into a written agreement with Screenwest, specifying the terms of the funding. Payments will be made on satisfactory achievement and delivery of each contracted milestone.

Closing Dates

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

Allow yourself plenty of time to submit the application as late applications will not be accepted.

Program Contact

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Applicants are encouraged to discuss their applications before applying.