

Frequently Asked Questions: Funding for Development

The following Frequently Asked Questions have been developed to support you throughout your application process. If video is more your style, you can watch our FAQs Facebook Live [here](#).

This document covers the below topics:

- Funding and Budget
- Eligibility
- Application Materials
- General Questions

Funding and Budget

How much funding can I ask for?

Check the [Budget Guide](#) for detail. This guide includes caps (maximum amounts you can ask for) on the total budget and on individual line items.

What is the difference between funding and budget?

Funding is the amount of money VicScreen may contribute to a particular stage of development. Your budget is the total cost of the development stage – the total amount of money you will need in order to deliver the next stage and the breakdown of those funds.

What is 'total estimated production spend'?

Your Production Budget or Total Estimated Production Spend is what you estimate the final project (film, series, etc.) will cost to make. Please note: this is only a ballpark figure.

For example:

- Funding from VicScreen for the stage of development \$10,000
- Budget for the stage of development \$20,000
- Estimated Production Budget is \$1,200,000

If you are unsure, we encourage you to research similar projects to that of your own and use that production budget as a reference.

Do I need to contribute to the proposed stage of development?

VicScreen funding is a partial contribution to the next stage of development. Applicants are expected to supplement this funding with their own or third-party contributions.

What is a third-party contribution?

A third-party contributor is someone other than you or VicScreen. This may be another member of the creative team, Screen Australia, a private investor, broadcaster, etc.

What type of activities can I request funding for?

Funding can be used to develop a project to secure market attachment or production finance.

Funding requests may include:

- For fiction series or one-off projects: writers room costs, pitch bible to series bible, sample pages to pilot/treatment to pilot, draft to draft, proof of concept activities or prototyping for virtual reality (VR).
- For fiction feature projects: draft to draft.*
- For documentary projects: research, writing of a detailed treatment, creation of a teaser, strategic shooting, proof of concept activities or prototyping for VR.
- For projects at an advanced stage with significant market interest – budgeting, scheduling, casting and travel to finalise production finance.

*Treatment to draft for fiction feature projects is available but only for Development On Demand projects that have the required qualifying credits.

How do I work out my budget/break it down?

Take a look at our [Budget Guide](#) to understand budget line items and what VicScreen is able to contribute to each item.

Be realistic about who needs to be involved in this stage of development and understand what their contribution is worth. For example, a budget may include producer, writer, script editor and legal fees.

You may like to consult the relevant guilds for minimum recommended rates (e.g. Australian Writers Guild, Directors Guild of Australia).

If successful, do I need to repay my development investment?

VicScreen funding is provided as a development investment, which must be repaid from the production budget if and when a project proceeds to production. Refer to our [Terms of Trade](#) for more details.

Are there certain things that VicScreen does not fund at development stage?

Funding is not provided for office overheads and option fees and in Fiction Development, we do not fund teasers or trailers.

Eligibility

Can I apply as an individual writer or individual producer?

Yes.

I'm a writer or writer/director, do I need to have a producer attached to my project in order to apply for funding?

You do not need to have a producer attached, however applicants must demonstrate that they have the skills required to realise the project.

Please note: writer applicants can only receive one round of funding without a producer attached. A producer must be attached for any subsequent funding applications.

For the purposes of VicScreen funding, what classifies me as 'Victorian'?

As an individual, you need to:

- Be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Be living in Victoria when you apply and for at least the last 6 months.

As a company:

- You need to have been based in and operating out of Victoria for at least the last 12 months
- If you are newly registered, you may still qualify if at least one of the company principals and/or parent entity have been based in and operating out of Victoria for at least the last 12 months.

Do I need screen credits to apply?

Project Development:

You do not need credits to apply for Project Development.

Development On Demand:

All applicants must have credits on a minimum of three qualifying projects for Development On Demand.

What is a qualifying project and/or credit?

Qualifying projects are those that have been commercially distributed or exhibited, and/or sold to a recognised commissioning platform.

Credits must be in the same role and for the same type of project that is being submitted for development support, so if you are a writer (sole trader) applying to develop a fiction feature film, you must have a minimum of three writing credits on three fiction feature films.

What is a commissioning platform?

A free-to-air broadcaster, subscription television service, VOD platform, or similar.

Do my credits need to be in the same role and for the same type of project that I am seeking funding for?

Development On Demand:

Yes. Credits must be in the same role and for the same type of project that is being submitted for development support (i.e. if you are a producer applying to develop a fiction feature film you must have Producer credits on at least three fiction feature films).

I am an interstate producer/production company, can I apply?

Project Development:

No. All applicants and key creatives (writer/director/producer) must be Victorian.

Development On Demand:

Non-Victorian Producers must engage a Victorian writer, however preference is given to all Victorian teams and projects that are substantially shot and/or completed in Victoria.

How many applications can I submit?

Project Development:

Applicants may only submit one application at a time. Further applications will not be accepted while the current application is being processed.

Development On Demand:

Generally, applicants are limited to two feature film applications through this program in any one financial year.

I have previously submitted this project to VicScreen for assessment, but it was declined. Can I submit the same project again for assessment?

VicScreen is unable to accept applications that have previously been through the assessment process and rejected for funding unless the application is substantially reworked at VicScreen's determination - 'substantially reworked' includes a consideration of all assessment criteria.

We encourage you to discuss any potential resubmission after a decline with the Program Manager.

If your project has been declined twice for funding from VicScreen through our development programs and/or initiatives, you cannot submit another application for the same project.

If I have a fiction feature project, can I apply for treatment to draft funding?

Project Development:

No, treatment to draft funding is not available through Project Development.

Development On Demand:

- **Writer (sole trader):** You must have three qualifying credits in order to apply for treatment to draft funding.
- **Producer (sole trader):** Both you and the attached writer must have three qualifying credits in order to apply for treatment to draft funding.
- **Company (Pty Ltd):** Both the applicant and the attached writer must both have three qualifying credits in order to apply for treatment to draft funding.

Can I seek funding for a proof of concept?

Generally, we will only fund proof of concept activities for VR or animation projects. For Documentary Development you can seek funding for teasers.

Do I need market interest to apply? If so, what evidence do I need to supply?

Project Development:

No, you do not need to market interest in order to apply for Project Development.

Development On Demand:

- **Fiction projects:**
In response to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, VicScreen has waived the Development On Demand requirement for market interest in television fiction projects. When this exemption is not in place, market interest is considered either a letter of interest or a co-funding agreement from an Australian or recognised international broadcaster, a major online content provider, a recognised distributor or sales agent.

Priority will be given to applicants with projects which are able to be market ready within 3-6 months of development funding being provided by VicScreen, and with financed productions suspended or on hold due to the crisis. Victorian applicants who meet the above criteria may include reasonable producer fees in their proposed development budget.

You do not need market interest to submit a fiction feature application, except for when applying for late-stage costs, such as budgeting and scheduling.

- **Documentary projects:**
For documentary television projects, evidence of market interest (minimum Letter of Interest) is required.

For documentary feature films, market interest is not required.

Application Materials

What materials do I need to provide?

Refer to 'Application Materials' section in the [Development On Demand guidelines](#) and the [Project Development guidelines](#).

Can I supply creative materials (e.g. screenplay, script sample, treatment, etc.) from a different project?

Fiction projects:

Fiction feature projects: you must provide the screenplay of the proposed project.

Fiction series projects: funding is competitive, and applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a writing sample of the proposed concept, however, if you are unable to do so, VicScreen will accept writing samples from other projects, provided the tone and genre are not dissimilar to the proposed project.

Documentary projects:

You must provide creative materials from the proposed project.

What are development notes?

These notes are a critical analysis of the creative and identify the challenges present in the current draft/materials and articulate strategies to address these issues in the next stage/s of development. These notes are specific rather than general.

What information should I include in my 'project notes'?

- The project history and key personnel in the project's development.
- The development activities to be undertaken for the proposed stage.
- A market overview of the project, detailing your financing strategies for production and any market interest that you have received to date.

What is a Pitch Doc or Pitch Bible?

A Pitch Doc or Bible is generally 5-10 pages, and details:

- The concept and creative vision for the project
- An overview of the series/project
- The major characters and their potential arcs
- Concise episode breakdowns
- The world/setting and the elements that make it unique and distinctive

- The tone/style of the show
- The target audience and the hooks of the show that will engage this audience.

For Fiction Development applications, refer to Screen Australia's [Story Documents](#) for further information on creative materials and definitions.

Do I have to submit a pitch video?

Project Development:

This is recommended, but not compulsory. You can provide a video or a written pitch.

Development on Demand:

A pitch video is not required.

How do I supply my pitch video for my Project Development project?

You will need to supply a link to your pitch video (preferably Vimeo or YouTube) and your video must not exceed 3 minutes. Note: if your video is password protected you will need to include it in your application form.

What are some tips for my pitch video?

- The pitch video is not a sizzle reel, although you can use images or clips to help communicate your project's tone or look. Production quality is less important – you can shoot it on your mobile and edit it on a laptop.
- The pitch video does not have to be done in a single take – feel free to edit as you see fit.
- You don't have to be in the pitch video, but it's worth considering that you're probably the best advocate for your project and what the panel might miss by not hearing directly from you.
- Use your three minutes strategically – do not rehash the synopsis or other written materials submitted as part of your application.

General

Do I need an ABN to apply?

Yes. VicScreen requires the applicant to have an Australian Business Number (ABN). You can register for an ABN [here](#).

Can I send you my concept, treatment, script, etc. and receive feedback prior to applying?

We do not accept unsolicited materials, as we are unable to discuss proposals or 'pre-assess' applications unless you are applying for funding through one of our programs/initiatives.

When can I expect an outcome for my application?

Project Development:

For Fiction projects, you can expect a decision 9-10 weeks from the date of submission, via email or phone.

For Documentary projects, you can expect a decision 7-8 weeks from the date of submission, via email or phone.

Development On Demand:

For Fiction projects, you can expect a decision 9-10 weeks from the date of submission, via email or phone.

For Documentary projects, you can expect a decision 7-8 weeks from the date of submission, via email or phone.

If my application is unsuccessful, can I receive feedback?

Due to the volume of applications we receive, we are unable to provide individual feedback.

If successful, when would I need to deliver the proposed stage of development?

Generally, six months after the contract execution date.

Can VicScreen connect me with other practitioners to work on my project?

We are unable to disclose the details of individuals, as we are bound by privacy and confidentiality clauses. You can use our online [Industry Directory](#) to get in touch with production companies/managers and other film professionals within the screen industry.