

Screen Yorkshire Production Fund Guidance Notes

Speak to us first!

You must always speak to Screen Yorkshire staff before filling out your application form for our production fund, so that you make the best application possible and to avoid wasting time. If you do not do this, we will not read your application and will return it to you.

These guidance notes will help you to apply for money towards the development or production of digital media content projects. We cannot consider applications from individual writers and/or directors. Other Screen Yorkshire schemes may support individual applications.

Background

Screen Yorkshire Production Fund is a digital media content development and production fund, supported by Yorkshire Forward, our Regional Development Agency. It is an investment fund that will help to develop a long-term and successful production sector in the Yorkshire and Humber region. This fund does not give out grants - we will look for returns on our investments, such as benefits to the sector and money we might get back.

In partnership with other public and private sector financiers, we will invest in projects and companies who....

- Nurture talent in Yorkshire and Humber
- Attract people and productions to the region
- Help establish markets and grow the regional production sector
- Encourage creative and technical innovation
- Encourage access for creative and business talent from all sectors of society
- Attract new audiences

We support projects across the whole range of digital media activity, including

- Feature films (drama and documentary)
- Television programming (drama and factual)
- Video and computer games
- New media

It is a long-term priority for Screen Yorkshire to develop volume production, specifically drama (i.e. multi-part series that can be returnable)

Who can apply?

We will consider projects

- Which production companies apply for
- Following approaches from other investors and funds
- Which we proactively seek to support

The formal application must come from a company fulfilling the assessment criteria (See below)

We can give financial support to projects and companies predominantly based in the region and to groupings of start-up companies, involved in innovation or seeking to expand into new market areas. These could be

- Regionally based companies
- Companies moving into the region to base production

Please note – a regionally based company is one that has had its offices in the region for more than 3 years or, in the case of companies less than 3 years old, where at least one of the principals is resident in the region.

What can I apply for?

Our Production Fund supports projects in the following categories:

Features

We encourage high-concept, innovative and commercially viable feature filmmaking, especially from production companies based in the region. Please note - you are more likely to be successful if your project has a distributor and/or sales company.

- *Development:* projects of scale and substance submitted by regionally based companies only
- *Production:* we will additionally accept applications for 'incoming' projects from production companies based outside the region, provided that there is a clear case for sustainable economic impact. This means that we will prioritise projects that create jobs in, and bring investment into the region, and companies that can demonstrate a commitment to a long-term relationship with the region. *Please note that we will not normally support more than 2-3 feature films a year in this way.*

Television

- We seek to encourage the long-term growth of the regional broadcast industry by investing in long-running series, either drama or factual entertainment. We will expect a return on these investments, and as a result we will look for a potential return from sales to international territories.
- We will normally only support proposals from regionally based companies, for 'single' programmes that have sales potential in more than one market and that demonstrate the value to the company of retaining ancillary rights

New Media/Games

- For computer games, web-based, mobile TV and other new media projects, please contact Craig Albeck on 0113 236 8231 or craig@screenyorkshire.co.uk to request some further information.

How much money can I get?

Development

Individual Projects

- We can offer up to 50% of your total development budget.
- We are more likely to support applications that include a match contribution from a third party of at least 30%
- We normally give up to £20,000 for individual projects but in exceptional circumstances this can be increased to £40,000

Multiple Projects

- We can offer up to a maximum of £100,000 for 'high growth, high risk' companies, across a number of projects
- We can offer up to 50% of your total development budget

Please note - development finance is only repayable if your project goes into production, with a premium. For investments of up to £5,000 with no other cash funding, the premium is normally 100% of the investment. For all other investments the premium is normally 50%. The repayment may form part of a subsequent equity investment in the production, if we negotiate terms acceptable to us. We will also expect a share of net profits should the project go into production.

Production

- For feature films, we can offer to finance the producer's tax credit in return for a fee of 10% of our investment. We will take a view based on independent legal and financial advice of the maximum we can invest in any one film, but we would not normally invest more than £600,000 in this way.
- We can invest up to £250,000 as direct equity in a production. The exact amount will depend on the risk involved, the long-term benefit to the region and the amount of private investment the project brings to the region. We will not normally invest more than 5% of the budget of a film, or more than 10% of the private investment attracted. Please note that Lottery funds do not count as private investment.
- For 'incoming' productions, i.e. not produced by regional companies, we would expect a minimum net spend in the region of not less than twice any investment made by the fund. The actual spend required may be higher than this, depending on the nature of the production and the long-term benefits to the region.

We will try, where possible to support production companies established in the region, by reinvesting part of our share of profits in the development and production of subsequent projects. Precise contractual terms will be negotiated on a project by project basis.

When can I apply?

There are no set funding deadlines and applications will be considered on a rolling basis

How do I apply?

You need to follow this process when making your application

- Read these guidance notes carefully
- Contact our staff by phone or e-mail for advice, contact details below
- We will normally ask for a one-page outline of your project and your profile submitted on a pre-application form
- We will assess any available material – proposals, treatments and/or scripts for development applications; scripts, budgets, financing plans etc. for production applications
- You will receive feedback on whether you can apply, what you can apply for and any additional information we may need
- When a project is at script stage, we will send the script for external review and we will send you a copy of the review
- When we agree the project proposal is complete, you can fill out an application form
- We will assess your application
- If appropriate, external independent professional advisors will assess your application form. This should take no longer than four weeks.

- You should receive a response and feedback about your application within four weeks of us receiving your documents
- We will send you our recommendations for funding in writing, subject to formal contract and board approval
- For us to recommend funding, your application must be endorsed by two independent industry sources, either from our own advisors or from recognised third parties supporting the application

How do you assess applications?

Our Production Fund aims to

- Develop and support distinctive media production
- Build a long-term and creative production sector that is culturally inclusive

Please note -

Your application must have a strategy for reaching an audience

We will give priority to projects with vision and that push creative, technological or commercial boundaries

We will assess the viability of your project against the following criteria:

- Creative content - clarity of your idea & how fully realised it is, distinctiveness of your concept creatively and/or technically
- Level of investment you are applying for, measured against potential returns
- How your project concept fits with intended cost and audience
- Quality of your team, ability to do the project as you've outlined
- Status of financial and production partners
- Impact your project will have on the success of your production company, whether through direct financial return, penetration into new market, enhanced reputation/profile
- Inward investment your project will bring into the region
- Number of jobs your project will create
- Potential benefit to the regional production sector in terms of profile, new markets and partnerships and direct economic impacts

Additionality

Your application must also show what our investment has helped your producer or production to achieve, which would not have otherwise been possible. This is 'additionality'.

Examples of additionality include:

- Allowing regional producer to win contract, over other competition
- Allowing you to diversify your activity or break into new markets
- Supporting projects that without our involvement would not otherwise be made
- Allowing greater rights share for your producer, increasing profitability to region

What we will not fund:

- Projects with no strategy for reaching an audience
- Projects for which our money becomes pure subsidy which we will not get back and will not bring economic benefit to the region
- Projects for which our money is replacing or topping-up commercial money with no additional benefit to the region. This may be the case in direct commissions for television or corporate work and these applications will be scrutinised very carefully for additionality benefits (see above)

Other Screen Yorkshire production support schemes

Screen Yorkshire supports Warp X, the low budget feature film slate established by the UK Film Council and FilmFour, in conjunction with Screen Yorkshire, EM Media and Optimum Releasing. For consideration of films with budgets of under £1m please go to <http://www.warpx.co.uk>. Screen Yorkshire will not normally fund low budget feature films outside Warp X.

Screen Yorkshire has recently established a Multi-Platform Content Development Fund to support projects that are intended to work across more than one platform (e.g. web, mobile phone, broadcast TV).

We also provide business support, location, crewing and trainee placement services. To find out more about what we do, please have a look at our website www.screenyorkshire.co.uk

To find out more about the Screen Yorkshire Production Fund please contact:

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