

**SCREEN SCOTLAND**  
**SGRÌN ALBA**

# **SCREEN SCOTLAND FILM DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION FUND**

**Consultation seeking views on  
proposed changes to the Film  
Development and Production Fund**

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## SCREEN SCOTLAND – WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

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Screen Scotland is supporting the growth of the sector through increased public funding and support for film and television production, an increase in specialist staff and further investment in skills, audiences and education.

Screen Scotland sits within the public body Creative Scotland and works in partnership with Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Funding Council, with funding from the Scottish Government and The National Lottery.

We are funding, developing and growing Scotland's screen sector by:

- Boosting production by increasing funding and support to grow the number and diversity of film and TV productions from Scotland
- Growing and improving Scotland's screen infrastructure including studio facilities
- Creating specialist business development provision for screen businesses, ensuring that advice and support is appropriate and easy to access
- Improving employment opportunities in the sector through increased and co-ordinated opportunities for training and development
- Developing audiences by improving access to Scottish film and TV productions at home and internationally
- Developing Scotland's reputation as a destination for international productions and co-productions, supported by our world-class talent, crews, facilities and unique locations
- Engaging best practice in Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion including introducing the BFI Diversity Standards Scotland Pilot and the adaptation of Fair Work principles.

# THE FILM DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION FUND

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Screen Scotland manages a suite of funding programmes supporting a wide range of activity, from professional development and training, to film festivals, education programmes and more. To see the full list of funds go to [www.screen.scot/funding-and-support/funding](http://www.screen.scot/funding-and-support/funding)

The Film Development and Production Fund exists to offer development and production funding for feature length films being made by filmmakers based in Scotland.

This £4m annual fund can support the initial development costs of a single feature film project, as well as support towards the production costs for a film project. Separately, Screen Scotland supports the development and production of short films through Little Pictures and Short Circuit. Short Circuit is also our support route for the development of first features.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS CONSULTATION

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This discussion document outlines the current offer within the Film Development and Production Fund, alongside some proposed changes we are seeking your feedback on. This does not apply to documentary and there will be a separate guidelines refresh for theatrical documentary film development and production.

Because the overall budget for the fund is not changing, the suggestions are modest in scope, but are designed to try to increase the range of funding opportunities for the development and production of films from Scotland.

The paper, by design, does not get into huge detail around any of the proposals. We want to keep it high-level so that feedback focusses on the broad ideas and that there is space for your input with big ideas. What is outlined are just proposals right now and may change. Further details will follow in the form of updated guidance once the set of changes has been finalised.

Before implementing any changes, we would welcome your feedback on these proposals, including any suggestions on how they could be enhanced, and any further ideas or suggestions for improvements that you feel could be made now or in the future. For more details on how to do this, please read the 'How to Respond' section on Page 14.



## OUR APPROACH

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Our ambition is to enable Scottish filmmaking talent to reach the height of its undoubted potential, by embracing risk and encouraging bold storytelling. Demand for content has never been higher but the path through independent film has never been harder.

Our job is clear: to ensure more great films from Scotland are made and seen. In an increasingly crowded and competitive international market, we need films with swagger and creative confidence, that feel relevant and compelling to audiences here and around the world.

Doing nothing is not an option for us, but every plan means choices. This paper lays out some of our proposed interventions to engineer a shift in the landscape. In short we plan to:

- Get more first and second features made by Scotland-based talent
- Invest in the ongoing and continuous development of filmmakers in Scotland
- Be first to commit to projects where needed, and be strong advocates for supported filmmakers
- Embed BFI Diversity Standards Scotland into our funded projects to ensure our industry is more representative and inclusive.

We hope that by supporting the hard work already happening and making a wider variety of support available, we can help you make more great films.

# THE ENTRY POINT: SHORT FILMS

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Short film remains a key entry point for aspirant filmmakers and Screen Scotland has recently renewed its offering in this crucial area, working with two external partners to offer filmmakers from across Scotland the opportunity to develop and produce their first funded film work.

## Current provision:

Existing and continuing short film initiatives currently funded by Screen Scotland include:

### Little Pictures

A micro budget film programme run by GMAC, Little Pictures works with filmmakers to develop their voice, take creative risks and to bring their unique experience and backgrounds into their film work. Filmmakers working in live action, animation and documentary benefit from an intensive programme of filmmaking training workshops and development of their projects with the support of mentors and GMAC's Little Pictures team. It is particularly supportive of under-represented talent in the sector. Further support is given for distribution and exhibition of the films produced, and the filmmaker's next steps.

**Awards:** 8 awards per year with a Production Budget per short of £2k

### Short Circuit – Sharp Shorts

Short Circuit is a film talent initiative for Scotland, acting as a key hub for emerging fiction filmmaking talent in Scotland. The programme prioritises Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion in all of its work. It is delivered by Film City Futures in partnership with Glasgow Film, and supported by Screen Scotland and BFI NETWORK.

Sharp Shorts is a short film scheme which aims to bring adventurous and distinctive stories to the screen. Created to deliver inspiring, engaging and boundary-pushing short films, it is an opportunity for Scotland's emerging writers, directors and producers to put their distinctive stamp on the filmmaking map.

**Awards:** Up to 9 per year with a production budget per short of £15k

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## Consultation questions:

How do you rate Screen Scotland's current provision for short films?

What can Screen Scotland can do to further support short film and other entry points for filmmakers?

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## THE NEXT STEP: FIRST FEATURES

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### First Features – Development

For new and emerging filmmakers, the stage after making short films can be the career-defining step towards making their debut feature.

For talent to flourish, it takes resources. We aim to support the most promising Scotland-based talent to fully explore and hone their story through rigorous research and editorial support.

### Current provision:

This is managed through the Short Circuit First Features programme:

### Short Circuit First Features – Development

Open to writers, directors and producers from across Scotland who have bold, compelling and cinematic fiction projects with the potential to resonate with audiences globally. This supports projects from initial idea to fully polished draft. Both early development (treatment or first draft) and further development (second draft and beyond) are offered.

**Awards:** Between 8-12 awards per year at levels ranging from £5k-£15k

### First Features – Production

The health of any industry is dependent on renewal. We want Scotland's very brightest talents have an opportunity to have their work seen on the big screen. Presently there are limited options for production funds for first features. To improve this, we want to create a simple path to having a first feature produced.

## Proposed Fund Alteration: Low Budget First Features to be funded through the Film Development and Production Fund

We believe that it can take too long for people to get to make films. The inherent risk involved in new talent can lead to years of development and financing, sometimes dimming the original boldness.

This change is about embracing the risk and creating a safe space for our most promising new talent to flourish. But this space has clear parameters. We are only able to take these creative risks by tightly controlling budgets. The successful applications will be those projects that positively embrace the restrictions imposed by a limited budget and use their creative brilliance to make outstanding work that isn't compromised by the tight budget.

This is not about making feature films on the cheap, but rather creating tight parameters for the production and developing innovative storytelling that embraces these limitations.

**Awards:** Subject to clarification of the new rules around subsidy control we will be content to be the sole or majority financier (in addition to the tax credit). The awards will be funded from the Film Development and Production Fund but not strictly ring-fenced. We anticipate giving a maximum of 3 awards per year of up to £400k each.

## Existing production funding from the Film Development and Production Fund

Funding Low Budget Features will aim to create a route into feature film production for emerging filmmakers. But most feature films need more than £400k and so the Film Development and Production Fund remains open for business for the funding of all films, including first features.

With projects that secure our support, we are happy to make a time-limited commitment as the first financier. This is to give Screen Scotland's endorsement as you seek the remainder of the finance to make exceptional work of ambitious scale. This approach of committing money early in the process requires us to make tough choices on the projects we support, and our decisions will be driven by the strength of the creative proposal in line with our published guidance. These offers of funding will be time-limited so that our money stays available and useful to the industry.

**Awards given:** £100k-£500k depending on budget.

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## Consultation questions:

What more can Screen Scotland do to further support first feature development?

What are your views on the proposed Low Budget First Features Production Fund?

What are your views on enabling our production funding to be used as first finance and to support projects earlier in the process?

Do you have any further comments on how new and emerging filmmakers are supported by Screen Scotland?

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## ONGOING SUPPORT FOR FILMMAKERS

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In addition to the traditional route of supporting teams of producers, writers and directors on specific projects, we want to do more to support and enable experienced creative talent.

### Support for Writers and Directors

Story comes first. Long before the edit, the shoot or financing, someone sits alone at a keyboard. Without the spark of inspiration and the hours of perspiration, imagining worlds and bringing them to life, there is no film. We want to offer help to those writers and directors that wish to create and explore their ideas before finding the right producer. While this support is something that is currently available to writers, we will look to extend it to directors as well as more actively promote it going forward.

We will explicitly welcome applications to the Film Development and Production Fund from screenwriters, writer-directors or writer/director teams based in Scotland to develop feature film projects. Funding awards can be sought not only to develop treatments or first draft scripts, but also to engage with relevant professionals, whether that is researchers, illustrators, script editors etc.

Ultimately, we want all projects to find a producer as this gives them the best chance of being realised. We will expect writers and directors funded through this route to be actively engaged in finding a producer they want to work with.

**Awards given:** £7k-£25k, depending on requirements.

## Support for Producers

We know being a film producer is a long hard slog. You need entrepreneurial zeal, a feel for the zeitgeist, a nose for talent, a brass neck, the ability to charm snakes from trees, huge story chops, and energy and resilience to burn. If you are that determined self-starter that wants to change the world, we want to support you on your mission. We also see our role as enabling all talent including those from groups under-represented in the industry.

### Proposed Addition: Film Producer Development Overhead Award

For those establishing or wishing to grow their production company's feature slate, we plan to offer a grant of up to £30k pa for two years to allow producers time to focus on film project development. Milestones would be discussed and agreed at the outset and ongoing participation would depend on satisfactory progress against these. With the emphasis on development, if producers enter production, the award may be suspended until production has finished. In addition, recipients will also receive a Film Slate Development Support Award (detailed below) and will be required to take part in the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training course.

### Proposed Addition: Film Slate Development Support Award

In addition to those receiving the Overhead award, we plan to make a further 4 Slate Development Support Awards available to producers who wish to retain the option to work in production while they develop a slate of projects. This award will offer funding of up to £35k pa for 2 years. This funding is to support the cost of treatments and script editor support. In addition, we will provide fast-track decision making on further development funding. The award will include a £1k allowance towards the purchase of books as well as cinema and theatre tickets.

#### Awards per year:

4 x Film Slate Development Support Award at £35k PA for 2 years.

4 x Combined Producer Development Overhead Award plus Film Slate Development Support Award at £65k PA for 2 years.

### Proposed New Programme: Film Producer Continuous Professional Development and Training

We know that success today requires producers to be immersed in cutting edge thinking and practice, super well-connected locally and, where relevant, internationally with a honed ability to sniff out great stories and talent. We want to enable Scottish producers to keep their skills razor sharp in all of these areas.

To support that aim, along with the above awards, we plan to engage with industry-leading experts to design and deliver a comprehensive training and development programme (CPD Programme) for producers. Participation in the training will be a requirement for anyone in receipt of above awards but will also be open to other producers wishing to attend. The hope is that the programme will allow producers to share with each other as well as learning from specialists in key areas.

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## Consultation questions:

What are your views on our suggestions to more actively promote the development funding to writers and directors?

Do you have any recommendations on how we might do this most effectively?

What are your views on the proposed new funds – the Overhead Award and the Slate Development Awards?

What are your views on the proposal to develop an industry leading CPD programme for producers?

What else should Screen Scotland do to support experienced writers, directors and producers?

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## Notes:

**Locked Box:** Our scheme which allows filmmakers based in Scotland to receive a share of recoupment from feature films produced and use those funds for future development and training will remain unaltered.

**Slates:** We believe this approach to slate funding is most beneficial at the early stages of development. It enables producers to seek out new work and properly pay writers for that early development. Where producers are happy that treatments are ready and wish to receive Screen Scotland support for script development, we would seek to assess and support each project separately based on its own specific needs.

# A MORE INCLUSIVE INDUSTRY – AN INTRODUCTION TO BFI DIVERSITY STANDARDS SCOTLAND PILOT

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Next year we will be piloting the BFI Diversity Standards - all projects supported through the Film Development and Production Fund will be required to meet the Diversity Standards criteria.

Everyone has a story and we want to ensure that the broadest range possible is told. When any group is under-represented, our collective library of stories is diminished and less authentic; the story we tell the world about ourselves should not be partial, narrow or restrictive. Screen is not only the mirror that reflects our society but also the medium through which we may challenge, celebrate and shape our identities. It provides us with the means to contemplate the past and the stage to imagine the future. There is also evidence that suggests that, on average, greater diversity leads to increased commercial success. For these reasons, inclusion and true representation both on and off-screen is vital for the sustainability of the Scottish and UK screen sector.

These guidelines were created to redress that balance, ensuring that what is made and those making it are more reflective of Scotland today. This is not about rules or a form to be completed, but a challenge to us all to ensure our storytelling is authentic and representative.

## What are the Standards?

The Standards focus on four key areas:

- A On-screen representation, themes and narratives:** We ask you to look at how you can address under-representation in the lead and secondary characters, talent or contributors, casting choices, the main and secondary storylines, themes and narratives, and where the project is set.
- B Creative leadership and project team:** This relates to the creative leadership of the project, film or programme such as the Head of Production, Series Producer, Series Director and other HODs, other key roles and the overall diversity of the crew or project team, as well as any impact in terms of regional participation from under-represented geographical areas.
- C Industry access and opportunities:** This relates to paid roles such as internships, apprenticeships and specialist adviser roles; trainee roles and other training or work experience opportunities; and promotions and 'first job' roles and mentoring.
- D Audience development:** This relates to increasing access to projects, films and programmes with a focus on one or more under-served audiences; strategies that will engage in geographical areas across Scotland including within both under-represented communities and locations; and new promotional and marketing strategies to engage under-served audiences.

We understand that every production is different, so there are a number of measures under each heading that will allow you to meet the required standard. More information and fuller guidance will be available on the BFI Diversity Standards Scotland pilot early in the New Year. The Standards are certified by the BFI and have been adopted by Film4, BBC Films and BAFTA.

# OTHER PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOW WE MANAGE THE FILM DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION FUND

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## **Making the most of Development Awards**

Going forward, each development application should include sufficient provision to cover a script editor. The choice of script editor should be discussed with Screen Scotland and is ultimately subject to approval. Where appropriate, we may ask for additional research to be undertaken as part of any development award. This may include the hiring of a specialist drama researcher or an experienced factual researcher with appropriate experience.

## **Support to create development opportunities for emerging producers**

Our ambition is to create great films that originate from Scotland. If you receive film production support, you are likely to be asked to make space on your team to offer a development opportunity for an emerging producer. This is likely to take the form of placements ranging from shadowing prep, the shoot or coordinating the delivery paperwork for a film. We will investigate if the cost for that placement can be covered by Screen Scotland.

## **Opening up the opportunity to move from TV to Film**

We plan to amend the Film Development and Production Fund guidelines to allow writers and directors with experience in TV to bring bold film ideas they would like to develop. Previously, writers and directors applying for development funding needed a theatrically released film credit. We recognise that many of the brightest writing and directing talents that are passionate about film are building careers in TV. By making it easier for them to develop work for the cinema, we hope to help them to pursue their dreams and, in doing so, broaden the pool of talent creating work from Scotland for the big screen.

## **Changes to assessments**

Moving forward, we want to make our decision-making processes more efficient. These changes will not change the projects we support, but will enable us to work more efficiently and do more to support the industry.

We plan to look at publishing deadlines for submissions, with quarterly deadlines for production awards and 6-weekly deadlines for development awards. These timings align closely to our current published turnaround times for applications so the impact on producers will be limited, but will increase efficiency and clarity around the decision making timeline.

To enable us to give a much quicker indication of whether we are supportive of the project editorially, they will be first assessed by the Screen Scotland Scripted Team for their creative potential as well as its ability to progress the filmmakers' careers. This means that, where appropriate, producers get faster "no" responses and can move on. Projects that garner support and confidence from the editorial perspective, will have the full package and funding request assessed by the wider Screen Scotland team.

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## Consultation questions:

What are your views on Screen Scotland's proposal to amend guidelines to allow writers and directors with experience in TV to bring film ideas for development?

What are your views on Screen Scotland's proposed changes to assessments?

Do you have any other feedback on Screen Scotland's other proposed changes to how we manage the Film Development and Production Fund?

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## OVER TO YOU

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We want to hear your feedback. Please submit your responses by 9AM on Tuesday 21 December 2021.

You can [submit your responses here](#). The short survey will take about ten minutes and needs to be complete in one sitting.

Your feedback is vital. Every response will be read and will be used to shape changes we make to our funding offering.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

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### Summary of Feedback

Please note that as part of this consultation process, we will publish a publicly available summary of the feedback received. This will be anonymised and will aim to present the key themes and suggestions put forward. Our plan would be to publish this summary in February 2022.

### Implementations of the Changes

Some of these changes will take longer than others to implement. However, with those changes we take forward, our plan will be make them all operational by 1 April 2022.



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Screen Scotland sits within Creative Scotland and is a partnership with Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, with funding from the Scottish Government and the National Lottery.