



AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FOUNDATION

Project Development Guidelines

The Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) is a national, non profit organisation. It aims to provide Australian children with entertaining media made especially for them, which makes an enduring contribution to their cultural and educational experience. Australian children deserve to see local stories and their culture on their screens.

We considers that a healthy children's production industry will help create better programs for the child audience. Accordingly, we provide a multifaceted assistance program for producers and writers including: project development and production funding, industry training, industry networking events, international market representation and recoupment.

These guidelines set out our requirements for our project development investment assistance.

What we look for

Audience

All projects must primarily target the Australian child audience and must, in our opinion, be likely to be of interest to Australian children.

Television projects should be aiming for either 'P' or 'C' classification as defined by ACMA for the commercial networks and Pay TV, or a G classification for ABC.

Feature film projects should be aiming for a 'G' or 'PG' rating from the OFLC Classifications Board.

For information on what constitutes a 'P', 'C' or 'G' or 'PG' program, have a look at the ACTF's FAQs.

Subject matter

Projects may be based on an original idea, or adaptations of a novel or other work. We look for originality and new ideas not already in the marketplace or currently on television.

If the project is an adaptation of someone else's work (such as a novel, play, character or concept developed by one of the team), the applicant must obtain, or at least option, an assignment of all the necessary rights from the creator prior to making an application.

Options should have a reasonable length of time to run following any ACTF Development Funding approval to allow for the project's development, commissioning and financing.

Copies of all contractual documentation demonstrating that the applicant has obtained the necessary legal rights to deal with the material on which the project is based must accompany the application. If such options or chain of title documents are not provided with the application, the project will not be considered in that round.

Any project containing indigenous content, themes or storylines must be accompanied by written permission from the relevant indigenous community authorising the Applicant's use of such material.

Format and genre

We provide funding for television series, one-off television programs, telemovies and feature films.

Before submitting an application for a television program, it is useful to familiarise yourself with the types of formats, series lengths and episode lengths broadcasters usually commission for your intended audience's age group.

Before submitting an application for development of a feature film it is worthwhile speaking with local distributors about their requirements in this area and their interest in the genre and age group.

Finance is open to all genres, but preference will be given to drama content which typically has higher development requirements than other genres.

Levels of Development funding

We will only fund one stage of development on any project at a time. To develop a feel for the levels of funding and stages of development that we have previously funded, please look at the funding section of the ACTF website.

Projects with an offer of matched development funding from a broadcaster, distributor, co-producer or state agency will assist an application.

Applicant and Creative Team

We will consider the experience of the creative team when assessing projects for funding. Whilst it does not require that all of the proposed team have experience in their relevant area, projects with a strong and experienced creative team are preferred.

How to Apply

Applications – General

Applicants should permanently reside in Australia or be Australian citizens. If the applicant is a company, it should be incorporated in Australia and have Australian-based management and control. We may require a personal company director's guarantee when contracting with companies.

We require all applicants to provide an Australian Business Number (ABN).

The individual applicant should be the creator or the holder of the copyright in the project (i.e. have an option in the underlying work). If the applicant is a company – the rights to the project must have been assigned to that applicant company prior to the application being submitted.

All applicants will need to contact Bernadette O'Mahony, Head of Development & Production, or Sara-Jane King, Program Assistant, to discuss their project prior to submitting their funding application.

The deadlines for applications are set out in the Funding section of the ACTF website. All applications (in hard copy) must be received at our offices by close of business on the due date.

All applicants should retain copies of material submitted, as we are not able to return submissions.

Applications must be delivered to:

Australian Children's Television Foundation
3rd Floor, 145 Smith Street, Fitzroy, VIC 3065

Applications– Television Projects

All applicants must fill out ONE copy of the relevant application form and post along with TWO hard copies of the supporting material which must consist of:

- a 4-5 line synopsis of the project
- a one page synopsis of the project;
- existing development materials (such as concept document, series bible, episode scripts, or for a telemovie an extended treatment or script);
- a CV for the applicant and any attached creative team; and
- all relevant documentation such as rights/option agreements and consents from indigenous communities (see below).
- evidence of marketplace or broadcaster interest in the project (if applicable)
- confirmation of matched development funding (if applicable) from State Agency or Broadcaster.

Applications - Feature Film Projects

It is preferred that projects be at first-draft stage, or beyond, before applying to ACTF development funding. In special circumstances we may consider feature film development funding for projects that have a well developed extended treatment, however this would be for exceptional projects or ideas.

We are unlikely to fully fund development of a feature film project and would expect that the applicant has partial or matched funding from Screen Australia or a State Film Agency, Distributor, or Broadcaster to match whatever is being asked from the ACTF for the relevant development stage.

Only creative teams (consisting of at least a producer and writer) may apply for development funding for feature films. Our preference would be for a creative team consisting of Producer, Writer and Director attached to the project, although we understand that this may depend on the development stage of the project. We also prefer that for more than one member of the creative team applying for funding to have a proven track record in fully produced feature films – in their proposed role or similar.

All applicants must fill out ONE copy of the relevant application form and post along with TWO hard copies of the supporting material which must consist of:

- a 4-5 line synopsis of the project
- a one page synopsis of the project;
- existing development materials (extended treatment or draft screenplay):
- CVs for the applicant and the attached creative team which must consist of Producer, Writer and preferably Director;
- all relevant documentation such as rights/option agreements and consents from indigenous communities (see below).
- Details of any interest from the marketplace (eg distributor or broadcaster)
- Details of any matched funding on offer for this development stage or details of any current application for matched funding.

One member of the creative team should be the primary applicant for the purposes of performing the obligations under the deed of funding, and receipt and disbursement of funds. Alternatively, teams can formalise their relationship in a company structure.

Assessment Process

Project Assessment

ACTF funds for project development are limited, and funding rounds are competitive.

Applications are initially assessed by a representative of the ACTF, and also by an external assessor. A recommendation on whether or not to invest in the project is then made to the ACTF's Board of Directors who will make the final decision. Recommendations to the Board are made on the basis of:

- quality of the existing development materials;
- potential local audience appeal to the targeted age group;
- experience and track record of the creative team;
- cultural relevance;
- existing interest from local and international broadcasters, distributors and investors, particularly whether there is any matching development funding from a broadcaster, distributor, co-producer or state agency.
- proposed production budget (projects should have a production budget that is capable of being financed largely within Australia);
- likelihood of the applicant and/or attached team being able to take the project from scripting, through financing and into production;
- whether it fills any gaps in the market;
- marketability; and
- any other issues the ACTF may consider relevant.

Funding decisions

Applications will be advised within five working days of the relevant Board meeting of the outcome of their application.

Any offers of funding will be limited to a reasonable time period. If an agreement is not executed by the ACTF and the applicant before this time, the offer of funding will be withdrawn.

If you're successful

Funding

Funding is provided in stages aligned with the development of the project.

ACTF funds cannot be spent on purchasing the rights to use existing works (such as in optioning a book).

A portion of the ACTF development funds will be withheld until final delivery of materials and receipt of the acquittal paperwork.

Copyright

The ACTF will own a share of the copyright in funded projects, until development funds are repaid (including a 15% administrative premium). Funds can be either repaid voluntarily by the applicant, or compulsorily from the production budget for the project on the first day of production.

Further explanation of these terms can be provided by the ACTF's legal department. Applicants should satisfy themselves that they can accept these repayment conditions prior to submitting an application, as these conditions are not negotiable.

It is strongly recommended that applicants obtain independent legal advice prior to making the application.

Credits

If a project proceeds to production, the ACTF is entitled, at its discretion, to receive a single card full frame end credit, comprising the ACTF's logo and the words "Developed with the assistance of the Australian Children's Television Foundation".

Further involvement

The ACTF will have the first and last right of refusal to distribute funded projects to the Australian education market, and to develop educational resources for such projects, if those projects are finally produced.

Any offer of development funding may be subject to additional conditions decided by the Board, such as a first and last right of refusal of international distribution rights. These conditions are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Delivery and acquittal

The ACTF expects the development to be a priority for successful applicants, and the deed of funding will set out a delivery date for the development to be completed. A copy of the results of the development needs to be delivered to the offices of the ACTF.

The applicant will be required to fill out a detailed acquittal of expenditure of the development funds in a form prescribed by ACTF, including providing relevant invoices and/or receipts.

Payment of award rates

The ACTF expects that writers and script editors involved in any project will be paid at no less than the minimum Australian Writers' Guild rates. Information on current rates is available from:

The Australian Writer's Guild at www.awg.com.au, or by telephone at 1300 552 228.

And finally...

Confidentiality

The ACTF will respect the confidentiality of applications.

However, it does have the right to:

- provide the existing development materials and final delivery materials to external assessors; and
- include details of the name of the project, the applicant, the creative team and a brief synopsis in its own documents and publications.

Warranty and release

Applicants are required to execute the deed of warranty and release which accompanies the application form.

Changes to guidelines

The ACTF can change these Guidelines at any time by placing a notice on the [Funding section](#) of the ACTF website.