

GUIDELINES

Digital Games Fund (DGF)



South Australian **Film Corporation**

What is the program?

The Digital Games Fund (DGF) offers grant funding to eligible South Australian game developers to aid in the development of digital games through to their next milestone.

The objectives of this program align with the South Australian Film Corporation (SAFC) Strategic Plan for 2025-2028:

- To assist South Australian game creators in reaching development milestones for new and upcoming games.
- To build a sustainable, long-term model of support for South Australian game creators that fosters new and innovative projects with commercial, critical, and artistic merit, fueling South Australian company growth and helping local teams to thrive and expand.
- To grow the number of South Australian digital game titles released each year, and to assist more teams in qualifying for the SA VGD rebate.
- To advance diverse South Australian game development teams, and to give them opportunities to thrive in the global games marketplace.

What is on offer?

Three streams of funding are available: Pre-production, Production, and Post-release.

Pre-production Stream

Grants of up to \$30,000 are available for digital game development teams who are looking to explore, test and prove a new digital game concept. Funding may support early design, prototyping, technical proof of concept, art direction, narrative design, market research and planning work that enables the applicant to determine the project's creative, technical and commercial potential.

This funding will come in the form of a one-off grant, which must be spent on the development of the game that the applicant has applied for.

Funding must help the applicants to develop their digital game concept to a significant milestone stage. The application must clearly define the stage the funding will support, and outcomes.

Depending on the amount requested, milestone stages may include (but are not limited to):

- Paper prototype
- Digital prototype
- Playable demo
- Vertical slice

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Production Stream

Grants of up to \$150,000 are available for digital game development teams who are in full production, or are about to enter full production, and are looking to develop their game towards its next significant milestone, including final release. Applications must demonstrate that the project is sufficiently developed, appropriately scoped and has a clear pathway to audience, market, release or further finance. Applicants seeking larger awards will be expected to provide stronger evidence of production readiness, market understanding, team capability and South Australian economic benefit.

This funding will come in the form of a one-off grant, which must be spent on the development of the game that the applicant has applied for.

Funding must help the applicants to develop their game to a significant milestone stage. The application must clearly define the stage the funding will support, and outcomes.

Depending on the amount requested, milestone stages may include (but are not limited to):

- Feature complete build
- Content complete build
- Alpha or Beta build
- Early Access (Steam)
- Release candidate build
- Launch 1.0 build

Post-Release Stream

Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for digital game development teams who are looking to extend the commercial life, audience reach and platform availability of digital games that have already been released or are close to release. Funding is not intended to support routine maintenance, minor patches, or general operating costs, unless they form part of a substantial and clearly defined post-release strategy. This funding will come in the form of a one-off grant, which must be spent on the development of the game that the applicant has applied for.

Funding must help the applicants to develop their game to a significant milestone stage. The application must clearly define the stage the funding will support, and outcomes.

Depending on the amount requested, milestone stages may include (but are not limited to):

- Localisation
- Significant post-launch content updates (i.e. new levels, new modes, new characters)
- New downloadable content (DLC) or in-app purchases
- Accessibility improvements

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- Live-service game updates
- Porting to console, PC, Mac, VR or mobile

Who is eligible?

Applicants applying as an individual must:

- be over 18 years of age
- possess a registered and active Australian Business Number (ABN)
- not be a full-time student
- have all necessary rights and appropriate clearances to carry out the proposal
- have read, and be compliant with, the [SAFC's Terms of Trade](#)
- be a South Australian Resident (as defined in the [Terms of Trade](#))
- have no outstanding contractual obligations to the SAFC.

Applicants applying on behalf of a company must:

- be incorporated and carrying on business in Australia and have its central management and control in Australia
- be registered in South Australia and have its principal place of business in South Australia for at least six months immediately prior to the date of the application
- be up to date and compliant with all relevant state and federal government obligations at the time of application for, and payment of, funding (including BAS, PAYG and GST obligations).

Which projects are eligible?

To be eligible games must meet all the following requirements:

- Digital games developed by South Australian teams (75% of the team must be primarily based in South Australia)
- Games intended for a digital release on any gaming platform (including but not limited to mobile, PC, Mac, console, VR/AR)
- Projects must involve a moderate degree of ludic interactivity (i.e. cannot be a film, player must be able to assert moderate control over proceedings. Games with light interactivity, including visual novels, are generally ineligible)
- Games must be owned by the applicant (based on IP either owned or licensed by the applicant)
- Funding cannot be retrospective (i.e. it cannot cover a previous development milestone)

Digital games that have already received funding from other funding bodies, e.g. Screen Australia, or Kickstarter, that also meet the above eligibility criteria, are also eligible.



Which projects are ineligible?

- Gambling games, including “social casino” games
- Non-digital games
- Games designed for educational purposes only, or business-to-business products (e.g. interactive instructional tutorials, educational research projects)
- Games that are not intended for commercial release
- Games based on external IP not owned or licensed by the applicant
- Games by teams that primarily consist of, or are run by, currently enrolled students in game-related courses or degrees
- Games that are deemed unlikely to receive classification within Australia
- Remasters and upscales of existing games, or games that have already received a full retail release
- Games developed by team members that are younger than 18 years of age

Evaluation criteria

Applied to the current release or prospects for the intended release:

1. Originality and creative ambition including differentiation from similar market products
2. Strength of core components presented, including visuals, storytelling, gameplay, and audio
3. Practicality and feasibility of the provided timeline and budget
4. Proven game development record of the team (including student and amateur projects)
5. Commercial potential including clear identification of market positioning and audience
6. Career pathway opportunities for South Australian Residents *
7. Accessibility of the game**

*The SAFC is committed to supporting increased participation of people from groups under-represented in the SA screen industry which include:

- First Nations practitioners,
- Female identifying writers and directors,
- LGBTQIA+ practitioners,
- Practitioners residing in regional or remote areas of South Australia,
- Practitioners from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background,
- D/deaf and/or disabled practitioners.

** The SAFC is committed to accessible content and encourages applicants to consider accessible features in game design. A resource for accessible game development can be found [here](#).

Specific assessment will be required for applications that include First Nations content. For more information, please refer to the SAFC's [Terms of Trade](#) (Working with First Nations Content and

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Communities); [Screen Australia's Pathways & Protocols](#) guide, and the SAFC's [First Nations Cultural Protocols Guide](#).

In evaluating the project, the SAFC will consider any information and weigh the criteria as it judges appropriate to best serve the SAFC's [Strategic Objectives](#) and the SAFC's [Diversity & Inclusion Strategy](#).

What can funds be used for?

Eligible spend includes:

- Staffing costs
- Legal fees and licensing costs
- Office hire (for Production and Post-release streams only)
- Marketing costs, including costs associated with attendance or exhibition at markets and events, making trailers, and running paid promotion (for Production and Post-release streams only)
- Mentoring and external support (for Production and Post-release streams only)

What can't the funds be used for?

Ineligible spend includes:

- Purchase of computers, laptops or developer kits for development
- Purchase of other equipment (i.e. computer mice, monitors, headsets, gaming consoles)
- Education
- Travel expenses
- Office hire (ineligible for Pre-production stream)
- Marketing costs, including costs associated with attendance or exhibition at markets and events, making trailers, and running paid promotion (ineligible for Pre-production stream)
- Mentoring and external support (ineligible for Pre-production stream)

How do I apply?

Applications for the Digital Games Fund are open once a year and must be made via the SAFC's online grants platform safilm.smartygrants.com.au.

Application Materials

Pre-Production Stream

- A pitch deck (max 10 slides)

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- Brief history/background of project
- A budget breakdown showing how the money will be spent (it needs to show how this will help the project reach its next milestone)
- A Pre-production development timeline
- A proposed Production development timeline
- Applicant warranty that they hold all applicable rights, and evidence of those rights including relevant agreements as applicable
- Statement of secured and anticipated third-party funding (if any)
- Documentation of secured third-party funding, as available
- For projects with First Nations material:
 - A statement setting out how First Nations content has been approached to date and plan for the stage of development applied for
 - Evidence of permissions from First Nations communities, and collaborators
- Statement of any attached market and/or previous funding received, if applicable
- Applicant and attached key creatives contact information, bios, credits, curriculum vitae, demographic information and state of residency

Production Stream

- A pitch deck (max 15 slides)
- A Game Design Document (GDD) outlining the objectives, mechanics, game play and aesthetic design
- Video footage/trailer of the game in its current form (3 mins max)
- Brief history/background of project
- Audience engagement plan
- Accessibility plan
- Marketing Strategy Proposal
- A budget breakdown showing how the money will be spent (it needs to show how this will help the project reach its next milestone)
- A development timeline, up to and beyond the stage of development the applicant is seeking funding for (including launch and post-launch plans)
- Applicant warranty that they hold all applicable rights, and evidence of those rights including relevant agreements as applicable
- Statement of secured and anticipated third-party funding (if any)
- Documentation of secured third-party funding, as available
- For projects with First Nations material:
 - A statement setting out how First Nations content has been approached to date and plan for the stage of development applied for,
 - Evidence of permissions from First Nations communities, and collaborators
- Statement of any attached market and/or previous funding received, if applicable
- Applicant and attached key creatives contact information, bios, credits, curriculum vitae, demographic information and state of residency

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Optional:

- A playable prototype or demo, including instructions on running the demo and a list of minimum required specs (can also be a Figma flow or paper playable version if applicable)

Post-Release Stream

- A pitch deck (max 10 slides)
- Applicant warranty that they hold all applicable rights, and evidence of those rights including relevant agreements as applicable
- A Game Design Document (GDD) outlining the objectives, mechanics, game play and aesthetic design
- A link to the game's current store page, including the latest trailer
- A playable version of the latest game build
- Brief history/background of project, including a performance summary
- Evidence of an existing audience and a future growth plan
- Accessibility plan
- Marketing Strategy Proposal
- A budget breakdown showing how the money will be spent (it needs to show how this will help the project reach its next milestone)
- Statement of secured and anticipated third-party funding (if any)
- Documentation of secured third-party funding, as available
- A development timeline for the entire project and a post-release strategy
- For projects with First Nations material:
 - A statement setting out how First Nations content has been approached to date and plan for the stage of development applied for
 - Evidence of permissions from First Nations communities, and consultants
- Statement of any attached market and/or previous funding received, if applicable,
- Applicant and attached key creatives contact information, bios, credits, curriculum vitae, demographic information and state of residency

Further requirements

Grant funding will be provided to successful applicants within the same financial year as application.

The SAFC must receive the following credit in a form no less prominent than that of any other funder:

*Development undertaken in South Australia with the support of the South Australian Film Corporation
[insert SAFC Logo]*

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The Applicant shall ensure that the SAFC receives the SAFC Credit in the form specified above:

- On the splash screen (if appropriate), or within the game's opening credit block (if appropriate),
- On any page on which other credits are given,
- Website/store materials (where appropriate), and
- In all publicity and media releases produced by the Applicant or at its direction in respect of the work and/or the game (except where giving such credit is not practicable where space is limited and no other credits are given)
- Credit must appear in any publicly released demo or prototype of the game as well as its final release.

Next steps

Before applying, all applicants must read the SAFC's [Terms of Trade](#) and speak to the SAFC regarding their intended SAFC grant request.

Key Contacts

Please direct all phone enquiries to the relevant staff below via SAFC Reception on +61 8 8394 2000.

For initial enquiries, please contact SAFC Program Coordinator on programs@safilm.com.au.

For other enquiries, please contact SAFC Game Development Executive on games@safilm.com.au.

(Note: All amounts in this guideline are quoted exclusive of GST, unless otherwise stated)