



Digital Originals 2024: Guidelines

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Overview

Digital Originals is a joint initiative of Screen Australia, SBS and NITV, aimed at developing exciting and innovative online scripted series for SBS and NITV. These series contain 6 x 10-minute episodes for broadcast on SBS and NITV platforms.

Digital Originals is targeted at emerging creators working on exciting and risk-taking scripted projects. Following the success of *Homecoming Queens*, *Robbie Hood*, *The Tailings*, *Iggy and Ace*, *A Beginner's Guide to Grief*, *Latecomers*, *Appetite* and *Night Bloomers*, this opportunity is aimed at episodic narrative series designed for SBS On Demand and NITV. Experience in writing for screen is not necessary.

Up to ten teams will be selected to attend an exclusive workshop run by Screen Australia, SBS and NITV, featuring a range of industry guest presenters.

From these ten teams, up to five will be chosen to take their projects into further development, and from these, up to three will be chosen for production funding and commissioning with SBS, NITV and Screen Australia. Teams will have the support and resources of SBS, NITV and Screen Australia through the development process.

Aims

Screen Australia, SBS and NITV aim to support practitioners and projects that reflect the unique diversity of people and experiences from around Australia, all of which are important culturally, creatively and economically.

This initiative is designed to support screen creatives currently under-represented in the sector, including people who are culturally and linguistically diverse, First Nations Australians, people with disability, women and gender diverse people, LGBTIQ+ and those who are located in regional and remote areas.

What support is available?

The successful teams will attend a workshop focusing on short form narrative writing skills, and developing the projects to align with the SBS Charter and SBS OnDemand platform, culminating in a pitch to Screen Australia, SBS and NITV.

The workshop will be held 19 - 21 November 2024, with a Pitch Day following on 10 December 2024. All applicants must be available for this workshop and pitch day in order to be eligible for the initiative.

Teams outside of Sydney will receive flights and accommodation within Australia for up to three team members to attend the workshop.

Following the workshop, selected teams will be provided with funding to develop their project, with delivery required by May 2025. Decisions on next steps will be made thereafter.

Who can apply?

- Applicant teams must be made up of at least two key creatives (which must include at least one writer).
- At least one writer must identify as one or more of the following: First Nations Australian; culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD); a person with disability; a woman or gender diverse person; LGBTIQ+; or located in a regional and remote area.
- Applicants must have an active ABN at the time of application. Teams can apply with a company ABN or if the team has not yet established a company, they can elect one individual to apply as the lead applicant with their individual ABN for the workshop phase. Note, if successful for development funding, teams will require a company ABN to be established prior to contracting. If you do not have an ABN, please click [here](#) for information about how to apply for an ABN.
- Applicants must also meet the general eligibility requirements set out in Screen Australia's [Terms of Trade](#).

Experience in writing for screen is not necessary. In recognition of the barriers and lack of professional pathways into the screen industry, applicants who do not have screen industry experience but who can evidence the relevant skills and potential in order to take advantage of screen industry career opportunities will also be considered.

While you can be attached to more than one project that applies for Digital Originals, we strongly recommend you carefully consider which project or projects are best suited to your skill set when applying, and that it is not recommended that individuals are attached to more than two projects as a key creative.

For teams provided with funding to develop their project post the workshop, the requirement is that two out of the three key creatives (writer, director, producer) identify as one or more of the following: First Nations Australians; culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD); people with disability; women or gender diverse; LGBTIQ+; or located in regional and remote areas. For First Nations projects, this means at least two out of three key creatives must be First Nations Australians in line with NITV commissioning guidelines.

What projects are eligible?

Projects must be of a scale suitable for online audiences - immediately compelling, creatively outstanding and risk-taking in their nature. They can be of any scripted narrative genre, and cannot be documentary, factual or reality.

Specifically, we are looking for:

- Scripted narrative projects suitable for the SBS OnDemand platform (6 x 10-minute episodes, which together form a 1-hour programme for broadcast)
- An awareness of **who** the project is for and **why** that audience will keep returning to watch it
- Unique stories that add to the cultural landscape of Australian content, for a global audience
- Projects that traverse new ground in the Digital Originals program - we encourage applicants to view the past Digital Originals commissioned, and to be bold and fresh in the stories they present to us.

How to apply

Applications close **5pm AEST Thursday 15 August 2024** and can be made through the Screen Australia [application portal](#) with the following materials*:

- A pitch document, up to 3 pages, consisting of:
 - Information on the series format (how many episodes, length of episode)
 - Genre, characters, story arc and brief plot summary
 - Themes and tone of the project
 - The target audience, including demographics and viewing habits
 - The team and their past experience creating content
 - What is unique and exciting about the project
- A pitch video up to 3 minutes outlining the creators' personal connection to the project, why this project, why this team and why now.
- A script sample of previous work up-to 10 pages (note: the script sample must not be part of the current project that is the subject of the application)

*If the applicant and/or team has access requirements or requires adjustments to submit their application, please contact online@screenaustralia.gov.au to make arrangements.

How will applications be assessed?

Each application will be assessed by Screen Australia, SBS and NITV executives taking into consideration the below assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria

- **Creativity.** The creative strength of the project, and its ability to successfully engage the SBS and/or NITV audience;
- **Team.** The track record of the key team members and the likelihood that this program will develop their skills in content production;
- **Writing.** The standard of the supplied writing sample, and its demonstration of the capabilities and skills of the writer; and
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.** The alignment of the team and project with the diversity and inclusion aims of the initiative and with the SBS Charter, SBS Codes of Practice and Editorial Guidelines

Shortlisted teams may be interviewed.

Decision and notification

Applicants will be advised of the outcome by **Friday 25 October 2024**.

Timeline:

- Applications Open: 8 July 2024
- Applications Close: 15 August 2024
- Applicants Notified: 25 October 2024
- Workshop: 19 - 21 November - Sydney (please note - revised dates)
- Pitch Day: 10 December 2024
- Successful Development Projects Selected: Week Commencing 16 December 2024
- Development Materials Due: 30 May 2025

Contracting Terms

SBS First and Last Right:

In applying for the Screen Australia / SBS / NITV 'Digital Originals' initiative, the Applicant(s) agree and acknowledge that in the event an applicant team is successful in securing development funding for their 'Digital Originals' project, Special Broadcasting Service Corporation (SBS) and/or NITV has an Exclusive First and Last Right to acquire on standard SBS terms all Free Communication Rights in Australia in respect of their project continuing for 6 months following acquittal of their development funding.

Additional information

Screen Australia, SBS and NITV acknowledge and appreciate the efforts that go into applications but, given the anticipated volume of applications, will not be able to provide individual feedback on each application.

For any enquiries, please contact the Screen Australia Program Operations team on 1800 507 901 or online@screenaustralia.gov.au. Please note that we are not able to provide creative advice or suggestions to strengthen your application.