# SCREEN SCOTLAND SGRÌN ALBA



# Screen Scotland's Talent Development Strategy: Feature Film Script Development

CALL FOR DELIVERY PARTNER 2025–2030





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# SCREEN SCOTLAND SGRÌN ALBA

# **About Screen Scotland**

Screen Scotland drives development of Scotland's film and TV industry, through funding, strategic support and advocacy.

We were established in 2018 as part of <u>Creative Scotland</u> and deliver these services and support with funding from the Scottish Government and The National Lottery.

Screen Scotland's vision is to cultivate creatively ambitious and economically sustainable film and TV sectors in Scotland, which provide fulfilling jobs and opportunities for people across the country, at all stages of their careers.

We work to develop Scotland's creative potential as a filmmaking nation and as an originator of distinctive films, television programmes and content enjoyed by audiences the world over.

Discover more in our Strategy to 2030/31.

# THE PROGRAMME

This call is to invite proposals from potential delivery partners interested in working with Screen Scotland to deliver a Feature Film Script Development programme for filmmaking talent from across Scotland, for activity from 2025 to 2030.

This programme will develop Scotland-based **producing, directing and writing talent**, and provide funding, support and training for Script Development. The programme is for live action and animation. Documentaries are excluded as their development is supported through other Screen Scotland supported programmes.

The Feature Film Script Development programme will be open to residents of Scotland. It will not be open to students at any level of formal education.

The successful delivery partner will work closely with Screen Scotland as this initiative is part of Screen Scotland's wider talent development strategy and pipeline of support.

Access and engagement will be central to the successful proposal, and therefore the programme should fit within Creative Scotland's wider **Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion** ambitions and the **BFI Diversity** Standards.

Engagement with Creative Scotland's **Environmental Sustainability Strategic Priority** will be advantageous, as will engagement with **Fair Work**, which includes **Dignity at Work**.

This call is for a delivery partner for Feature Film Script Development as set out in more detail below. Feature Film Script Development is one of four Scripted Talent Development Programmes that Screen Scotland has designed and implemented under the Screen Scotland Strategy to 2030/31. It is Screen Scotland's intention to partner with experienced professionals who are experts in each area and can support filmmakers to deliver their best work. Partners can therefore choose to bid for one or more programmes, if they have the required skills and experience.

The four programmes are:

- 1. Feature Film Script Development
- 2. Short Film Development and Production (including the BFI NETWORK)
- 3. Early Development Shorts
- 4. Community Engagement Workshops

# FEATURE FILM SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

# The delivery partner

Under this call we welcome proposals from potential delivery partners who have a proven track record of delivering successful industry standard talent development and training projects within the UK.

We are looking to select a delivery partner who has identified and secured the services of an experienced Development Executive with a proven track record in script development. This individual will have a strong editorial knowledge and be able to nurture the films during all stages of development. They will be expected to liaise with the Screen Scotland scripted team regularly and meaningfully, and all funding decisions (green light decisions) will be made with Screen Scotland.

The successful applicant may be a single organisation or a partnership between multiple organisations. The programme should be designed to operate for five years, from April 2025 to March 2030, with regular reporting and evaluation.

In the instance that a new organisation is formed for the delivery of this programme, we will be evaluating the experience of the individuals involved (rather than the track record of the new organisation). We do not expect the full delivery team to be in place at the point that the proposal is made.

In order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, existing film production companies will not be eligible.

Applicants need to demonstrate a high level of understanding of the current state of Scottish/UK independent filmmaking, and its position internationally. Creative origination is a strategic "north star" for Screen Scotland, we want Scotland-based creatives to devise, develop and deliver work of a high creative standard; work that wins recognition, audiences and awards at home and internationally and which establishes Scotland-based filmmakers as exciting, global film talent. This script development programme is a key element of Screen Scotland's strategy.

The delivery partner must be legally constituted and based in Scotland for the duration of the programme – incorporated in Scotland, and managed and controlled at the most senior level within Scotland. We will consider proposals which include further editorial support provided by individuals based outside of Scotland.

Your proposal should include strong strategic reasoning for you and/or your delivery partnership being the host for Scotland's primary feature film script development programme. You will be expected to have significant experience of developing scripted talent and have strong connections to the Scottish film and television industry.

# **Background**

Screen Scotland drives development of all aspects of Scotland's film and TV industry, through funding and strategic support. Screen Scotland is part of Creative Scotland and delivers these services and support with funding from Scottish Government and The National Lottery.

In our Strategy to 2030/31, Screen Scotland set out our overarching plans and priorities for the remainder of the decade. One of our key objectives is Content Origination, continuing to develop Scotland based talent and increase the number of financed projects that are originated and owned in Scotland. These four new Talent Development Programmes are the next step in achieving this objective. Further information about Screen Scotland can be found on **our website**.

Screen Scotland and Creative Scotland have supported the development of screen talent through a variety of routes in recent years, including <u>SFTN</u>, <u>DocScene</u>, <u>TRC Media</u>, <u>FOCUS</u>, <u>Short Circuit</u>, <u>Film FastTrack</u> and <u>Young</u> <u>Films Foundation</u>.

#### **Recognition of Screen Scotland National Lottery funds**

It will be a condition of funding under these programmes that the funding sources (being Screen Scotland and National Lottery funds) are prominently acknowledged throughout all aspects of the scheme. This includes prominent credits on the films being supported, display of relevant logos (e.g. on marketing materials, website) and through agreed verbal and written acknowledgment (e.g. on press releases, social media). The concept and identity of the proposed programme should emphasise the funding sources.

Screen Scotland will additionally require the delivery partner to acknowledge that the feature film script development activity is an integral element of Screen Scotland's Strategy to 2030/31, that Screen Scotland's support is not limited to the provision of funding and includes creative and strategic leadership in the design and delivery of the script development programme/film talent development process within Scotland.

# **Purpose and content of the programme**

This programme will nurture and elevate the next generation of emerging, Scotland-based feature filmmakers working towards their first feature film.

The scripts developed through this programme by Scotland-based writers will offer new and unique stories that represent modern Scottish society and creativity. They will be written with an eye to the market and to audiences, presenting viable propositions that can attract partners and co-financers at the appropriate stage, and which are likely to engage, excite, inspire and entertain audiences in Scotland and beyond.

The programme will work in concert with other film talent development programmes funded by Screen Scotland.

The successful programme will name a Development Executive who will be responsible for editorial oversight of the programme. It will be crucial that the person recruited into this role is a specialist in their area and at the highest level we can attract. They should have the editorial heft and experience to command respect not just of our talent but also potential funders of these films.

The programme will support five new feature scripts per year through various stages of development, from early outline to polished first draft. These projects can be taken from pitch to polished first draft, with applications possible at any stage (i.e. a writer who has worked up a treatment on spec will not have to take their project back to outline necessarily). The filmmakers will receive close editorial support throughout this process from the Development Executive and the Screen Scotland team. The programme will also be expected to continue the development, where appropriate, of feature script projects initiated under Short Circuit. It is anticipated that this will total between five and ten projects.

Projects that meet the high editorial threshold at first draft will be migrated on to the Screen Scotland slate – with further funding delivered via the Screen Scotland Film Development and Production Fund, subject to application/assessment. The Film Development and Production Fund Guidelines/criteria will be updated to reflect this change. These will then have the potential to continue their development with the Screen Scotland Scripted team, receiving further editorial and strategic support with the intention to move into funded production.

Filmmakers will be Scotland-based and will have the necessary experience to develop their first feature film. This could be having had a short film they wrote screened at international festivals or having made a significant impact in another artistic field such as theatre, literature and other forms of visual and/or performing arts.

The programme will be able to support writers directly, although they will be encouraged to attach a producer as they move to draft. Projects can be in any genre and may be live action or animation; the most important factor will be that they are high-quality works that speak to the creative ambition of Scotland's screen sector and evidence the potential to engage audiences.

Screen Scotland funding will include an access fund of £20,000 with the remainder being split between direct awards and programme staffing/ overhead on a 50/50 split. This award will initially be made on a 12-month basis, with the intention to extend for a further four financial years, as continuity will be crucial for the supported filmmakers.

It is expected that the programme will break down into two sections:

#### i. Training Labs

In addition to supporting the development journey, the programme should arrange for a regular diet of training labs across each year. The precise content of these can be agreed with Screen Scotland once the delivery partner is in place, but they should be aimed at preparing prospective applicants for the first feature programme, encouraging applications from creatives coming from a range of artistic disciplines and empowering individuals who may feel they face barriers to applying. We are looking for authentic, fresh voices who want to tell new stories from a diverse range of backgrounds, stories that reflect contemporary Scotland and which demonstrate an understanding of potential audience and market appeal.

#### ii. Script Development

Up to five projects will be supported each year via the programme. These projects will be taken from pitch to polished first draft, with applications possible at any stage.

Projects that meet the high editorial threshold at first draft will be migrated on to the Screen Scotland slate. These will then have the potential to continue their development with the Screen Scotland Scripted team, receiving further editorial and strategic support with the intention to move into funded production.

The Script Development programme will be expected to make an open call with two deadlines per year. It is expected that the Development Executive will work closely with Screen Scotland and other outreach partners appointed by Screen Scotland in adjacent activities to maximise the reach of the call.

It is crucial that filmmakers face no geographical and/or socio-economic barriers to application. Additional access funding may be made available to filmmakers should they need support in the application process, or at any stage of their development journey.

It will be clear from all communications issued by the delivery partner that the initiative described above has been developed by Screen Scotland to address the aims and objectives set out in Screen Scotland's Strategy to 2030/31 – primarily around creative origination, talent and audience development – and that the programme is directly funded by Screen Scotland with all necessary attribution for Scottish Government or National Lottery.

# **Delivery partner: skills and experience required**

We are looking to select a delivery partner who has identified and secured the services of an experienced, high-level script Development Executive with a proven track record of feature film development. The delivery partner and Development Executive should be able to demonstrate the following attributes:

- Demonstrable track record of creative leadership in scripted filmmaking
- High level expertise in the creative and practical development and production (including legal and compliance) of scripted film
- Track record of identifying new and emerging talent
- Demonstrable track record of facilitating creative excellence in scripted film and of nurturing new and emerging talent
- Significant knowledge and experience of Scottish filmmaking past and present
- Strong understanding of the needs of new and emerging talent
- Understanding of current and past talent development in Scotland
- Understanding of current trends in film exhibition, distribution and festivals

- Understanding of current film industry demographics and routes to diversifying the industry
- The staff infrastructure to administer a major funding scheme, including
  to support the employment of programme staff, finance administration
  including payments to awardees, the provision of legal and business affairs,
  managing the application and assessment process, recruiting a diverse
  range of external readers and advisors to ensure that the executive is
  reflecting a plurality of voices in their participant selection decision making
- Demonstrable existing positive partnerships or relationships within the UK and international film industry
- Demonstrable understanding of how to deliver film activity in an environmentally responsible manner
- Experience or knowledge of grant-making and grant management
- Demonstrable outreach experience
- Demonstrable understanding of and commitment to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion
- A strong online presence and a physical presence as a 'creative hub' is desirable.

# The budget for the programme

# A maximum budget of £220,000 per annum is available for this programme, provided by Screen Scotland.

It would be advantageous for your proposal to show evidence of other funding, including in-kind support, although we will accept proposals that are 100% funded through this allocation if the strategy around it is exceptionally strong. This award will initially be made on a 12-month basis, with the intention to extend for a further four financial years, as continuity will be crucial for the supported filmmakers.

Confirmation of the second year of funding (2026-27) will be subject to:

- satisfactory delivery of the Script Development Provision by the partner during the preceding period;
- continued satisfactory operation of the delivery partner; and
- the continued availability to Screen Scotland of funding at current levels.

## **Timeline**

Date	Key Information
11 December 2024	Call for Proposals
20 January 2025	Closing date for delivery partner applications
20-27 January 2025	Evaluation and shortlisting
End Jan 25	Notification of Interviews
Feb 25	Interview Week
Feb 25	Notification of successful candidates

Activity funded under this call for partners is expected to begin in April 2025. Funding for one year of activity is available and subject to the criteria set out above and we will provide funding until March 2026.

We expect to select a delivery partner by the end of February 2025 and your proposal should outline your ability to launch a callout in April 2025.

The successful applicant for the Feature Film Script Development programme will be required to deliver the programme in close communication with Screen Scotland. This will include:

- Regular monthly meetings with Screen Scotland's Head of Scripted and/or Screen Executive Officers monitoring the programme.
- Close, regular and meaningful consultation with Screen Scotland on any
  major project decision within the programme (including which projects are
  selected), and the Development Executive will be empowered to champion
  projects.

## **Deliverables**

The nature of this programme means that there will be a degree of flexibility around the deliverables. However, each year the delivery partner will be expected to:

- Support a mix of emerging filmmakers, identifying and developing unfamiliar and diverse cinematic voices; encouraging ambition and creative excellence
- Provide funding awards
- Provide a development programme for emerging filmmakers, to enable them to advance their projects, gain skills and create favourable conditions for attracting feature production support
- Support films that are of sufficient quality that they are able to achieve release via theatrical or related platforms; evidence popularity with audiences through box office and viewing figures; and attract positive reviews, festival nominations and awards

 Evaluate the programme and its outcomes thoroughly, including a narrative report noting key observations and learnings from the programme; presentation/s of results to Screen Scotland; an Equality Diversity and Inclusion report, showing how you have identified and engaged underrepresented and diverse talent

# **Additional requirements**

Screen Scotland will also require the following:

- Regular project updates, including written quarterly reports
- Approval of all funding guidelines
- Representation on selection panels
- Approval of any sub-contractors
- Approval of any third-party finance, prior to entering into agreements
- Approval of any distribution deals or other exhibition packages arranged with, or on behalf of, funded filmmakers

# How to apply

Please supply the following:

- Narrative Proposal (3 sides A4)
- Budget
- Management Structure
- Timeline and Activity Plan
- Risk Management
- Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Plan
- Latest Annual Accounts (if applicable)
- Partnership Agreement (if applicable)

See below for further guidance on these items.

Proposals should be sent to screen@creativescotland.com

We encourage all applicants to get in touch with Screen Scotland's Scripted team before submitting your application. Please send enquiries about your proposal to **enquiries@creativescotland.com** and you will be directed to someone who can help.

# **Contacting our Enquiries Service**

If you require support, further information or have any other queries about the process, contact our Enquiries Service by emailing: enquiries@creativescotland.com.

If you are a d/Deaf BSL user, you can access our services with the Contact Scotland-BSL programme. Visit <a href="www.contactscotland-bsl.org">www.contactscotland-bsl.org</a> for more information.

# **Narrative proposal**

#### Your vision for new talent in Scotland

This should include what you think the next wave of Scottish filmmaking needs in order to succeed creatively and commercially on the international stage. It should also include consideration of current barriers and opportunities faced by new filmmakers, and how this programme will help to address these.

#### Strong creative editorial support

How you will ensure the programme offers strong creative support to talent, allowing them the opportunity to develop their work to a high standard. The programme should engage with a wide range of different styles across live action, including different genres and tones, and you should indicate how you will achieve this.

#### **Targets**

Please provide an indication of your annual targets which can be used to measure the achievements of the programme. These will be finalised in consultation with Screen Scotland and will work alongside Screen Scotland's new Talent Development Strategy.

#### Market/business support

The successful proposal will demonstrate how support will be provided to ensure all films produced under the programme find an audience, and how talent will be developed in a way that nurtures and maintains a connection to the wider film industry.

Although this is not a business development programme, a key function will be the development of producers' market knowledge and skills.

#### **Industry connections**

This programme will be receiving funds from Screen Scotland. It is expected that the successful applicant will have provision for nurturing a strong relationship between the participants on the programme and the rest of Screen Scotland.

Applicants should also be able to present strong connections to other aspects of the UK and international film industry.

#### Other talent development programmes

Screen Scotland is presenting four talent development programmes in total. This programme is expected to work with other talent development offers to present clear and complementary pathways for Scottish talent to progress their careers.

#### **Platforms**

With today's shifting landscape, the programme should be aware of the opportunity for talent to develop through routes beyond theatrical film. The programme will be expected to offer connections to new platforms.

#### **Continued development**

This programme should recognise that film development is not a straightforward path, and projects may require a degree of after care and continued development whilst not being in direct receipt of support.

# Projects currently in development with the current delivery partner

There are up to ten first feature projects currently in development with the former delivery partner, Short Circuit, that will not have completed their current stage of development. It is expected that the new delivery partner will provide ongoing editorial support for these projects.

# **Your budget**

Realistic budget levels should be set for each individual activity as part of the overall programme. All participants should receive financial support to develop projects within the programme. This should be at a level that is appropriate to their level of experience. Your budget should reflect industry standards and a commitment to fair pay.

It may be necessary to attach more experienced producers to projects and adjust budget levels and fees accordingly. Any potential slate of projects should be realistic and involve Scottish producers/companies.

We will expect the successful applicant to demonstrate value for money through the ratio of direct awards for filmmakers against overhead costs. Please ensure the budget identifies individual salaries for staff roles.

# **Management structure**

Please state how you will deliver each element of the programme (including management, legal and business affairs), and whether these resources are already in place or to be established.

The programme will require the appointment of at least one Development Executive and this Development Executive should be attached on application.

Will you work with any other organisations to deliver the scheme, whether through a formal or informal partnership, or a contract for services? If so, please describe the rationale for each relationship; what the arrangement between the parties will be; and how you will divide responsibilities.

Where available please include the track records of the key personnel within your organisation who will work on the scheme or the person specifications for any roles you would recruit to work on the scheme, for both salaried and freelance staff as appropriate.

# **Timeline and activity plan**

A description of the proposed Year One of your programme. This should include how you will address the key points set out above. Indicative detail should also be provided for the proposed Year Two.

This timeline should be based on making a call for proposals as soon as possible and should include an exit strategy for implementation as required during the second year.

# Risk management register

A summary of the risks you perceive in relation to delivering the scheme, how these will be mitigated and who is responsible for mitigation.

# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan**

Screen Scotland is committed to addressing diversity in film and television. A proactive approach to increasing diversity can improve screen projects creatively, fuelling innovation and engaging audiences through a wider range of stories, perspectives and experiences. The programme will seek to address barriers to participation and aim to increase the diversity of people working in Scotland's screen sector from all parts of Scotland in terms of gender balance, ethnicity/race, disability, neurodivergence, and socioeconomic disadvantage.

# What happens next?

#### 1. Eligibility

Once you have submitted your proposal, Screen Scotland will review it for completeness and eligibility. If you have not provided all the information required, or if you do not meet the eligibility criteria, your proposal will not be assessed. You will be notified of this, and of the reasons why, by email.

#### 2. Assessment

Complete and eligible proposals will be assessed against the criteria outlined at 'Skills and experience required' above.

#### 3. Interview stage

We may invite a shortlist of applicants to interview, to discuss the proposals further. We will provide further information on the format of the interview to shortlisted applicants. A preferred delivery partner will then be selected by the interview panel. Following this decision, Screen Scotland are likely to hold further discussions with the preferred applicant in order to finalise the agreement for funding.

#### 4. Creative Scotland Senior Leadership Team

The Screen Scotland Scripted Team and the Director of Screen Scotland will then make a recommendation to the Creative Scotland Senior Leadership Team, who will have final approval of the delivery partner.

Please note that we may not select any delivery partner if we feel that no proposal was sufficiently viable or we may enter into post-assessment discussions with one or more preferred delivery partners to encourage a particular approach prior to our making a decision.

# **Feedback**

We will aim to provide feedback to all applicants we meet for an interview, where this is requested. We welcome constructive feedback from you on our process, so we can continue to improve.

## Once a decision is made

Once Screen Scotland has reached a decision, we will write to you to let you know the outcome. If you are successful, we will let you know of any specific conditions attached to the award.

Once specific conditions, if any, have been met we will issue you with a Funding Agreement for Screen Scotland funds. You must note and adhere to all the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement. At this point we will also ask you for your banking details and agree a payment schedule and cash-flow with you, which will normally be set against agreed milestones. You will need to return a signed copy of our Funding Agreement. Once all conditions are met, we will release the first instalment of your award.

# COMPLAINTS

As an organisation, we will always listen and respond to any concerns that you may have. If you would like to make a complaint, about either the way we dealt with your proposal or the service you have received from Screen Scotland, we have a process you can use.

Please note that Screen Scotland does not have an appeals process and for this reason, we are unable to accept complaints that relate solely to the decision we have made. You can only complain if you believe we have not followed our published process when dealing with your proposal.

For more information, please visit the complaints section of our website.

# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

Creative Scotland is committed to being as open as possible. We believe that the public has a right to know how we spend public funds and how we make our funding decisions. For more information, visit the **Freedom of Information section of our website**.

We are listed as a public authority under the Freedom of Information Act (Scotland) 2002. By law, we may have to provide your application documents and information about our assessment to any member of the public who asks to see them under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. We may not release those parts of the documents which are covered by one or more of the exemptions under the Act.

Please see the Freedom of Information website at <a href="www.foi.scot">www.foi.scot</a> for information about the Act generally and the exemptions. We will not release any information about applications during the assessment period, as this may interfere with the decision-making process.

# **DATA PROTECTION**

Creative Scotland requires some personal information about you/ your organisation to consider your application for funding. Without this information we will be unable to process your application.

If you would like to see a breakdown of the personal information we require, why it is required, what we do with that information and how long we keep it, please refer to our **Privacy Notice on our website**.

Creative Scotland may share your personal information with third parties to comply with the law and/or for our legitimate interests and/or the third parties concerned.

Where the personal information you have provided to Creative Scotland belongs to other individual(s), please refer to our Privacy Notice. Please ensure you share this Privacy Statement and Creative Scotland's Privacy Notice with the respective individual(s).

You have some rights in relation to the personal information that Creative Scotland holds about you under data protection law. Our Privacy Notice contains information on how to exercise these rights, or you can contact our **Data Protection Officer**.

If you have any concerns with how we have processed your personal information, you should contact our Data Protection Officer in the first instance, as we would welcome the opportunity to work with you to resolve any complaint. If you are still dissatisfied, you can submit a complaint to the **Information Commissioners Office**.

# **SUBSIDY CONTROL**

Screen Scotland, as part of Creative Scotland must comply with Subsidy Control legislation. Learn more on the **Subsidy Control webpage**.



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