



## **FILM ENTERPRISE GUIDELINES**

These guidelines relate to Creative England's **Film Enterprise**, a dedicated programme of support for film-related businesses based in England (outside of Greater London). We also welcome applications from companies that are not currently active in film but wish to expand their business model into this area and can demonstrate that they have the skills and capability to do so; primarily by evidencing a strong track record in content creation.

Please read the guidelines carefully before submitting your application. This is a rolling fund so there is no current deadline for applications.

If you are unsure about any aspect, please email [filmenterprise@creativeengland.co.uk](mailto:filmenterprise@creativeengland.co.uk)

### **About Creative England**

Creative England is a not-for-profit company that invests in and supports the best ideas, talent and businesses across film, TV, games and digital media.

Our film-related activities currently include support for development, production, business growth & inward investment, and are largely focussed in the English regions (outside of Greater London).

We distribute National Lottery funds, delegated from the British Film Institute (BFI), as well as Regional Growth and European Regional Development Funding. We also provide a comprehensive "money +" service that offers expert advice, contacts and advocacy to all the individuals and businesses that we invest in.

For more information about our support for film and TV, please visit [www.creativeengland.co.uk/film](http://www.creativeengland.co.uk/film)

### **About Film Enterprise**

We plan to invest £2m (over 4 years) to improve the growth and sustainability of film-related businesses outside of Greater London. We will work with companies on an individual basis and design made-to-measure programmes of business support and funding to help entrepreneurs unlock new opportunities, develop creative strategies, refine their business models and attract increased levels of corporate finance. We are also looking to encourage new business alliances and joint ventures and to help companies enhance their capacity for international trade.

Please note that Film Enterprise does not offer standalone single project or slate funding. We will however consider proposals that include these as part of an overall business growth plan.

### **What does Film Enterprise offer?**

Film Enterprise has a range of options at its disposal and our aim is to work with companies and the people who run them to develop a plan for funding and support that is most appropriate to the needs and aspirations of the individual business. We will support companies to develop their creative and business strategies, build new commercial partnerships, diversify revenue streams and take advantage of emerging markets. We can offer recoupable grant, debt and equity funding alongside "money +" options such as business planning, skills development, leadership training, mentoring and the attachment of non-exec directors. However, this list is by no means exhaustive and our principle is that the offer is bespoke rather than prescriptive.

### **Who can apply?**

All applicants must meet the following essential requirements listed below. If you have any concerns about your eligibility then please contact [filmenterprise@creativeengland.co.uk](mailto:filmenterprise@creativeengland.co.uk)

### **Essential Requirements:**

Regardless of the level of support or funding you apply for, the following are minimum requirements:

The application submitted must come from a limited company or LLP that is actively trading in the English regions (outside of Greater London)

Your company and/or its management must evidence a significant track record in film and/or related TV, digital, games or content creation activity and demonstrate how any Creative England support might build on this

Your business proposal must include as a significant component one (or a combination of) the following: film development, film production, film distribution, film sales, other film-related activity

You must demonstrate that you understand the basic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of your current business model

You will be required to articulate a clear vision and implementation plan for your proposed future business growth and/or sustainability

### **Film Enterprise cannot support:**

Individuals who wish to apply outside of a company structure

London based companies and their subsidiaries, or those registered outside of England; the exception to this is for partnership or joint venture activity where at least 50% of the shareholding be held in one of the English regions

Special Purpose Vehicle or subsidiary companies that have been established purely for individual projects or productions

Local authorities or academic institutions

Please note that some of the areas excluded by Film Enterprise may be eligible for support elsewhere within Creative England. For more information please visit [www.creativeengland.co.uk/film](http://www.creativeengland.co.uk/film)

### **The Application Process**

#### **The EOI stage:**

Before submitting a full application we will ask you to complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) form online. This will give us a better sense of your current business and your future plans for growth. Depending on your EOI we will be in touch to arrange a one-to-one meeting to discuss your business proposal further and to guide you to apply for the most suitable strand of support.

The EOI form can be accessed via the 'Enterprise' tab at

<http://www.creativeengland.co.uk/index.php/portfolio/film/#enterprise>

A member of our team will contact you within 8 working days of submitting your EOI. Any feedback or advice we give is not part of a formal assessment and should not be considered an endorsement of your proposal or a guarantee of funding. Please note that indicating on the EOI form that a certain aspect of your business is 'under threat' will not prejudice any future application.

Once we have considered your EOI, we may advise you to apply for one of the two strands of support available;

- **Strand A: Business Planning**
- **Strand B: Business Funding**

Please note that we can help you to consider which (if any) of the above are suited to your current business needs but ultimately you will decide whether you wish to make an application.

### **Strand A: Business Planning Support**

This strand will provide financial support to successful applicants to help them with their business planning and strategy. This may include acquiring specialist expertise, knowledge and contacts that will help 'get under the bonnet' of your company and refine your business proposition. At the end of this process most applicants will have developed a robust 3-year business plan that can be confidently presented to Creative England and other public/private sources for further investment.

When you apply we will ask you to nominate the companies or individuals you would like to work with to deliver this support, along with a proposed budget and work-plan. Ideally we would expect the business planning process to take no more than 6 months and to involve the owner/CEO of the company and any other relevant senior management.

Depending on the outcome of your business planning phase you will have an option to apply subsequently for Strand B: Business Funding. However, Creative England's support for your business planning phase is no indication or guarantee that we will offer you further funding through Strand B. For the purposes of assessment the two strands are treated completely independently of one another.

### **Strand B: Business Funding**

This strand is for companies who a) have done significant work on their business plans and who in our view are in a position to apply for funding without any further business planning support or b) have successfully gone through the business planning phase under Strand A above.

If you are one of those companies you will be advised to submit a full application, giving us a detailed and fully-costed business plan for 3 years. The plan should demonstrate how you will use Creative England funding to grow, develop and diversify your business in order to access new markets, or new routes to market and not to sustain existing activity.

We welcome proposals for funding to cover the full 3-year period of your plan but your financial projections will need to demonstrate a decreasing level of support from Creative England during this time. We will also expect you to identify other funding you have, or opportunities you intend to pursue, as Creative England is unlikely to be the sole investor in your proposed business activity.

### **All Applications**

Should you decide to make a Strand A or Strand B application, we will email you a link that will allow you to complete and submit an application form online.

We regret that we cannot accept applications by disc, fax, email or by post except by prior arrangement.

Following submission, you will receive an email confirming that we have received your application, together with a tracking number to be used in all correspondence.

If you have not received such email confirmation within ten working days of your submission, then please contact us at [filmenterprise@creativeengland.co.uk](mailto:filmenterprise@creativeengland.co.uk)

All EOI's and applications will receive checks for eligibility against the guidelines. If your application is ineligible, we will send you an email informing you as to why. We are unable to progress ineligible applications but may at this stage allow you to correct an error if it is the sole reason why it is ineligible.

### **How much can I apply for?**

The maximum amount available under Strand A for business planning support is £5,000. This will be subject to a pre-approved budget and work-plan and not every business may need the maximum award.

Because the Film Enterprise offer is tailored to the needs of the individual business there are no set minimum or maximum amounts for Strand B funding. However, it is unlikely that we would make more than £300,000 available to any one business and in all cases our funding will be governed by State aid regulations. If you are uncertain about what this means then please visit <https://www.gov.uk/state-aid>)

Your request for funding should reflect the nature of your proposed business activity and demonstrate why Film Enterprise funding is important to your plans. The level of funding will be commensurate with the market potential of your proposal and the likelihood that it will succeed. The impact that the level of funding will have on each individual company's potential for sustainability and growth will also be a key consideration.

Your company may only submit one application for Film Enterprise funding at any one time. We will expect there to be a clear rationale for the order and timing of your proposals and it is unlikely that we would offer support for business planning after we have already funded a company through Strand B.

### **How much match funding is required?**

Partnership funding is not required for Strand A other than the 'in kind' investment of time that key individuals from your company will bring to the business planning process.

For Strand B we will in most cases, expect a proportion of the overall funding required by your business to come from your own resources or from third parties. If you have external match funding then we will need to check that any conditions attached are compatible with our own. We particularly welcome applications from companies with match funding linked to new routes to market.

### **Deadlines and Decision Timetable**

This is a rolling fund so there is no current deadline for applications.

We aim to process applications for Business Planning and give you our decision within 6 weeks.

Decisions on applications for Business Funding may take longer depending on how quickly your company is able to supply any materials we require for the purposes of due diligence. Within 2 weeks of receiving your Strand B application we will inform you of any requirements for additional materials and provide an indication as to when we will consider this material and reach our decision. If you are able to submit everything that we require with your Strand B application promptly on request we anticipate that decisions will be made within 8 weeks of application.

Our ability to give quick decisions will ultimately depend upon the following factors:

- The completeness of the application and any requested supporting information including confirmation of partnership funding, evidence of share ownership or rights in particular properties, expressions of commercial interest in your proposals
- A single point of contact at your end for any potential questions that may arise
- The amount of funding applied for
- The complexity and financial structure of your business
- The number of applications being considered by the Film Enterprise and Business Affairs teams at the time of application

## **Assessment and Selection Criteria**

Eligible applications will be assessed by Creative England's Senior Executive for Film Enterprise and other members of the Film team, as appropriate. We may also use external assessors and/or appropriately qualified independent professional advisors. We recognise that applications may contain commercially sensitive information and all proposals will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

It may be necessary to request a meeting with you or additional information in order to complete a proper assessment. We will inform you if this will have a material impact on our decision-making timescales.

All businesses are unique and our assessment criteria may vary depending upon the specific nature of your proposal.

For Strand A, we will typically consider the track record of your business and its management, the feasibility of your future growth plans, and the impact that business planning support might have on your company.

For Strand B, we will typically consider the overall strengths of your business plan (including your financial forecasts and risk assessment), the commitment and abilities of management team, the viability of the market opportunity presented and the availability of resources (including human and financial) required to deliver the plan. We will also review the industry/commercial partnerships that you have in place, the nature of any co-investment, the broader regional impacts of the company's proposed growth plans and the overall fit with objectives of the Film Enterprise programme.

We expect a very high demand for support and we have a finite amount of money to award. Even if your application meets all the above criteria, we may not necessarily be able to fund you.

## **Funding Decisions**

A full assessment report and recommendation will be made to Creative England's Lottery Finance Committee as to whether to support or decline your application.

The decision of the Lottery Finance Committee is final.

All successful and unsuccessful applications will be confirmed in writing as soon as possible after a funding decision has been made.

## **Awards and Conditions**

If your application is successful, you will be sent a formal offer letter that sets out the level of financial assistance agreed and the terms and conditions of our funding. This will form the basis of a funding agreement.

All offers of funding will remain open for a specified amount of time. This will be determined by the scope and nature of any further materials we require for due diligence and contractual purposes. During this time the Senior Executive for Film Enterprise will contact you to discuss and set the terms of your funding agreement with Creative England. After this time, the offer of funding will lapse unless extended at our sole discretion.

All successful awards are published on the Creative England website and it is a condition of any award that successful applicants co-operate with Creative England and BFI in any PR and press activity relating to their funded activity.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

If your application is successful the Film Enterprise team will liaise with you for the full duration of any activity that Creative England supports and agree with you in advance a reporting and evaluation

schedule with appropriate KPI's. This will allow us to measure the effectiveness of our funding both for your business and in meeting our strategic aims.

### **Feedback**

While we aim to provide feedback on unsuccessful applications to Film Enterprise, this may not always be possible due to the high volume of applications that we expect to receive.

We welcome constructive feedback on our application and assessment processes.

### **Return of Materials**

All materials should be submitted electronically, please do not send us originals or hard copies unless specifically requested. Creative England will retain the application form for declined proposals for a period of two years after which it will be destroyed. Any information sent to us in addition to the application form and/or materials we have requested will be disregarded in the assessment of your application and will not be returned.

### **Resubmission**

We can only accept resubmissions if there have been significant and material changes to a previous proposal. Any proposed resubmission should be discussed in detail and in confidence with the Film Enterprise team and invited by us in advance.

### **Speculative Submissions**

We regret that we are unable to consider proposals or read additional material that has not been formally submitted through the application process.

### **Solicitation**

In certain circumstances, we may solicit applications to Film Enterprise directly. We will only solicit in accordance with the relevant terms of the National Lottery Act 1998. A solicitation does not guarantee funding and all solicited applications will be treated the same as any other application to Film Enterprise in respect of assessment and decision making process.

### **Appeals and Complaints**

Creative England's decision in all matters concerning the assessment and selection of proposals is final. Inevitably, applicants may be turned down and may be disappointed as a result.

Applicants who wish to make an appeal against a funding decision can only do so if they have good cause to believe that the correct procedures, as published in these guidelines, have not been adhered to or applied in such a way as to prejudice the outcome of an application.

A copy of the Lottery complaints procedure can be obtained from Creative England on request.

### **Freedom of Information**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request information held by Creative England. This includes information held in relation to applications to Creative England's Lottery funding programmes. If you choose to apply to Creative England, you should be aware that the information you supply, either in whole or in part, may be disclosed under the Act.

### **Contact Details**

If you have any queries on the process, eligibility or the application process for Film Enterprise please email [filmenterprise@creativeengland.co.uk](mailto:filmenterprise@creativeengland.co.uk)

*Whilst the information and advice in these guidelines is believed to be accurate at the time of going to press, Creative England reserves the right to make changes at any time at its discretion. Neither Creative England nor any of its partners shall be responsible for any loss attributable to errors, omissions or other inaccuracies in the information contained in these guidelines.*

