West Midlands IP Content Development Fund

Announcing the return of the West Midlands IP Content Development Fund, the third round of project development funding for screen IP in the region.

- **Grant funding up to £20,000**
- **Available for scripted and non-scripted narrative projects and slates**
- **Supporting projects from broadcast level to 'digital first' content**
- **Applicants must be SMEs based in the West Midlands**
- **Webinar with Q&A on the opportunity being held 1pm, Thursday 5th November.**

Apply here.

The West Midlands IP Content Development Fund (WMIPCDF) is funded by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and UK Government, and delivered by Creative UK (CUK) in collaboration with Create Central (CC). The purpose of the fund is to support SME production companies based in the WMCA core area in their development of as-yet unproduced screen IP.

What can I apply for?

The WMIPCDF supports the development of narrative IP before it has gone into full production; it is not a production or post-production fund and does not support the development of further series of an existing project which has already had a first series made.

Following distinct 'strands' in the last round, '**Narrative'** now welcomes applications for projects and slates which may span the spectrum from 'broadcast' to 'digital first' content.

By 'broadcast', we refer to scripted and non-scripted narrative projects for film, TV and animation – from single fiction and documentary films to limited and returning series – being developed by companies in a position to deliver network broadcast and theatrical release standard content at the expected quality and scale. Awards may fund a range of activity, including option costs, treatment development, script/story development and writer fees, design/artwork development, pilot production, early-stage project packaging costs or other activities which creatively and substantively contribute towards project and IP development.

By 'digital first', we refer to project or slate development funding for more nascent, emerging and/or micro indies operating primarily in the digital landscape. We anticipate such companies will have the ambition to ultimately grow and scale the work that they do but can demonstrate the immediate ability to deliver high quality, lower-budgeted, smaller scale, 'digital first' content for successful production which prioritizes digital release as the primary means of engaging with audiences and delivering content.

Funding awards are each expected to be up to **£20,000** in total for higher-end broadcast level projects and up to **£10,000** in total for digital level projects; we will make awards up to a maximum of £20,000 according to what we believe projects deserve and require on their own terms and relative to other projects being considered.

We ask applicants to consider what they really need and for what specific development purposes; we ask you to break down and budget the stages of development and to request an amount of funding accordingly, specifying all the fees and costs involved. If we are unable to support the entire development process, we may still be able to fund a given stage of that

process - details of those different stages will therefore allow us to make the best funding decisions possible.

We ask applicants to indicate how they intend to utilise the funding and to tell us about their narrative IP, its realistic projected cost/achievable scale and a clear strategy for reaching audiences with the content. (Please note: although the funding may support shorter form series IP development, it is **not** available for standalone short film development or production or for live performance or immersive/AR/VR projects.)

We ask applicants to request a funding amount appropriate and according to the achievable opportunities that currently exists for them to realise their project/slate in the short to medium term.

We can only support one award per company through this round so please apply with the most appropriate proposal for the work you are doing and your potential to realise it.

Who can apply?

The intent of the fund is to support and help sustain local, homegrown screen production companies to develop their own originations and IP at a challenging and changing time in the industry.

The fund is targeted at SMEs and micro-companies. Eligible producers and production companies must be operating in the WMCA area of Birmingham, Solihull, Sandwell, Dudley, Coventry, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Companies must be registered trading entities at Companies House; companies should be registered or trading in the WMCA region, or company leaders/founders must be permanently resident in the area.

For higher value awards, producers/companies should have in place at the point of application the creative team which is due to undertake the development process. Teams must include a lead project producer and in addition should include one or more key creatives, for example: writer, writer/director, director, animator, designer. This list is not exhaustive - please specify the key creatives you need for the development process you are asking us to fund.

Higher value awards are not intended for new or very early-stage teams and as such creative teams must be able to demonstrate an individual or collective level of experience in their given field – or in another related field (for example, ad/commercial producers developing a film project). Relevant experience might include full writing/directing/production/animation credits, professional writing commissions/engagements and in-house or freelance creative roles (for example at production companies/houses or broadcasters).

For lower value awards, applicants should have in place a named lead creative driving forward the IP development, whether that is in their capacity as a producer, writer, director or company leader/founder. Applications must demonstrate the ability and capacity to deliver digitally positioned projects of high quality at lower budgets.

Lower value awards may support more emergent talent or those crossing over from other forms (for example, from theatre to screen); however we expect applicant companies to be able to demonstrate compelling experience of originating, developing and delivering lower-budgeted content to audiences, as well as the ambition to achievably grow and scale the work they do in the future.

Webinar

Join Paul Ashton at 1pm Thursday 5th November 2026 for a webinar, where he will talk through the fund, the application process, and answer your questions. **Register for the webinar here.**

Key dates

Webinar: 1pm, Thursday 5th November

Application deadline: midday, Tuesday 1st December 2026

How to apply

We operate an online application process, which can be accessed here.

Stage 1**:** Applicants are asked to complete an application form online via the CUK website at here. You will be asked to provide information regarding the lead applicant, production company and creative team members, alongside information regarding the project such as logline, synopsis, creative statement and development budget.

Stage 2: All applications are checked for eligibility against the guidelines; we are unable to progress ineligible applications. Eligible applications will be assessed by CUK with reference to the selection criteria outlined below. During the assessment process we may send queries or request further information via email.

Requested additional information and/or materials should be provided as soon as possible and may include, for example: evidence of authorship, rights ownership or chain of title; evidence of any proposed partner involvement in your project; further information around the development budget or proposed development plan; further information regarding company eligibility.

It is important to understand that requesting additional information does not constitute an endorsement of your project or guarantee of funding.

Stage 4: Once reviewed and assessed, we expect to contact successful applicants in January 2027.

Selection criteria

All applications submitted will be considered according to the following criteria for each strand:

- the creative merits of the proposed project/slate;
- the track record and potential of the creative team;
- the viability of the project in terms of production and proposed market/audience;
- the strategic benefit of the project to the creative team/production company.

In our decision making, we endeavour to support diversity in all its forms and ensure that funds benefit as wide a base of recipients as possible.

We are only able to make a limited number of awards and even if your application meets all the above criteria, competition from other projects applying to the fund means that we may not necessarily be able to support you.

Funding decisions

All funding decisions will be made by Creative UK, in consultation with Create Central.

Whilst all projects are reviewed against the published criteria, the selection process is inevitably subjective and our decision on whether we wish to support your project is final.

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

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

Data Protection & Freedom of Information

West Midlands Combined Authority will act as Data Controller and Creative UK the data processor for data collected via this application form. Further information on how the organisations process your personal data can be viewed via the WMCA privacy policy and the Creative UK data & privacy policy.

Feedback

Due to the volume of applications that we anticipate, we will not be able to provide individual feedback to all projects that are not being supported.

Conditions of award

Awards are grant funded from the WMCA's Integrated Settlement. In accordance with the UK's subsidy control legislation, eligible businesses must not have received 'minimum financial assistance' more than £315,000 in aggregate (including any grant awarded under this programme) over the applicable period (being the current financial year ending 31st March 2027) and the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.

You will not be able to treat funding awarded as a taxable supply for VAT purposes. Nonetheless, all funding awards will be deemed to be inclusive of any VAT that may apply and in no event will we be liable for any additional amount by way of VAT.

You should be able to provide us with evidence of your rights of ownership over your project and you may require certain approvals from us over the project including chain of title or clearance documents before any award can be made. If you cannot provide evidence that you already have the necessary rights or an option to acquire those rights, then we may not be able to fund your project.

Awards will take the form of a non-repayable grant. We aim to have contracted awards by March 2027 – if you are not able to demonstrate rights/ownership at the point of application, then we may not be able to support your proposed development.

You will be expected to complete your development work within an agreed proposed timeframe on a project-by-project basis. Awards will be disbursed in two stage payments – the first on execution of a contract and the second on meeting an agreed milestone to demonstrate the development process is underway.

You will be required to credit CUK, CC, WMCA and UK Government on all materials (screenplays, decks, pilots, etc) created or developed with the funding and on the end credits of the completed content in due course. You will also be expected to co-operate with CUK, CC, WMCA and UK Govt in publicity and press activity relating to your project and to the funding in general.