

These are the guidelines for:

## **Sinema Cymru**

### **The Welsh language film programme**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the guidelines for the Sinema Cymru programme, an exciting new collaboration between S4C, Welsh Government's Creative Wales, and Ffilm Cymru, to support Welsh language feature films with international big screen potential. Through this programme, we will support original live-action narrative films in the Welsh language, which are intended for cinema release and which are led by Wales born or based writers, directors or producers (hereafter referred to as Welsh filmmakers).

If you're looking for funding for a feature documentary or animation in the Welsh language, or for films in other languages, please refer to Ffilm Cymru's other funds or review S4C and Creative Wales' latest call outs on their websites.<sup>123</sup>

Under the Sinema Cymru programme, a minimum of three Welsh language feature films will be developed a year, with the intention that one of these be selected for production funding.

Sinema Cymru aims to put Welsh language film on the map by fast-tracking independent Welsh language films, which are bold, unconventional, and have the potential to gain international cinema release. The programme particularly wants to champion under-represented voices in the depiction of the Welsh language and to push the boundaries of what we know as Welsh language film.

If anything is unclear in these guidelines, or if you'd like support to make an application, please get in touch with us, (see [Contact Details](#) below).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ffilmcymruwales.com/funding-and-training/film-development-production>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.s4c.cymru/en/production/page/24265/commissioning/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.creative.wales/funding-and-support/production-funding>

## How is Sinema Cymru funded?

Sinema Cymru 2023 is funded with £1 million of Capital Funds from Welsh Government's Creative Wales, and £1 million from S4C.

Up to £1.6 million will be available to a film selected for production, for the production costs alone (not including development). £30k will be available to each film selected for development under the programme, with additional support available to support access and continuing professional development of the programme participants.

## What is the criteria for this fund?

Both S4C and Welsh Government have funding parameters, which the Sinema Cymru programme reflects. In addition to this, the partners have shaped the programme in response to the needs they have observed in the Welsh film sector.

### Eligibility Criteria

In order to apply for this programme, you must:

- Have an original Welsh language feature film proposal which is intended for cinema release and which is feasible within a budget of up to £2 million (but no less than £350,000).
- Have a Wales born or based talent in the lead writer, producer or director role but no more than four lead team members overall. You can apply as a lone writer (without a producer or director on board) or as a writer and producer or writer, producer and director team. It's important to get the right team for your project and we can help you to bring on board producers and directors if necessary.

- Have writers, directors, and producers on your project who are over the age of 18 and not in full-time education.
- Own or be in the process of obtaining the rights (including any underlying rights) in the project.
- Have some relevant experience of film and TV within your team (we do not expect all team members to be experienced in screen but will be looking for a balance of experience across team members).
- Be able to commit to the lab style nature of the programme, under which development will be more intensive than usual film development with an aim of going into production in under a year.

In addition to this, the Sinema Cymru programme will prioritise projects which speak to one or more of the following:

### **Funding Priorities**

- Films which depict Wales and the Welsh language in new and unconventional ways.
- Films, which are led by Welsh speaking filmmakers who identify as having a protected characteristic and/or as being from socio-economic disadvantage<sup>4</sup>.
- Films, which represent diverse lived experience on screen.
- Films which take informed risks on new or emerging talent, with content or form which the commercial sector would find more difficult to support.

We will also be keen to see a geographic spread across Wales of the Welsh filmmakers we support.

### **What we can't fund**

We are unable to fund the following with this fund:

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on our approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, please read our [Film For Everyone Action Plan here](#)

- Work that is intended primarily to capture another art form, such as filmed theatre, sporting or music events
- Short films (or films which are shorter than 70 minutes in length. Please see our other funding streams).
- Feature animations or documentaries (please see our other funding streams).
- Artist installation work.
- Work that is not primarily audio-visual.
- Work intended primarily for broadcast television.
- Work that is not primarily in the Welsh language
- Work that has already gone into production.

This is because there is other funding available from broadcasters, the Arts Council of Wales, Creative Wales and others to support the above.

## How do I apply?

Because we manage public funds, we have to ensure that we don't give unfair advantage to any applicants and that we have clear and transparent processes in place. That means that we can't assess projects informally and that you must apply by submitting the application form found on our website to [applications@ffilmcymruwales.com](mailto:applications@ffilmcymruwales.com) along with any required supporting materials by the deadline (unless an alternative format of applying is agreed to support access).

## Deadlines

The deadline for this year's Sinema Cymru programme is:

*Midday 3rd November 2023*

## The Process of Applying

Applicants can apply for up to £30,000 of development funding. Please ensure that you include fees for writer, director (or writer/director) and producer (even if you have not yet assembled a full writer, director and producer team) as well as anything else that you feel is essential to develop your idea into a strong cinematic proposal.

In addition to this, we'll ask you to detail:

- a) What other support might be helpful for the project's development if the budget were not an issue. *For example an experienced film line producer to help you with budgeting and scheduling.*
- b) What support would be helpful for you and your team to get to the next level of your career. *For example mentorship, film market attendance, or an on-set placement with an experienced film director.*
- c) What support will be necessary for you and your team to participate fully in the programme. *With this, we're looking to address barriers that individuals might face during or post the application process. For example, there may be ongoing childcare costs, Welsh language lessons, or the need for an interpreter.*

There is the potential for us to support you with additional funding or direct support in these areas, which we'll discuss with you at length if you are awarded development funding.

Sinema Cymru is a talent development programme as well as a film funding programme, so it's important that applicants reflect any continuing professional development we can help with as well as the needs of the project itself.

Applicants are welcome to discuss their applications with a member of the Ffilm Cymru team ahead of applying, but it is not essential that they do.

Applications can be made by individuals or by a producer or production company but we would usually expect producers to be the applicant if attached.

It's important you respond to every question within the application form unless it is described as optional, as incomplete applications will not be assessed. In these circumstances, we will ask you to complete and re-submit your application.

### **Supporting Materials for development application**

You will be required to submit the following along with your application for development:

- A script for the project you're applying with OR a story treatment of no more than 3000 words (or five A4 pages) and a full-length writing sample from the writer (e.g for a full tv episode, film, play). If the sample is short-form, less than 20 pages, then two samples should be provided.
- CVs for your core team and an active link to the director's (if attached) most relevant previous work
- Details of option/underlying rights agreements if applicable
- A copy of your company sustainability policy, bullying & harassment policy, diversity and inclusion policy (if applying as a company)

Any visual materials, director's showreel, mood boards, rip reels, will strengthen your application.

Supporting documentation is best delivered as a single link to an online storage platform provided within the body of your application, rather than as individual attachments.



Your application won't be complete until all these items have been delivered along with the application form.

## **Confirmation of your application for development**

You will receive confirmation that your application has been received within 2 weeks of submitting it. Within this confirmation you will also be emailed a link to complete our diversity monitoring form, which should be completed by all lead writers, directors and producers on the project at that time. There is a 'prefer not to say' response available for all questions but the answers we do receive help us to evidence gaps in representation and to take action to address them. For more information about why we ask for this information, please read our Film for Everyone Action Plan<sup>5</sup>.

## **Can I get access support with my application?**

For applicants with access requirements, for example individuals who are D/deaf, hard-of-hearing, Disabled or neurodiverse people, and people with sight loss, further support is available to complete an application. For example, we can cover the costs of a BSL interpreter for a meeting with us prior to making an application, or scribing support for dyslexic applicants, or agree alternative formats for applying such as a short video or slide deck. Please contact us to discuss how we can help in advance of the application deadline (see Contact Details below).

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<sup>5</sup> <https://ffilmcymruwales.com/film-everyone>

## Contact Details

Completed applications must be emailed to [applications@ffilmcymruwales.com](mailto:applications@ffilmcymruwales.com) unless we've agreed an alternative form of delivery.

If you have any questions or access requests, please contact both:

Gwenfair Hawkins, Development and Production Executive:  
[gwenfair@ffilmcymruwales.com](mailto:gwenfair@ffilmcymruwales.com)

Ihsana Feldwick, Talent Coordinator:  
[ihsana@ffilmcymruwales.com](mailto:ihsana@ffilmcymruwales.com)

## How are funding decisions made?

### Assessment Criteria

We will consider all the following when assessing whether to offer funding to a project:

- The quality and originality of the project and the team's ability to realise their creative vision
- Whether the project will have a significant impact on the careers and companies of Welsh filmmakers
- Whether the project responds to one or more of our [Funding Priorities](#)
- The viability of the project (whether the budget level is appropriate for the material, available finance, and experience of the team; whether the schedule is realistic)
- The team's understanding of the specific audience for their project and plan to reach that audience

- The potential to support a sustainable Welsh screen sector, addressing environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion, skills & training, and broader business innovation.
- The project's suitability for public funding. Could it be fully commercially financed? Is the project capable of paying everyone for their work? [See Budget Requirements](#) below.
- The likelihood of the project having a meaningful cinema release (that isn't self-financed)
- Whether the project is likely to provide a good return on investment against the Welsh Government funds (with £3 spend in Wales required for every £1 of Welsh Government funding granted)
- The overall balance of our investments. We will consider if the project is a distinctive addition to the Sinema Cymru slate of Welsh language projects.

## Assessment Process

Funding decisions will be made approximately eight weeks after the deadline.

Applications will be assessed by a panel of representatives from Ffilm Cymru, Creative Wales, and S4C.

Ffilm Cymru will write an assessment report on each project and may use external consultants in addition to the personnel identified above in order to broaden the expertise and lived experience feeding into that assessment.

In the process of writing the report we may ask for more information or materials from you. For information on what we do with applicant data, please refer to our Privacy Policy<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://ffilmcymruwales.com/sites/default/files/2020-10/Privacy%20Policy%202018.pdf>

Ffilm Cymru will let you know within three working days of any assessment date whether your application has been successful or unsuccessful.

All decisions will be confirmed via email and when a project is unsuccessful a brief explanation will be included.

## Indicative Decision-making Timeline

Confirmation of receipt of the development funding application Within two weeks

Funding decisions Within 8 weeks from submission date. You will be informed within 3 working days of the assessment date.

## Feedback

If you are unsuccessful in receiving funding you may request brief feedback via the telephone or video call. We receive a large amount of applications and don't have the resources to provide detailed feedback to every project that applies to us.

Sinema Cymru is a selective rather than automatic funding programme which will only fund three development awards a year. Applications will be rejected for a number of reasons, including:

- The originality of the material
- The readiness of the team to make a feature of this level
- The project's alignment with our Funding Priorities
- Whether the project could be financed by other means
- Any other element relating to our Assessment Criteria

There is no obligation for the team to apply any feedback provided by Ffilm Cymru nor is application of that feedback a guarantee that funding will be provided in the future.

## **Resubmission of unsuccessful projects**

Resubmissions of previously rejected applications can be made to Ffilm Cymru's other funding streams or to subsequent years of the Sinema Cymru scheme with prior Ffilm Cymru approval.

Resubmissions should show substantive changes addressing any previous feedback delivered by Ffilm Cymru: for example, a significant rewrite or change of producer.

If you meet this criteria and submit a new application for the same project, you must clearly identify the revised elements of the project within the application.

Resubmissions of projects, which have received a funding offer, which has expired, must also be discussed with a member of the team.

## **Access Costs**

We encourage you to budget for access costs that enables the production to support d/Deaf, disabled and neurodiverse individuals to participate in your production, and that help to make your production more inclusive as a whole. For example, you might consider support for childcare, the costs of providing accessible toilets and interpreters, or costs that would otherwise support our vision for a sustainable screen sector, which for us encompasses environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion, skills and training, and business innovation. If you're successful in gaining

funding from us, we'll help you to develop sustainability plans that work with the unique strengths and restrictions of your film.

## **Producer/Production fees**

Fees vary considerably according to the project and experience of the applicant team so we aren't able to stipulate fees here. We would however expect producer fees and/or production fees/overheads to be proportionate to the proposed budget and the producer fees to be on par with the Director and Writers' fees. If we decide to support the project, we will discuss the fees with the team and, although there are exceptions, on average combined producer/production fees would usually be in the region of 7-8% but capped at 10% of the direct costs of production (that is production budget net of the producer fees AND production fees/overheads).

## **Finance Plan Guidance**

We don't expect applicants to raise additional production finance under Sinema Cymru but leveraging additional finance is welcome (subject to the approval of the programme partners).

We don't encourage the deferral of any fees. If your finance plan includes the UK film tax credit, you should provide an initial calculation of this within your application, along with any other incentives or subsidies available to the production. We do however support producers to retain the benefit of the UK tax credit to support the future sustainability and growth of their company, subject to approval of all co-financiers.

## How do I work with the Programme Partners if I'm awarded funding?

Ffilm Cymru will be your main point people through the programme but will work closely with Creative Wales and S4C, sharing materials on your behalf.

When we start working with you, we'll develop a 'partnership form' with you, that will ensure that we understand how we can support you to do your best work. This might involve us understanding not to call you around school pick up for example, or to, if possible, contact you via email rather than phone due to hearing loss or d/Deafness. It won't be compulsory for you to share any of this information.

Ffilm Cymru is here to actively support you through the, often difficult, process of independent film production. We've worked on a lot of independent films and can help you to avoid common pitfalls, providing introductions and guidance that will support you to bring your vision to life and to audiences.

However we also have a responsibility to effectively manage government funds and to work toward long term growth of the screen sector and not just individual projects. Like most financiers, the programme partners will have approval over key elements of the film and will provide editorial and strategic feedback as will be stipulated in your funding agreements.

We'll also ask you to consider how you can support sustainable and inclusive practice in the sector, offering advice and support on areas such as trainees, environmental sustainability, and diversity and inclusion.

It will be your responsibility to ensure that you meet your contractual obligations, allowing enough time for review, feedback, and approvals from the programme partners.

### **What will the terms and conditions of my funding be?**

You will be issued with a development agreement which will include standard approvals over the key elements of the project and a time-limited right of first refusal for S4C to invest in the production of the film.

Projects awarded development funding are subject to a funding agreement with Ffilm Cymru reflecting the Creative Wales funds that will include an agreed payment schedule and full terms and conditions of the funding.



## Ffilm Cymru Wales Standard Terms of Business

These Standard Terms of Business (“Standard Terms”) form part of and should be read in conjunction with any funding agreement (“Funding Agreement”) issued by Ffilm Cymru Wales CBC (FfCW) in relation to your project (“Project”). Where there is any conflict between the two then the Funding Agreement prevails.

1. The law and Government regulations on distributing National Lottery and Welsh Government funds may change. FfCW therefore reserves the right to review funding schemes and/or change its’ policies, procedures, and assessment criteria.
2. FfCW will not be liable for any loss, damage or costs arising directly or indirectly from:
  - The application process;
  - FfCW’s decision not to provide an award to an applicant; or
  - Dealing with an application.
3. FfCW’s decisions on applications are final. Formal appeals against decisions will not be considered unless the applicant has good cause to believe that the procedures for processing the application were not adhered to or applied in such a way as to prejudice the outcome of the application. [FfCW’s Complaints Policy can be found on our website.](#)
4. FfCW is not obliged to pay out any funding until it has received a fully executed copy of the Funding Agreement and until any conditions precedent as defined within the Funding Agreement have been satisfied.
5. FfCW is required to publicise information on the number of applications it receives, and the awards made: this information will include the name of the successful applicant, award amount, project name and project details.

6. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request certain information held by FfCW on behalf of our funders. Therefore, if you choose to apply to FfCW the information you supply may be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act, in whole or in part unless there are sufficient grounds under the Act to withhold, as with commercially sensitive information, for example.
  
7. FfCW is committed to improving the diversity and inclusivity of the screen industry. We ask all applicant teams to complete anonymous diversity monitoring forms and all successful applicants to develop diversity and inclusion plans, which they report against. FfCW may publish any anonymous diversity data you provide on an annual basis aggregated with other application and award data, as further detailed in our Privacy policy: <http://ffilmcymruwales.com/index.php/about-us/our-policies>. FfCW requires that any measures taken by applicants to improve the diversity and inclusivity of their work are in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 ([www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)).
  
8. FfCW distributes National Lottery funding from the Arts Council of Wales and capital funds from Welsh Government's Creative Wales. Depending on the funding received, funding recipients will be required to credit FfCW and the Arts Council of Wales (with corresponding credit given to the National Lottery) and/or Welsh Government, in all verbal and written/published materials relating to the Project including using logos, as supplied.
  
9. FfCW can withhold or reclaim an award in the following circumstances:

- the application has been filled in dishonestly or with incorrect or misleading information about the organisation or the project whether deliberately or accidentally;
- if the award recipients acts dishonestly or negligently to the disadvantage of the project
- AND
- any other breach as defined in the Funding Agreement.