

Funding Guideline to the “13th Animation Support Program”

*NOTE: HKDEA may update the funding guideline without prior notice.
Applicants are advised to get latest guideline from our official website,
www.animation-ssp.com regularly.*

Funding Guideline (“Guideline”) to the “13th Animation Support Program” (“13th ASP”)

Background

- To support young start-ups and small enterprises in animation production to perform professional portfolio works that will help them build up businesses to sustain their operation, the Hong Kong Digital Entertainment Association Limited (“HKDEA”) had successfully organised the “1st Animation Start-ups Support Program” (1st ASP) in 2013, and the 2nd to 12th Animation Support Program (ASP) with the sponsorship from Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency (“CCIDA”) office of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government.
- Riding on the success, the HKDEA hereby introduces the “13th Animation Support Program” (“13th ASP”) to further support more local potential animation start-ups and small businesses in the animation sector.
- The 13th ASP will provide the participating animation enterprises with resources, training program, professional mentorship and talent matching to produce their original creative animation works that could demonstrate their creativity and technical capacity, and to upgrade quality of local animations. The 13th ASP will also tailor-make promotional activities to be implemented via various channels to help the participating enterprises in finding business partners and getting business opportunities from potential clients.

Objectives

The objectives of the 13th ASP are:

- To identify and select a maximum of 16 young animation start-ups which have been in operation for not more than 6 years and with not more than 8 full time staff members to produce an animation work of at least 3 minutes (“Tier 1”).
- To identify and select a maximum of 10 small animation enterprises with training in basic productions which have been in operation for not more than 9 years and with not more than 15 full time staff members to produce an animation work of at least 5 minutes (“Tier 2”).
- To identify and select a maximum of 4 small animation enterprises with training in advanced productions with not more than 30 full time staff members to produce an animation work of at least 10 minutes (“Tier 3”).
- To provide funding, training and mentoring support for the participating animation start-ups and small animation enterprises to produce original animation works that could demonstrate their creativity and technical capability, and help them to pitch to potential clients and partners for business development; and
- To promote the completed animation works in events and channels such as premiere, TV program, project website, and various local and regional exhibitions and award activities.

Funding amount, coverage and procurement procedures

- Each of the 16 Tier 1 selected animation start-ups will be subsidized to produce an animation work of at least 3 minutes, with an amount of funding not exceeding HK\$130,000. Each of the 10 Tier 2 selected small animation enterprises with training in basic productions will be subsidised to produce an animation work of at least 5 minutes, with an amount of funding not exceeding HK\$240,000. Each of the 4 Tier 3 selected small animation enterprises with training in advanced productions will be subsidised to produce an animation work of at least 10 minutes,

with an amount of funding not exceeding HK\$600,000. The selected animation start-ups and small animation enterprises under the 13th ASP are hereafter referred to as “Fund Recipients”. A maximum of 70% of the said funding could be used by the Fund Recipients to cover the cost for manpower (such as animation specialist), and the remaining balance could be allocated for other expenses (including script writing, voice talent, audio recording studio, music and other post-production services costs, etc.) which are incurred solely for the production of the animation under the 13th ASP (hereafter referred to as “Other Expenses”). Fund Recipients shall ensure that under no circumstances is the funding used to cover the purchase of any hardware/equipment, or any other non-allowable cost items (please refer to Chapter XI of CreateSmart Initiative Guide at https://www.createsmart.gov.hk/egrantcpubres/eng/CSI_Guide.pdf for the unallowable costs).

- For calculating manpower cost on the animation work under the 13th ASP, signed timesheet must be documented and submitted as a proof by the Fund Recipients at project completion for auditing.
- The Fund Recipients should follow the procurement procedures when incurring other expenses as stated below:

For expenses **more than \$5,000 and less than \$10,000**, at least **two** quotations in writing should be obtained for the purpose of selecting the vendor. For expenses **equal or more than \$10,000 and less than \$100,000**, at least **three** quotations in writing are needed. All quotations and invoices for all expenses must be submitted at project completion for auditing and kept by the Fund Recipients for two years for auditing by the representative(s) of the 13th ASP and/or CCIDA. HKDEA reserves the right to refuse the claim for reimbursement of other expenses without

proper record of quotations and invoices.

- Fund Recipient shall manage its procurement to the extent it can disqualify a tenderer/terminate a contract upon if the appointed Tenderer / Contractor has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security; or the continued engagement of the Contractor or the continued performance of the contract is contrary to the interest of national security, or the Fund Recipient reasonably believes that any of the events mentioned above is about to occur. HKDEA/ CCIDA shall not be responsible for any claim, legal proceeding, liability, loss, damages or any cost or expense, suffered or incurred by the Recipient arising out of or in relation to such termination.
- In the event that the actual amount for disbursement of funding is less than the amount of funding already received by Fund Recipients concerned, the Fund Recipients are obliged to return the unused amount to HKDEA.

Who are eligible to apply?

An enterprise will be eligible to apply for funding to produce an animation work of at least 3 minutes (i.e. Tier 1 of the 13th ASP) if:

- It is a local business holding valid business registration certificate, and
- It is a business with primary focus on animation production, and
- It has been in operation for not more than six years (as at the date of the application deadline) with 8 full time staff members or below.

(Remark: Application under this category is NOT open to any enterprise which had been funded in the “1st ASSP” or under Tier 1 category in the “2nd to 12th ASP”)

An enterprise will be eligible to apply for funding to produce an animation work of at least 5 minutes (i.e. Tier 2 of the 13th ASP) if:

- It is a local business holding valid business registration certificate, and
- It is a business with primary focus on animation production, and
- It has been in operation for not more than nine years (as at the date of the application deadline) with 15 full time staff members or below.

(Remark: Application under this category is open to any enterprise which had been funded in the “1st ASSP” or under Tier 2 category in the “2nd to 12th ASP”. A maximum of 3 quota of Tier 2 will be allowed to past participants)

An enterprise will be eligible to apply for funding to produce an animation work of at least 10 minutes (i.e. Tier 3 of the 13th ASP) if:

- It is a local business holding valid business registration certificate, and it is a business with primary focus on animation production, and with 30 full time staff members or below.
- *(Remark: Application under this category is open to any enterprise which had been funded in the “1st ASSP” or under Tier 3 category in the “2nd to 12th ASP”. A maximum of 2 quota of Tier 3 will be allowed to past participants)*

Implementation agent

- The 13th ASP is organized by HKDEA with funding from CCIDA’s CreateSmart Initiative (hereafter referred to as “CSI”). HKDEA has appointed a Project Director to run the Secretariat Office to be responsible for the overall administration of the 13th ASP.
- The Secretariat Office will process all applications submitted by local animation start-ups and small animation enterprises, monitor the progress of each approved application, and arrange funding release to Fund Recipients in four instalments upon the satisfactory completion of each milestone and the overall production progress has no major lag behind as stated below and acceptance of the appropriate documentary proof of the expenses.

Application form and deadline

- The application form and the template of proposal can be obtained from the Secretariat Office directly or downloaded from the project website at www.animation-ssp.com as from May 2025. All sections of the application form have to be completed with supporting documents wherever required. Before filling in an application form, please read this Guideline carefully.
- Applications should be submitted online via the programme website (<http://www.animation-ssp.com>) on or before 10th June 2025.
- The soft copy of completed and signed application forms should be submitted online via the programme website (<http://www.animation-ssp.com>). Supplementary Documents and PowerPoint should be uploaded to a secure cloud storage platform with a URL for the secretariat to download the files. Please write down the URL link in the online application (<http://www.animation-ssp.com>). Enquiries: Telephone: 3594 6722, Fax: 3594 6720 and email asp.hkdea@gmail.com.

Vetting Mechanism

Materials to be submitted

- The applicant should fill in the application form with details of its enterprise, a creative proposal (with preliminary storyboard, script, and character design) on the proposed animation works under the 13th ASP, a production plan, with any other supporting documents and past animation works produced by the applicant for evaluation.
- For applicants submitting more than one application, they should submit separate applications with respective creative proposal, character design, storyline, script, storyboard and production plan etc.

Vetting procedures

Upon receipt of an application, the Secretariat Office will conduct a preliminary screening on the eligibility of the applicant and may seek clarification or supplementary information from the applicant. The eligible applications will be submitted to a vetting committee (the “Committee”) to be responsible for vetting applications and monitoring the progress of the selected applications.

- The Committee comprising industry experts, academia and association representatives in the animation field will provide the necessary creative, commercial and technical inputs in the vetting and monitoring processes. The membership list of the Committee can be obtained from the Secretariat Office.
- Officer(s) in-charge of the project from the applicant may be required to attend vetting meeting(s) to introduce their enterprise, present the creative proposal and answer queries from the Committee.

Vetting criteria

In evaluating an application, due consideration will be given to, inter alia, the following wherever applicable:

- The applicant should have track records in animation production or could demonstrate its capability of completing the required animation production. Award(s) won by the applicant in local and/or regional competitions is not a pre-requisite but will be considered.
- The creative proposal, character design, storyline, script, portfolio work, and production plan etc., submitted by the applicant will be considered and judged by the Committee with judging criteria below:

Part A (50%) - *Based on submitted creative proposal (story board, character design, script etc).*

- Creativity
- Originality
- Design and artistic quality
- Expressiveness

Part B (50%) - *Based on company profile, portfolio and production plan submitted, and interviews to be conducted.*

- Company's track record
- Capability of producing the proposed work
- Commitment to the program

- The proposed animation work needs to cater to the interest of the general public of Hong Kong and comply with the local broadcast standard, as the finished work may be aired on local TV channel(s) or other public venue(s). The contents must comply with the overall general standards of television broadcasting in Hong Kong, including but not limited to such contents not being: hindering society benevolent customs; disturbing public order; political arguments; defamation; of indecent, obscene or disgusting taste; any material which may result in any person or group to be subjected to hatred, fear, denigration or insult due to ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social status, physically or mentally unsoundness or any other reasons; harmful language or metaphor; sex and nudity; visual shots causing severe mental unease; creepy sound effects presaging or simulating death or heavy injury; supernatural or superstitious matters causing high anxiety or fear; abuse or brutalization of children or animals; any matter which may cause hysterical reaction, nightmares or emotional distress from children; use of foul language; etc.
- Applicants may submit more than one application. However, with the aim to maximize the number of beneficiaries under the project, HKDEA will not provide more than one offer to each successful applicant. Applicants with common shareholders will be regarded as the same applicant.

Avoidance of conflict of interest

- To avoid conflict of interest, members of the Committee who are directly or closely related to an applicant will not have access to the application information on the applicant concerned and will be required to refrain from discussions of that application. This will apply to members who are management, advisory team member, shareholder, paid staff or consultant of the applicant, or close family member or close friend of any key personnel of the applicant.

Notification of result

- The Secretariat Office will notify successful applicants of the vetting result within two months from the deadline of application.

Formal agreement

- Applicants selected by the Committee to be Fund Recipients will be required to sign a formal agreement with the HKDEA to comply with all the terms and conditions laid down in the formal agreement, this Guideline and all instructions and correspondences issued by the Secretariat Office from time to time in respect of the 13th ASP.

Funding Release Procedures

Schedule and condition of funding release:

- To ensure proper use of the funding, the 13th ASP will release the funding to Fund Recipients by four instalments after the endorsement of committee on milestones achieved by Fund Recipients as below:

Instalment payment	Funding release %	Milestones (Documents to be submitted)
1st (Around August/September 2025)	20%	Upon signing of agreement based on approved creative proposal
2nd (Around October 2025)	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalized production schedule (if applicable) • Pre-production work including: Animatics (final version), revised full storyboard, test animation, concept art, test model • 5-10 seconds of animation works in final output quality • Reference final soundtrack incorporated into animation work
3rd (Around February/March 2026)	30%	After submission of full animation approved by the vetting committee
Final (Around early 2027)	20%	After completed work is released to general public and approval of HKDEA's audited statement and project completion report by CCIDA

Copyright of Produced Animation Work

- The copyright of animation works produced under the 13th ASP shall belong to the respective Fund Recipients.

Deadline of funding release

- To allow enough time for the HKDEA to process, submission of request from Fund Recipients for release of the final instalment of funding should be made on or before 31st March, 2026. Late submission will NOT be processed, unless prior written approval is obtained from the Committee.

Other Administrative Highlights

Suspension or termination of funding support

- HKDEA on the recommendation of the Committee may terminate any selected application or suspend the funding release at any time for reasons which include, in the sole opinion of the Committee, inter alia,

(I) lack of progress of the proposed animation work by the Fund Recipients concerned; change of the company or business status of the selected applicant concerned and the change is considered to have impact on the original proposal; failure of the Fund Recipients to remedy some faults or breach of the agreed terms and conditions; or any other circumstances which the Committee or the CSI sees fit to terminate the selected application in view of public interest.

(II) Fund Recipients' failure to comply with the laws of Hong Kong, including the law on safeguarding national security in Hong Kong in implementing the project.

(III) If the Fund Recipients has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security or the continued engagement of the Recipients or the continued performance of the Agreement is contrary to the interest of national security; or HKDEA / CCIDA reasonably believes that any of the events mentioned above is about to occur.

- In such cases, HKDEA can terminate the agreement by giving the Fund Recipients not less than two weeks' prior written notice and reserves the right to require Fund Recipients to return the subsidy, in whole or in part, to the CSI via HKDEA.

Modifications or amendments to the animation work or change of company or business status

- The endorsed animation work of the selected applicant should be carried out in accordance with its original creative proposal. Any modification or amendment must be approved by the Committee before implementation, otherwise it could be treated as a breach of the agreement.
- Fund Recipients must inform HKDEA via the Secretariat Office in writing for any change of its company or business status, officer(s) in-charge of the project, management structure, project commencement or completion dates, etc. HKDEA reserves the right to terminate the project agreement with the Fund Recipients and to seek remedies from the Fund Recipients if, in the sole opinion of HKDEA, these changes are considered to have affected the eligibility of the Fund Recipients under the 13th ASP.

Participation in promotion of the 13th ASP

- HKDEA will promote the finished animation works by Fund Recipients under the 13th ASP at premiere, on TV channel(s), project website, and at exhibitions, and to enrol the finished animation works in various local and regional award activities. By signing the project agreement, Fund Recipients agree to publicize their finished animation work under the 13th ASP at the discretion of HKDEA and shall assist HKDEA in the publicity activities that are related to the 13th ASP.

Acknowledgement of support and disclaimer

- Fund Recipients shall acknowledge that the “13th Animation Support Program” is funded by CCIDA, in the animation work produced under this 13th ASP, and in all related publicity / media events as well as publications of the animation work concerned. Fund Recipients are required to seek the approval of the Secretariat

Office of the 13th ASP for the contents of the acknowledgement prior to its production.

- In addition to the acknowledgement, the following disclaimer should be included in all publicity / media events and publications of the animation work concerned:
“The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region provides funding support to the “13th Animation Support Program” only and does not otherwise take part in the project. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in these materials/events (or by members of the project team) are those of the project organizers only and do not reflect the views of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Communications and Creative Industries Branch of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency , the CreateSmart Initiative Secretariat or the CreateSmart Initiative Vetting Committee.”

Project Evaluation

- For evaluation propose, Fund Recipients are obliged to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the 13th ASP, including but not limited to the figures of business contacts and deals made / negotiated through the 13th ASP. Individual Fund Recipient’s information is collected purely for statistical purpose and will not be divulged in the evaluation exercise.

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