

Creation: Content Development– Guidelines for Applicants

Purpose

This paper sets out our approach to allocating funding for content development within the Creation stream of [NZ On Air's Investment Strategy](#).

Introduction

NZ On Air's primary investment focus is our Creation stream, and content development is funded within this. Our priority is on supporting the development of valued and distinctive local content across a range of platforms and formats with a focus on diversity, cultural authenticity and excellence.

Development pūtea gives a creative project the necessary time to evolve and innovate before it is ready to seek production financing.

In the face of intensive demand, we want to be clear about the development work we will support and simplify documentation to help applicants.

Our Objective

Content development serves our three investment goals:

Valued Content: ensure projects are adequately developed before production and skilled personnel are available to make them.

Diverse Content: creative personnel from different cultures and communities have equitable opportunities to develop and make different NZ stories.

Discoverable Content: NZ audiences can find and appreciate local content.

What we will fund

We will fund different content development applications with or without platform support. The amount of funding you request should be in line with what your project needs, however we expect to fund up to \$25k – \$50k per project.

Development applications supported by a commissioning platform have an enhanced business case for funding as they present a confirmed level of market attachment with a pathway to an intended audience, in line with NZ On Air's key investment goal of Discoverability. In these cases, there is the expectation that the development budget will be funded 50/50 between the supporting platform and NZ On Air.

We will also fund development projects without a platform attached, acknowledging some projects need the time to develop before they are ready to seek market attachment. We will generally only fund one initial round of unsupported development per project.

Due to financial constraints, we will primarily fund the development of Scripted (drama, comedy, animation) projects because these are high cost, high risk genres where more certainty is required before production funding can be considered. Development funding can afford a project the time to structure a concept, and for example develop a treatment and scripts.

We accept development projects with anticipated production budgets within any of our three Scripted tiers:

- Tier 1: Projects seeking >\$3m
- Tier 2: Projects seeking \$1m - \$3m
- Tier 3: Projects seeking <\$1m

We are also open to funding development of larger-scale complex Non-Fiction projects that require significant research to test whether there is adequate material available to tell the story.

Our support for local games is primarily to fund their full completion and delivery to audiences, but we may occasionally support the development of game concepts. Please check the latest funding round guidelines to see if games applications will be considered.

We are likely to commit around \$1 million each year to content development proposals under the Creation stream of our Investment Strategy.

Applying for Funding

Applications must be made through our online portal [here](#). Decisions will be made by NZ On Air's Staff Investment Committee and Board on advice from staff.

Applications should be made to one of our [three funding rounds](#) each year. Content Development applications are generally accepted to any round but do read the [current round](#) guidelines before applying in case there are limitations to the types of applications we will consider.

What to include in your Creation: Development (Content) Proposal

When applying through our funding portal you will be asked to provide key information about your project (i.e. synopsis, format, key personnel, finance plan), and upload some key documents: content proposal, development budget, and if applicable, any completed draft scripts to date.

Development funding is relatively modest so we do not expect your application to be lengthy. The content proposal you upload should include the following:

- Project description: An overview of your project and what you want to do
- Proposed format: Is this a one-off or series? What duration?
- What is the proposed style/treatment of the content?
- Who are the key development personnel? Producer, researchers, writers, others?
- Who is the primary target audience, how is this content relevant to them, how will they access it?
- What are the deliverable materials: e.g. treatment, scripts, story arcs, character backgrounds etc.
- What is the planned schedule for delivering these materials?
- Budget. How much do you need, for what, and who else is contributing (if applicable)?

Assessment Criteria

Content development applications are assessed against slightly different criteria to production applications, reflecting the earlier stage of the project's life. Our nine investment principles are still reflected in the assessment pātai, as are our goals of funding content that is valued, diverse and discoverable. The full criteria by which content development applications will be assessed are below.

Valued:

- Is the idea/concept original and does it take a high level of creative risk and/or embrace diverse forms of storytelling, utilising new and emerging media formats?
- Will it resonate with an audience?
- Is the team experienced making this type (genre/format) of content?
- Is the budget reasonable for the development work planned and are there additional sources of finance contributing to the development?
- Will the proposed development deliverables progress the project and develop the skills of the team?

Diverse:

- Does the project tell an engaging NZ social, cultural, political or historical story?
- Does the content have a high level of cultural specificity, and is there a strong correlation between the team, the content and a priority audience?
- If the team is experienced, is it offering opportunities to new or emerging talent?
- If the team is new or emerging, is it accessing support from industry organisations or more experienced practitioners?

Discoverable:

- Will the project be distributed across a diverse range of media, including a confirmed, contributing, local free-to-air platform, to reach its intended audience and does it have the potential to engage that audience?
- If there is no local free-to-air platform support, then is there a sound intended local distribution plan?
- Does the project leverage other aspects of NZ On Air's work, improving their combined discoverability?

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