

# Round Toru Information for Funding Applicants

3 December 2024

## Purpose

This information is intended for applicants who are considering submitting a funding application for Round Toru, the final funding round of the 2024/25 financial year, across the following funding streams: **Scripted, Non-Fiction or Content Development**.

In this round we will also consider applications for the following:

- **Capability** – Industry skills and training initiatives
- **Discoverability** – Industry events and awards

## Introduction

NZ On Air's funding strategy is founded on core public media principles. We do this by funding **valued, diverse and discoverable** content that inspires, engages and entertains local audiences.

Please refer to our [investment strategy](#) for more information about our funding priorities. Here are the [funding round deadlines](#) for financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26.

## Round Toru Priorities

We invite projects catering to both priority<sup>1</sup> and general audiences that have practical distribution plans to ensure the resulting content reaches the intended audience. Given shifting media consumption, we expect most projects to be digital-first<sup>2</sup> or digitally native but they may have a linear run as part of the distribution mix.

Non-Fiction and Scripted production applications will be considered (including children's content, podcasts and part-financing of feature films<sup>3</sup>) as will applications for supported Non-Fiction and Scripted content development.

We require all submitted projects to have confirmed qualifying<sup>4</sup> local platform support – unless yours is a

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<sup>1</sup> For NZ On Air's priority audiences, see the introduction to our [Investment Strategy](#) (page 2).

<sup>2</sup> "Digital-first" means that the project is designed and optimised for online viewership from the outset, rather than adapting traditional formats for digital consumption. "Digital native" means that the project is inherently born and developed within digital environments, rather than being adapted from traditional formats.

<sup>3</sup> Our support for feature films is generally limited to gap financing for projects that have already received support from Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga | New Zealand Film Commission.

<sup>4</sup> See [General Guidelines](#)

rangatahi project as outlined below. We will give priority to projects that have a clear and considered distribution plan to ensure that the target audience is reached.

We are looking for projects that can demonstrate they are ready to move into production imminently.

See below for more information about the Non-Fiction, Scripted, Content Development, Children, and Capability and Discoverability applications we are looking for.

## Non-Fiction

**Approximately \$4m has been allocated for Non-Fiction projects in this round.**

In this round, we will accept Non-Fiction screen applications for documentaries, general factual, comedy panel shows and unscripted comedy shows, and partial financing of documentary feature films.

We will consider applications with international intellectual property, but priority will be given to local formats.

We will accept podcast applications in this round. Please refer to our [podcast policy](#), to ensure your podcast meets our funding criteria.

## Scripted

**Approximately \$6m has been allocated for Scripted projects in this round.**

For this round, we will prioritise applications seeking \$1m to ~\$3m per project. We will accept applications seeking under \$1m but will likely preference those with a finance plan that includes third-party funding as their business case will be stronger. Drama and comedy are both eligible, and partial financing of feature films.

## Music/sync licensing for Scripted projects

We welcome applications from Scripted projects that plan to incorporate at least 80% local music (both track licensing and composition) into their productions.

You can indicate in your application that you intend to use local music in your production, and you should allocate the appropriate amount for this in your budget, including a music supervisor role if applicable. Where you are applying for a significant level of funding for music in your application (i.e. >\$100k) you need to provide details of how you intend to allocate this pūtea and how it will elevate the project.

If your project is approved for funding, sync licensing costs will be ringfenced and cannot be reallocated for any other purpose within your production's budget. This can be made up of composed, licensed or library music or some combination thereof.

At present, additional sync licensing funding requests for Non-Fiction projects are not eligible due to funding constraints. We will not accept applications for sync licensing for projects that have previously been granted production funding.

## Games

In this round, we will accept applications for early development and production of games projects. We are looking for games that meet our funding priorities.

We will accept games applications that target children and young people. Your application should include a detailed distribution plan that is appropriate for the intended audience and detail any platforms it will be distributed on besides HEIHEI Games.

We recognise that browser updates can affect how platforms and games function, so a plan for dealing with maintenance and updates should be included. It is also essential to consider the range of devices and browsers that users will use to access the content, ensuring compatibility with the platform and content. If you have any questions or would like to discuss your submission, please contact Kelly Davis at [kelly@nzonair.govt.nz](mailto:kelly@nzonair.govt.nz).

## NZ Screen Production Rebate Projects (NZSPR)

Please read our [NZSPR guidelines document](#) carefully to understand our priorities and requirements.

We welcome applications from both Scripted and Non-Fiction productions seeking access to the NZSPR. However, we are primarily seeking to be 'last-in' funders, providing the final piece of the finance plan to ensure projects can proceed promptly. We are unlikely to prioritise 'first-in' funding for projects seeking access to the NZSPR.

We will give preference to applications that include firm letters of offer that support the finance plan. Applications that have finance plan gaps will be given lower priority.

If you have received an offer of funding for a NZSPR production that is yet to contract with us, you may not apply for another NZSPR project in this round.

The funding allocation per NZSPR project is capped at \$2.5m. Projects requesting more than this amount will require prior approval from a Co-Head of Funding (this will be difficult to secure in this round given the constrained funding available). Such requests will be evaluated based on how compelling the cultural value case is, as outlined in the investment principles on page 15 of our [Investment Strategy](#), the strength of the business case and the overall mix of applications in the round.

## Content Development

The round is open to content development applications with platform support and co-investment. We will fund an extremely limited amount of development in this round.

While the funding amount requested should align with your project's requirements, we anticipate funding within the range of \$25k to \$30k per project alongside matched platform support (where applicable). If we are oversubscribed with development applications, we may approach applicants to discuss a lower funding offer.

Content development applications will be assessed against our core criteria: valued, diverse and

discoverable. [Read the assessment criteria here.](#)

## Rangatahi | Youth

**Approximately \$3m has been allocated for rangatahi content in this round.**

We welcome applications for Scripted and Non-Fiction projects that will reach rangatahi audiences (15 – 24-year-olds). This audience is not easy to reach with traditional media so successful applications will need to make a convincing case that their distribution and discovery plan will effectively connect with this audience.

Your project may be supported by a local platform, ideally as part of a multi-platform distribution ecosystem.

However, recognising that rangatahi audiences are big users of online and social platforms (such as YouTube), we are willing to support projects that **do not** have a local platform, but your production will need alternative arrangements in place to provide the legal and creative oversight that commissioning platforms typically bring (see below).

Your budget should include the costs associated with your marketing plan, including asset creation. If your project intends to leverage an existing YouTube audience or channel, you should demonstrate how you will do this.

In recognition of the 'always-on' nature of YouTube content, we are willing to fund projects that require a high volume of content over an extended period.

If you submit an application for a rangatahi project with YouTube as your primary platform, without a local platform attached, your application must articulate robust plans to address the following requirements as well as meeting all our usual funding criteria:

- Legal compliance.
  - How will you ensure that the content you create meets broadcast compliance standards?
  - What is the process you will put your content through to provide assurance it is legally compliant prior to release? Who will you partner with to achieve this?
- Creative oversight.
  - Will you have a suitable third-party attached to your project who will be able to provide appropriate creative and editorial oversight in the absence of a platform commissioner?
  - This person should be willing and able to ensure that your project is delivered in line with its original creative objectives and to a high standard. They may be attached as an Executive Producer and should have suitable credentials and experience to fulfil this role.

## Tamariki | Children

**Approximately \$3.5m has been allocated for tamariki content in this round.**

We welcome both Scripted and Non-Fiction children's projects.

Applications will ideally be tailored for multiple platforms, with well-defined strategies for engaging the

target audience. Producers must secure a local platform for content distribution, either as the primary platform or as a secondary option. YouTube is acceptable as a primary or secondary platform, alongside an established local platform. [Please review our tamariki strategy for more detail.](#)

## Industry Capability and Discoverability

The previous Industry Development Fund (IDF) is now incorporated within the Capability and Discoverability streams of our [Investment Strategy](#) (pages 8 and 14 respectively). In this round, we will accept funding applications for:

- Industry capability – skills and training initiatives.
- Discoverability – industry events and awards support.

A limited amount of pūtea is available and will likely be prioritised for projects that we have provisionally made allowance for in our annual budget. If you plan to make an application, we encourage you to discuss it with Glenn Usmar at [glenn@nzonair.govt.nz](mailto:glenn@nzonair.govt.nz) before submitting your application.

## Marketing and Publicity

At a minimum, we expect all applications to include budget lines for promotion and marketing asset creation.

You may allocate a proportion of your production budget to marketing (paid media promotion and publicity costs), not more than \$15k for a non-NZSPR project. We are looking for applications to demonstrate an understanding of effective call-to-action marketing campaigns and to indicate how this pūtea will be spent. For funded projects, the budget lines dedicated to marketing costs will be ringfenced and will not be able to be used for other parts of your production.

Additionally, NZ On Air will support selected projects with a discoverability marketing campaign. When you complete your application form, you can indicate that you would like your project to be considered for a discoverability marketing campaign – either one that you run yourself or one that may be planned and implemented by our media partner, Contagion. Please refer to our [Discoverability Guidelines](#) for more information.

If you would like to run your own discoverability marketing campaign, you will need to provide a marketing plan and budget with your funding application, detailing how the pūtea will be used and clear evidence that your team has the skills to deliver the campaign. A very small number of applications will be allocated up to \$50k in ringfenced marketing funding to run their own campaign.

## Timeline

### 4 December 2024

- Applicant information webinar.
- A webinar will be held on Zoom on **Wednesday, 4 December** from 3-4pm to answer questions relating to round Toru.
- To register, email [funding@nzonair.govt.nz](mailto:funding@nzonair.govt.nz).

### 12 December 2024

- Funding round opens.
- All applications must be made through our funding application portal.
- Applications not submitted through this system will not be accepted.

### 30 January 2025, 4pm

- Application deadline. Round closes.
- Late applications will not be considered. In very exceptional circumstances, for time-sensitive projects agreed prior by a Co-Head of Funding, we may consider an out-of-time application.

### 11 April 2025

- Decisions confirmed, applicants notified.
- This date may be extended at NZ On Air's sole discretion.

## Application Limits

To address the rising demand for our funding, and the consequent increase in declined applications (with an average decline rate of approximately 70% year-on-year), we are maintaining application limits per round for both producers/production companies and platforms.

Producers/production companies are limited to a maximum of four applications, with a maximum of two applications per category (Scripted, Non-Fiction, Content Development, Industry Capability, Discoverability).

Platforms, on the other hand, can submit up to 10 applications per round, without any restrictions per category within that total. It's important to note that children's projects and returning series do not count towards a platform's application total.

If you have a strong case for exceeding these limits, please contact a Co-Head of Funding before submitting your applications. For any questions, please email either [kelly@nzonair.govt.nz](mailto:kelly@nzonair.govt.nz) or [glenn@nzonair.govt.nz](mailto:glenn@nzonair.govt.nz).

## Assessment Criteria

Alongside our [nine investment principles](#), we will additionally assess the following when evaluating applications:

- **Equity and representation** – Does the content reflect the diverse makeup of Aotearoa New

Zealand's population and provide opportunities for under-represented groups? Does it shed light on aspects of Aotearoa New Zealand culture, society or people that are often overlooked or misunderstood?

- **Gender equality** – Will the project promote and uphold gender equality on and off screen?
- **Talent and skills development** – Is this project offering a supportive environment for early and mid-career writers and production creatives, particularly those who represent Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural and ethnic diversity, to hone their skills?
- **Regionalism** – Will this production showcase regions and communities that are seldom represented in local content, giving us a glimpse into parts of the country that we rarely see?

## Industry Standards

Your production budget should consider the costs of operating in line with the agreed industry standards as expressed in the Individual Performance Agreement (SPADA and NZ Actors Equity), Screen Industry Workers Act, and The Blue Book (The Screen Industry Guild of Aotearoa New Zealand).

## Health and Safety

Your production budget should consider the costs of operating in line with the [New Zealand Screen Sector Guidelines](#) published by ScreenSafe.

## General Guidelines

Information on our funding criteria and how to make a funding application is [here](#).