



Public Interest Journalism Fund: General Guidelines

Guidelines for funding applicants

If you have any questions/pātai about the following information - please contact journalism@nzonair.govt.nz

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1. Purpose of this Document

These guidelines are for applicants intending to make a funding application to the Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF). They explain how to apply and how applications are assessed in an environment where there are more applications than available funding. More specific information is published prior to each round about the applications we are seeking.

2. Background

In January 2021 Cabinet agreed to draw down \$55 million over the next three years (2021 - 2023) from the tagged contingency set aside by Cabinet for broadcasting initiatives. This funding will be administered by NZ On Air to support the production of public interest journalism including Māori and Iwi journalism that is relevant to and valued by New Zealanders. The [principles set out in the Cabinet paper](#) have informed the design of the fund. NZ On Air [is collaborating with Te Māngai Pāho](#) on the design and delivery of the PIJF.

The three funding pillars of the PIJF are:

- **Projects** – for tightly defined projects with content outputs delivered to a deadline, similar to those funded via the NZ Media Fund Factual stream

- **Roles** – supporting newsrooms for the employment of journalism roles – including roles that are clearly tied to content outcomes, as well as support roles in the delivery of high-quality PIJ.
- **Industry Development** – an increased provision of public interest journalism will require growth within the journalism workforce and increased sector capability. Industry Development funding will also support projects that could include:
 - Training and development roles and programmes
 - Cadetships and internships
 - Sector collaboration and discussion
 - Staff Te Tiriti education
 - Recruitment initiatives

The PIJF will provide contestable funding delivered via a number of funding rounds. The funding round deadlines are [here](#).

The Government acknowledges a viable fourth estate is a central feature of a healthy democracy. A variety of factors have impacted the media sector in recent years diminishing its ability to fulfil this role within Aotearoa. In this context Government support is required to ensure journalistic capability across local, regional, and national newsrooms, infrastructure, and the continued production of New Zealand made content, is retained. The spread of misinformation related to COVID-19, particularly through social media channels, has sharpened public awareness of the importance of, and reliance on, a strong and independent media sector. COVID-19 has accelerated the need to confront the pre-existing and fundamental challenges facing the media sector. In particular, it has compressed the time available for media companies to adapt and transition to more sustainable business models that will be fit for purpose for the future media landscape.

Sector engagement in February 2020 highlighted the need for the fund to reflect a Te Tiriti o Waitangi Partnership with Māori media, acknowledging the different value systems that motivate content and inform reporting practices for Māori and Iwi journalism. NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho are working with Māori and Iwi journalism providers to ensure parity of need and interests within the sector under the PIJF.

3. Goals of the Public Interest Journalism Fund

The following detail has been informed by engagement with the sector for the purposes of this fund.

The Public Interest Journalism Fund must achieve all these things:

1. Seek to inform and engage the public about issues that affect a person’s right to flourish within our society and impact on Aotearoa’s ability to fully support its citizens.
2. Provide accurate, accountable, and fair coverage that reflects and empowers all sectors of the community, upholding the public’s right to know.
3. Actively promote the principles of Partnership, Participation and Active Protection under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, acknowledging Māori as a Te Tiriti partner.
4. Reflect the cultural diversity of New Zealand.
5. Encourage a robust and sustainable media sector.

For example, public interest journalism coverage could include content that:

- Meets the definition of Māori and Iwi journalism (detail on this below)
- Explains complex institutions, or issues
- Investigates, reports on, and explains public policy or matters of public significance
- Reports from perspectives including Pacific, Pan-Asian, women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, other ethnic communities
- Engages citizens in public debate
- Informs democratic decision-making

- Holds power (in its various forms) to account
- Covers issues and sectors of society not currently being provided.

Māori and Iwi journalism

Māori and Iwi journalism is made by Māori about Māori perspectives, issues, and interests, prioritising the needs of Māori.

Māori and Iwi journalism create a space and platform to give voice and representation to Māori, Iwi, hapū and hau kāinga; Māori content, language, and perspectives on all issues deemed relevant locally, nationally, and internationally.

This spectrum of reporting is integral to the protection of te ao Māori under article 2 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and includes (but is not limited to) focus areas such as:

- Te reo Māori and tikanga
- Political matters*
- Historical accounts
- Profile-based reporting
- Tangihanga
- Māori interest
- Sports (Ki O Rahi, Waka Ama, Touch Nationals etc.)
- Civil Emergencies

* Maori and iwi journalism and reporting is innately political in nature – this is especially true in the context of iwi, hapū and whanau politics. Including political matters within focus areas for Māori and iwi journalism also ensures a plurality of voice for Māori within a national political sphere is heard.

4. What Public Interest Journalism Is Not

The sector sought guidance on what subject matter sat **outside** of the fund’s definition of ‘public interest journalism’. This exercise posed challenges when trying to compare mainstream journalism with journalism that is culturally specific. The indicative list below of ‘what PIJ is **not**’ is guided by the context of mainstream media outlets and sector feedback that advised these types of stories below are usually well-served to national and local audiences and are often stories that sell themselves.

Applicants can make the case for funded coverage of these issues on a culturally specific basis and with a clear rationale as to how they would not be covered in the normal course of events.

What PIJ is not:

- Match reports of national sporting codes
- National political coverage*
- Reporting on international entertainment content
- Opinion
- High-profile crime
- Celebrity news
- International news
- Sponsored content*
- Lifestyle content with minimal connection to recent events.

*National political coverage is widely provided by mainstream news media outlets across Aotearoa and is generally excluded under the PIJF. Exceptions will be considered in cases where national political coverage is delivered via formats that provide investigative, in-depth, or longer-form analyses (such as current affairs programmes) which are more difficult to fund commercially.

*Sponsored content is content specifically marked as “sponsored”, “in association with”, “brought to you by”,

“advertorial” etc, and relates to news content where the advertiser has editorial input including the right of editorial veto.

Under no circumstance may funding from the PIJF be paid to subjects for interviews.

5. Sustainability

While the PIJF is currently funded only until the end of June 2023, applicants should consider how their proposal might be sustainable beyond that time frame or how it might contribute to sustainable outcomes.

6. Eligibility to Apply

All general eligibility criteria below must be met for applications to be assessed.

General Eligibility Criteria	Overview
Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to Māori as a Te Tiriti partner	Applicants can show a clear and obvious commitment or intent for commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including a commitment to te reo Māori. This commitment will enhance public interest journalism, resulting in stronger Māori representation and greater bi-cultural collaboration within the wider journalism sector. More guidance on this is provided in our Q & A document .
Commitment to Public Interest Journalism	We expect applicants applying for funding to have a demonstrated commitment to PIJ. In most cases, a history of publishing journalism will be necessary.
Data provision	Applicants must commit to use of common metrics where possible and the provision of other audience engagement, output, and financial data as required. See Section 7 .
NZ commitment	Applicants can show a track record of, or plan for, a sustained commitment to NZ content. Funding will be restricted to applicants who generate content that is focused on the New Zealand market (or a regional or local market in New Zealand), who employ journalists in New Zealand, have an operational presence in New Zealand, and pay tax in New Zealand. This initiative will not support overseas-domiciled organisations that may report on New Zealand affairs from time to time.
Freely available, simultaneous online distribution	All funded content must be broadcast or published in an acceptable form online (i.e. publishing a PDF online does not meet accessibility standards and therefore would not be considered acceptable under the PIJF). Funded content must be available to the NZ public free of charge. If behind a paywall or in a magazine with a cover price, funded content must also be available free of charge as close to simultaneous as possible in a readily available online location.
Media Standards	Applicants will be required to be subject to a relevant standards regime (the Media Council or the Broadcasting Standards Authority).

PIJF acknowledgement	In the interests of transparency, content will be required to be clearly signalled as funded by the PIJF. Guidelines on PIJF acknowledgement are provided with the funding contract and will be a condition of the contract.
Capability	Applicants must be able to demonstrate they have the current capability to deliver (or a solid plan for how they will intend to deliver) the proposed scope of work.
Admin/Capability/HR capacity	Applicants must have the ability to handle payroll, overheads, holiday cover, sick leave etc. Individual journalists may not apply for funding. For role-based funding, the capacity to manage performance, ability to provide support, and exercise a duty of care, will be required.

Limited eligibility for Crown-owned and funded public media organisations (i.e., Māori Television and RNZ)

Projects	Roles	Industry development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the funded content is additional to content that the entity is currently funded for, and when acting in partnership with independent content producers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the funded role is additional to roles that the entity is currently funded for, and where the funding does not duplicate other roles funded through the PIJF. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> where the funded initiatives are additional to initiatives that the entity is currently funded for.

Although Māori Television is Crown funded, it is significantly different to other Crown funded organisations. Established through a Waitangi Tribunal claim and legislation to rectify Crown breaches in Te Tiriti, its specific purpose and function is to promote, protect and revitalise te reo Māori (under article 2 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi). This is highlighted in the fact that this organisation is not funded specifically for journalism purposes but has chosen to invest in those areas due to the important role journalism plays in the revitalisation of te reo Māori.

7. Data provision

It is essential to the PIJF that funded entities return regular and accurate performance metrics to NZ On Air across all aspects of media distribution of the content. This reporting is an integral requirement of funding and must be considered prior to applications being made. NZ On Air will employ a dual system of passive measurement (currently via Google Analytics) and Producer supplied data across Owned and Earned channels outside of their main funded website.

Reach estimates	At application producers are required to provide an estimate of the reach per piece of content (average across all if you have multiple pieces) on your primary platform to NZOA. This will be a key success metric.
Reporting cadence	Outside of real time reporting, metrics must be filed on a quarterly basis for the reporting lifetime of funded projects or roles or if applicable up to 5 quarters after the project ends to allow for the true value of “evergreen” content to be assessed. Deadlines for all funded applicants are common regardless of the first publication or broadcast date.

	Reporting deadlines will be the 20 th of the month following the end of the calendar quarter.
Reporting lifetime	NZ On Air, in consultation with the funded applicant will set the “reporting lifetime” of funded applications so that the majority of audience engagement is captured.
Reporting granularity	Each piece of funded content can be broken out, with content name, publish/broadcast date and primary author identified along with core metrics, as well as being able to show a wrap up view of all funded content. In addition to this granular reporting, engagement metrics for funded projects across social and other sharing platforms as a consolidated number will be provided where possible for the quarter.

Digital reporting requirements

Installation of Google Analytics	Funded applicants must use Google tracking (preferably through Google Tag Manager, but bespoke configurations are also possible) where web traffic is reported. Guides on how to configure Google Tag Manager are provided by NZ On Air’s data management provider and bespoke solutions developed in consultation with them.
Websites	Core metrics from GA, with video views for embedded players. Core metrics will be detailed in the PIJF Common Metrics Framework provided with the funding contract and will be a condition of the contract.
Video	One video view will be defined as viewing for 15s where possible.
Third-party platforms	Engagement with funded content on, for example, Google AMP pages, Facebook Instant Articles, MSN and other third-party platforms will be reported on using GA (if available) or with measures approximating the core metrics. Third party platform distribution should be flagged in applications.
Podcasts	Aggregated downloads, with minutes listened to (where possible).
Apps	Engagement with apps must be reported with measures approximating the core metrics and broken out from Web and third-party metrics.
Social media	Applicants who share content to social media are asked to provide impressions, reactions/comments/shares as a wrap up number.

Offline reporting requirements

Offline reporting will require a “best fit” approach regarding the quarterly reporting cadence.

Print	Isolating the performance of individual pieces of funded content through circulation and readership figures is generally not possible. Nevertheless, circulation and readership should be supplied to give an indication of funded content reach.
TV	Nielsen consolidated ratings to be used as per the NZ Media Fund reporting requirements.
Radio	Similar to print reporting, it is difficult to isolate the content performance of small funded projects. Where funded content corresponds to an identifiable “day part” in GfK, then metrics should be reported. Station cumulative audience and other general metrics may also be used as indicators of engagement.

8. Assessment Criteria

General Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be used to broadly analyse all applications to ensure the objectives of the PIJF are met across the breadth of applications funded. However, round guidelines will include specific assessment criteria depending on what the focus of that round is.

Upholds PIJ	Meets the goals and definition of PIJ as outlined in Section 3 of this document.
Māori and Iwi journalism	Supports and promotes Māori and Iwi journalism that is made by Māori about Māori perspectives, issues, and interests prioritising the needs of Māori.
Targeted audiences	Targets content areas and communities (local, regional, national) that are currently not being fulfilled in particular: Pacific, women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic communities (with a focus on Pan-Asian communities).
Discoverability	A clear and convincing plan to reach the target audience/s.
Collaboration	Content distribution agreements, aggregation by platforms/publishers, sharing resources or co-producing content furthers the interests of the industry and audience.
Sustainability	Applicants should consider how their proposal might be sustainable beyond that time frame or how it might contribute to sustainable outcomes.
Ethics	Applicants must demonstrate how they will adhere to ethical and professional standards in journalism coverage.

Role-based Assessment Criteria

Supporting environment	<p>Focused, relevant, costed, and delivered by dedicated, qualified people. Consideration will be given to the employment environment within the funded organisation.</p> <p>Platforms/publishers must show how they will support funded roles materially, legally, culturally, and emotionally, and highlight pathways for journalists' development. Clear editorial direction for employed roles is essential to ensure quality output.</p>
Additional resource	<p>Barring exceptional circumstances, funded roles should be additional to the existing workforce of a funded organisation with a view to their ongoing sustainability. In cases where loss of staff is demonstrably imminent, non-incremental roles may be funded. In this instance, applicants must be prepared to provide financial information (including potentially commercial sensitive information) on a confidential basis to be reviewed by an appropriate independent assessor.</p> <p>Guidelines that expand on the submission requirements for a full proposal application for non-incremental roles under the Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF) can be found here.</p>

9. Applying for Funding

- You must be registered with our online system before you can apply: funding.nzonair.govt.nz
- Register as a platform/publisher: funding.nzonair.govt.nz/platform
- You can register at any time, and we encourage you to register well in advance of [funding deadlines](#)

- Please have all your documents ready to upload when you submit your application.

The PIJF is open to applications from content producers and platforms/publishers with a track record in public interest journalism and a demonstrated means to distribute that journalism to the intended audiences.

Applications proposing content outcomes for audiences must include a viable path to those audiences. Individual applicants (i.e., independent content producers) with no direct audience relationship must be commissioned by platforms/publishers and must nominate a primary distribution platform in our applications portal at submission stage. Individual journalists may **not** apply for funding.

Platforms/publishers who intend to produce their own content can apply for funding and will need to be registered as **both** a platform/publisher and a content producer.

Platforms/publishers may include, for example, newspapers, apps, newsletters, magazines, TV channels, websites, and radio stations. Platforms/publishers must be able to demonstrate they have been operating for **at least six months** and can demonstrate an engaged and reasonable-sized audience (relative to the intended target audience size).

More than **two** applications for the same project that has already been declined in previous PIJF funding rounds will not be accepted unless you seek and gain approval from the Head of Journalism to resubmit.

Applicants will **not** be able to submit proposals until all the required fields have been completed, so **please do not leave application completion to the last minute**. You can save your application at any time throughout the process and come back to it via your dashboard prior to the deadline. We do not guarantee that we will be able to contact applicants about discrepancies, and incorrect or incomplete information may adversely affect a funding application.

Primary Distribution Platforms

We recommend platforms/publishers have a single point in the organisation to coordinate and authorise support for applications to NZ On Air.

Platforms must formally confirm support for third-party projects when nominated as a primary distribution platform by an applicant.

Primary platforms will confirm their commitments online via our applications portal.

Other platforms that have confirmed involvement will provide written confirmation to the applicant prior to deadline so they can upload them with their application.

After logging in to our applications portal, platforms will be able to access a list of applications from the dashboard, that cite them as the primary distribution platform. They will be able to review the details of those applications.

Primary platforms will be asked to verify all these applications. We will need this verification within two working days of the deadline closing.

Platforms will warrant that all information they provide to us is complete and accurate as we may rely on it.

We both agree to take reasonable steps to protect the other's confidential information. Our obligation to protect confidential information is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and other legal, parliamentary, and constitutional conventions.

General expectations and structure of applications

We suggest you consider these overarching questions when developing your application:

- How does your application meet the objectives of the PIJF?

- Does your application meet all the eight general eligibility criteria?
- Are the skills and experience of the team appropriate for the project?

Basic information (required)

- Name of your project
- A one-line overview of the project
- The output (i.e., total minutes (video or audio content), total number of articles (text-based), number of workshops, list of resources created)
- Budget information. At the first stage submission - a budget summary will be required (we're aware there will be different types of costs and considerations dependent on content type (e.g., print, video).
 - At the shortlist stage - a detailed budget will be submitted in an excel format.

We will want to see aspects covered in your application including:

- Ethical and professional standards in journalism coverage that you will adhere to
- Where a project has specific cultural or spiritual elements, we will expect you to include information (e.g., a plan) that demonstrates how these will be handled through implementation, production, and distribution to ensure safety of subjects and staff/crew, and appropriate handling of subject matter
- Appropriate people attached to the project in leadership roles who can manage and advise on these cultural and spiritual aspects of the production at critical stages (e.g., research, language advisors)
- Language strategies to ensure correct pronunciation and use of language/s and dialects
- Meaningful representation in key roles
- Where relevant - mentoring and professional development – leading to career pathways.

10. Assessment process

The [assessment process flowchart is here](#).

Preliminary Step: Eligibility Check

Only eligible applications will be accepted for assessment. To be eligible, applications must meet the general eligibility criteria and:

- Applications must include complete and accurate documentation. Applications with significant omissions, inaccuracies or which clearly do not meet funding criteria will be declined. The decision to decline an application at this stage will be made by the Head of Journalism.

Stage 1: Assessment

Please note that from 2022 onwards we will no longer be running a two-stage assessment process.

- Applicants will submit full proposals through our funding applications portal.
- Applications will be assigned to an assessment panel made up of:
 - at least one NZ On Air funding team member
 - at least one Te Māngai Pāho team member, and
 - **up to** three external assessors
- This assessment stage requires individual assessors to consider the assessment criteria, and then compare like applications against like applications.

- The assessment team will meet formally to discuss the assessment of all applications and the quantum of funded requested in relation to available funding. The assessment team will confirm the finalised aggregated assessment, and these will be reviewed by the Head of Journalism.
- A NZ On Air Funding team member will complete a combined funding paper which will generally cover a group of applications. The funding paper may outline assessment discussions, explore the merits of the individual applications, and discuss all other relevant considerations that led to the proposed recommendations, including noting any strongly varying opinions.

Stage 2: Ratify Recommendations

Funding papers are submitted to the:

- NZ On Air Staff Investment Committee (SIC), for all applications seeking ≤ \$1m
- NZ On Air Board, for all applications seeking over \$1m.

SIC will:

- *review* all applications seeking ≤ \$1m, and discuss any high-level process issues or funding trends that are emerging
- *discuss* the funding papers and recommendations, including considering both available investment funds and applications going to the Board
- *agree* to fund or not fund individual applications, along with any conditions it wishes to impose, by full consensus. In a split decision, applications will be referred to the Board for determination.

The Board will:

- *review* all applications over \$1m, and any applications referred by SIC, and
- *agree* to fund, or not fund, with any conditions it wishes to impose.

11. Governance

Irirangi Te Motu NZ On Air established the Te Puna Whakatongarewa Public Interest Journalism Advisory Panel as a stakeholder reference group of industry representatives to contribute to the successful implementation of the Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF). The 14 members will meet at regular intervals throughout the remainder of the PIJF to provide industry feedback and support for PIJF development.

What is the purpose of the Advisory Panel?

The primary purpose of the Advisory Panel is to ensure industry and stakeholders are feeding back into the operation and ongoing design of the PIJF. A secondary purpose is to ensure members are fully apprised of PIJF operations and processes.

Who sits on the Advisory Panel and why?

The panel comprises 13 industry and stakeholder members, the independent chair, and three representatives of NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho. It is a large group, and sub-committees may be formed to consider specific questions. The invited members represent the major news publishing groups (including commercial and public broadcasters) along with magazine, community newspaper, mid-level digital-only, Māori journalism and journalism education representatives. The aim of such a broad group is to encompass as far as possible the range of interests within the sector. Because perfectly proportional representation is not possible, panel members are expected to not only operate as representatives, but also to bring informed consideration to all questions as individuals.

What will the Advisory Panel do?

The panel will meet at least four times a year to consider its advice to NZ On Air regarding the operation of the PIJF. Members will have received the agenda, operational reports and other information prior to the meetings:

major changes or additions to the agenda should be suggested to the Chair ahead of time. There will also be time allocated during meetings for impromptu suggestions and feedback.

What is the status of the panel's advice to NZ On Air?

NZ On Air is not bound by the advice or recommendations of the panel. It will take the panel's input into consideration.

What if the panel is divided or cannot come to a majority decision?

Consensus is not required or even expected of the panel. The function of the panel is to provide an ongoing industry perspective on the operation of the PIJF, just as consultation with the industry formed the basis for the creation of the fund. Because the needs of publishers, broadcasters and other stakeholders are so varied, and many of the perspectives are contradictory, there is no possibility the fund will perfectly satisfy any single group.

Will the panel be considering funding allocation?

The panel has no role in application assessment. It is acknowledged that funding is the main business of the PIJF, and therefore must be a central concern of the panel. However, it is not the intention or purpose of the panel to discuss individual application decisions.

How does the panel reflect NZ On Air's Te Tiriti commitment?

Care has been taken to ensure tangata whenua are well represented on the panel, and they will have the opportunity to ensure the views of Māori media are well expressed.

The panellists are:

1. Hal Crawford - Independent Chair
2. Barry Stewart - Allied Press Group
3. David MacKenzie - New Zealand Community Newspapers Association
4. James Frankham - Magazine Publishers Association NZ
5. James Hollings - Journalism Education Association of New Zealand (JEANZ)
6. John Utanga - Moana Media sector representative
7. Maramena Roderick/Wena Harawira - Whakaata Māori (Māori)Television
8. Mark Jennings - Mid-scale digital only media representative
9. Mark Stevens - Stuff
10. Nevak Rogers - Te Reo Tātaki (TVNZ)
11. Sarah Bristow - Discovery (Newshub)
12. Shannon Haunui-Thompson - Te Reo Irirangi o Aotearoa (RNZ)
13. Shayne Currie - NZME
14. Tamaiti Tiananga - Kawea te Rongo (Māori Journalism Association)

15. Raewyn Rasch - Irirangi Te Motu (NZ On Air)
16. Amie Mills - Irirangi Te Motu (NZ On Air)
17. Blake Ihimaera - Te Māngai Pāho

12. Contracting and Payment Drawdowns

Contracting will begin once you have completed any pre-contracting requirements specified in your Letter of Offer and once NZ On Air has received all the requested information from you and your supporting platform/s. Contracting will take not more than 20 working days from receipt of all necessary information. Contract Initiation forms and the standard terms and conditions for funding can be found [here](#).

Before we can pay you, we need up-to-date and accurate information on your project's progress and to ensure

key milestones detailed in your contract have been met. The more information you provide, the easier it is for us to pay you promptly. You need to supply a PIJF Recipient Report for most drawdowns and check your own drawdown schedule for requirements, but usual exceptions are the execution (first) and delivery (second-to-last) drawdowns. Public Interest Journalism Recipient Report requirements can be found [here](#).