

Round Rua Information for Funding Applicants



2 August 2023

A. Purpose

This information is intended for applicants who are considering submitting a funding application for Round Rua, the second major funding round of the 2023/24 financial year, across any of the following funding streams: Scripted, Non-Fiction, and Content Development.

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

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

B. Introduction

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

Please refer to our [investment strategy](#), which was revised earlier this year.

Here are the [funding round deadlines](#) for the 2023/24 financial year.

C. Round Rua priorities

We welcome projects intended for both NZ On Air's priority audiences¹ and general audiences. Non-Fiction and Scripted applications will be considered (including children's content, podcasts, games as well as part-financing of feature films) as will applications for Non-Fiction and Scripted content development.

We will give priority to projects that have a practical distribution plan to ensure that the target audience is reached.

Non-Fiction

A minimum of \$9.5m has been allocated for Non-Fiction content in this round.

This round will accept Non-Fiction applications of all genres, and formats including screen, podcasts, and games as well as partial financing of feature documentaries. Additionally, we will consider applications for children's content, returning journalism projects including current affairs, investigative journalism and regional news, documentaries, national event coverage, comedy panel shows, and unscripted comedy shows.

Journalism

The Public Interest Journalism Fund (PIJF) has officially concluded, and as we do not have any ongoing additional funding for journalism, our focus on journalism funding during this post-PIJF transition year is limited. Our aim is to return to pre-PIJF funding levels. As a result, only **returning** journalism projects that are supported by a local platform with a sizeable audience are invited into this round. Those

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

targeting NZ On Air priority audiences will be favoured, as will those with a significant platform contribution. We will consider **new** journalism applications into this round by invitation only.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please get in touch with Gabriel Thomas at gabrielt@nzonair.govt.nz.

Please note that certain projects that previously received funding from the PIJF will not be eligible for this funding round. This includes funding for all roles and for projects that are print or text-based only.

Scripted

A minimum of \$8.5m has been allocated for Scripted content in this round.

For this round, we are accepting applications for all genres of Scripted content, and formats including screen, podcasts, games, and partial financing of feature films. Drama and comedy content genres are both eligible, as is children's content.

As previous rounds, including the recently closed Special Scripted round, were designed to support larger-budget productions looking to access the [Screen Production Rebate](#) (SPR), Round Rua will only accept [Tier 3 projects](#) (<\$1m per project). Previous rounds have had an emphasis on Scripted projects so we do not expect to fund a large quantity in this round. In Round Toru, we may have more opportunities to fund Tier 2 and 3 projects.

Content Development

The round is open to **content development applications** with or without platform support.

We acknowledge that a variety of projects and creatives seek development funding from NZ On Air and we aim to be flexible about what development should entail. We encourage you to design a development phase that will get your project ready for production and to tell us what you need to make that happen.

The amount of funding you request should be in line with what your project needs, however we expect to fund in the range of \$25k – \$50k per project. If we are oversubscribed with development applications, we may offer a lower funding allocation than requested.

Content development applications will be assessed against our core criteria: quality, diversity, and discoverability. [Read the assessment criteria here.](#)

Children and Youth content

Children/Tamariki

Children's projects designed for multiple platforms, with clearly articulated strategies for reaching the target audience, are welcome. Producers will be required to secure a local platform – either as a primary or as a secondary platform for content distribution. YouTube is an acceptable primary or secondary platform alongside an established local platform.

Youth/Rangatahi

For Round Rua, we anticipate funding only a limited number of youth/rangatahi projects. In light of evolving audience behaviour and industry dynamics, we are actively working on a fresh rangatahi/youth content strategy, drawing insights from our [2022 youth research](#). Our goal is to have this new strategy in effect for Round Toru.

We will assess favourably projects that plan to provide mentorship or partnership opportunities between early career youth content producers and those with more experience.

We encourage producers to think deeply about how content might be released and marketed more widely across the web, YouTube, and social media to encourage greater discoverability and engagement with funded content.

Platforms

We will not consider applications for platform funding in this round.

Games

In this round, we will accept applications for development of new games projects, and production funding only for games that have previously received development funding.

We will not accept new applications for game production.

Our new [children's content strategy](#) is based on global and local research that shows children access video and games content from a range of platforms, and that a single point of distribution for all content is no longer a viable approach – especially considering the scale of content that the international platforms offer alongside extensive marketing and promotion. Consequently, the [HEIHEI.nz](#) games platform will be discontinued from next financial year 2024/25, as it is no longer pragmatic or feasible to financially support and maintain a dedicated gaming platform. However, NZ On Air remains committed to funding local games for tamariki on the platforms they use, as well as providing safe online access to funded games.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your submission, please contact Amie Mills at amie@nzonair.govt.nz.

Games must meet our assessment criteria as outlined in Section G.

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.

Capability

Our revised investment strategy has led to the integration of what was formerly known as Industry Development Funding (IDF) into the Capability and Discoverability funding streams. In this round we will accept funding applications for:

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

Please read our [new investment strategy](#) to learn more about how we support industry and skills training. If you plan to make an application, please contact Glenn Usmar glenn@nzonair.govt.nz before submitting your application.

Marketing

Applicants for production funding are welcome to apply for funding to create marketing campaigns to drive discoverability. You may allocate 10% of your production budget to marketing and/or the creation of marketing assets, up to a total of \$15,000. We are looking for applications that demonstrate understanding of effective call-to-action marketing campaigns that will drive the intended audience to your content.

D. Timeline

17 August 2023

Funding round opens.

All applications must be made through [NZ On Air's online application system](#).

Applications not submitted through this system will not be accepted.

14 September 2023, 4pm Application deadline. Round closes.

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

24 November 2023

Decisions confirmed, applicants notified.

This date may be extended at NZ On Air's sole discretion.

E. Application Limits

To cope with the increasing demand for our funding and the resulting surge in declined applications, we are implementing application limits (per round) for 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 the platform application cap does not apply to children's applications and returning series.

If you have a strong case for exceeding these limits, please contact the Head of Funding (amie@nzonair.govt.nz) for approval before submitting your applications.

F. Platform support

To be eligible for funding, Scripted and Non-Fiction screen applications must have the support of a local broadcaster or platform that has a proven track record of reaching local audiences. We strongly encourage the distribution of content across multiple platforms whenever feasible.

Podcast and game applications are eligible to apply for funding with distribution plans for free-access international platforms, provided that they have a feasible distribution strategy that demonstrates how the target audience will be reached.

Supporting platforms should provide:

- free access to the content
- audience data and insights
- a well-considered and well-resourced marketing plan for reaching audiences
- an audience for funded content that is appropriate for the size of pūtea (funding) sought
- an established, viable business

- a sustained commitment to local content for New Zealand audiences
- co-investment - this demonstrates market attachment and strengthens the business case of an application.

Please note that if supporting platforms seek content exclusivity then appropriate co-investment in the production budget is required.

G. 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 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?

H. Health and Safety

Your production budget should consider the costs of operating in line with [ScreenSafe COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols and general health and safety requirements](#). You can access other ScreenSafe Health and Safety Toolkit documents [here](#).

I. General Guidelines

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