

Round Rua Information for Funding Applicants

30 July 2024

Purpose

This information is intended for applicants who are considering submitting a funding application for Round Rua, the second 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 year 2024/25.

Round Rua Priorities

We invite projects catering to both priority¹ 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-first² 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) as will applications for Non-Fiction and Scripted content development.

We require all submitted projects to have confirmed local platform support. 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.

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

² "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.

Concurrent with Round Rua, NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho will be running the 2024/25 edition of the Co-fund. The RFP and dates for this initiative will be released on 13 August.

Non-Fiction

Approximately \$9m 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, journalism (see below), 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.

Journalism

Since the conclusion of the Public Interest Journalism Fund, the allocation of funds for journalism projects will revert to previous levels. Funding of approximately \$5m is available and priority will be given to:

- Primarily audio-visual based projects.
- Cost effective applications that will extend the range of content available to local audiences.
- Projects where stories are told with a depth and perspective not found elsewhere and that achieve high local audience impact in terms of reach and scale and/or serve a priority audience.
- Applications where 'radical sharing' of content is proposed, to enhance the potential audience discoverability and engagement.

We expect this round to be highly contested and given the relatively modest level of funding we have available for journalism projects difficult decisions will have to be made. It will be a high bar for new projects to secure support, and it is likely that some previously funded projects will no longer be able to be supported or will potentially receive a lower offer of funding than previous years.

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 in this round 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.

We will not accept applications for games into this funding round – these are likely to be sought in Round Toru.

Music/sync licensing for Scripted projects

We welcome applications from Scripted projects that plan to incorporate a significant amount of local music (both track licensing and composition) into their productions. However, we may not be able to accommodate all funded projects with an additional sync licensing contribution. Priority will be given

to projects that present the strongest rationale for why integration of local music will enhance and elevate their project.

You can indicate in your application that you would like to allocate up to \$250k for sync licensing in addition to your budget. Once approved, sync licensing costs will be ringfenced and cannot be reallocated for any other purpose within your production's budget.

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

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. For this round, 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.

The funding allocation per NZSPR project is capped at \$2.5 million. 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 the round.

Content Development

We will only be able to support a very limited number of development projects in this round.

We welcome content development applications with platform support in the form of matched funding.

We will accept applications for unsupported development in this round, however these applications should demonstrate how development pūtea will progress the project to a point where it can secure market attachment for potential production.

Unsupported development applications must meet the following criteria:

- The company applying must have no outstanding unsupported development contracts with NZ On Air.
- The key creative team should contain one person with at least one screen credit in an Above the Line role.

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.](#)

Tamariki / Children

Approximately \$5m has been allocated for tamariki content in this round.

We welcome both Scripted and Non-Fiction children's projects. We will not accept games applications in this round.

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 both 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 before submitting your application.

Marketing and Publicity

You may allocate a proportion of your production budget to marketing (paid media promotion and publicity costs) and/or the creation of marketing assets to a maximum of \$15k. At a minimum, we expect all applications to include budget lines for promotion and marketing asset creation. 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 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

31 July 2024

Applicant information webinar.

A webinar will be held on Zoom on **Wednesday, 31 July** from 3-4pm to answer questions relating to round Rua.

To register, email funding@nzonair.govt.nz.

22 August 2024

Funding round opens.

All applications must be made through our funding application portal.

Applications not submitted through this system will not be accepted.

12 September 2024, 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.

22 November 2024

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 or glenn@nzonair.govt.nz.

Platform Support

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

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 sought
- an established, viable business (operating for at least two years)
- a sustained commitment to local content for Aotearoa New Zealand audiences
- co-investment - this demonstrates market attachment and strengthens the business case.

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?

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