

Round Toru Information for Funding Applicants



8 December 2023

A. Purpose

This information is intended for applicants who are considering submitting a funding application for Round Toru, the final major funding round of the 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 do this by funding **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 financial year 2023/24.

C. Round Toru priorities

We welcome projects intended for both priority¹ 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 supported Non-Fiction and Scripted content development.

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

Māori-owned production companies

A **minimum** of \$2 million has been allocated to new projects from Māori-owned production companies in this round.

In Budget 2023, an additional, one-off \$10 million was granted to NZ On Air to “*support creation of innovative content*” and “*reach groups who are currently under-represented across the media system (such as Māori, Pacific, Asian, rangatahi and children)*”.

In this round, we plan to allocate \$2 million from this one-off \$10 million for new projects specifically from Māori-owned production companies. This underscores our commitment to fostering the growth and sustainability of the Māori screen sector, with a primary focus on supporting Māori-owned

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

production companies as a strategic approach.

Key details for producers and platforms regarding this opportunity:

- We welcome applications with well-developed, production-ready projects
- We are open to **Scripted, Non-Fiction** and **content development** projects
- Returning series are ineligible for this additional \$2 million
- There is no minimum te reo requirement for this fund, however content containing te reo is encouraged
- Applications should adhere to our standard application process and meet our usual funding requirements, including the attachment of an eligible local platform
- Platforms may wish to identify, in their platform comments, which projects they are supporting specifically as part of this \$2 million opportunity. For enquiries on this, platforms can contact Kelly Davis at kelly@nzonair.govt.nz.

It is worth noting that NZ On Air and Te Māngai Pāho are running a [co-fund round](#) alongside Round Toru. The emphasis of that round will be Scripted projects with a minimum of 30% te reo Māori and a strong Māori world view. The round is also open to a limited amount of Non-Fiction, with the same language threshold. If you would like to discuss which round best suits your project, please contact funding@nzonair.govt.nz.

Non-Fiction

A minimum of \$6 million has been allocated for Non-Fiction content in this round.

This round will accept Non-Fiction applications for screen (television and digital), podcasts and games as well as partial financing of feature documentaries. Additionally, we will consider applications for children's content, documentaries, national event coverage, comedy panel shows and unscripted comedy shows.

Funding for Non-Fiction projects will be constrained in this round and the emphasis will be on supporting a smaller number of larger scale, higher-end Non-Fiction projects that require significant research and/or high production values. This decision is motivated by sector advocacy around supporting Non-Fiction projects that provide strong employment opportunities and have the potential to commence production in the near future. Applicants are required to demonstrate that their projects are production ready.

Scripted

A minimum of \$10.5 million* has been allocated for Scripted content in this round.

For this round, we will accept applications **across all three tiers** of our Scripted funding strategy (page 9 of our [Investment Strategy](#)).

We are accepting applications for **all genres** of Scripted content, and formats including screen (television and digital), podcasts, games and partial financing of feature films. Drama and comedy are both eligible, as is children's content.

We will accept applications from productions intending to access the [Screen Production Rebate](#) (SPR), however we are looking to be 'last-in' funders, providing the final piece of the finance plan to ensure a project can get underway. We will not provide 'first-in' funding for projects looking to access the SPR in this round. The decision to allocate 'last-in' funding has been influenced by feedback from

producers and platforms, that emphasised a priority for projects with demonstrated SPR viability.

The funding allocation per SPR project is up to \$2.5 million. Projects requesting more than \$2.5 million will require prior approval from the Head of Funding. 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.

While we are open to the possibility of majority-funding Scripted projects at the Tier 1 level, in the event we receive many strong SPR applications, our priority is likely to be the funding of multiple projects rather than providing majority-funding for a single Tier 1 project. Applications seeking majority-funding should be production-ready and clearly meet our funding criteria. If you would like to discuss your application in advance of submission, please do not hesitate to contact kelly@nzonair.govt.nz for advice.

**The total amount of Scripted pūtea available may increase, depending on the status of previously funded SPR projects that had provisional funding offers from NZ On Air subject to full financing being raised. The amount that is ultimately available will likely determine the range and volume of Scripted projects we are able to support in the round.*

Music/sync licensing for Scripted projects

We invite applications for projects that intend to use a large amount of local music in their productions. We want to encourage applicants to give sufficient time and pūtea to music supervision, composition and licensing. You may indicate in your application that you would like to do this and allocate up to \$250k for sync licensing in addition to your budget.

Sync licensing costs can be **excluded** from the budget total when calculating platforms' license fees. Please note that, once approved, sync licensing costs will be ringfenced and cannot be used for any other budgetary purpose within your production.

Content Development

The round is open to **content development applications with platform support**. We have already allocated the majority of our Development funding for this financial year, so will fund an extremely limited amount of development in this round, and we expect match funding from platforms.

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 tell us what you need to make that happen.

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

Tamariki / Children

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. [Please review our tamariki strategy for more detail](#).

Rangatahi / Youth

In light of evolving audience behaviour and industry dynamics, we developed a new rangatahi/youth [content strategy](#), "Within My Reach", drawing insights from our [2022 audience research](#).

The request for proposals (RFP) for "Within My Reach" was issued on 5 October and the announcement of shortlisted projects followed on 30 November 2023. These shortlisted projects are expected to apply for production funding in this round, with eligibility limited to those who received shortlist notification letters. An additional \$5 million in funding is earmarked to support "Within My Reach" projects.

While we welcome new project submissions for youth initiatives in Round Toru, it is crucial to note that due to the \$5 million specifically designated for "Within My Reach" youth projects, we can only accommodate a limited number of additional projects. Projects submitted for consideration should ideally have a local platform attachment. For enquiries about submitting a youth project in this round, please contact funding@nzonair.govt.nz.

Industry development and capability support

The previous Industry Development Fund (IDF) is now incorporated within the Capability and Discoverability phases of our revised [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 which 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.

Games

In this round, we will only accept production funding applications for games that have already received development funding from NZ On Air in the past. We will not accept new applications for game development or production. We are limiting this funding while we work on a new strategy for games funding that more clearly aligns with the needs of the sector and the gaps that exist.

Game applications are eligible to apply for funding with distribution plans for free-access, age-appropriate international platforms, if they have a feasible distribution strategy that demonstrates how the intended local audience will be reached.

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 funding@nzonair.govt.nz for advice.

Marketing and publicity

Applicants are welcome to apply for funding to create marketing campaigns to drive discoverability. You may allocate up to 10% of your production budget to marketing (paid media promotion and publicity costs) and/or the creation of marketing assets, up to a total of \$15,000. We are looking for applications that demonstrate understanding of what marketing campaigns would best suit your project. At a

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

Marketing and publicity costs can be **excluded** from the budget total when calculating platforms' license fees. Please note that marketing and publicity costs must be ringfenced, however, and used for the intended purpose; not absorbed into your production budget or contingency.

Additionally, NZ On Air will support selected projects with a Discoverability marketing campaign planned and implemented by our media partner, Contagion. If you would like your project to be considered for a Discoverability marketing campaign, please opt in when you complete your application form. Please refer to our [Discoverability Guidelines](#) for more information.

Platforms

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

D. Timeline

18 January 2024

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.

8 February 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.

12 April 2024

Decisions confirmed, applicants notified.

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

E. 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 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 before submitting your applications. For any questions, please email amie@nzonair.govt.nz.

F. Platform Support

With the exception of "Within my Reach" applications, to be eligible for funding, Scripted and Non-Fiction screen 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 whenever feasible.

Podcast proposals also need the support of a local free access platform with a proven track record of reaching local audiences. However, if your project has a clear rationale for being distributed on international platforms without local platform support, you will need to seek the approval of the Head of Funding prior to submitting your application. For any questions, please email amie@nzonair.govt.nz.

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 Aotearoa 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 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?

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 these and other ScreenSafe Health and Safety Toolkit documents [here](#).

I. General Guidelines

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