

Public Interest Journalism Q & A

April 2021



Applying

How do I apply and when will I know if I am successful?

The first step is to register as an applicant with our online application system. You do this [here](#). You cannot register as an applicant later than midday on the day the round closes.

Once your registration has been approved you can then go into the application system and start creating your application. You can save and go back to the application as many times as you like before submitting it. It's a good idea to look through the application form before you start the process so that you have all the information you need.

Applications **must** be submitted through the application portal and must be received by the deadline stated. Don't leave applying to the last minute.

Funding decision dates are generally about 8-10 weeks after applications close. The dates relevant to the round you are applying for will be clear in the guidelines and are in our [Funding deadlines document](#). We advise applicants of the outcome of the application directly within 1 to 2 days after the decision is made (depending on volume) and then announce funding decisions publicly and publish all decisions on our website.

What sort of costs can I claim for?

Applications need to provide detail that encompasses all of the costs incurred in creating the journalism content. This will be different depending on which of the three pillars of funding you are applying under. We would expect that the type of cost, quantity, and rate (where applicable) of personnel, equipment and any other costs related to a Project budget are clearly identified. Overhead costs are allowed to be included in a Project budget but should be related to funded content and detailed line by line as with other costs.

We are working on creating budget templates as examples for different media formats so that you can see what you might include. We hope to have these available for the second funding round in August/September. For the first round include directly related costs and if we have questions about your budget we may come back to you. We will have a huge volume of applications and applications providing insufficient information are at greater risk of being declined.

Who will decide who gets funding?

No one person makes that decision – for journalism funding or any funding administered by NZ On Air, the decision-making approach is consistent with all of our funding decisions and [follows a thorough process](#).

Funding decisions for the PIJF will be made by the NZ On Air Investment Committee (which includes the Senior Leadership team and the Head of Journalism) for applications seeking less than or equal to \$1m, and by the NZ On Air Board for applications seeking more than \$1m.

What are my chances of success?

We have a sense of the demand for this funding through communication with the sector and it is very high, but we won't actually know until we run a funding round. Assume that the bar is very

high, make sure you have met all of the eligibility criteria, and bring us your best application. If you are unsuccessful, unless you have been told otherwise, you may reapply at the next relevant round.

When will you announce how the role-based funding will work and open applications? Why not now?

The role-based funding requires a bit more sector consultation to ensure it is fit-for-purpose, especially as it's a type of funding we do not usually undertake. The first funding round for role-based funding will be in August/September and the guidelines will be issued in July.

First round

Why does the first funding round give applicants only 2 weeks to get applications in?

The first tranche of funding (\$10m) must be committed within this financial year. We have been working at pace to complete the basics of the funding scheme design, eligibility criteria, assessment criteria and guidelines for the first round to achieve this.

There will be [more funding rounds to come](#), and these will have a three-week application period.

How much funding is available for the first round?

We are required to allocate the first \$10m in this round (minus MCH and NZ On Air overheads). We have the discretion to add further funds if warranted.

Fund structure

How do I know whether to apply for PIJF or the Factual fund?

Please review the PIJ definition in the [general guidelines](#) to see if your project meets this definition. It's likely that some projects could feasibly come into either funding stream and in this instance, we recommend you email journalism@nzonair.govt.nz and an NZ On Air staff member can contact you to discuss and advise which funding stream your project is better suited to.

Will there be ring-fenced funding for Māori journalism outcomes?

NZ On Air intends to work with the Māori and Iwi journalism sector to ensure parity of need and interests within the sector under the PIJF. Given that the purpose of the fund is to correct deficits in public interest journalism and reach currently underserved audiences, it is likely the fund will need to provide ring-fenced funding for Māori and Iwi journalism outcomes. Decisions regarding the provision of a ring-fenced fund require greater consultation with the Māori and Iwi journalism sector.

In the Eligibility Criteria, what does 'Commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to Māori as a Te Tiriti partner' mean?

The Māori and Iwi journalism sector provided some guidance (not exhaustive) of what demonstrating a clear and obvious commitment or intent for commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi could look like in practice. We intend to ensure appropriate cultural assessment takes place to assess this criterion.

Collaboration: A willingness to collaborate is a great way to express partnership in accordance with

Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This could be in the form of sharing of content / platforms.

Commitment to te reo Māori

Intrinsic to the commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is the commitment to te reo Māori as an official language. The PIJF the normalisation of te reo Māori wherever possible.

How this could be reflected:

- Organisation/project commits to te reo Māori (e.g. language plan)
- Accurate pronunciation is a standard for language use in projects
- Organisation supports staff to learn te reo Māori
- The project planning identifies any language expertise required
- Macrons are used and fonts allowing for macrons are provided for
- Bilingual content is provided

Iwi and/or Māori relationship building

Applicant has included how their:

- organisation will work with or currently works with whanau/hapū/iwi/Māori
- existing programmes and projects reflect a whanau/hapū/iwi/Māori relationship and involvement.

How is this reflected?

- Does the application reflect an existing relationship or plan to meet, include, or develop a relationship with local iwi/Māori for the location or kaupapa of their project?
- Planning reflects intentions to engagement with mana whenua when a project is in their region, or language or cultural expertise if required.

A marae engagement plan if your funded role and/or project seeks support from or visits a marae

This is a form of cultural safety for projects to respectfully anticipate and operate under tikanga and kawa (marae codes of conduct). Examples include:

- Engagement – have you identified who to establish a relationship with and to approach to learn of the appropriate protocol for you/your project being at the marae?
- An acknowledgment that each marae maintains its own tikanga and kawa which can be different across iwi and hapū
- Reciprocity – consider how your project will support or benefit the marae? How do you show commitment to the way iwi/hapū work at a grassroots level to get your content?
- Ensuring staff adhere to the tikanga and kawa of each marae

Training and development: Organisation can demonstrate a commitment to educate and develop its staff in accordance with Te Tiriti o Waitangi showing a commitment to the education of Aotearoa's cultural identity.

Who will be on the industry advisory panel?

We intend to form an industry-led group in the next few months once the Head of Journalism has started, with people drawn from and representative of the industry itself, guided by a clear charter requiring members to act in the interests of the sector as a whole.

How many journalist roles are going to be funded through the PIJF?

The Hal Crawford Stakeholder report mentioned 100 roles. This is not a target but an indication of the possible scale of the role-based funding. We'd love to over-achieve but ultimately how many roles are funded will depend on applications that meet the criteria. The objectives and measurement of the success of role-based funding are not about the number of people employed but the quality and quantum of content produced.

Additionally there will be entry-level roles supported through Industry Development in the form of cadetships/internships, and project-based funding will support a range of roles indirectly.

PIJF Acknowledgement

What do I have to do to acknowledge funding?

We will require all funded content to be clearly identified as such. We have not yet developed the guidance on this. We will do this shortly and ensure all applicants receive plenty of notice and guidance on what is required. It will be stipulated in the contract you sign that PIJF acknowledgement is a condition of funding.

I don't want the funding I've received to be public knowledge. Can I keep it private?

No. It is a condition of funding through NZ On Air that the public are able to identify where taxpayer dollars have gone. We believe this is particularly important in the case of journalism because transparency is paramount.

We will however hold commercial information you provide as part of the application confidential, but please do note that the Official Information Act applies to all of our activities.

Webinar Q + A

We are preparing applications for the PIJF and wanted to know when NZ On Air would need the completed project delivered by?

When you apply for Project-based funding you need to tell us how long the project will take. There are no set time frames – it is very much project dependent.

There is a form to fill in to register – does that automatically mean we have registered as a platform/publisher too? Or must it be done separately?

In our online application portal you will see that on the left-hand side there is an area to register as a content producer/maker, and on the right-hand side there is an area to register as the platform/publisher. You only need to register as a Platform/publisher if you intend to commission content from external content creators.

Must content producers register and if so, how?

Yes this is the one to complete if you are applying for funding, either as an independent content maker

who has a commission to provide content for a platform/producer, or if you are the platform and you are applying for funding for content you will make in-house.

Our organisation provided TV then tried video production (all for 5 – 10 years) and we are repositioning now to go back to our primary purpose – will that track record be recognised?

The important thing is that you have a track record in Public Interest Journalism. If you've changed formats that's not the key issue. If you know what you're doing and can demonstrate it, that may be enough. You do also though need to prove you have a path to audience – so you need to be able to show that the journalism you produce will be found and consumed by your intended audience.

We are a regional television platform – we will have a strong focus on training cadets, cross sector relationships, multimedia modalities and sustainability options. Does this meet the focus of industry development?

If you can demonstrate you are training people who are currently not being trained (or augment an existing programme) or extending career pathways and there are cross sector collaborations, that would qualify to apply for Industry Development funding.

Our news platform development hinges on hiring additional journalists (general and iwi specific) and also developing our business model by securing a physical newsroom space (necessary for training), plus a news manager as well as specialist legal/accounting/business advice around innovative mechanisms for community journalism funding. Can these aspects all be included in a single Industry Development application - or should they be distributed across different applications or different categories?

The fund is allocated in three pillars – Project based, Role-based, and Industry Development. We are not yet open for applications for Role-based funding. It's important to remember that the fund is not for upscaling your business. It is for providing journalistic content (whether through a defined project or through employing a journalist whose job it is to deliver PIJ), or for training to increase capability/capacity.

We are currently funded from the previous NZ On Air Regional TV fund for the production of a regional documentary series. We want to apply for Series 3 funding for this work - should that application be under the current Project round - or another channel?

This would be a Project application under the PIJF.

Will there be budget templates released and will you require the budgets to be split, similar to how the traditional video funding rounds are with split ATL and BTL lines?

We don't yet have any Budget templates specifically for the PIJF. For those applying for a Project that involves audio/visual content we expect budgets to show Above The Line and Below The Line costs (below the line being equipment and crew costs, legal etc.). We don't yet know how this will translate into print production costs but in general we are looking for budgets that are directly related to producing the content. In terms of personnel costs, we expect to see the rates and time spent on the project by

individuals. In terms of equipment and facilities costs, we expect to see the rates of what this equipment costs and the quantity of time spent using this equipment. With applications for print-based content we are likely to provide your budget to an external assessor to get expert opinion on whether the costs are reasonable.

Can you apply for more than one Industry Development initiative? I can see there is a cap of four projects but nothing on this.

You can, but please remember there will be high demand for funding, and by lodging more than one application within one of the pillars, in this case Industry Development, your projects will compete against each other, as well as other applications. Also note that Industry Development applications with cross-sector collaboration will generally have a stronger case.

What provisions have been put in place to ensure iwi radio stations and te reo Māori journalism is prioritised? Will there be ring fenced funding for iwi radio stations and or Māori journalism in te reo Māori and English.

We are under time pressure to get the first round of funding out before the end of the financial year. We are still consulting with the Māori and Iwi journalism sector to define a strategy that services that sector. We will make further announcements on this. But please note that a goal of the fund is to promote the goals of Te Tiriti and acknowledging Māori as a Tiriti partner. Also, within the assessment criteria Projects that meet the definition of Māori and Iwi journalism will have added weighting. The promotion of Māori language and Māori culture is also a priority in the Broadcasting Act. Proposals with these elements will be viewed favourably.

I am enquiring about funding based on individual entity vs national body.

The fund is looking for local, regional and national outcomes as well as targeted audiences. There may be efficiencies of scale across a national network but that doesn't rule out hyper-local content. The strength of your application will be in the detail of the journalism deficit you are addressing, and your understanding of your path to the audience.

Does any project we apply for have to meet every category of the general assessment criteria - for instance if an opportunity for an important project comes up that does not strongly meet one or more of the categories is it likely to be funded?

The more of the criteria you can meet the greater your case will be for funding. However, there will be different weightings given to different aspects of the criteria. If your application does not meet all aspects of the criteria but you have made a strong case regarding the need for the journalism content you will create, you may still be successful. It's not a simple box-ticking exercise and we are open to hearing your case for the deficit you are addressing.

How strict are you on the 5-page submission?

At the long-list stage, fairly strict. It is a contestable fund – it is about a level playing field for all applicants. If you are shortlisted you will be asked to provide a more detailed proposal. Refining the pitch

to a shorter application also helps you to crystalise your idea.

Are you able to clearly define PIJ? Including the obvious aspects that are and are not included

Please refer to the PIJ definition on [page 2 of the general guidelines](#).

It is up to the applicant to tell us what journalism deficit you are addressing, and how this fits with the overall PIJF definition.

Can an organisation make multiple applications to each funding pillar, or multiple applications across the funding pillars in every round?

You can apply to more than one pillar in each round. When we are assessing applications, we are assessing like against like, within each pillar. You may submit up to four Projects in a Project round, and there is no limit set at this stage in Industry Development. There is also no limit to how many third-party projects a NZ distribution platform may support. But do remember there will be high demand for this funding. If you submit multiple applications within a round and within the same pillar (i.e. Project) then those applications are competing against each other, as well as all the other applications.

Can print publications supply a copy of a previous edition of the magazine in hard copy during the Stage 1 application, to demonstrate track record and quality etc.?

Unfortunately, no. The application and assessment processes are entirely online. You may like to submit a scanned document or a document in Dropbox for example. You should also consider other ways that you can demonstrate your track record and quality such as circulation figures, awards etc.

Does the application form allow for a submission on behalf of several small publishers who are wanting to establish a collaborative role?

We encourage collaboration, especially when doing so addresses an identified gap. You will need one entity that is the entity we contract with, but there is no restriction on how many 'partners' you involve in your application.

Could you provide us with some further example of where you would perceive content is too similar to be considered fulfilling the brief of diverse or covered in the normal course of events? To tighten up our understanding of what is already being produced that we should NOT make application for.

Look to the definition of PIJ for guidance on what we are interested in and also not interested in. Some areas of journalism are already well-covered without the need for public subsidy.

Journalism for ethnic communities or niche communities of interest that are not well-served are important in this PIJF and projects of these types may cover more general content for their audience which may be comparatively underserved.

Is the Public Interest Journalism Fund applicable for investigative reporting that includes content created to uncover affairs within the realm and sectors of New Zealand's society and regions to create original content that an audience is interested in? This would require a somewhat team of journalists.

Yes this would be a Project application, similar to investigative journalism projects we have funded in the past such as *Stuff Circuit* and *Newsroom Investigates*. Investigative journalism is a deficit area we will be interested in.

Is one of your team available for direct one-to-one consultancy regarding the application process? This would be extremely helpful to people/companies who have not previously applied for funding.

We can certainly help step you through the application form if there is anything you don't understand. We can't however provide formal feedback on your application before submission or direct your approach to your project as this would be unfair to other applicants. If you need help with the application form then please email journalism@nzonair.govt.nz and we'll get a funding advisor to give you a call.

On budgets - for stage one - are you looking for a top-line budget (basic break down) - or the usual budget - all bells and whistles?

The funding will be hotly contested. The more detail you can provide in regard to anticipated project costs at Stage 1 the better.

Is it fair to say that one role (or a small number of roles) might be needed to allow a training/development initiative to happen effectively, and that role/s would be reasonable to ask for within a training initiative idea - rather than holding these for the roles pillar round?

We would not be looking to fund 'mentors' or trainers within the Role-based funding. The role-based funding is directly tied to journalism content outputs. But it would be reasonable to have a budget line for a trainer/mentor within an Industry development application.

Our organisation is a collective, and because of lack of time/resources and in the name of efficiency we're hoping to make a joint application. We've been around for a couple of decades, but our collective does not currently exist as an incorporated body. Are we still able to make an application?

Yes, but you will need to form either a Limited Liability Company, an NZ incorporated company or an incorporated society if your application is successful so that we can contract with that entity.

A small number of roles might be needed for a project - presumably if they are set for the timeframe of the project they would be valid in the first funding round and not have to wait for role-based fund?

Yes this sounds more like a Project than a Role-based funding application. Within a Project application we would expect to see a breakdown of rates plus time expected to be spent by each individual working on the project. This might include a number of roles. But we wouldn't be paying for any time those people spend on other work outside of the project.

Is there a limit to the number of supporting docs that can be uploaded?

No. But please do bear in mind our assessors will have A LOT to read! You will have an opportunity to submit more detail if you get to the second stage.

Can an unregistered organisation, which is starting/forming, but gaining traction able to still apply whilst registering as a Limited Liability later down the track?

Yes you can apply but you will need to register either as an LLC or an NZ incorporated company or an incorporated society before we can contract with you if you are successful.

Do we need to apply for a specific amount? And if we do, can a different amount be awarded or is it just a yes/no to the amount applied for?

You do need to apply for a specific amount, with an itemised budget showing where the costs lie. We may decide, upon examining the budget that you can deliver the project for less, and we may fund you to a lower amount. We would check with you though that you still wish to proceed on that basis and/or whether the scope needs to be revised.

What is the time period for the content to be produced/delivered? I.e.. successful projects from Round 1 are expected to be delivered within 12 months?

There is no concrete timeframe for delivery, the completion or delivery date for content is project specific. You need to tell us the timeframe you can deliver the project in. We will then contract on that basis, assuming it appears reasonable.

The content as specified obviously changes from time to time but would it be appropriate to the fund if it had a new outcome, if things change per that topic, if it happened to die off?

Public Interest Journalism is dealing with topics that are current, so naturally things may change, or a new issue may emerge that requires a shift. If this has happened after contracting you can approach us to vary your agreed output. We'll want to know the reasons for changing course and be satisfied the new content also meets the PIJ definition.

A few other talking points:

When we assess applications we assess like with like. If your content is hyper-local it is not being assessed against the 'might' of a national publisher. We will group applications for assessment – this might be by funding amount sought, audience being served, platform type... there are many ways to slice the pie. We are looking to be fair in our deliberations.

Collaboration is often advantageous. In both Project and Industry development we may see greater value for the taxpayer dollars, and better outcomes for audiences when parties work together.