

Round Tahī Information for Funding Applicants

18 March 2024

We recognise the profound significance of the current and ongoing upheaval within our sector. These changes are having sector-wide impacts on content creation and job opportunities. The guidelines for Round Tahī have been crafted to address the current landscape in ways that will have the highest impact and production sector support during this critical period while also delivering outcomes for audiences.

Our aim is to support projects that offer public media value alongside scale and employment prospects, with a particular emphasis on those seeking gap financing through the NZ Screen Production Rebate (NZSPR). This strategic approach ensures that our funding stretches as far as possible in support of local production.

If you believe your project aligns with this brief but doesn't conform to the guidelines provided below, please contact either the Associate Head of Funding or the Head of Funding for approval before submitting.

A. Purpose

This information is intended for applicants who are considering submitting a funding application for Round Tahī, the first 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

It is important to note that the funding allocations proposed for this round are based on our currently anticipated annual baseline budget. However, these allocations will be subject to review once we have had official confirmation of our funding for 2024/25.

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](#) for more information about our funding priorities. Here are the [funding round deadlines](#) for financial year 2024/25.

C. Round Tahī Priorities

We invite projects catering to both priority¹ and general audiences. However, it's important to highlight that in this round, precedence will be given to **projects targeting general audiences**.

Non-Fiction and Scripted applications will be considered (including children's content) 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.

Non-Fiction

A minimum of \$12M has been allocated for Non-Fiction projects in this round.

In this round, we will accept Non-Fiction applications for screen, with a priority given to those projects intended for digital-first release, followed by potential secondary linear release if applicable. Additionally, applications for children's content, documentaries, national event coverage, comedy panel shows, and unscripted comedy shows, and partial financing of feature films will be considered.

We will not be accepting applications for podcasts or games into this funding round.

The focus will be on larger scale Non-Fiction projects (>\$500k) that may include the following aspects: gap-financing from NZ On Air for the NZSPR, high production values and significant employment opportunities.

We will consider applications with international intellectual property, but priority will be given to local formats. This prioritisation stems from our belief that investing in local IP will foster the potential of our domestic sector.

For large-scale projects, we encourage opportunities for emerging practitioners to be attached in meaningful, paid roles that contribute to their skill and craft development.

Scripted

A minimum of \$10M has been allocated for Scripted projects in this round.

For this round, we will prioritise applications seeking between \$1M to ~\$3M per project. We will not be accepting applications seeking under \$1M in this round.

We will be accepting Scripted applications for screen, with a priority given to those projects intended for digital-first release, followed by potential secondary linear release if applicable. Drama and comedy are both eligible, as is children's content and partial financing of feature films.

We will not be accepting applications for podcasts or games into this funding round.

Music/sync licensing for Scripted projects

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

In this round, 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 budget. Priority will be given to projects that present the strongest rationale for why a deeper 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. Sync licensing costs can be excluded from the budget total when calculating platforms' licence fees.

Once approved, sync licensing costs will be ringfenced and cannot be reallocated for any other purpose within your production's budget.

At present, sync licensing funding requests for Non-Fiction projects are not eligible due to funding constraints. While music can still play a role in Non-Fiction productions to set the tone or complement the storytelling, it is arguably not as integral to the overall narrative as it is in Scripted projects.

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. 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 letters of interest or letters of offer from market attachments. Applications that have finance plan gaps will be given lower priority.

This decision to prioritise 'last-in' funding has been influenced by feedback from producers and platforms, emphasising the importance of projects demonstrating genuine NZSPR viability, international market interest and the ability to commence production within a reasonable timeframe.

The funding allocation per NZSPR project is capped at \$2.5 million. Projects requesting more than this amount will require prior approval from the Associate Head of Funding or 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.

Content Development

The current round welcomes content development applications with platform support. However, we will only allocate funding for a very limited number of development projects in this round, and we require match funding from platforms.

Development applications without platform co-investment and support will not be accepted.

We acknowledge that a variety of projects and creatives seek development funding from NZ On Air, and we aim to maintain flexibility regarding the scope of development activities. We encourage you

to design – alongside your supporting platform – a development phase that effectively prepares your project for production and articulates your specific needs to achieve that goal.

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. If we are oversubscribed with development applications, we may consider discussing a lower funding request.

Tamariki / Children

A minimum of \$3.5M has been allocated for tamariki content in this round.

In this round, we welcome both Scripted and Non-Fiction children's projects. Priority will be given to children's projects with total production budgets exceeding \$500k or those intending to access the NZSPR seeking gap-funding from NZ On Air.

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.](#)

Aotearoa New Zealand Pacific Regional Media Fund

This is a closed round. The 10 teams selected from the Expression Of Interest (EOI) in November 2023 are invited to submit their funding application to the Aotearoa NZ Pacific Regional Media Fund.

The fund will see Aotearoa-based Pasifika producers collaborate with producers in the Pacific Islands to produce Scripted or Non-Fiction screen content, with a portion of the fund specifically allocated to support the creation of original music by Pasifika composers and musicians as part of the productions. Applications outside the 10 teams selected will not be considered.

Industry Development and Capability Support

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 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.

Marketing and Publicity

Applications can include costs 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 to demonstrate an understanding of short-form marketing campaigns and to indicate how this pūtea will

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

Additionally, NZ On Air will support selected projects with a Discoverability marketing campaign that may be 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

The Platforms funding stream is a closed fund for existing funded entities who deliver services to create and deliver audio/visual public media content of particular cultural or social value. These entities are described [here](#). Applications for new platforms will not be considered.

D. Timeline

19 March 2024

Applicant information webinar.

A webinar will be held on Zoom on **Tuesday 19 March** from 3-4pm to answer questions relating to round Tahī.

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

4 April 2024

Funding round opens.

All applications must be made through our funding application portal.

Applications not submitted through this system will not be accepted.

24 April 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.

5 July 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 children's projects and returning series do

not count towards a platform's application total.

Please note that applications for the Aotearoa NZ Pacific Regional Media Fund do not count towards either the producer or platform application total.

If you have a strong case for exceeding these limits, please contact the Associate Head of Funding or Head of Funding before submitting your applications. For any questions, please email either kelly@nzonair.govt.nz or amie@nzonair.govt.nz.

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

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 NZ 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 [the ScreenSafe Health and Safety in the New Zealand Screen Sector guidelines](#).

I. General Guidelines

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