

Scripted and Non-fiction applications

Information for platforms supporting funding applications

A. Purpose

1. This information is to assist platforms supporting the distribution plans of Scripted and Non-fiction applications seeking development or production funding.
2. This document defines different types of platforms in relation to their role in the distribution of funded content and details the key roles and responsibilities of a 'primary platform' in particular. Our expectations about co-investment, distribution and the sharing of a platform's audience data are outlined, and the process of registering in our portal is explained.

B. Introduction

3. Support from a local platform is a key aspect of a Scripted or Non-fiction production application. Funded content must be easily discoverable and available to local audiences on the platforms they use. In an environment where there are more applications than available funding, we want to know how we will assess the distribution plan of applications and how this supports the overall business case of a project.
4. NZ On Air's Investment Strategy is built upon fundamental principles of public media. These encompass enhancing the culture of Aotearoa New Zealand, expanding the variety and inclusivity of local content available to New Zealanders, guaranteeing that content is easily accessible, strengthening social cohesion, and promoting well-informed discussions. You can read more details about the strategy underpinning our funding in our [Investment Strategy](#).

C. Platform Definitions

5. The following is how NZ On Air defines platforms (broadcast and online) in relation to their support of the distribution of content funded by us and in relation to their use by local audiences:
 - **Primary platform:** A local platform that is the main (or only) platform supporting the funding application and driving the distribution of that content. The role, responsibilities and eligibility requirements of a primary platform are outlined below in Sections E, F + G.
 - **Secondary platform:** A local platform that does not take on all the responsibilities of a primary platform, but does provide additional support in terms of distribution, promotion, resources and/or co-investment.

D. Social Media (including YouTube) and International Streaming Platforms

6. Social media and video streaming platforms like YouTube can play an important role in distributing and promoting funded content in very specific cases, particularly when they align with local audience viewing habits. When we consider using such platforms as primary distribution channels, we require a strong evidence base and comprehensive audience research, as demonstrated in our [Within My Reach](#) funding strategy for rangatahi and youth audiences.
7. These cases will remain limited and require robust arrangements to ensure the legal and creative oversight that traditional local primary platforms typically provide. Despite these potential opportunities, our priority will always be supporting local platforms that serve our communities directly.

8. Similarly, we will consider international streaming platforms as primary or secondary platforms in limited cases where there is timely free access to funded content, ideally a local platform attached with secondary or simultaneous distribution and – where possible - significant co-investment from the international platform.

E. The Key Role of a Primary Platform

9. Scripted and Non-fiction applications to NZ On Air's Creation stream must confirm the platform/s where the content will appear. This reassures us that funded content will be completed with appropriate oversight and be discoverable by an audience.
10. The main platform supporting the application is the **primary platform** that has specific responsibilities if that project receives funding and progresses into development or production.

F. The Responsibilities of a Primary Platform

11. We expect that a primary platform will provide the following:
- **Editorial guidance:** Have effective commissioning processes in place to provide input where needed on areas including scripts, casting, crew, and creative direction to ensure the project is of quality and delivered as originally proposed. By law, NZ On Air is not permitted to exercise editorial control of funded content.
 - **Budgeting and financial monitoring:** Assess and approve a content proposal budget and, if funded, monitor financial aspects of the production, ensuring it stays within budget and delivers value.
 - **Risk management:** Monitor production progress and make decisions to assist with the smooth delivery of content. Where appropriate, act as a liaison between producers and NZ On Air, and manage workflow within your own commissioning, legal and marketing teams.
 - **Compliance and policy adherence:** Ensure content meets editorial standards, legal requirements, and regulations. This includes Aotearoa New Zealand broadcasting standards, Media Council principles, YouTube Community Guidelines and thorough fact-checking of content where relevant. The primary platform will ensure that all necessary rights, licences, consents and other authorities required to publish the project will be obtained and retained.
 - **Final approval:** Approve final deliverables and be involved in planning the content release and platform distribution details.
 - **Marketing and promotions commitment:** We expect all platforms to provide promotional investment for projects they support for funding. The extent and value of any promotional activity will be an important consideration in assessing applications, but will not be considered a replacement for a production budget contribution. See our [Discoverability Guidelines](#) to understand how a platform's responsibilities can work alongside the promotional assistance NZ On Air can provide.
 - **Co-investment:** Primary platforms will generally offer an adequate financial contribution to the production budget. More information on this is below in Section H: Co-investment from local platforms.
 - **Audience data:** Provide regular audience data to NZ On Air that allows us to monitor the performance of funded content. See Section J: Platform audience data required.

G. Primary Platform Eligibility Requirements

12. There is a very high threshold for being a primary platform that supports Scripted and Non-fiction applications. You will need to:

- Demonstrate the platform can fulfil the responsibilities outlined in Section F, including staff who will perform key roles relevant to the types of content you will support
- Show a track record of or plan for a sustained commitment to Aotearoa New Zealand content
- Provide free access to funded content and tell us how content will typically be distributed and marketed on and off your platform
- Provide a clear description of the audience reached by your platform and the relationship between this audience, your content strategy and the content funding application you are supporting
- Provide relevant, timely data showing significant and consistent engagement of Aotearoa New Zealand audiences with media formats currently available on your platform that are relevant to the content application you are supporting. Specific data should include:
 - Existing video/content upload volume and frequency on your platform
 - Average episode views across the series of similar projects
 - Average completion rate
 - Unique audience reach per month
 - Total website (relevant section) impressions per month
 - Percentage of views from Aotearoa New Zealand versus international views.

13. Platforms that have not previously been accepted as a primary platform for an NZ On Air-funded project should contact the [funding team](#) and provide the information that confirms they can meet the eligibility requirements. This should be done prior to the application submission deadline.

14. There will be an even higher threshold for those seeking to be primary platforms that currently receive operational funding from NZ On Air. Our expectations regarding additional content funding for platforms that we operationally fund include:

- The platform will be supporting funding applications from the independent production sector, and not internal productions. Applications should provide a clear rationale for NZ On Air funding and explain how the project will extend or differ from the usual local content output of the platform.
- A significant level of co-investment. We will look more favourably at a funding request of 50% or less of the production budget.
- Content applications will generally be made with modest production budgets.
- A strong distribution plan will be presented and include radical sharing with other platforms. We encourage applications to come with secondary distribution partners attached and will often make secondary platform attachment a condition of funding where possible.

H. Co-Investment from Local Platforms

15. Co-investment is important because it shows market interest in the application, which supports the likelihood of success on release and reduces the request to us, allowing us to fund more applications.

16. A strong level of platform co-investment is prized; other appropriate co-funding sources are encouraged. Projects seeking 100% NZ On Air funding will only be successful in very exceptional circumstances, so applicants should discuss this with us prior to submitting their application.

17. If NZ On Air contributes 95% or above of the production budget our Extended Platform Rights position will apply, and we will require content to be made available to other local platforms two weeks after initial launch on the commissioning platform.

18. Co-investment will take one or more of the following forms:

- **Platform cash contribution to the production budget**

Our preferred option. The level of contribution will be part of our assessment and will influence our funding decision.

- **“In kind” or non-cash platform contribution to the production budget**

This type of contribution may also be considered as co-investment if it is a genuine contribution to the production budget by providing necessary resources or services that are appropriately costed. For example: studio and editing suite hire, legal services, etc. Any costs associated with the responsibilities of a primary platform (as outlined in Section F) cannot form part of a platform’s in-kind contribution, including commissioning costs, marketing, etc.

- **Third-party cash contribution to the production budget**

This can include different funding sources, including co-production finance, distribution or sales advances, sponsorship and private investment. Letters of support are expected at the application stage. We also expect that any third-party finance that is subject to contractual conditions with the applicant is spoken to in the proposal, particularly in cases where that third-party finance is dependent upon an additional presale by that party.

19. Please consult our [Budget Expectations](#) for guidance on acceptable budget/line items for funded projects.

I. Distribution Plans and Radical Sharing

20. We expect that funded content will be free to access early in its life. We prefer free-access first-run where possible, but may make exceptions depending on the strength of the cultural and business case and provided free access forms a fundamental, timely part of the distribution plan.

21. We look favourably on distribution plans that include multiple platforms, partnerships between platforms, and considered social media strategies to maximise local audience reach. In these cases, a content proposal might have the support of a **secondary platform** or platforms that provide additional support in terms of distribution, promotion, resources and co-investment.

22. The terms of a multi-platform distribution plan should be clear in the content proposal, and relevant letters of support should be attached.

23. Following the original licence term, we expect that funded content will still be easily accessible for New Zealand audiences either through relicensing to another platform, being offered to a site like NZ On Screen, or uploaded to a video-sharing platform like YouTube.

J. Platform Audience Data Required

24. We monitor funded content performance to inform future funding decisions and content strategies. As part of our business case assessment of content applications, we will consider the supporting platform’s ability to attract an audience and how this aligns with the target audience of the project.

25. If the platform is a channel included in the Nielsen ratings system or the industry-approved radio survey, we will use this data to obtain channel performance information. We encourage you to provide additional data on your platform’s audience metrics.

26. Local platforms that host NZ On Air-funded content on their websites are required to provide basic audience data for that content through VIEW - NZ On Air's proprietary audience data measurement system. Additional data requests may be made by NZ On Air to the platform to help assess funding applications and could include requests for unique audience/logged-in user numbers and demographic data.

K. Platform registration and project confirmation

27. Before supporting an application, please ensure you are registered in our portal well before the funding deadline. Go to portal.nzonair.govt.nz. Registration is a one-off process that provides us with general details about you and prevents future administrative duplication for both you and us.
28. Before an application is submitted by the applicant, please ensure you have seen it and confirmed your support. We do not guarantee that we will be able to contact a platform about discrepancies, and incorrect or incomplete information may adversely affect a funding application.
29. Platforms must formally confirm support for each project when nominated as a distribution platform by an applicant. One platform nominated by the applicant will be the primary commissioning platform (we encourage applications with distribution plans that include multiple platforms, but it should be clear which is the primary commissioning platform).
- Primary platforms will confirm their commitments online via the portal.
 - Other platforms that have confirmed involvement will provide written confirmation to the producer prior to the deadline so they can upload them with their application.
30. After logging in to the portal, platforms will be able to access a list of applications from the 'My Assessments' section that cite them as the primary platform. They will be able to select the relevant application, review the submitted details, confirm support and upload any supporting documents – all within the portal.
31. Primary platforms will be asked to verify all these applications and to confirm their contribution through the portal. **We will need this verification within three working days of the deadline.**
32. By verifying their support for an application, platforms confirm that all the information provided to us by the producer is complete and accurate, as we may rely on it.
33. We both agree to take reasonable steps to protect each other's confidential information. Our obligation to protect confidential information is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and other legal, parliamentary and constitutional conventions.

L. The Fine Print

34. The following standard terms and conditions apply to funding applications. In submitting an application, the applicants are deemed to have read, understood and agree to be bound by these terms and conditions:
- They must bear all their own costs in preparing and submitting their application
 - They represent and warrant that all information provided to us is complete and accurate
 - We may rely upon all statements made in the application
 - We may amend, suspend, cancel and/or re-issue any guidelines at any time
 - We may waive any irregularities or informalities in the application process
 - We may seek clarification of any proposal and meet with any applicant
 - We will not seek clarification of all proposals or meet with all applicants
 - We are not bound to accept any application

- They will not submit in the application any data that breaches any third-party right (including intellectual property rights and privacy rights) or is objectionable, incorrect or misleading
- We both agree to take reasonable steps to protect each other's confidential information. Our obligation to protect confidential information is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and other legal, parliamentary and constitutional conventions
- They acknowledge that the nominated commissioning platform will be able to access their full application to verify support
- There is no binding legal relationship between us and applicants: a successful application is only formally accepted if a funding contract is signed.

35. Please also be aware that if an application is successful, among other requirements, we will stipulate that:

- Creators enter into a formal funding agreement with NZ On Air. Our standard agreements are [here](#).
- Content creators and commissioning platforms must be aware of their obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
- For projects approved for production funding, the commissioning platforms are required to sign and return to NZ On Air before we execute the relevant funding agreement:
 - A covenant confirming basic publishing and audience data reporting requirements, and
 - A covenant confirming that the commissioning platforms are aware of their obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.
- Creators of video projects are required to:
 - Follow the Health and Safety in the New Zealand Screen Sector guidelines found at screensafe.co.nz
 - Abide by agreed industry work standards as expressed in the Screen Industry Workers Act, Individual Performance Agreement (SPADA and NZ Actors Equity) and The Blue Book (SIGANZ)
 - Adhere to NZ On Air's [Code of Conduct](#)
 - The content is branded as NZ On Air-funded. See our accreditation requirements [here](#).

Updated September 2025