NEW MUSIC PROJECT FUNDING
Pre-Application Criteria Guidelines

Updated November 2026

Introduction

This document outlines the criteria needed for applicants to apply into NZ On Air's *New Music Project* funding.

NZ On Air's *New Music Project* funding scheme supports the production and promotion of new contemporary music from New Zealand artists and is designed for artists who have an established track record of significant audience, sales, and broadcast/online outcomes in New Zealand and internationally. It is not designed for new or emerging artists without significant results in these areas.

If you are a new or emerging artist, please refer to other music funding streams on our website here.

New Music Project

New Music Project provides funding to create, record, release, and promote a multi-song project, either an EP, album, or series of singles releases with a minimum of five songs (not including intros, outros, or interludes).

It is mandatory that *New Music Project* applicants must have an experienced **project manager and a third-party New Zealand-based music company** involved alongside the project.

It is expected that the applicant has a funding history with NZ On Air i.e. the applicant has received at least Single funding before, or a funding history with another funding agency such as Creative New Zealand or NZ Music Commission.

What you can expect

It is inevitable that demand for funds will outstrip our funding budgets, so not all applications will be successful in receiving funding.

Please note, our maximum contribution is up to $50,000 plus the 10% Artist Creation Fee (maximum total project funding $55,000). If you have been previously funded through New Music Single for a song on this project, or received any other NZ On Air Music Funding (excluding New Music Project Touring and Global Promotion) within 12 months of the application closing date, then this should be deducted from the requested funding amount.

Applicants cannot have any other NZ On Air Music grants open at the time of applying for a New Music Project **including** New Music Project Touring and Global Promotion.

For New Music Project funding, an artist can only apply under one entity (either as a solo artist or as part of a group/band) within a 12-month period.

If the application is for a collaboration between two or more artists, all artists must meet the New Music Project criteria.

The maximum content funding an artist can receive in 12 months is two Single or Focus grants, or one New Music Project grant (not including New Music Project Touring or Global Promotion).

An artist can only apply twice for funding with the same project.

Criteria Check List

Set out in this section is a list of the pre-application criteria you must meet before making an Expression of Interest for *New Music Project* funding.

1	Confirmation of New Zealand music
2	Third-party NZ-based music company and project manager involvement
3	Audience engagement and artist track record **over the last five years** – online & broadcast, album sales, & gig attendance
4	Sending an Expression of Interest (EOI)

1. Confirmation of New Zealand Music

Your music must first qualify as New Zealand music. This means that it was created by, or the predominant creatives involved are, Citizens or Permanent Residents of New Zealand. If you are unsure if your music qualifies, please read this document.

2. A project manager and a third-party New Zealand-based music company must be involved in your project

The project manager and third-party company can be the same company or two different companies. NZ On Air must approve both the project manager and the third-party company before the *New Music Project* application is submitted.

A letter of support and confirmation of the level of involvement in the project from the nominated project manager and third-party company is required within the application. The letter must explicitly state that they are the third-party company or project manager.

3. Audience Engagement and Artist Track Record

New Music Project applicants must have met a minimum of **four of the seven criteria** below, at least within the **last 5 years**.

A. Audience Engagement

It is expected that New Music Project applicants demonstrate significant audience engagement across broadcast and music streaming platforms, social media, and live performance. Audience engagement indicates that there is interest and market demand for the applicant's music.

A1. **5,000 followers/fans** on any one site. This cannot be a collective figure across multiple social media platforms.

A2. The artist should be able to attract a minimum gig attendance of **300 attendees** at one venue of their own shows as evidenced through venue capacities or ticket sales of recent gigs or tours.

B. Artist Track Record – Online, Broadcast, Sales, and Awards

B1. **Online.** Applicants for Project funding must have had at least two original songs achieve significant online traction, especially in the last five years. Different genres and audiences are taken into consideration, but generally we would expect **two or more** of their singles to have achieved well over **100,000 streams/plays** online on one streaming platform. This cannot be a collective figure across multiple platforms.

For collaboration singles with other artists, the applicant must be the main artist on the song.

B2. **Broadcast.** In radio terms, this means a song or songs that have achieved **rotate** airplay on a commercial or alternative radio station or network generating multiple plays, not one-off 'spot plays'.

B3. **Sales.** The artist has sold at least 500 copies of a single album or EP released within the last five years (combination of vinyl, CDs, Lume sales etc.). This cannot be a collective number across multiple albums, EPs, or across a catalogue.

B4. **Awards.** The primary applicant has been a finalist in, or has won, a major music award i.e. Aotearoa Music Awards, Silver Scrolls, Taite Music Award, Pacific Music Award.

C. International

C1. The primary applicant has a current record deal with an international record label, either major label or an independent record label. Please note that an international distribution contract does not qualify.

4. **Sending an Expression of Interest (EOI)**

If you, or the artist you are working with, can provide evidence that you/they meet at least four of the seven criteria, you may email an Expression of Interest to project@nzonair.govt.nz

This should be done at least **two weeks before** the next project **application round opens**. Your email must include:

1. **the artist's name**
2. **details of the supporting Project Manager and Third-Party NZ-based music company, and the services they will provide to the project**
3. **evidence that you meet at least 4 of the 7 criteria listed above**
4. **a brief overview of the proposed project.**

If accepted into the *New Music Project* funding round, you will be provided with more information on how to structure the application and how to apply. Any applicants who apply without having been accepted into the funding round by the NZ On Air team will have their applications declined.

It is at NZ On Air's sole discretion who to accept into the round.

Definitions

The table below has commonly used phrases within *New Music Project* funding and definitions of what they mean. This will be helpful to understand what certain phrases mean in relation to *New Music Project* funding.

Phrase	**Meaning**
Third-party New Zealand-based music company	A New Zealand-based independent or major record label, music distributor, music management company, publishing company, or specialist experienced music publicity company. The company must have experience with music releases in Aotearoa New Zealand and must be a genuine third-party (i.e. not the artist themselves or a related party to the artis**t).**
Project Manager	This person will be responsible for leading the project planning and roll out and will take responsibility for its delivery. The Project Manager must have experience with music releases in Aotearoa New Zealand. NZ On Air will require evidence of project management experience. Examples of a Project Manager are: • Artist or band management • Artist or band record label • Independently contracted experienced project manager • Contracted music publicity company with experience in project management

	• A member of the band or an artist who has experience in project management
Letter of Support (LOS)	A letter of support is a formal document written by an outside individual or organisation that endorses applicants and projects.
Expression of Interest (EOI)	An email you send to NZ On Air to express your interest in applying for New Music Project funding. It must include all the required information as set out in the 'Pre-Application Criteria Guidelines.'
Portal	The NZ On Air funding portal where New Music Project and New Music Project Touring applications are submitted.