



Ko te pae tawhiti whāia kia tata

Ko te pae tata whakamaua kia tata

Dream big, set bold goals and work to turn distant visions into reality, while pausing to cherish, protect and nurture the milestones and achievements you have already reached along the way.

Call for applications - *SHARED GROUND* - International Indigenous Filmmaker Collaboration

We invite mid-career Māori filmmakers to join a year-long development initiative connecting Indigenous filmmakers from Aotearoa, Australia and Canada. The programme will support participants to build relationships, develop their work and explore international collaboration through bold, culturally grounded storytelling and meaningful creative exchange.

What is Shared Ground?

Shared Ground is an international Indigenous storytelling and screen collaboration initiative developed by the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC), Indigenous Screen Office, Canada (ISO), and Screen Australia.

Through a series of international wānanga (labs), mentorship opportunities and creative exchanges, Shared Ground supports Indigenous writers, writer-directors and creative producers to build meaningful relationships, develop creative opportunities and explore pathways for Indigenous-led feature film collaborations while maintaining cultural sovereignty and ownership of their stories.

At its heart, Shared Ground begins with a simple belief:

Meaningful Indigenous co-productions start with relationships.

What is the aspiration?

Shared Ground is grounded in the understanding that stories carry more than entertainment value. They embody language, cultural knowledge, identity, and unique ways of seeing and understanding the world. Across Indigenous cultures, stories connect people to place, community and future generations. By creating space for storytellers to gather,

exchange perspectives and build trust and develop relationships from which meaningful collaborations may naturally evolve.

Shared Ground is relationship-first rather than project-first. Participants will bring feature film projects currently in development into the programme, but they are not expected to enter with predetermined international partnerships or co-production outcomes.

What the programme offers

- A year-long creative development programme
- Three in-person international wānanga plus online collaboration
- Time and support to develop a script or film idea with international co-collaborators
- Guidance from Indigenous mentors, knowledge keepers, and experienced practitioners
- A focus on creative rigor, cultural specificity, and shared story development
- Potential pathways toward a feature film co-production

Who can apply

You are eligible to apply if you:

- are a NZ Citizen; **and**
- are a Māori writer, writer/director and/or creative producer who has made a feature film or television series of at least 80-minutes of scripted content that has been released theatrically, broadcast, or screened at one of these listed festivals; **and**
- have a narrative feature script in development (at least first draft stage or beyond); **and**
- are available and committed to travel to wānanga in Aotearoa in March 2027, Australia in June or July 2027, and Canada in September or October 2027; **and**
- hold, or be able to obtain, a current passport valid until at least early 2028.

You can apply as an individual or as a team, but each member of the team must meet the eligibility criteria.

What you need to submit

Submit via the NZFC portal. You will need to set up a profile in the funding portal to apply.

- Applicant name, Address, Email and phone contact details
- Personal 1-page Biography
- A personal statement outlining your approach to Indigenous storytelling and creative collaboration, and your interest in participating in Shared Ground
- Project material (logline, synopsis, 20 x script pages) NB: you may not be actively developing your project through this series of labs, but you will be expected to share your story with the cohort as a way to develop an understanding of who you are as an indigenous storyteller.
- Writer's notes to material submitted: why are you telling this story, why now?
- A working link to the prior work you are most proud of. (Where you are the writer and/or director of the work)

Important to note

- This programme is a pilot that will be shaped in collaboration with participants, mentors and agency representatives.
- Participants are expected to actively share, respond, and build work together
- Participants selected would be available to travel to our NZ wānanga , Australia in June/July 2027 and Canada Sept/Oct 2027
- The NZFC will cover scheduled travel, accommodation and agreed expenses for the three wānanga. Project development funding will also be available to assist with the development of projects arising from the wānanga, in line with current funding policy.

Selection and Next Steps

- The projects will be assessed by NZFC staff and external assessors.
- We will select up to 8 NZ participants
- Selection will be based on the submitted material, , commitment and availability to participate and the applicants stated aspirations for this indigenous collaboration. Selection will also take into consideration the overall shape of the cohort, the number of applicants and the balance of writers, writer/directors and creative producers.
- Interviews with shortlisted applicants may also be conducted.
- Successful applicants will be contacted and practical information provided at the time of selection.
- Successful applicants will be confirmed in December 2026.
- By submitting an application for Funding, you agree to these Development Funding Guidelines (except to the extent varied or waived by us) and our Code of Conduct.

Confidentiality and Privacy

We will use reasonable efforts to keep the information you provide confidential. Please note that any information you give to us can be requested under the Official Information Act 1982. If we get such a request, we can talk to you before responding.

The NZFC may publicly disclose the following information relating to a successful funding application: the programme title, the key personnel, the type of funding, and the amount. Applicants must obtain consent from third parties before including their personal information in an application, as required by the [NZFC Privacy Policy](#). Applicants must also meet the notification requirements described under “How do we collect personal information?”, in the subsection “Notification if you provide us with personal information about another individual”.

Information is available on our website in Funding: Placements & Opportunities
Submit application via our NZFC Portal

For queries about Shared Ground please email rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz well before the deadline.