



**New Zealand**  
FILM COMMISSION



Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

# New Zealand Film Commission Co-Production Development Fund Guidelines for Applicants

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We encourage you to read these guidelines carefully as they are intended to help you deliver the strongest application possible. Please also read the relevant information sheets on our website.

Please get in touch well before making a formal application for financing, as we can offer helpful advice and guidance.

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## Introduction

Our job at the New Zealand Film Commission is ensuring New Zealand has a successful screen industry. We want our industry to succeed internationally as well as at home and we recognise that working with colleagues from overseas benefits our filmmakers.

Each year we support international connections and official co-productions.

Official co-productions are film and television projects made in accordance with treaties or other formal agreements between New Zealand and other countries. Co-production status enables filmmakers to access funding and incentives programmes from New Zealand and the overseas partner and also means the project is regarded as a domestic film/TV series of both.

## Co-Production Development Fund overview

The Co-Production Development Fund (the Fund) provides a total of \$100,000 per year to support New Zealand filmmakers who are working with an overseas partner(s) on developing feature films as official co-productions.

The maximum any one applicant can receive is \$40,000 towards the actual and reasonable costs of progressing the development of an already well-advanced project.

This funding is provided as a non-recoupable grant.

Our funding is discretionary – that is, the Film Commission chooses where best to apply the limited funding available. Our decisions are final. The criteria we apply may change from time to time, but our decisions will be consistent with the New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978.

The 17 co-production agreements between the governments of New Zealand and our overseas partners are available on our website at [www.nzfilm.co.nz/international-productions/co-productions](http://www.nzfilm.co.nz/international-productions/co-productions).

## We are here to help

These guidelines are intended to help you deliver the strongest application possible. We recommend you discuss your project with our International Relations Team as you work on your application. To contact us email [international@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:international@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.



## Who can apply

In order to be eligible for the Fund, you must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident.

If the application is being made in the name of a company, it must be a New Zealand company; that is, the company must be incorporated and carrying out business in New Zealand, and its central management and control must be held by New Zealand citizens or permanent residents.

Applications must be made by a producer, and the producer must have suitable closing and production experience. We require the applicant to have at least one feature film credit as producer, on a film that involved a multi-party film production financing agreement. It is not necessary for this previous experience to have been specifically on a co-production, but it must have been on a film of substantial contractual scale.

You must hold or share intellectual property rights in relation to your project.

## What you can apply for

You can apply for support from the Fund when you are working on one or more feature film projects that are likely to qualify as official New Zealand co-production with one or more of the 17 overseas partners with which we have official treaties.

You can apply for a grant of up to \$40,000 per application.

You should only apply for actual and reasonable costs involved in progressing your project. You must provide a detailed budget of intended costs. See *What in your application* on page six for what you may include in your budget. We will not consider retrospective applications; that is, you cannot apply for funding to cover costs you have already incurred. Some of the funds can be spent overseas on elements relating to that side of the co-production, but you must clearly identify this in your budget.

## How to apply

Apply using the online application portal at <https://funding.nzfilm.co.nz/>. Search for the Co-production Development Fund and click 'New Application'. The form will step you through all the information we require and much of these guidelines are repeated there.

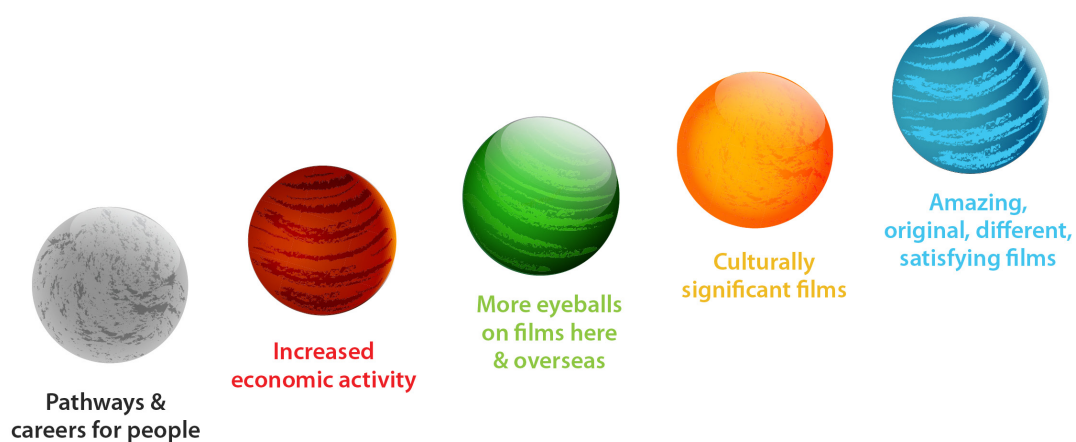
If you are using the online application portal for the first time you will need to sign up for a new account. Be aware there can be up to a 24 hour wait while we approve this, however, in most cases the wait will be much shorter than this.

It is important you provide as much information as you can to help us make a full and fair assessment. We are unable to consider incomplete applications.

## What we are looking for

When the Film Commission considers any funding application, we think about how it fits into the bigger picture of our vision of a successful New Zealand film industry. To describe what a successful film industry would look like, we use the metaphor of 'lining up the planets' (see image below). Each planet represents an essential aspect of our vision; when the planets are aligned, we're getting it right.

The planets are not 'tick-boxes' – you don't have to reference every one of them in your application, but it's helpful for you to be aware of where we're coming from.



### Decision criteria


When considering applications to the Fund, we will be looking for evidence the application is:

- well-advanced and has an overseas partner(s) formally attached;
- likely to qualify as an official New Zealand film co-production<sup>1</sup>; and
- of sufficient quality and promise to justify assistance.

When assessing the quality and promise of the project, we will consider the following factors:

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<sup>1</sup> Under the New Zealand Film Commission Act, the Commission is limited to funding projects that have "significant New Zealand content". Section 18 (2A) of the Act deems official co-productions to meet the test of significant New Zealand content.

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- the experience level of the applicant, including their history of engagement in co-productions;
  - the producer's plan for addressing any specific challenges of the proposed co-production and how support from the Fund will enable significant and tangible progress towards film production;
  - any formal engagement with and support (financial or otherwise) from the relevant competent authority/authorities overseas – preference will be given to projects that show evidence of matched development funding from overseas funding agencies or other sources;
  - strength of the project's main idea(s);
  - quality of the script(s) or treatment(s);
  - strength of market appeal;
  - ability of associated talent;
  - likelihood of the film(s) being financed;
  - strength and standing of the overseas partner(s) and their proposed finance and distribution plan;
  - any third-party finance being contributed; and
  - the amount of remaining money in the Fund.

## What to include in your application

### Producer's statement

The producer's statement is your opportunity to convince us that you have what it takes to deliver a successful co-production. Your statement is broken into two parts, your ***Project History*** – which must inform us about your history of engagement with your overseas partner(s), and your ***Producer's Approach*** – how you plan to approach any specific challenges arising from the proposed co-production.

### Creative material

The creative material you provide will help us assess whether your film is of sufficient quality and promise to justify assistance.

You must include:

- genre;
- logline;
- synopsis of the story; and
- draft script (in principle 80–120 pages) or documentary treatment (2–15 pages).



## Team Vision

The team vision sets out how you (the producer) and the writer (and director, if attached) see the project developing. You must provide development notes from each of the producer and writer (and director, if attached).

The producer's development notes should provide us with a clear understanding of the intended audience, proposed scale and funding, and the next steps from both the New Zealand and overseas producers.

The writer's script development notes are a critical part of your application. The writer should critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the current draft, and a plan to address these issues, for example, weakness in characterisation, structure or resolution.

The director's vision must demonstrate a robust understanding of the current stage of development, the project's strengths and weaknesses, and intentions for moving the project towards production readiness. The director's notes should provide a sense of creative vision for the film, personal engagement with the themes, and how this story speaks to the intended audience.


## Budget, Timeline and Financing

In this section we ask that you provide a breakdown of all development investment to date and a detailed development budget that clearly shows the amount to be spent in New Zealand and any amounts to be spent offshore as part of this funding request. We also require you to provide a comprehensive, global development budget for the project overall, which clearly shows the split of development expenses and development stages for the two (or more) co-production partners.

Items that you can include in your development budget are:

- writer fees – the [New Zealand Writers Guild rates](#) are a good guide;
- script consultant fees;
- producer fees;
- script assessment fees;
- director fees (unless the director is also the writer or script consultant);
- project-related research costs including location recces and initial casting;
- travel costs to the location of your overseas partner;
- legal costs;
- extensions to rights costs;
- linguistic support (if overseas partner is non-English speaking); and
- direct script and project-related overheads (e.g. printing, couriers, phone etc.).

You must also set out a proposal for the drawdown of funds (no more than \$20,000 per drawdown), and list the reports you will provide to the Film Commission to satisfy us that



funds are being used responsibly and for their intended purpose, and the report-back dates.

### **Rights**

You need to show that you hold or share intellectual property rights in relation to the film. You can find out more in our Chain of Title information sheet.

### **Key Personnel**

Provide details of your production company and the key creatives involved in the project—both NZ and overseas—including CVs and bios.

### **Eligibility Check**

The eligibility check qualifies your eligibility for this fund, making sure that

- you are a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident;
- your production company is incorporated and carrying out business in New Zealand;
- the level of the team is matched to the scale of production;
- you have secured the rights to your project; and
- you don't have any outstanding reports or deliverables due to the Film Commission.

Please list any other projects you as the applicant have in active development with the Film Commission. If there are any outstanding reports or deliverables relating to those other projects or any other Film Commission grants, loans or equity, they should be delivered before, or alongside, this application. Note that you may be considered ineligible for funding if you have outstanding reports or deliverables or you are in breach of any contract with the Film Commission. To be accountable for the taxpayers' money entrusted to us, we have to be able to verify that any loan or grant has been appropriately used.

Grants to successful projects from this fund will not be taken into account when calculating caps on other Film Commission development financing.

## **What happens to your application**

Applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis. The Fund will close for the financial year once all funds are committed.

External assessors may be used if Film Commission staff consider it will help them make a full and fair assessment. Decisions will be made by the Head of International Relations with input from the Chief Executive. Input from other Film Commission staff—including but not limited to the Chief Financial Officer and Head of Development and Production—may also be sought in reviewing.



You may be asked to speak to the proposal in person or via video conference.

Once all relevant information is provided and the application is **confirmed** by the Film Commission as being eligible, you will be advised of our decision within four weeks.

## Next steps

Applicants will be contacted by email or phone as soon as possible after a decision is made.

If your application is not successful this will be followed by a decision letter providing headline feedback on the reasons for our decision. Decision letters are viewable within the online portal.

If your application is successful we will negotiate a drawdown schedule with you, based on your proposed cashflow. We are unlikely to agree to more than \$20,000 per drawdown. You will be sent a Letter of Agreement which you will have to electronically sign in the online portal before you receive the first payment.

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A final reminder that if you have any questions please contact our International Relations Team by email [international@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:international@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.

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