



# Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission

## He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative

### He Aratohu mā ngā Kaitono Guidelines for Applicants

September 2022



Ma te huruhuru, ka rere te manu  
With feathers the bird will fly

You are encouraged to read these guidelines carefully as they are intended to help you deliver the strongest application possible. Please also read the information resources [Te Rautaki Māori](#), [Chain of Title](#), [New Zealand Content](#), [Audience Engagement](#), and [Distributors and Sales Agents](#) referred to in these guidelines and the [Terms of Trade](#) document.

**Please get in touch BEFORE making an application**, as Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission staff can offer helpful advice and guidance regarding the details for the application.

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Please contact the **Te Rautaki Māori Team** by email [rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.

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Please also refer to the [COVID-19 Policy](#)



## Kupu Whakataki - Introduction

Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) is committed to ensuring Aotearoa New Zealand has a successful screen industry. The Māori voice is key to success.

*Te Rautaki Māori* o Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission – the Māori Strategy affirms the richness of New Zealand screen production is bound to the extraordinary strength of Māori culture and storytelling. The mission of Te Rautaki Māori is to champion Māori film and filmmakers to Aotearoa and the world.

The NZFC acknowledges the principles of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* and the recognition and protection of te reo Māori as an official language of New Zealand with this endeavour to uphold *Maihi Karauna*, the Māori Language Act 2016 and support the revitalisation of te reo Māori.

The NZFC values the importance of the **He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative**, an annual fund for the production of dramatic feature films in te reo Māori. This fund aims to increase the number of films produced in te reo Māori and create a culturally appropriate production financing pathway for these films. If you have a dramatic feature film script written predominantly in te reo Māori, led by talented Māori creatives, then we would like to hear from you.

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

## Tirohanga whānui ki te whāngainga pūtea waihanga - Production financing overview

**\$2.5 million** has been allocated to the production financing of dramatic feature films where the script is in te reo Māori and where a minimum of **two out of three key creative roles of writer, director or producer are Māori**

The number of films supported through this initiative will depend on the range and quality of proposals received. Projects without a producer attached or that require further development may be considered for other NZFC development opportunities.



The amount of financing you apply for should be in proportion to the budget and anticipated market/audience for your film. Typically, the NZFC will invest no more than \$2 million per project, but that amount is the exception rather than the norm.

You may apply for up to \$2.5 million per project for He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative Funding. The \$2.5 million cap must include any development funding received from the NZFC directly for the project you are applying with. Development funding includes any funding the project received from He Ara Development of Boost funding.

Please note that the \$2.5 million cap amount is a cap on the amount of Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission investment, not a cap on your budget level.

Production financing is provided as an equity investment, which means the NZFC has a stake in the film and a recoupment and profit position for its investment. Like any investor, conditions are attached to the investment, and the NZFC expects to be involved in certain decisions. Conditions for investment are set out in the *Terms of Trade* document and the *COVID-19 Policy* document.

Additional funding may be available to you and your project through other government organisations including *Te Māngai Pāho* and *NZ on Air* as well as cultural institutions, international sources, private investors, or other partners.

NZFC investment is discretionary, and decisions are final. The criteria applied when making financing decisions may change from time to time, but decisions will be consistent with these guidelines and the *New Zealand Film Commission Act 1978*.

## Heoi anō tā mātou he āwhina atu - We are here to help

These guidelines are intended to help you deliver the strongest application you can. Please read them carefully, along with the suggested information sheets and documents, all of which can be found [here on the Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission website](#).

Making a production financing application can be a complex process and it is strongly recommended you discuss your intended approach to financing with NZFC staff before you approach potential market partners.

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If you need assistance, please contact the **Rautaki Māori Team** by email [rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.

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## Ko wai ka āhei ki te tono - Who can apply

To be eligible for He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative:

- The majority of the script will be in te reo Māori.
- **The content must be led by the Māori key creatives.**
- The team must have Māori individuals in at least **two out of three key creative** roles of writer, director and producer one of which must be the director **attached at the time of the application.**
- The producer must be the person making the application for He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative and ideally is Māori. This recognises the need for one person to take overall responsibility for the project and the producer's critical role in providing creative guidance, film financing expertise and an overall strategy for the project. The person named as the lead producer in your application **cannot be the same person as the writer or director.**
- Producers will only be permitted to apply for one project per production financing round. The main applicant must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident.
- This initiative is to progress te reo Māori films. If applications for previous funds have been unsuccessful, we may take this into consideration when assessing your project for He Pounamu Te Reo Feature Film Initiative.
- If your project is a co-production, it must have a proportion of significant New Zealand content and an experienced producer who is a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident. Find out more about [co-productions on our website](#).



## Te āheinga kaupapa mō te kōkiri i a He Pounamu Te Reo Kiriata - Project eligibility for He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative

**He Pounamu Te Reo Feature Film Initiative** is one of several options for getting support from the NZFC. The following points will help you decide if it is the right option for your feature film project.

- **All applicants are required to have a scheduled meeting with a member of the Rautaki Māori team at least three weeks in advance of the application due date. Please organise this through email [rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.**
- The NZFC would like to support projects led by Māori and have set aside \$2.5 million for production financing under this initiative.
- Projects that are bringing in other sources of finance and a higher budget are welcome.
- The majority of the script must be in te reo Māori. Productions will demonstrate clear established involvement of Iwi/hapū/whanau/Māori in the elements or content that is in the project.
- Market attachment at application stage is welcomed but is not a requirement to apply.
- If your project already has market attachment or other finance, please submit offers or letters of interest with your application.
- Ideally, your script will be production ready. However, the NZFC will consider scripts which still require finessing, and these projects will be assessed with the potential for support through alternative development frameworks.
- Projects will be required to provide an audience engagement plan; however, a non-traditional approach will be considered. An audience engagement plan information sheet can be found [here on our website](#).
- You can apply for He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative at any budget level. The amount you apply for should be in proportion to the budget and anticipated market/audience for your film.
- If you do not have market attachment or other finance partnerships, you will need to demonstrate the film can be made within the budget of \$2.5 million or less.

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- You can apply for production financing for a certified official co-production; that is, a joint project with someone in another country or ‘territory’ covered by a film treaty or agreement. You will need a producer in both places and each producer is expected to raise the finances that are intended to be spent in each place. Find out more about co-productions [here on our website](#).
  - The NZFC is primarily interested in [funding narrative feature films which are intended to be screened theatrically and are not less than 80 minutes in length. This includes animation. Formats generally considered to fall outside core funding objectives are:](#)
    - [advertising programmes or commercials;](#)
    - [news or current affairs programmes;](#)
    - [productions of a public event or live event, including sports events, stage-plays, music concerts, dance performances or comedy shows; and](#)
    - [programmes primarily intended for television broadcast.](#)
  - Your film must have significant New Zealand content and Māori content. Read the New Zealand Content information sheet and the Māori Content information sheet [here on our website](#) for more detail.
  - If you haven’t got all your financing in place yet but plan to apply for [Feature Film Production Investment](#) or He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative, please get in touch early.

## Me pēhea e tono - How to apply

Please register your interest to the Te Rautaki Māori Team by email

1. [rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.
2. Complete the **He Pounamu Te Reo Feature Film Initiative** application [online](#) and upload the required documents.

In the next section, the information required is set out. It is important you fill in as many fields as you can, and upload as much of the requested material online as possible, as this information is needed to make a full and fair assessment. If your application is incomplete, it may not be considered.

*Late applications will not be considered for funding unless there are exceptional circumstances such as technical difficulties with the application portal and you notify the NZFC immediately by emailing [funding@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:funding@nzfilm.co.nz).*



## Te Pūtea Āwhina Mahi Kiriata o Aotearoa - NZSPG

- These guidelines set out how to apply and qualify for He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative, one of the NZFC's discretionary production funds. They are not connected to those of the **New Zealand Screen Production Grant (NZSPG)**. The NZSPG is administered by a separate team within the NZFC on behalf of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. The NZSPG team operates to separate criteria and timelines.
- If you are structuring the finance of your feature film project to include the NZSPG it is critical that you review in detail what makes a project eligible for NZSPG, how the process of qualifying for the grant works and how long it takes.
- You may wish to consider seeking expert advice regarding the details of the film's ability to qualify for the NZSPG.
- The NZSPG details can be found [here on our website](#) and enquiries can be directed to [nzspg@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:nzspg@nzfilm.co.nz) or call the Incentives Executive on +64 4 382 7680.

## He aha tā mātou e kimi nei - What we are looking for

The NZFC wants to invest in feature film projects based on strong, original ideas delivered by a distinctive Māori voice. [Te Rautaki Māori](#) guides how we will champion Māori films to Aotearoa and the world. Please read Te Rautaki Māori and become familiar with its objectives and how they align with your project, and feel free to contact us if you have any questions. [Te Rautaki Māori is available here on our website.](#)

Your application needs to provide practical information that demonstrates you have what it takes to deliver your project successfully. Funding for additional talent support is available through Rautaki Māori and Talent Development funds.

Your application needs to make the best case for your project.

## He aha ngā mea hei whakauru atu ki tō tono -

### What to include in your application

The table below sets out what you need to provide, and what assessors will be looking for in that material. Remember to also read the information sheets and [Terms of Trade](#) document and the [COVID-19 Policy](#) document.

Ngā mea me homai e koe - What you need to provide	Ngā mea e kimihi ana e mātou - What we are looking for
<p><b>Tono Auaha – Creative Material</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A ‘production-ready’ te reo Māori script.</li> <li>• A logline that accurately reflects the story of the film in a couple of sentences.</li> <li>• A short synopsis that accurately reflects the story of the film including the ending (max 250 words).</li> <li>• One-page synopsis that accurately reflects the story of the film including the ending</li> <li>• Director’s vision statement.</li> <li>• Producer’s overview.</li> <li>• Notes about the genre of the film and stylistic use of language nuance/mita that support the growth/ retention of te reo Māori.(refer Maihi Māori.)</li> <li>• If the creative material relates to a whanau/hapū or Iwi story or perspective - How will you involve or consult with whānau /hapū or Iwi and what considerations have you made to manage and protect that for those interests and the production outcomes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the film authentic, high-impact and culturally significant?</li> <li>• Is the script production-ready? Our team can talk you through what this means.</li> <li>• Is the film culturally significant? Will it reflect Aotearoa-New Zealanders or Iwi Māori?</li> <li>• Is the film an ‘exciting idea that will lead to a great film ‘with unique voices or stories that have no boundaries or genre limits?</li> <li>• Is the film likely to achieve critical acclaim?</li> <li>• Is the film likely to achieve commercial success, attracting larger audiences to New Zealand film? Will the film attract different audiences e.g. indigenous, Māori communities, social impact etc?</li> </ul>



Ngā mea me homai e koe - What you need to provide	Ngā mea e kimihia ana e mātou - What we are looking for
<p><b>Mahere pūtea me te here haumi - Finance plan and recoupment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viable finance plan and details of any third-party financiers including any letters of interest/commitment from those parties.</li> <li>• Recoupment structure (this determines to whom and in what order film income is distributed). This should detail the proposed recoupment structure and a projected 'waterfall' of all relevant parties against the minimum recoupment estimates.</li> <li>• Any financial or investment agreement with whānau/hapū or Iwi supporting the production.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who else is providing financing and how strong is their commitment? A letter of interest from investors detailing the terms on which they would be providing funding (for example, the types of financing e.g. equity investment, loan, grant, sponsorship, deferments, the recoupment position they would expect and any additional conditions of their financing) is expected.</li> <li>• Is the amount of financing from market sources, such as pre-sales and/or private/gap/equity investment relative to the prospects for the film?</li> <li>• Generally, the NZFC expects to recoup a share of investment alongside other equity investors. Ensure your recoupment structure reflects the <u>Terms of Trade</u> document.</li> <li>• Where applicable, this will include written evidence of arrangements with distributors and a sales agent. A signed deal at application stage is not recommended; an offer is preferable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mahere tūhono tangata - Audience engagement plan</b></p> <p>A credible plan setting out the target audience and how you will reach them. Plan may include specific focus on models of distribution to communities, marae, local / national festivals/ international/ indigenous specific, in addition to traditional models of distribution. If you know your audience well, how will you engage them amidst myriad other films?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will this contribute to getting larger audiences for New Zealand films?</li> <li>• Does the plan describe the audience for your film and how to reach them? See the <u>Audience Engagement Plan information sheet</u> for the minimum requirements.</li> <li>• What is the anticipated New Zealand box office and income from ancillary markets such as TV, VOD, DVD?</li> <li>• Who is the New Zealand distributor? What distribution plans do they have for the film? What are their terms?</li> <li>• Do you have a sales agent? What is their sales strategy for the film? What are their terms?</li> <li>• Is there a domestic broadcaster? What is their licence fee?</li> <li>• Are the rights of the sales agent, distributor and broadcaster aligned?</li> <li>• Where applicable, this will include written evidence of arrangements with distributors and a sales agent. A signed deal at application stage is not recommended; an offer is preferable. The domestic market may be the initial target for te reo Māori, however, consideration should be given as to international opportunities for a film of this nature also.</li> </ul>





Ngā mea me homai e koe - What you need to provide	Ngā mea e kimihia ana e mātou - What we are looking for
<p><b>Tātai Pūtea me te maramataka - Budget and schedule</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production budget top-sheet and one copy of the full production budget.</li> <li>• Proposed overall production schedule. The production schedule must include a minimum of six (6) weeks for contracting (also known as the “closing” process) and allowance for a test screening (see the <i>Terms of Trade</i> document).</li> <li>• A full shoot schedule and one liner. At time of application these details are optional - however, dependent on level of investment sought, a high-level breakdown of the script is helpful when assessing the viability of vision to budget. These will be required if you proceed to contracting stage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the budget relative to the anticipated audience for the film?</li> <li>• Can the film be achieved with the proposed budget and methodology?</li> <li>• Does it allow for the specific NZFC costs and requirements listed in the <i>Terms of Trade</i> document, including development funding received to date?</li> <li>• Is the production schedule realistic?</li> <li>• All budgets will be reviewed to ensure they adequately cover all elements, and an independent budget assessment may be commissioned.</li> <li>• Your budget includes marketing material minimums as reflected in market agreements for marketing and release elements such as closed captions, test screening DCP, export script, EPK, production stills and publicist. You do not need to include poster and trailer costs in your budget, provided you have written confirmation that your distributor or sales agent will cover these costs, as stipulated in our <i>COVID-19 Policy</i> (please refer to Marketing and Publicity section).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Te Hunga mahi - Key personnel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of key personnel attached to the film, including one-page CVs, tribal affiliations, reo proficiency and connection to the story or kaupapa if any, and a short bio</li> <li>• Details of proposed key cast and plans to confirm/letters of interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will this project develop the careers of the Māori filmmakers involved?</li> <li>• Are the producer and director experienced enough? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If your budget is above \$1 million, producers will need a proven track-record in producing feature films, short films, high-end television drama and/or commercials. Directors will need a proven track record in short films, high-end television drama and/or commercials.</li> <li>○ For lower budget films, producers and directors may have less experience, but at least have a proven track-record in short films, television drama and/or commercials.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What will other key crew bring to the project?</li> <li>• What are the Māori cultural competencies of the applicant to deliver the project?</li> </ul>





Ngā mea me homai e koe - What you need to provide	Ngā mea e kimihia ana e mātou - What we are looking for
<p>Ētahi atu kōkiri a Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission - Other NZFC projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Details of any projects in active development with the NZFC (project title and NZFC involvement).</li><li>• If there are any outstanding reports or deliverables relating to those other projects, or any other NZFC grants, loans or equity, they should be delivered before, or alongside, this application.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is your background with the NZFC?</li><li>• What's happened as a result of previous support? To be accountable for the taxpayers' money entrusted to us, the NZFC has to be able to certify what has happened as a result of any loan/grant.</li><li>• Are you up to date with all your NZFC obligations?</li></ul>



Ngā mea me homai e koe - What you need to provide	Ngā mea e kimihia ana e mātou - What we are looking for
<p><b>Mahere Tiaki Tikanga - Māori Cultural Considerations and Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline the contribution that the project will make towards reflecting Māori culture or Iwi/hapū perspective and the diversity of the Māori experience.</li> <li>How the project will manage the need to engage with the kaitiaki of that material and how will Iwi, hapū, whānau considerations be managed in the project.</li> <li>An explanation of how the applicant nurtures tikanga me te reo Māori within its own team and within the production.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A consultant who may sit outside the key creative team/cast/crew who facilitates the needs of the production seeking to portray Māori in their project, and to ensure all Māori concerns that may arise are dealt with correctly. It is essential to the maintenance of cultural integrity and tikanga on a production where Māori communities are involved or referenced.</li> <li>A clear outline of what importance te reo and tikanga has in your production and how this is carried out as a naturally significant part of the production.</li> <li>Correct use of te reo Māori.</li> <li>Considerations for tikanga in production and engagement with crew and talent.</li> <li>Appropriate consultation and advice from stakeholders/kaitiaki/iwi/hapū/whanau.</li> </ul> <p>Supporting information may be useful from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Te Puni Kōkiri – Maihi Karauna</a></li> <li><a href="#">Te Māngai Pāho - He Mahere whakapuaki</a></li> </ul> <p><u>Reo</u></p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ko te reo kia Māori – promotes a Māori world view</li> <li>Ko te reo kia ora – contributes to normalisation</li> <li>Ko ngā tikanga kia tautokongia – embraces tikanga Māori</li> </ul> <p>Additional information can be found on our website to assist with Māori cultural guidelines and considerations for production:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Working with Māori in Screen Production</a></li> <li><a href="#">Te Urutahi Koataata Māori – Working with Māori in Film &amp; Television</a></li> <li><a href="#">The Brown Book</a></li> </ul>

The NZFC will use reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided by the applicant. Please note that any information you provide to the NZFC is subject to Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) requests. In processing a request under the OIA, The NZFC will consult with the relevant applicant prior to making a decision to release or withhold any information.

## Ka ahatia tō tono - What happens to your application

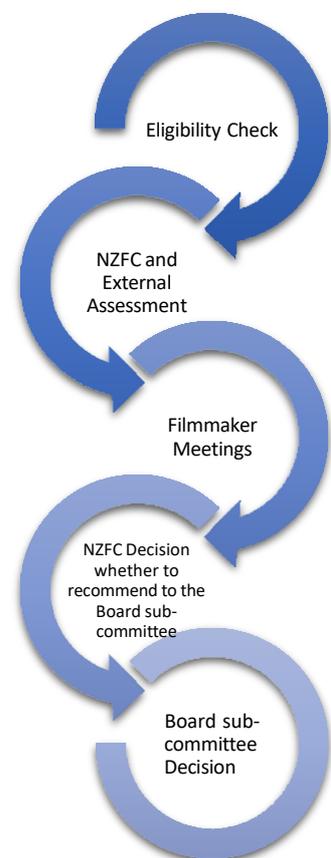
Once your application is received an email confirmation will be sent acknowledging receipt. NZFC staff will then:

1. Check that it's eligible in accordance with the eligibility criteria outlined in these guidelines. Any applications that are late or ineligible will be declined.
2. The NZFC engages a range of local and international individuals who have various specialisations across the areas of development, finance, production and/or film licensing of screen content (External Assessors).

While some of these individuals specialise in specific areas (for example documentary, animation, interactive projects), all External Assessors provide a useful and an independent perspective on funding applications to NZFC staff. Where relevant, an additional assessor with appropriate cultural knowledge and/or experience associated with an under-represented community may be engaged to provide valuable objective insight (Cultural Assessor). For example, if your project has Māori content, the NZFC will seek an independent perspective considering our Te Rautaki Guidelines.

Please note that by submitting your application for funding from the NZFC, you acknowledge and agree that your application may be reviewed by external assessors, and you also accept that the identify of any particular assessor(s) used to assess your application will be kept strictly confidential to the NZFC and will not be released.

For the current list of External Assessors please visit our [website](#) and declare any Conflicts of Interest you may have.





3. Your application will be reviewed by NZFC staff (including the Rautaki Māori team and the Production and Development team) and an independent assessment of the script and the market potential of the film will be arranged. Assessors will include at least one Māori assessor/reo assessor.
4. Once assessments come back, and your application is identified as having the potential to proceed, NZFC staff will want to talk to you about all aspects of your project. It is likely they will want to **meet with you** and request further information. You will receive an anonymised summary of the assessment of your project prior to the meeting
5. All this information, including any conversations, will be considered alongside your formal application when the decision whether to ultimately recommend the project to the He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative Board sub-committee that investment is made. If your project is found to not be at production financing level but has potential to be with further development, you may be eligible for development funding from the NZFC. This option will be discussed with you by Rautaki Māori staff.
6. Any recommendation made to the He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative Board sub-committee will include a summary of your application including key information and our assessment. **The He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative Board or Board sub-committee will make the final decisions on whether the NZFC will invest.**

## Te huarahi whakamua - Next steps

You will be advised the outcome by phone or email **within one working day** of the He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative Board or Board sub-committee meeting.

If the He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative Board sub-committee decides to offer investment, an offer of conditional production financing will be made. The Terms of Trade and COVID-19 Policy will apply. There may be additional conditions on a case-by-case basis. This will be set out in a conditional offer letter that you will be required to counter-sign.

Conditional production financing offers are usually **valid for four months**. During this time, you must satisfy any pre-closing conditions (as set out in the Terms of Trade and COVID-19 Policy), otherwise the offer will expire. If requested, it may be possible to have an extension of up to two months if significant progress has been made in meeting the conditions of the offer.





Once any conditions of financing outlined in the Letter of Conditional Offer are met, the closing is able to commence and contracting begins. The contracting stage, “closing”, **can take between six weeks to three months, which must be built into your production schedule.** During this period, you and your lawyer are expected to manage the closing process working closely with the NZFC to ensure conditions are met and all required documents and information are provided. Formal contracts are negotiated before production financing is released unless there is a pre- negotiated advance.

Following the He Pounamu Te Reo Māori Feature Film Initiative Board sub-committee meeting, Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission will make public the names of the successful projects, but not the amount of funding being offered. Once contracting for the film has closed, the amount of equity investment will be published.

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A final reminder that if you have any questions please contact the Rautaki Māori Team by email [rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.

You can find more background on some topics on information sheets on our website, including [\*Chain of Title\*](#), [\*New Zealand Content\*](#), [\*Audience Engagement\*](#), and [\*Distributors and Sales Agents\*](#).

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