



**New Zealand**  
FILM COMMISSION



Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga

# Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission

## **He Ara** **Pathway for Māori and Pacific Island** **Screen Professionals**

### **He Aratohu mā ngā Kaitono** **Guidelines for Applicants**

October 2023

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You are encouraged to read these guidelines carefully as they are intended to help you deliver the strongest application possible.

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

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## Kupu whakataki - Introduction

The New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) champions the film industry of Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori and Pacific Island stories are at the heart of New Zealand's identity and are among the most celebrated here and overseas.

We want to assist established New Zealand writers, producers and directors of Māori and/or Pacific Island heritage to bring their perspectives to screen through their chosen development framework.

If you are a part of a filmmaking team made up of a majority of Māori and/or people of Pacific Island heritage, then please consider applying for He Ara funding.

## Tirohanga whānui o He Ara - He Ara overview

The NZFC's Te Rautaki Māori acknowledges Māori as tangata whenua (the indigenous people of New Zealand) unique to Aotearoa New Zealand and recognises the pioneering Māori filmmakers who helped create a national and international indigenous filmscape.

He Ara (*Pathway*) funding is intended to support Māori and/or Pacific Island filmmakers to further create a diverse range of quality New Zealand films using their own way of working.

He Ara attests to the shared historical, cultural relationship with Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, the vast ocean of the Pacific that joins all the peoples of the Oceania region.

He Ara celebrates these connections and, in this spirit, welcomes applications from teams including Māori filmmakers and/or filmmakers of Pacific Island heritage.

Recipients of devolved funding schemes like He Ara are encouraged to consider ethnicity and gender diversity and to reflect Aotearoa New Zealand society. Applicants are encouraged to have half of their projects with women in key creative roles, and to promote the authentic representation of Māori characters, stories, places, history and culture in New Zealand films (in front of and behind the camera). Progress towards diversity goals will be tracked and reported on an annual basis by the NZFC.


He Ara funding aims to support:

1. Increased development of culturally diverse, outstanding New Zealand projects and talent
2. The freedom to use Māori and/or Pacific Island development frameworks
3. Screen professionals of Māori and/or Pacific Island heritage gaining clarity on the target audience and market engagement for their films
4. Helping business development and sustainability for Māori and Pacific film creatives

He Ara funding is for a team or company with a slate of at least two feature film or drama/feature documentary development projects. **It is not available for a team or company with a single project on their slate, nor television, digital or short film production.**

## Ngā tikanga pūtea - He Ara funding conditions

The level of support available will be a grant of up to \$50,000 per application. You may allocate up to 50-70 percent of the funding towards producer overhead or business development costs. The remaining 50-30 percent must be spent on third party development costs. Expenditure must take



place over 12 months from execution of a funding agreement. Any funding that has not been drawn down within the 12 months may not be payable by the NZFC.

If you still have active Boost/Boost Up/He Ara deliverables these will need to be completed before you can apply again for any of these funds.

Funding is discretionary – that is, the NZFC chooses where best to apply the limited funding available. Decisions are final. The criteria applied may change from time to time, but decisions will be consistent with 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 possible. We recommend you discuss your application with the Te Rautaki Māori Team as you put it together.

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If you have any questions, please contact the Te Rautaki Māori team [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

Applications must be made by the producer on behalf of either a team or a company in which:

- At least two out of three key creative roles (writer, director or producer) are of Māori and/or Pacific Island heritage;
- One producer is of Māori and/or Pacific Island heritage; and
- At least one member of the team or company is an established New Zealand writer, director or producer, with evidence of at least one credit in one of these roles on either: a feature film, or a substantial body of produced and broadcast television work in one of these three roles.

Teams that include Māori and/or Pacific Island heritage collaborators with significant experience in a related area of screen production (for example TV commercials, digital, online, gaming) or the wider arts sector (for example playwrights, novelists, traditional storytellers) are also eligible to apply.

In order to be eligible for funding, 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.

You must hold, or have the unrestricted ability to obtain, all necessary intellectual property rights in relation to your projects. If you do not yet hold the rights, you will need to set out clearly in your application how you will acquire the rights, with written support from the relevant copyright holders. Please refer to the [Chain of Title information sheet](#) for more information.



## Hononga ki tō mātou pūtea - Relationship to other NZFC funding

You may apply for He Ara funding in relation to projects that have had prior NZFC funding (such as development funding or NZWG Seed funding) provided you have completed the work funded and met your required reporting and delivery obligations (if applicable). These must be received and approved before the He Ara application deadline. Failure to provide outstanding reports in accordance with your NZFC contract will result in you being ineligible to apply for any other NZFC funding.

Projects that have previously been unsuccessful in securing Early Development Funding (EDF) support are ineligible for He Ara unless you can illustrate that significant changes have been made since the previous EDF application.

For projects both within and outside your He Ara slate you are eligible to apply for other NZFC funding pathways including project development and Talent Development Funding, but you cannot use funding from He Ara and another NZFC scheme to cover the same costs.

If you are a Boost/Boost Up/Business Development Grant recipient, you can apply for He Ara but the budget allocation has to be different for both your business and project costs.

Please be advised that you can only apply for a total of \$100,000 per project across all NZFC development funding. If the aggregated total of your applications for development funding exceeds \$100,000, your application will be ineligible and the NZFC will contact you to re-submit your application(s).

## He aha te mea ka taea e koe te tono - What you can apply for

You can apply for a grant of up to NZ\$50,000 per application.


Your slate can include projects across a range of genres, budget levels, settings and audience destinations. They should be distinctive projects that engage with both historical and contemporary Māori and/or Pacific Island stories, themes and experiences, whether these be set in the present, past and/or future.

Acceptable project formats include:

- Feature film narrative or documentary projects, including animation, suitable for cinematic release
- Series drama – script development
- Interactive – story development
- Gaming – story development

Projects may range in development status from an expanded idea for a film to an existing draft script. What is crucial is the strength of the projects creatively, that you have clear and realistic audiences in mind, and you have a development strategy that will advance your slate. Creative approaches to distribution, relevant to the project, will be considered.

You should only apply for actual and reasonable costs involved in progressing your projects. You must provide a detailed budget of intended costs. See *What to include in your application* on page 6



for the items you may include in your budget. Retrospective applications will not be considered; that is, you cannot apply for funding to cover costs you have already incurred.

You may also apply for funds that will assist you to progress a sustainable screen business. These costs should be additional to your current 'business as usual'.

## Ētahi atu whiringa pūtea - Other funding options

He Ara funding is not available to individuals applying for support with single projects. If you have a single project, you are encouraged to consider other feature film development funding pathways, outlined on the NZFC's web page [Project Development Funding](#), or give us a call or email to help you consider your options.

## Me pēhea te tono - How to apply

Apply through the online application portal at <https://funding.nzfilm.co.nz/>

Please review details on the portal in advance. It's 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.

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If you have any questions, please contact the Te Rautaki Māori team [rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz](mailto:rautaki@nzfilm.co.nz) or phone 0800 659 754.

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## Ngā paearu whakatau - Decision criteria

When considering whether applications are of sufficient quality and promise to attract assistance, the strength of your slate and your proposal, and the quality of your budget will be taken into account. The factors considered may include:

- **Strength of slate**
  - How strong are the main ideas of the projects?
  - What is the level of experience and ability of the talent attached to the projects?
  - What is the quality of the attached scripts or treatments?
  - Do the projects have potential to bring distinctive and culturally different stories to screen?
  - Do the projects have strong audience appeal?
  - What is the likelihood of the films being financed?
- **Strength of proposal**
  - Do you have a clear and simple vision?
  - How well does your vision align with the aims of He Ara and of the NZFC's Te Rautaki Māori, or similar aims for Pacific filmmakers?
  - What difference will He Ara funding make to your company or team in progressing your slate?

- Do you have a clear development strategy for the projects on your slate (for example writers' tables, workshops, read-throughs or other development activity)?
- How will you measure progress in a clear, definable way?
- What is the track record and expertise of the team members?
- What are your considerations/goals as a production team for an ongoing sustainable filmmaking business?

- **Quality of budget**

- Is the budget comprehensive and is it realistic?
- Does the budget include information on where other money will come from for the projects and/or the business?

## He aha ngā mea hei whakauru atu ki tō tono - What to include in your application

### Te tono - Proposal

Set out the vision you have for expanding your feature film and screen production practice, and your comprehensive plan for developing the projects on your slate. This is your opportunity to convince us that you have a realistic and clear plan for using He Ara funding and how you will measure the success resulting from the funding. The pathway you aim to follow to have your projects eventually produced and released should be set out.

At a minimum your proposal should include the following:

- a brief history of the team including any results from having worked together in the past;
- a description of your present position in the screen industry;
- concise and measurable six-monthly milestones you can report on, so you, and the NZFC, can track your progress over the 12-month funding period. Milestones may include:
  - A full first draft screenplay (or a more advanced draft of a project that was already at script stage at the time of the He Ara application);
  - short pitch documents or other materials (depending on the level of funding sought and provided) for each of the remaining projects;
  - a final proposal including a strategy for continuing development of the project/s to market-readiness and towards production; and
  - a business development strategy.

### Mahere pakihi - Business

A proposal showing how you plan to enhance your business strategy over the next 12 months, including how your slate of projects fits within your vision. This may include the following:

- Indicators of proposed sustainability of the business; and
- SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats).



## Tātai pūtea - Budget

You must provide a detailed budget that clearly shows how the funding will be spent. This needs to include projected income from other sources (if any). The costs you can include in your budget are:

- writer fees – (note: the New Zealand Writers' Guild rates are one guide);
- development methodology costs;
- project or professional consultant fees;
- anticipated costs associated with obtaining or continuing to hold all necessary rights to make the projects (e.g. extensions to rights);
- script or story mentor/consultant costs;
- director fees;
- project-related research costs;
- legal costs;
- travel costs to market and market pitch materials;
- producer fees; and
- direct script and project-related overheads (such as printing, couriers, phone etc.)

You must also set out a proposal for the drawdown of funds, linked to your milestones, and planned report-back dates.

Note that you will be invited to meet with the NZFC after six months to provide an update on the progress of the slate. This will be accompanied by the presentation of a written interim progress report, an up-to-date cost report and updated schedule of work to be completed indicating how the remaining funding will be spent (if applicable). This report will also need to include funding/business strategies on proposed production for all the projects.

Drawdowns and report-back dates should link directly to the milestones you have set out in your proposal. You should expect a percentage of the NZFC funding to be held back until delivery of a final report.

## Kaupapa tuhinga - Slate

Provide the following details for all the proposed projects on your slate:

- title;
- type (feature, doco, TV series etc.) and genre (drama, comedy, children's horror etc.);
- one-line and one-paragraph synopsis;
- key creatives (producers, directors, writers, and key cast if attached);
- stage of development and an overview of the project-specific development work to be performed using the funding sought, and the expected timeline for that work;
- details of NZFC development funding and sources of other non-NZFC funding (including the amount, whether it is a loan or a grant, specifying whether the funding has already been given, or if it has been committed to but not yet accessed by the applicant company);
- proposed production budget level and financial strategy;

- any confirmed finance or marketplace attachments (sales agent, broadcaster presales etc.);
- a one-paragraph audience engagement plan identifying the audience and your early ideas on how this audience could be reached, whether via traditional or other means; and
- screenwriting samples of up to 15 pages from writers attached to any projects for which you do not have a script.

## Te hunga mahi - Key Personnel

Provide a short CV and screen credit list for all key personnel attached to this application.

## Mana kaupapa tuhinga, mana whakairo hinengaro - Rights

You must hold intellectual property rights in relation to your projects. If you do not yet hold the rights, you will need to set out clearly how you will acquire the rights, with written support from the current copyright holders. Please refer to the [Chain of Title information sheet](#) for more information.

## Ētahi atu kōkiri a Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga - Other NZFC projects and funding

Please list any other projects your company, as the applicant, have in active development with the NZFC (this includes any individual person attached to the application). 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. Note that you may be considered ineligible for funding if you have any outstanding reports or deliverables or if you are in breach of any contract with the NZFC.

To be accountable for public money entrusted to us, we have to be able to verify what has happened as a result of any loan or grant.

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

**Your application must be completed online through the NZFC's application portal and is due by 1pm on the deadline date. No late applications will be accepted.**


Once all relevant information is provided and the application is **confirmed** by NZFC as being eligible, you will be contacted within six weeks of the application deadline and advised of a decision, or of progress towards a decision.

Decisions will be made by the NZFC Pouwhakahaere and the Head of Development and Production with input from the Head of Talent Development and a panel of external assessors.

The NZFC engages a range of local and international individuals who have various specialisations across the areas of development, finance, production and/or film licencing of screen content (External Assessors). For these funds, assessors with appropriate cultural knowledge and/or experience associated with an under-represented community may be engaged to provide valuable objective insight (Cultural Assessor).

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.





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 the NZFC [website](#) and declare any Conflicts of Interest you may have.

You may be asked to speak to your proposal in person or via video conference. If you are asked to present to the panel, you will be advised of the date and time.

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.

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.

## Te huarahi whakamua - Next steps

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

If you are successful, a drawdown schedule will be discussed with you and a contract setting out the offer will be provided to you. You will need to sign and return your contract before you can receive the first payment.

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

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