

Assessment process information – Scripted and Factual

Purpose

1. This explains how NZ On Air will assess applications to the Scripted and Factual streams of the NZ Media Fund.
2. As there will be more applications than available funding, assessment stages are tiered so that ultimately the most work and resources are spent on the applications with the most likelihood of success.

Overview

3. We will assess proposals using the nine investment principles set out on p11 of [the funding strategy](#).
4. These investment principles allow us to assess the business case for each application alongside the application’s cultural case and how it contributes to NZ On Air’s three funding goals:
 - ▶ **Quality Content:** New Zealand audiences enjoy well-made local content that matters
 - ▶ **Diverse Content:** New Zealand audiences value local content made for a range of communities
 - ▶ **Discoverable Content:** New Zealand audiences can find and appreciate local content

Preliminary step: Confirm eligibility

NZOA lead: Head of Funding

5. Staff will enter applications into NZ On Air’s database as directed by the Associate Head of Funding.
6. Only eligible applications will be accepted for assessment. **To be eligible:**
 - ▶ Applications must include complete and accurate documentation
 - ▶ Where there is a commissioning platform the platform must have verified their support via Eric
7. Applications with significant omissions, inaccuracies or which clearly do not meet funding criteria will be declined. The decision to decline an application at this stage will be made by the Head of Funding.
8. Unsuccessful applicants will be advised with a form letter that states the key reason and which indicates when the next such round will be open.

Stage 1 Assessment: Single assessor

NZOA lead: Associate Head of Funding

9. The Stage 1 assessment will be completed for all eligible applications by a member of the funding team by considering the application and supporting materials and compiling an assessment sheet. See this sheet here: [Stage 1: Funding Assessment](#).
10. This assessment:
 - ▶ balances at a high level cultural, creative and business aspects
 - ▶ considers the investment principles, excluding Balance, Risk and Competition which are assessed in stage 2, taking into account the level of funding requested.
 - ▶ assesses how well the application meets basic statutory and strategic requirements
 - ▶ notes any aspects of the application that might require particular consideration if the application moves to the second round assessment

11. After completing this process, the assessor will recommend whether, in their opinion, the application should continue for second round assessment, or be declined.
12. Applications declined at this stage will be for one of the following reasons:
 - 12.1 The project does not clearly reflect and develop NZ culture and identity
 - 12.2 The target audience is not clear, or of insufficient size to justify level of funding requested
 - 12.3 The distribution plan does not provide sufficient evidence that the target audience can be reached
 - 12.4 There is no or insufficient co-investment for the scale of the project
 - 12.5 Production team key personnel have not demonstrated sufficient breadth or depth of experience to execute the project
 - 12.6 The application is similar to other local content recently funded by NZ On Air or other investors
 - 12.7 The application documents provided were not sufficiently complete, accurate or reliable enough to make a funding decision.
13. The Associate Head of Funding (AHoF) and at least two other assessors will meet formally to discuss all applications and recommendations and seek full consensus. If the AHoF is unavailable the meeting will be chaired by Head of Funding (HoF).
14. Applications that secure full consensus will either proceed to Stage 2 assessment or be declined.
15. Where a recommendation does not achieve full consensus, the AHoF will discuss with the HoF and the latter will decide.
16. Applications seeking \$1m+ (and most development applications) that are Board decisions will automatically progress to second stage assessment after stage 1 assessment.
17. Unsuccessful applicants will be advised with a form letter that states the key reason for their application being declined. Where appropriate, information on when the next such round will be open will be conveyed.

Stage 2 Assessment: Three assessors

NZOA lead: Head of Funding

18. Applications approved for a second assessment will be grouped by the Associate Head of Funding into like applications by topic or genre e.g. 'broadcast documentaries', 'factual webseries' 'spoken features', and assigned to assessor groups.
19. Each group of applications will be assessed by three people: the Stage 1 assessor, one other funding team member, and a third assessor either a NZ On Air staff member or external.
20. This assessment uses a ranking system against investment principles (excluding Fairness, assessed at Stage 1) which weighs the cultural case against the business case, and then like applications against like applications. See Stage 2: Funding Assessment.
21. The NZ On Air assessment team will meet formally to discuss the comparative rankings of all Stage 2 application assessments, which applications are the strongest, and the quantum of applications compared to available funding.
22. Assessors may amend their rankings after discussion and further comparison. Consensus among the assessment team is desirable but not essential.
23. Taking into account the team discussion, the HoF will make the final decision on recommendations for Stage 3.
24. The AHoF will confirm the finalised aggregated assessment. See Stage 2: Aggregated application scores.
25. A Funding Advisor or the AHoF will complete a combined funding paper for each group of applications outlining assessment discussions, the merits of the individual applications, and discussing all other relevant considerations that led to the proposed recommendations, including noting any strongly varying opinions.

26. Funding papers being submitted to the
 - ▶ Staff Investment Committee (SIC), will be approved by the Head of Funding
 - ▶ Board, will be approved by the Chief Executive through the Head of Funding.

Stage 3 Assessment: Staff Investment Committee / Board

NZOA lead: Head of Funding

27. SIC will
 - ▶ *review* a schedule of the Stage 1 assessments and decisions and discuss any high-level process issues or funding trends that are emerging
 - ▶ *discuss* the Stage 2 combined funding papers and recommendations, including reviewing the assessment forms, considering both available investment funds and applications going to the Board.
28. SIC will agree to fund or not fund, with any conditions it wishes to impose, by full consensus.
29. In a split decision, applications will be referred to the Board for determination.
30. The Board will consider all applications over \$1m, most development applications, and any applications referred by SIC, and will agree to fund or not fund with any conditions it wishes to impose.

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