



THE ACTIVATOR SCREEN BUSINESS PROGRAMME

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CREATIVITY AND BUSINESS

2025 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Revision 250403

Overview

The Activator Screen Business Programme is a five-month international professional development accelerator for entrepreneurial New Zealand film and television producers. The programme will build leadership skills and expand industry networks through workshops, expert-led training, and international market visits, equipping participants with confidence and essential tools to succeed in a rapidly evolving global industry.

It is designed for internationally minded, ambitious film and television professionals who want to enhance their business acumen and international networks and build commercially viable businesses.

The Activator Screen Business Programme is made possible with the support of the New Zealand Film Commission, NZ on Air, and Te Māngai Pāho, the Vista Foundation, Netflix, Grant Thornton, and Gallagher Insurance. The programme was developed by Libertine Pictures and 113 Partners, with 113 Partners overseeing the course content and Libertine Pictures and Hinterland managing the market connections and assisted by SPADA.

The Programme Directors are Ian Murray and John Gregory (of 113 Partners) and the Market Directors are Richard Fletcher (Libertine Pictures) and Sharon Menzies (Hinterland).

Objectives

This programme aims to create career opportunities for New Zealand film and television producers by:

- Encouraging the development of business strategies by film and television production companies that drive growth and sustainability outside of the traditional Government and/or grant funding models and capitalise on success, both for companies and the wider NZ screen industry.



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- Supporting businesses to build greater knowledge, capacity, and connection for pathways to sustainability in their film and television making activities, and to support and promote the development of screen culture and screen skills.
- Developing an understanding of the opportunities and commercial benefits of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the NZ screen industry.
- Nurturing behaviours that drive quality and capacity in film and television making to meet domestic and international demand, create connections with global and domestic audiences, and provide sustainable financial returns for businesses.

Participant Benefits

Our programme focuses on equipping NZ film and television producers with the critical business skills they need to thrive in the global industry.

By the end of the programme, participants will have significantly enhanced their business skills and developed a deep understanding of key international marketplaces, particularly in the US, UK, and Australia.

Participants will:

- Learn about project packaging and discover how to strategically assemble and present their projects to attract investors and industry partners.
- Gain valuable skills in negotiating deal terms, ensuring they are well-equipped to value their projects accurately and secure favourable agreements.
- Embark on a comprehensive exploration of international sales and distribution opportunities, gaining insights into the ecosystem of the international screen market with a deep dive into the US film industry.
- Partake in workshops designed to refine their skills in project development and pitching.
- Spend time in Australia, the UK, and the US developing critical relationships and putting their newly developed skills into practice.
- Learn about various aspects of business and commercial sustainability including strategic planning, revenue stream development, and scaling and growing business to ensure participants are prepared for long-term success.
- Form relationships as a cohort, providing a support network close to home.

The programme has been designed to bridge the gap between creativity and business acumen, empowering New Zealand content makers to achieve high-level career development opportunities locally and internationally to ensure participants are well-equipped to build commercially viable and sustainable businesses that can thrive in a global marketplace.



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Learning Methodology

The programme uses a multidisciplinary approach to enhance learning outcomes for all participants, and to provide access to a range of learning opportunities. It has been designed to run over a five-month period, providing a “hot house” intensive learning environment designed to maximise skills development and retention, and provide real-world opportunities for development of key industry relationships.

Experienced instructors, drawn from diverse backgrounds in the screen industry, will offer personalised advice, constructive feedback, and industry insights tailored to each participant's unique needs and goals.

Programme Outline

There are three core components to the programme:

1. Intensive Workshops

Three in-person two-day intensive workshops - two in Auckland and one in Sydney - will provide hands-on training from leading industry professionals. Participants will gain insights into audience behaviours, market trends, and strategies to effectively reach and convert audiences.

Workshops will cover the entire screen value chain from an Australasian perspective, including development, financing, production, marketing, sales, and distribution. Participants will develop both creative (producer) and business (entrepreneurial) skills, equipping them to succeed as filmmakers and business owners.

2. Online ‘US-Focused’ Training

A “Deep Dive into the US Film Market” online training sessions delivered from Los Angeles by industry experts over 8 x 2.5 hours, spread over 2 weeks.

Sessions will cover global market trends and business practices, production models and collaboration insights from producers and showrunners, developing and pitching content for international buyers, pitching techniques for projects, companies, and personal branding, expanding your slate, brand, and cross-cultural opportunities, building effective partnerships with agents, managers, and collaborators.

3. International Market Visits

Participants will take part in three week-long international market visits to Sydney, London, and Los Angeles to observe the studio and independent systems firsthand. These trips offer



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valuable opportunities to build in-person relationships with key industry players across major global markets.

They'll engage with experienced executives, including decision-makers from streaming platforms, and gain insight into the strategic and business practices in Hollywood, London, and Sydney. Each day includes meetings with 2–4 industry professionals—ranging from broadcasters and distributors to financiers and talent agents—providing exclusive high-level networking and partnership opportunities.

Application Timeline

15th April 2025 – 2pm NZST	Zoom Q&A
16th May 2025 – 5pm NZST	Applications Close
6th June 2025	Shortlisted Applicants Advised
10th & 11th June 2025	Zoom Interviews
19th June 2025	Successful Applicants Advised

Programme Timeline

It is a condition of taking part in the programme that participants will attend on a full-time basis ALL of the following dates:

10 th – 11 th July 2025	1 st two-day intensive workshop
21 st – 25 th July 2025	One-Week Sydney Market Visit including 2 nd two day intensive workshop
11 th – 22 nd August 2025	2 x week online US Marketplace training (2-4 hours per day)
21 st Sept – 3 rd October 2025	Two-Weeks London & Los Angeles Market Visits
23 rd - 24 th October 2025	3 rd two-day intensive workshop



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Target Participants

The programme has been developed for mid-career to established screen practitioners who have an existing body of work and verified credits in feature film making or television production.

Applicants must have a strong track record or be highly accomplished across multiple longer form productions - some of which may be higher-budget - and have achieved critical and/or commercial success and significant audience reach. It is expected that applicants will have more than five (5) years of experience in the industry.

Applications from companies whose principals or key staff are from underrepresented communities are encouraged to apply. For this programme, under-represented applicants (in line with the NZ Film Commission's [He Ara Whakaurunga Kanorau Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)) may include Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian communities, MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African), women, gender diverse, LGBTQIA+ communities, people with a disability, regional communities (defined for the New Zealand screen sector as those outside of Auckland and Wellington), people below the age of 30 and people above the age of 60.

The programme has been designed for up to 12 participants from around New Zealand.

Entry Requirements

The programme is for mid-career to established screen practitioners who have a minimum of 5 years' experience in the screen industry. They will need to be able to demonstrate their commitment to working in and with the New Zealand and international film and television industry. Eligible applicants must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident living in New Zealand, and have:

- At a minimum, one full producer credit on a theatrically released feature film or broadcast television program or series
- 1-2 market-oriented projects in development that require international finance and/or sales representation and/or broadcast attachment
- At least one project that can be pitched in-market

Producers with only Executive Producer, Co-Producer, and Associate Producer credits are not eligible.

Applicants must be able to commit to the interview dates and the full five-month programme. Full attendance is one of the terms and conditions of participation.



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Financial Contributions

The Activator Screen Business Programme is heavily subsidised, but participants are required to contribute financially.

Each successful participant will be required to contribute a NZD\$2,000 plus GST fee which will be payable before commencing the programme.

This will cover all trainers and tutors (both online and in person), all networking and events associated with the programme, all lunches at training days held in NZ, return airfares to Sydney, London, and Los Angeles, group transfers in Sydney, London, and Los Angeles, hotel accommodation in Sydney, London, and Los Angeles and domestic airfares and accommodation for those who live outside Auckland.

However, during the programme, there will be some costs that participants will be responsible for, including but not limited to, domestic airport transfers, meals and personal expenses during market visits, travel insurance (strongly recommended) and the cost of passports or visas.

Applicants will be responsible for having a valid passport and obtaining a visa (if required) and/or access authorisation to enter Australia, USA and the UK. Applicants must confirm that they are not aware of any reason that may prevent entry to Australia, USA and the UK.

Financial Assistance & Scholarships

Libertine Pictures and Hinterland are committed to reflecting and representing the diversity of Aotearoa as well as capability building in the screen sector. They are offering up to four scholarships, two to under-represented applicants and two general scholarships to cover the full (NZD\$2,000 + GST) cost of the recipient's programme fees.

In addition, they will offer the recipients ongoing mentoring for six months following the programme and look to find them work placements on future Libertine or Hinterland projects.

If you require financial assistance, please complete the Scholarship Form and include it with your application. Scholarships are awarded based on merit and need.

For the scholarships, under-represented applicants (in line with the NZ Film Commission's [He Ara Whakaurunga Kanorau Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)) may include Māori, Pacific peoples, Asian communities, MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African), women, gender diverse, LGBTQIA+ communities, people with a disability, regional communities



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Participant Reporting Requirements

To ensure the programme delivers measurable benefits, participants must actively engage in reporting and evaluation activities.

Mandatory Reporting Includes:

1. Pre-Programme Survey – Participants must complete a baseline assessment outlining:
 - Business strategy, market position, and revenue model
 - Current industry connections and international engagement
 - Areas of professional development they aim to improve
2. Participant Satisfaction Survey – Participants will be required to complete feedback surveys at key stages of the programme to evaluate:
 - Workshop effectiveness and knowledge gained
 - International market visits and networking opportunities
 - Overall programme management and impact
3. Participant Demographic Survey – An anonymised survey will collect demographic data, including:
 - Gender identity
 - Ethnicity and Iwi affiliations
 - Disability status
 - Regional location
 - Level of industry experience
4. Final Programme Report – Upon completion, participants must submit a brief report (max 1,000 words) on:
 - Key learnings and takeaways
 - Industry connections made
 - Business growth and future plans
5. Twelve-Month Follow-Up – Participants will be asked to provide an update on:
 - New industry partnerships or deals secured
 - Changes in their business structure or revenue
 - Continued engagement in international markets



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6. Twenty-Four Month Follow-Up – Participants will be asked to provide an update on:
 - Project financing or broadcaster commitments secured
 - Any international sales, production deals, or business expansion
 - Impact of the programme on long-term career and business strategy

The programme team must submit formal reports to funding bodies, including NZFC, NZOA, and Te Māngai Pāho. All data will be anonymised before any reporting takes place.

Application Process

Applications close: Friday 16th May at 5pm NZST

To apply, complete the application form and Development Slate Overview on the [Activator Screen website](#) and submit them with other required documentation to applications@activatorscreen.com. Late applications will not be accepted and no extensions will be available.

A Zoom Q&A session for potential applicants will be held on Tuesday 15th April 2025 at 2pm NZST.

Any queries regarding the application process or the Activator programme should be submitted to queries@activatorscreen.com.

Stage 1: Application Submission

Applicants must submit:

- A completed [application form](#).
- A completed [Development Slate Overview](#).
- A CV and full filmography.
- Two years Financial Statements for the years ended 31st March 2024 and 31st March 2025 (Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet) supplied by an accountant. Draft or interim financial statements for FY25 are acceptable.

Stage 2: Shortlisting

- All applications will be checked for eligibility.
- Eligible applicants will be notified that their application has been received and meets the criteria.
- Eligible applications will be reviewed and assessed by the selection panel.



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- Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an online (Zoom) interview by Friday 6th June 2025.
- Unsuccessful applicants will be notified.

Stage 3: Interviews

- Interviews will be held on Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th June 2025 via Zoom.
- No alternative interview dates will be offered.

Stage 4: Final Selection

- Following the interviews, the selection panel will determine the successful applicants.
- Successful applicants will be notified by Thursday 19th June 2025.
- Applicants must confirm acceptance and pay the NZD\$2,000 + GST programme fee within 48 hours to secure their place.
- Successful applicants will be required to sign a contract confirming (amongst other things):
 - a. their commitment to attend the entirety of the Activator Screen Business Programme;
 - b. that they will fulfill all reporting requirements; and
 - c. that they shall at all times whilst taking part in the programme conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner and not do anything which could adversely affect or bring into disrepute the programme, the organisers or the funders.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. **Strategic Vision and Business Goals:** How clearly does the applicant articulate their company's long-term goals, including growth targets, project outputs, and revenue streams? Are these goals ambitious yet achievable, and do they reflect a strong understanding of the screen industry landscape?
2. **Market Awareness and Industry Analysis:** Does the applicant demonstrate a solid understanding of industry trends through their PEST analysis? How well do they identify opportunities and threats relevant to their business and projects?
3. **Commercial and Creative Integration:** How effectively does the applicant combine creative ambition with a sound commercial strategy? Do they provide a compelling case for the market potential of their projects, supported by details on genre, budget, distribution, and collaborators?



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4. **Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion:** To what extent does the applicant incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into their business practices and project development? Do their strategies align with broader industry goals for representation and inclusion?
5. **Entrepreneurial Drive and Readiness to Learn:** Does the applicant demonstrate a proactive approach to building their business, seeking out opportunities, and addressing challenges? Do their responses reflect openness to mentorship, constructive feedback, and professional growth through the programme?

Decisions of the selection panel are final and cannot be appealed. No correspondence regarding decisions will be entered into.

Important materials to read before you apply.

- Application form
- Development Slate Overview
- FAQ materials

Confidentiality

The commercial sensitivity of the application documents is acknowledged, and we will use reasonable efforts to keep the information applicants provide confidential. Furthermore, applicant's Financial Statements will only be provided to 113 Partners and no applicant documents will be provided to the New Zealand Film Commission, NZ on Air, and Te Māngai Pāho, the Vista Foundation, Netflix, Grant Thornton, or Gallagher Insurance.

Applicants agree not engage in any publicity or make any statement, give any interview or supply any information or material to any third party or the public (including without limitation by media such as email, websites, or via any social media platforms including (but not limited to) Instagram, Facebook, Tik Tok and Twitter) in relation to the application process or their selection (if applicable). After the programme's selections have been announced, the successful applicants may engage in normal publicity in relation to the programme, provided that it may not disclose any commercially sensitive information.



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