

PREDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTIONS

Program Guidelines

In recognition of the need to stimulate the creation and development of innovative and marketable documentary projects and of the significant costs of taking those projects to the marketplace, this pilot program will provide financial support to Manitoba producers developing linear documentary productions. This program allows companies to pre-develop one or more projects that have not yet received support from a broadcaster, distributor, or development financing, with the intent to encourage broadcaster or distributor financial support in the subsequent stages of development and production.

The program is a collaboration between the Manitoba Film & Music (MFM) and the Canada Media Fund (CMF) and will require joint approval of both agencies.

A. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for financial support, the **applicant** must:

- Be incorporated in Manitoba or federally;
- Be Canadian-owned - as defined in the Investment Canada Act (Canada) and is Canadian-controlled as determined for the purposes of sections 26 to 28 of the Investment Canada Act;
- Be in good standing with MFM and the CMF at time of application submission;
- Be a resident Manitoba producer, defined as a producer who operates a production company in Manitoba that is majority owned and controlled by Manitoba residents. Further details on applicant eligibility requirements are found in MFM's [Audit Guidelines](#);
- Have a minimum of two years of production experience as a producer and have previously produced at least one project (minimum 30 minutes in broadcast length), which has been either screened by a major network or distributed by a recognized distributor;

- Producers who do not meet this requirement but who are judged to have equivalent experience (including experience in interactive digital media) may be deemed eligible at MFM and the CMF's joint discretion. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate this; and
- Have proof of ownership in the underlying property and the necessary, corresponding current rights or options to develop, produce and exploit the production throughout the world.

To be eligible for financial support, the **project** must:

- Be a documentary production as defined by the CMF's [Appendix A Definitions & Essential Requirements](#);
- Be either a feature film, one-off (min. 30-minute length), series or mini-series;
- Be in early concept/development stages without the financial participation of a broadcaster or distributor;
- Be a new project that has not previously received funding from MFM or the CMF;
- Be primarily intended for broadcast or distribution;

An eligible company is allowed to submit a maximum of two projects per deadline.

Co-productions or co-ventures at the pre-development stage are not eligible.

Projects do not have to be intended primarily for the Canadian market but must meet all other guidelines herein to be eligible.

The project must be in the compliance with the laws, regulations, standards and policies applicable to broadcasting and to intellectual property, and the project must not infringe upon any public or private rights and must not otherwise contravene the Canadian civil and criminal laws in effect.

MFM and the CMF jointly retain the discretion to determine whether a project meets genre and format eligibility.

In 2021, the CMF launched PERSONA-ID, a self-identification system that allows individuals to disclose their demographic information directly and securely to the CMF. While PERSONA-ID is not a requirement to apply to this program, if selected for funding in this program, successful applicants will be required to provide the CMF with their PERSONA-ID number.

B. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The successful applicant corporation will sign two agreements, one with MFM and one with the CMF.

The funding contribution from MFM will be offered in the form of a recoupable advance that must be repaid on the first day of principal photography of the production. Any sale or transfer of ownership (either copyright or share) by the Manitoba producer must be at fair market value, and “first-dollar-in” proceeds must be used to repay MFM’s development loan immediately. Should the project apply and be awarded equity funding through one of MFM’s production programs, the development advance will be rolled into the total equity investment.

The funding contribution from the CMF will be offered in the form of a repayable advance that must be repaid on the earlier of:

- i) the first day of official preparation of principal photography of the project;
or
- ii) the transfer, sale, assignment, or other disposition of the script/creative materials.

Eligible Production Companies may receive up to the following per project caps:

- Up to \$25,000 per project not to exceed 75% of the eligible pre-development budget.

For clarity, the parties’ contributions to each project will be made on a 2/3 (CMF), 1/3 (MFM) basis.

The financial participation of any third-party funds will be taken into consideration. Third-Party funding may affect the contribution amount by MFM and CMF if the third party funds contribute to over-funding the predevelopment phase budget of the project.

Projects who receive financial contribution from this program will not be eligible to apply for MFM’s Pitch Readiness Program for Multi-Episode Productions for this or any subsequent development phase.

Please note that should the recipient also apply for any of MFM’s Development Funds for a subsequent phase, the contribution provided by MFM via this program will be included in the calculation of the per-project funding cap at the development stage. Please refer to the MFM [Feature Film Development Fund](#) and [Television and Web-Based Development Fund](#) guidelines for additional information on project caps.

Please note that should the recipient also apply for any CMF Development funding for a subsequent phase, the contribution provided by the CMF via this program will be included in the CMF per-project funding cap at the development stage. Please refer to the relevant CMF Development guidelines for additional information and eligibility requirements.

MFM's agreement will specify the following terms of payment:

- 80% of the contribution paid at the agreement signing; and
- 20% of the contribution paid at the end of the activities related to the project. This payment is conditional on the submission of all deliverables related to the pre-development phase, as specified in the agreement, and the submission and acceptance by MFM and the CMF of the final cost report.

The CMF's agreement will specify the following terms of payment:

- 100% of the repayable advance upon full execution of the CMF agreement and receipt and approval by the CMF of all deliverables specified in the agreement.

C. DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables will be expected in advance of MFM's release of the second payment (final drawdown):

- Copies of the deliverable(s) that were intended to be completed at this phase (e.g. bible, treatment, proof of concept, demo);
- Final cost report;
- List of Manitoba expenditures (those funds paid to Manitoba-based individuals and companies) – please see Schedule A;
- Signed affidavit attesting to the final cost of the pre-development phase.

MFM and the CMF reserve the right to request submission of any additional documents that may be necessary in the determination of the phase's final costs.

D. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The advance must be used exclusively for direct third-party pre-market development costs that, in MFM and the CMF's opinion, will significantly improve the product's marketability, such as, but not limited to:

- Acquisition of underlying rights;
- Writers;
- Story editors;
- Consultants;
- Researchers;
- Marketing specialists;
- Pitch materials;
- Non-broadcast demo production;
- Sales and promotional materials; and

- Travel and accommodation related to development activities.

Producer fees and corporate overhead are each eligible at a maximum of 10% of eligible expenses.

E. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications submitted to MFM will be assessed to ensure that all required documentation has been submitted correctly and that the producer and the project meet basic eligibility criteria.

Applications are first analyzed by MFM staff and evaluations will be discussed with the CMF before a final joint decision is made. The evaluation criteria will be applied, but not limited to the following elements:

- Producer experience and track record;
- Track record of other key contributors;
- Involvement of Manitoba key creative talent;
- Proposed development plan;
- Readiness of the project to meet the marketplace and to align to broadcaster / distributor mandates;
- Detailed description of how the funds requested will specifically enhance the project's marketability;

MFM and the CMF are committed to supporting projects whose original version is in French and/or applicants who identify as part of a Diverse Community as defined by the CMF's [Appendix A Definitions & Essential Requirements](#).

F. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for financial support from this program must be submitted to MFM through the online application portal [here](#). For assistance on accessing the portal and making funding applications please see [How to Apply](#).

Applications must be submitted by the due date. The project submission schedule is available on the [MFM website](#).

Eligible companies must first complete and submit an applicant profile through MFM's online application portal to be eligible to apply. The following supporting documentation must be included with the applicant profile:

- Business registration/Articles of incorporation;
- Resolution of board of directors (indicating list of directors, officers, voting shareholders, and contract signing authority);
- Most recent copy of the annual corporate return of information (if incorporated more than one year);

- Most current financial statements (parent company statements if newly incorporated); and
- Production Company Bio/Experience.

Eligible companies will then complete the online application. The following supporting documentation must be included with the online application:

- Detailed story outline and pre-development project description;
- Detailed pre-development budget (signed and dated);
- Signed confirmation for the balance of the pre-development funding;
- Pre-development schedule;
- Detailed cast & crew list (if applicable - for example if a proof of concept is identified as a deliverable);
- Resumes for key creative positions;
- Pitch plan (an outline of the strategy and scope of the pitch to national and international broadcasters and distributors - identify those that will be targeted);
- Marketplace readiness plan indicating target audience and market potential;
- Complete chain of title documentation;
- Any other relevant information required by MFM or the CMF.

G. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Eligibility under these guidelines does not guarantee financial support. The funding decisions of MFM and the CMF are final.

Sale or Transfer of Project:

The percentage of project ownership held by the Manitoba producer must be maintained.

Any sale or transfer or ownership (either copyright or share) by the Manitoba producer must be at fair market value, and “first-dollar-in” proceeds must be used to repay MFM’s development loan. MFM must be informed of the sale or transfer within 5 business days and all MFM funding for the project must be repaid in full within 10 business days.

If the producer loses control of the project through option lapse (and the project does not go into production), then MFM’s financial contribution will become a forgivable loan. However, if the producers (or a related company) subsequently regain control or become reinvolved in the project during the life of the project or reoption the project, then MFM remains entitled to have any and all of its advance repaid at first day of principal photography.

Application Requirements:

MFM reserves the right not to review any application considered to be incomplete or inconsistent with the present guidelines, or to require additional information before proceeding with the application.

Applications which are incomplete and/or do not provide the minimum complete documentation will not be reviewed or assessed.

All documents submitted must be signed and dated by the Manitoba producer.

All documents must be named, dated and versioned to correspond with the current financing structure. Agreements cannot be stale-dated.

Any changes or revisions to creative, financial or other supporting documents must be submitted in a timely manner, and no later than the submission to any other funder.

Applicant companies (or their affiliates) must be in good standing with MFM and the CMF at the time of application. Applications from those companies in default on any contractual obligation to MFM or the CMF will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify its status with MFM prior to applying for funding.

It is the applicant's sole responsibility to have their own independent legal counsel review the CMF Financing Agreement and MFM Funding Agreement to ensure that the contents and the responsibilities within these agreements are fully understood and agreed upon. In the event the applicant requests to have changes to the MFM standard agreement, all legal fees incurred by MFM to review the request will be at the expense of the applicant.

Investment Acknowledgment:

Any documents or media presented to broadcasters, distributors, and the public must clearly acknowledge receipt of pre-development funding by MFM and the CMF. MFM's funding agreement and the CMF's financing agreement will include specific acknowledgment and credit (if applicable) requirements.

MFM and the CMF reserve the right to review and update these guidelines at any time, without notice. Please refer to the MFM website for any changes or revisions to our guidelines or documentation. In all questions of interpretation of these guidelines, or regarding the spirit and intent of MFM and the CMF's funding programs, the interpretation of MFM and the CMF shall prevail.

SCHEDULE A

Calculation Criteria for Manitoba Expenditures

General: A Manitoba expenditure refers to any production expense that is paid to a Manitoba resident or company*.

Specific considerations:

Airfare: Include 50% regardless of how it is booked

Per Diem:

- Include 50% for Manitobans working outside Manitoba;
- Include 100% for Manitobans working inside Manitoba;
- Include 50% for non-Manitobans working inside Manitoba

Hotel/Accommodations:

- Include 0% outside Manitoba;
- Include 100% inside Manitoba

Vehicle Rentals:

- Include 0% outside Manitoba;
- Include 100% inside Manitoba

Interim Financing/Bank Fees:

- Include 100% if through a Manitoba bank account, regardless of where the account manager is located

Insurance: Include 100% if through a Manitoba insurance broker

Legal: Include 100% if through a Manitoba lawyer

* This Schedule applies only to MFM and CMF's Pre-Development Program for Documentary Production and does not apply to the Manitoba Film & Video Production Tax Credit Program.