

# **DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

## **ESSENTIAL INFORMATION GUIDE**

**EFFECTIVE AS OF JUNE 17, 2021**

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## GENERAL QUESTIONS RELATING TO ALL STREAMS OF THE PROGRAM

### 1. What are the types of funding available under the Development Program?

There are four streams under the Development Program:

- Prequalified Stream
- Selective Stream
- Indigenous Stream
- Stream for Black and People of Colour

#### Prequalified Stream

The Prequalified Stream funding is a pre-determined (automatic) amount for eligible companies based on their Organization Performance Ratio for qualifying films. A total of **125 companies will have access to the Prequalified Stream**. Depending on their ranking, companies may be in tiers A, B or C.

Applicants who are eligible under the Prequalified Stream will be notified of their eligibility and of the development funding amount (i.e. Tier) to which they are eligible.

#### Other Streams

Funding for projects under the Selective Stream, Indigenous Stream and the Stream for Black and People of Colour is determined through a selective process using advisory committees. All advisory committees evaluate the projects based on the evaluation criteria described in the Guidelines and score and rank the projects following the Evaluation Grid. For more details see below.

**IMPORTANT:** An applicant may only apply to one of the above streams even if it is eligible under more than one stream. Further, the applicant may not switch streams after the application is submitted.

### 2. My feature length film had a digital platform release. Can it be considered in determining my eligibility under any of the Streams of the Program?

Telefilm may, in its discretion, consider films released on a digital platform in determining eligibility for the Selective Stream, the Stream for Black and People of Colour and the Indigenous Stream.

To be considered, the film must have been digitally released between March 1, 2020 and December, 31 2020 and must meet one or both of the following criteria:

- the film was released on a digital platform by a third-party distributor or a Telefilm-approved distributor; **and/or**
- the film received funding under Telefilm's National Marketing Program for the digital platform release.

### 3. What is the reference period for the 'released in the last six years' criterion?

The date of the initial release of the project being used to trigger eligibility under a particular Stream of the Program must be within the reference period which is defined as six (6) calendar years prior to Telefilm's current fiscal year which runs from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Therefore, the initial Canadian theatrical

release<sup>1</sup>, digital distribution<sup>2</sup>, premiere at a qualifying festival<sup>3</sup> or broadcast on television, as applicable, must have occurred between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2020.

**4 I want to review my filmography, and performance ratio prior to the opening of the Program to make sure it is accurate. How do I do that?**

Applicants are responsible for reviewing their company's information and filmography and ensuring that the information is current and accurate at all times. This is the information that Telefilm relies on to determine a project's and applicant's performance ratio, as well as applicants' eligibility for the Prequalified Stream, and the amount of funding to which the applicant is eligible, if applicable.

If there are discrepancies in a company's filmography, a designated representative for the company should inform Telefilm's team. Requests for adjustments, corrections or revisions that are made outside the verification period indicated on the program's [webpage](#) will not be taken into account for the current application period.

**5 How do I add a film that was produced without Telefilm funding to my filmography?**

Only films financed by Telefilm under the Production Program, the Theatrical Documentary Program, or the Talent to Watch Program can be added to the filmography.

**6 What if my project premiered at a qualifying film festival in one year and then had a theatrical release later? Is the reference period extended to six years from the date of the theatrical release?**

No. First, a theatrical release is required to be considered as eligible for the Prequalified Stream, so the date of the festival premiere is irrelevant for that stream. For the other streams of the Program, Telefilm will relate only to the first release of the project, whether that was a theatrical release or a festival release. The two periods cannot be combined to exceed six years.

**7 Do the projects in my portfolio have to be intended for theatrical release?**

Yes. In order to be considered eligible for development support, a film must be intended to also be eligible for production support under the [Production Program](#), the [Theatrical Documentary Program or the Talent to Watch Program](#).

**8 If my portfolio is funded, what percentage of a project's budget will Telefilm contribute?**

Subject to the maximum amount of financing your company is eligible for, Telefilm's financial participation can cover up to 100% of the budget of each project included in your portfolio.

**9 Does Telefilm fund eligible costs incurred prior to submission of the funding application?**

Yes. Costs incurred since January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year of the funding application are eligible. For example, if an application is filed on August 25, 2021, eligible costs incurred since January 1, 2021 may be included in the development budget supported by Telefilm.

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<sup>1</sup> As evidenced by the Movie Theatre Association of Canada (MTAC).

<sup>2</sup> Telefilm reserves the right to determine if the scope of a release of a project on digital platforms is sufficient for the purposes of eligibility for the Program.

<sup>3</sup> For a complete list of the qualifying film festivals per stream, please refer to the [Program's webpage](#).

**10. Is there a standard budget for development which lists which costs are eligible at which phase?**

No. Telefilm has moved away from a standard budget model. The guidelines speak of eligible costs and some parameters for a few of them, but the applicant can tailor applicable costs depending on the state of advancement, creative needs, and particularities of the project.

A final cost report will be required, and Telefilm could question some costs to make sure they meet the program's objectives and spirit and intent. Telefilm reserves the right to decline some costs that are deemed unreasonable or not in line with the program's objectives.

**11. Does every project in my development portfolio with Telefilm need to be completed and delivered before I can apply again?**

Applicants having an uncompleted development project under contract with Telefilm may not submit another application for the same project nor include it in a new portfolio submission. However, the entire portfolio does not have to be completed before applying for an additional phase of a previously funded project.

**12. I wish to apply for multi-phase funding. Is that possible?**

Yes. However, you must be able to demonstrate that the phases can be completed within the term of your option agreement.

**13. Can I apply for funding more than once for the same phase?**

No, a phase cannot be funded more than once. For example, if you have received funding for a third draft, you cannot apply for third draft for the same project again.

**14. What is the "packaging" phase of a project?**

The packaging stage involves subsequent drafts of a screenplay and the inclusion of market elements, for example the commitment of a director and a distributor (depending on the production budget level envisioned), attaching a casting agent and/or cast, the development of a business and financing plan as well as a preliminary theatrical marketing plan, including target audience(s), commercial potential and a preliminary theatrical release strategy.

Note that rewrite or polish agreements will be required at time of application for packaging applications.

**15. Am I required to have a Director and a Distributor attached to my project in order to submit an application for the packaging phase?**

A commitment from a director is mandatory (as evidenced by a director's agreement).

A commitment from a distributor is not required but having one attached would be considered in the evaluation of the application.

**16. Can I submit an application under this Program if the Director or Screenwriter attached to my project are not Canadian Citizens or Permanent Residents?**

No. All key members of the development team must be permanent residents or Canadian citizens.

**17. What minimum rights do I need for the project(s) I am submitting?**

The film(s) must be under the financial and creative control of the applicant, who must hold for at least 24 months all of the exclusive rights and options necessary for the adaptation of the original work or concept (if applicable) and for the full and complete worldwide exploitation of the script and production (appropriate exceptions for projects structured as audiovisual treaty coproductions).

**18. Is it mandatory to have a Story Consultant or a Script Editor?**

No. However, Telefilm encourages teams to collaborate with a story consultant or a script editor who is independent from the producer.

**19. Can I engage myself or one of my employees as Story Consultant or Script Editor on my development project?**

No. To be considered as an eligible cost, the Story Consultant/Script Editor must be independent from the applicant. They cannot be the Producer, a related party to the Producer or an employee of the applicant.

## **PREQUALIFIED STREAM**

**20. How are the Prequalified Stream Tiers and amounts determined for each company?**

Access to the Prequalified Stream for eligible production companies is based on the Applicant's Organization Performance Ratio which, in turn, is based on its portfolio of Telefilm-supported films theatrically released in the last six calendar years (January 1 to December 31).

The calculation of company performance is ultimately used to rank all companies eligible for the Prequalified Stream. A total of **125 companies will have access to the Prequalified Stream**. Depending on their ranking, companies may be in tiers A, B or C:

- **Tier A consists of 25 companies each eligible for a prequalified amount of \$75,000.** These are the eight French-language<sup>4</sup> companies with the highest performance and the 17 English-language companies with the highest performance.
- **Tiers B and C include a further 100 companies** cumulatively. One third of these (34) are French-language companies and two thirds (66) are English-language companies. The English-language companies in tiers B and C are selected based on their performance, but also to ensure regional representation across the country.<sup>5</sup> **The top 50 performers compose tier B**, with access to a prequalified amount of **\$50,000** per company. **The next 50 companies make up tier C**, which provides access to a prequalified amount of **\$25,000**.

The detailed calculation for the Performance Ratio of the films in an organization's portfolio and the resulting Organization Performance Ratio are described [here](#).

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<sup>4</sup> To determine a company's language, Telefilm uses the weighted sum of the Canadian shares of eligible films' production budgets. A company whose majority of production expenses were incurred on French-language projects will be considered a French-language company, and vice versa if the majority of expenses were incurred on English-language projects.

<sup>5</sup> Companies are selected based on regional rankings. The four regions considered are: Atlantic; Quebec (English language); Ontario and Nunavut; and Western, Northwest Territories and Yukon.

Telefilm clients who are eligible to the Prequalified Stream will receive a Note in Dialogue before the Program's opening date advising them of their eligibility to that Stream and the amount to which they are eligible.

If an applicant does not meet the criteria set for the Prequalified Stream, they may be eligible under another stream of the Program (See the Guidelines for complete eligibility criteria).

**21. What is the minimum performance ratio required in order to be eligible to the Prequalified Stream?**

The minimum performance ratio required in order to be eligible to the Prequalified Stream may vary by region and by linguistic market. This ratio will be published on the program's webpage in advance of the opening.

Telefilm clients who are eligible to the Prequalified Stream will receive a Note in Dialogue before the Program's opening date advising them of their eligibility to that Stream and the amount to which they are eligible.

**22. How many projects may I submit in my Prequalified Stream portfolio and what is the maximum Telefilm participation per project?**

The minimum Telefilm participation in an individual project is \$15,000.

The per-project maximum Telefilm participation for projects under the Prequalified Stream is equal to the total funding amount for which the applicant is eligible. In other words, the maximum Telefilm participation for projects submitted by applicants eligible under Tier A is \$75,000; for Tier B projects it is \$50,000 and for Tier C projects, it is \$25,000.

Telefilm's financial participation per project can be up to 100% of the project's budget.

The maximum number of projects an applicant may include in its portfolio under the Prequalified Stream will be determined by the tier under which the applicant is eligible.

**23. How is the Performance Ratio calculated for my company and for the films that I have produced?**

For more information on performance ratio calculation, please refer to the [Cheat Sheet on Performance Ratio Calculation and Access to the Prequalified Stream](#).

**24. If I am eligible to the Prequalified Stream in Tier A or B, can I submit a mix of French and English-language projects?**

Yes, applications under the Prequalified Stream may contain a mix of French and English-language projects.

## **SELECTIVE STREAM, STREAM FOR BLACK AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR AND INDIGENOUS STREAM**

### **25. What are the terms of funding under the Selective Stream, the Indigenous Stream and the Stream for Black and People of Colour?**

Telefilm's minimum participation in individual projects under these Streams is \$15,000 and the maximum participation is \$25,000. Each applicant may submit only one (1) project to these streams, and each applicant may apply to only one of these streams.

### **26. Who is eligible for the Stream for Black and People of Colour?**

Any production company which meets the applicant eligibility criteria described in the Guidelines is eligible. Eligibility, however, does not mean that an applicant will receive funding.

### **27. How does Telefilm determine if an applicant is a Canadian-controlled corporation?**

Telefilm uses the parameters of the *Investment Canada Act* for the purposes of determining the Canadian control of applicants.

Please note that, a permanent resident within the meaning of subsection 2 (1) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* who has been ordinarily resident in Canada for more than one year after the time at which they first became eligible to apply for Canadian citizenship is not considered "Canadian" under the *Investment Canada Act*.

### **28. What if the festival at which my project premiered is not in the List of Qualifying Festivals for the Selective Stream or the List of Qualifying Festivals for the Stream for Black and People of Colour, and the Indigenous Stream?**

If the festival at which your project premiered is not on the list, please fill in the eligibility form on the Program's webpage and submit with the rest of the required documents at the time of application.

### **29. How will projects be evaluated once they are submitted under the Selective Stream, the Stream for Black and People of Colour, and the Indigenous Stream?**

The projects will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 2 of the Program guidelines. Advisory committees will evaluate the projects based on the evaluation criteria indicated in the Program guidelines and submit their recommendations to Telefilm. Each advisory committee will use an evaluation grid to score and rank eligible projects.

The factors that Telefilm will consider in evaluating submitted projects under each of these streams are:

#### **Creative Elements**

- ✓ the creative quality and originality of the synopsis and the treatment or script, as applicable;
- ✓ the strength and creative passion of the pitch;
- ✓ the cinematic potential of the film;
- ✓ the viability of the development plan;

- ✓ the aspects of the creative elements that speak to Canadian experiences and audiences;
- ✓ for projects dealing with the experiences of underrepresented communities, the level and nature of the engagement with those communities;
- ✓ for projects at the packaging phase, the Director and/or market interest attached.

**Track Record of the Key Creative Personnel (Producer(s), Screenwriter and Director (where applicable))**

- ✓ the capacity of the creative team to execute its vision for the project;
- ✓ the relevant experience and level expertise of the Producer(s), Screenwriter and Director (where applicable), relative to the scope of the project;
- ✓ the past performance of the previous projects of the creative team in terms of critical acclaim, audience engagement, visibility, etc.;
- ✓ **Note:** The track record of the Director will only be considered for packaging phase applications with a confirmed director attached to the project as confirmed by a director agreement.

**Cultural Impact and Audience Potential**

- ✓ the potential for cultural and/or commercial success;
- ✓ the potential to find an audience;
- ✓ whether the project speaks to a Canadian or international audience and/or an underrepresented audience;
- ✓ the originality, creative vision and creative quality potential of the project to stand out in the current feature film landscape;
- ✓ for projects dealing with the experiences of underrepresented communities, the project's potential to reach and speak to these communities.

**Portfolio Balance**

Decision-making will take into account Telefilm's objective to foster a diversity of voices in the industry, ensuring Telefilm funds a balanced portfolio of productions reflecting a variety of genres, budget and company sizes, regions across the country, and different viewpoints. To that effect, Telefilm may notably prioritize projects whose key creatives (screenwriter and/or producer and/or director, if applicable) self-identify as Black, People of Colour, Indigenous, Women, and Members of Official Language Minority Communities.

**30. Who makes the decisions on which projects Telefilm will support under the Selective Stream, the Stream for Black and People of Colour and the Indigenous Stream?**

Advisory committees will evaluate the projects based on the above evaluation criteria. Internal advisory committee representatives will come from the Project Financing and Business Affairs teams at Telefilm including National and Regional Feature Film Executives, Content Analysts and Investment Analysts located in Telefilm's offices across the country.

Where advisory committees include external members, such members will be film industry experts with the necessary expertise and experience to be able to assess the strength and quality of the applications according to the evaluation criteria.

In all cases, the advisory committee members for the Stream for Black and People of Colour and the Indigenous Stream will be individuals who self-identify as Black or People of Colour and Indigenous persons, respectively, and will reflect regional diversity and gender parity.

There may be different advisory committees based on language and region.

**31. How will Indigenous projects be evaluated?**

The Indigenous projects will be assessed based on the evaluation criteria described above. In addition, the objectives of narrative sovereignty outlined in the *On-Screen Pathways and Protocols: A Media Production Guide* will be a factor in the consideration of all Indigenous projects and content.

In its assessment, the Indigenous Stream advisory committee will consider the overall portfolio of projects to strive for a diversity of voices reflected in the choices. This takes into account gender parity, regional balance, a balance of Indigenous nations to be reflected, official languages, Indigenous languages, and budget levels.

**32. How will the advisory committees rank and score the applications?**

The applications will be evaluated and ranked based on the evaluation grid. This grid will be used by each advisory committee across all streams except the Prequalified Stream. The evaluation grid has a maximum number of points for each criterion and will be published on Telefilm's website prior to the opening of the Program. The advisory committee members will each score the projects according to the evaluation grid and the projects will then be ranked based on the average score.

As part of the process, a portfolio balancing exercise will be performed to ensure that Telefilm is meeting its objective to foster a diversity of voices in the industry, ensuring Telefilm funds a balanced portfolio of productions reflecting a variety of genres, budget and company sizes, regions across the country, and different viewpoints. Telefilm may notably prioritize projects whose key creatives (screenwriter and/or producer and director, where applicable) self-identify as Black, People of Colour, Indigenous, women, and members of Official Language Minority Communities.

### 33. What should be included in the Pitch Document?

The Pitch Document is the document that will be considered in the evaluation of the project and therefore should include a summary of the creative elements, the team attached, the cultural impact and intended audience. The document should be 5-10 pages (including visuals). Every Pitch Document will be different but should include (but is not limited to) the following:

- A short synopsis.
- A long synopsis.
- A description of the themes and creative intentions behind the project. This could include a personal statement from the creative team, discussing the connection to the material, the motivations for making the film, as well as information that will help elevate the film beyond what can be understood in the creative materials.
- A development plan including a summary of the creative goals for this phase. Discuss any unique processes that may be important to the film's execution (e.g., non-traditional casting, etc.);
- A summary of the track record of the team.
- Community engagement elements (**Note:** The detailed community engagement plan is a separate document).
- An indication of the intended audience and cultural impact for the project.
- The advisory committee may find it helpful to see a note from the writer about the way they intend to approach this phase of writing; e.g., if it is a rewrite of an existing script, discuss the writer's intended changes. The advisory committee may also find it helpful to see an email or a letter confirming the participation of the story editor, if a story editor is associated with the project, and a rationale for why this story editor is the best fit for the project.

### 34. What is a Community Engagement Plan and what should be in it?

A Community Engagement plan is an opportunity for filmmakers to talk about their process of working with underrepresented communities impacted by the development and planned production of their film. Appropriate engagement will depend on the content of the film, the knowledge of the team, and the territories and communities being represented on-screen. This is a tool to help answer questions that advisory committee members may have about the filmmaker's approach to underrepresented communities and potentially sensitive content. In most cases, decision-makers want to see evidence that the filmmaker has considered the potential impact of their production and that they have a plan to work in ways that are collaborative and respectful of impacted communities. The Community Engagement Plan may also discuss the approaches that will be employed which are sustainable and environmentally responsible. Community Engagement Plans can be a simple statement from a filmmaker saying that they don't believe the production of their film requires any particular kind of community engagement. Applicants may outline plans involving (but not limited to) hiring advisors, involving community members in their creative team, having counsellors on set, hiring local crew, and entering into written agreements with communities. The plan depends entirely on the needs of the project, the communities involved, and what the filmmakers deem is appropriate for their project.

For further information, applicants may contact Telefilm's Lead, Indigenous Initiatives, Lead, Inclusion Initiatives or the Inclusion Initiatives Advisor. (See the website for contact information).