



CANADA FEATURE FILM FUND

THEATRICAL DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION GUIDE

AS OF DECEMBER 15, 2020

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Eligibility

1. Who is eligible for the Theatrical Documentary Program?

Any production company which meets the basic Applicant Eligibility criteria is eligible. Eligibility, however, does not mean that an applicant will receive funding.

2. What are the maximum budgets allowed in the Theatrical Documentary Program?

There is no restriction on the maximum size of budgets for theatrical documentary projects submitted to Telefilm. There is, however, a minimum budget level of \$400,000 for production applications. There is no minimum budget for post-production applications.

3. Does the subject matter of my documentary have to be Canadian?

The subject matter does not have to be intrinsically Canadian in terms of content. Telefilm considers the filmmaking approach and point-of-view of the creative team to be a key factor in the Canadian perspective of a project, along with the relevance of the subject matter to a Canadian audience.

4. If an applicant is the minority coproducer of an audiovisual treaty coproduction, is the project still eligible?

Yes, projects that are recognized as audiovisual treaty coproductions are eligible to apply to the Program but, as all projects submitted to the Program, they are not guaranteed funding.

In the case of audiovisual treaty coproductions, the determination of eligible applicants and eligible projects will be adapted to reflect international treaties and to ensure that the spirit and intent of the Theatrical Documentary Program guidelines are respected.

Please note that applications for treaty coproduction recommendations must be done separately at the earliest of: 40% of the financing confirmed (exclusive of tax credits) or after an offer of financing from Telefilm has been received and, in all cases, no later than 30 days before the start of principal photography.

5. My documentary project's budget is less than \$2.5M. Do I need a firm commitment from an eligible Canadian distributor for a theatrical release in Canada within one year of completion and delivery for my project to be eligible?

Yes. All projects submitted to the Theatrical Documentary Program, no matter the level of the production budget, must have a firm commitment from an eligible Canadian distributor.

The commitment must be in the form of a valid agreement with the eligible distribution company and must outline all rights and/or options being licensed or acquired, the territory, the term, all relevant terms and conditions, including all deductions permitted from revenues and admissible expenses. The agreement must also guarantee the film's theatrical release in at least its original language market in Canada within one year of its delivery and should include a minimum commitment for print and

advertising expenditure in support of the production's initial theatrical release.

On a case-by-case basis, Telefilm reserves the right to accept a firm written commitment from a non-eligible Canadian distribution company for projects submitted under the Indigenous Stream.

6. I am considering an offer from a Canadian distributor for the theatrical release of my project but I am not sure if that distributor is considered an eligible Canadian distributor under the Marketing Program's guidelines. How do I know if my project will be eligible?

The distribution Company should be able to confirm to you if it is considered eligible for the purposes of the Theatrical Documentary Program. For more information, you can contact your local Coordinator.

If the distribution company is not eligible, the distributor may contact Telefilm directly to request eligibility consideration.

Note: On a case-by-case basis, Telefilm reserves the right to accept a firm written commitment from a non-eligible Canadian distribution company for projects submitted under the Indigenous Stream.

7. What officially constitutes a theatrical release for the purposes of the Theatrical Documentary Program?

A theatrical release is the exhibition of the film to the paying public at a commercial theatre. The theatrical release date is the day on which a film is entered into the theatrical distribution system for public viewing in one or more theatres and in one or more cities. **Note:** Four-walling is not considered a theatrical release.

Evaluation

8. How will projects be evaluated once they are submitted?

The projects will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 4.2 of the Theatrical Documentary Program guidelines.

The decision-making will be done by a selection committee including external and internal representatives who will rank the applications based on the evaluation criteria described in the Guidelines.

The main factors that will be considered in evaluating submitted projects are:

- **Creative Elements**
 - ✓ the originality of the project;
 - ✓ the quality of the research, including sources accessed and expertise consulted on the arguments presented;
 - ✓ the quality of the cinematic and narrative potential of the project including the presentation of subject matter and characters, the quality of the script and production plans (for production applications);
 - ✓ the quality and level of completion of the production at time of application (for post-production

- applications);
 - ✓ the director’s vision and intentions for the film;
 - ✓ for projects working with under-represented communities, the level and nature of the engagement with those communities.
- **Track Record of the Production Company and the Key Creative Personnel** (i.e., the producer, director and screenwriter)
 - ✓ the relevant experience and level of expertise;
 - ✓ the capacity of the creative team to get the project into production and to execute its vision;
 - ✓ the past performance of the team in terms of critical acclaim, audience engagement, visibility, etc.

Note: the track record will be evaluated according to the nature and scope of the project
- **Project Viability**
 - ✓ the readiness of the project, the overall financial viability of the project, confirmed financing, and feasibility of the production schedule;
 - ✓ the access that the creative team has to relevant locations and interview subjects.
- **Theatrical Potential, Promotion Strategy and Audience Reach Potential**
 - ✓ its potential to stand out and make an impact within the theatrical feature documentary landscape
 - ✓ the global promotion strategy and its capacity to make the film available to its target audience and to maximize audience reach including steps proposed to ensure selection in relevant national and international festivals and the Canadian and international marketing strategy for traditional and other platforms
 - ✓ the track record and experience of the attached distributor in successfully bringing theatrical documentaries to their audiences in cinemas and across other platforms
 - ✓ the clear identification of the target market, and solid marketing hooks
 - ✓ commitment of the Canadian broadcaster, if applicable, to providing significant promotional support for the theatrical release
- **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 (director and/or screenwriter and/or producer) self-identify as Racialized Persons (including, but not limited to, Black and People of Colour), Indigenous, women, and members of Official Language Minority Communities.

NOTE: The evaluation and decision-making will be done based on the application information and documents submitted at the Program deadline. The Required Documents list for the Program can be found [here](#). Applicants should ensure that they understand the documents required and submit a complete application package. Questions may be directed to the local Coordinator. Documents submitted after the Program deadline may not be considered in the decision-making.

9. What is the difference between the Creative Plan, the Creative Completion Plan and the Director's vision?

The Creative Plan (production) or the Creative Completion Plan (post-production) is the document which describes the proposed execution (or completion) plan for the project including (but not limited to) the summary of the research, proposed interview subjects and locations for shooting. It provides the overall plan for what will be shot and the intended scope of the documentary project.

The Director's vision, on the other hand, is the Director's particular take on the project. Every Director's vision statement is different, although a more visually dynamic document is often useful. The Director's statement often includes (but is not limited to):

- A personal statement from the director which discusses their connection to the material, their motivations for making the film, and their perspective on the subject matter
- Notes on their unique directorial approach to cinematic elements which will elevate the film beyond what can be understood in the documentary treatment or script.
- Discussion of any unique access to research, locations, special events or characters that will be represented in the film.

10. What does Telefilm take into consideration when evaluating requests which exceed the \$150,000 financial participation cap?

Telefilm may consider a request to exceed the cap in exceptional situations for projects whose production budgets are greater than \$2M and will take into account the track record of the production company and the creative team, as well as the creative merit and the cultural relevance of the project.

11. How will the overall financial viability of the project be evaluated?

When evaluating a proposal, Telefilm will take into consideration the viability of the project with respect to its budget and financing structure. While it is not necessary to provide commitment letters from all financial sources at the time of application, a proposed financial structure must be realistic and attainable. As such, applicants must be able to demonstrate the capacity to close the financing within a realistic timeframe.

12. What is a Community Engagement Plan, and what should it include?

A Community Engagement plan is an opportunity for filmmakers to talk about their process of working with under-represented communities impacted by the 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 onscreen. This is a tool to help answer questions juries and decision makers may have about the filmmaker's approach to marginalized 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 Engagement plan could also discuss the approaches that will be employed which are sustainable and environmentally responsible. Engagement plans can be a simple statement from a filmmaker saying that they don't believe the production of their film requires any community engagement. Other times, filmmakers will talk about specific activities, including (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 appropriate for their project.

Indigenous Stream

13. I am an Indigenous filmmaker and want to access funding under the Indigenous Streams of various programs. Who should I reach out to?

Telefilm has a webpage dedicated to Indigenous initiatives and Telefilm programs including information about Telefilm's commitment to an accurate representation of Indigenous stories and various Indigenous streams, the application and decision-making processes as well as links to helpful guides and tools. You can consult it [here](#). There is also a useful **Indigenous Initiatives Resource Guide** for Indigenous clients [here](#).

Before you submit your application, please contact [Adam Garnet Jones](#), Lead, Indigenous Initiatives.

Note: The application period for the Indigenous Stream of the Theatrical Documentary program is at the same time than the application period for the Indigenous Stream of the [Production Program](#). Applicants who apply to the Theatrical Documentary Program outside the application period for the Indigenous Stream and mark the box requesting to be reviewed by the Indigenous jury will be asked to re-submit their application during the Indigenous Stream application period.

14. How will Indigenous projects be evaluated?

Indigenous theatrical documentary projects will be assessed by a jury including Indigenous creators and experts from the industry, who will make recommendations to Telefilm. In its assessment, the jury 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. All projects will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria set out in Telefilm's Theatrical Documentary Program guidelines.

Track record, for the purposes of the Indigenous jury, is assessed by an evaluation of the team's previous success. This is based on the team's CVs, which should outline their:

- Ability to get previous film projects financed and completed
- Amount of experience in their proposed role (e.g. Producer, Director)
- Artistic, critical, and market success of their past work. (e.g. Festivals, awards, national and international sales & distribution, broadcast, box office, etc.)

15. What is considered a remote location?

A remote location is generally defined as a location 350km or more from a city with an active film industry,

or any region where production expenses are expected to be significantly higher as a result of a location's remoteness.

16. How do I qualify for remote location additional funding?

The jury may choose to dispense additional funding for Indigenous projects being shot in a remote location when the production expenses are higher due to the remoteness of the region and the additional funding is considered essential to the success of the project.

17. What is meant by Capacity building?

Telefilm recognizes the need to support Indigenous filmmakers in the growth of new Indigenous talent. To this end, applicants to the Indigenous Stream may submit proposals for projects that will use the production of their film to train, mentor, and otherwise develop Indigenous production talent.

18. It is possible to request additional funding for remote location and for capacity building for the same project?

Yes. However, the cumulative additional funding cannot exceed \$50,000 and the total financial participation of Telefilm shall not exceed 49% of the eligible Canadian production costs.

19. What does it take to qualify for an additional funding for capacity building?

Only projects submitted under the Indigenous Stream are eligible for this additional funding. The applicants submitting a request for additional funding for capacity building must be able to demonstrate the training/mentoring efforts put in place on the project, the additional costs incurred for the capacity building efforts and the measurable outcomes.

Contracting

20. I have received an offer of financing. What happens next?

The Business Affairs team will work with you to translate this offer into a firm contractual commitment. It is your responsibility to review all the conditions to commitment in the decision letter. We strongly suggest you review each of them with the investment analyst assigned to your file to make sure you understand all the requirements. Pay special attention to the expiry date: if all conditions to commitment are not met by that date, the financing that has been conditionally reserved for your project could be reallocated without further notice.

21. What happens if I don't proceed to production by the date specified in my Telefilm agreement or if I'm unable to fulfill any of the other conditions in my Telefilm agreement?

It is the applicant's responsibility to update Telefilm with any changes to its project. Please contact your investment analyst and Feature Film Executive as soon as possible if there are updates to your project.