



CANADA FEATURE FILMFUND

PRODUCTION PROGRAM

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION GUIDE

AS OF FEBRUARY 4, 2021

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ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Who is eligible for the Production 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. 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*.

3. What are the maximum budgets allowed in the Production Program?

There is no restriction on the maximum size of budgets for film projects submitted to Telefilm. There is, however, a minimum budget level of \$250,000.

4. How do you identify the lead production company?

The lead production company has to be clearly identified at the time of application for production financing (see the form *Designation of Main Applicant and Sharing of Project Score*). In cases where there is more than one production company involved, Telefilm will not make any assumptions in that regard and will rely on the coproducers’ joint declaration of intentions provided at time of application. Once this designation is confirmed to Telefilm, it cannot be modified.

5. If an applicant is the Canadian 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 for all other projects, 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 production guidelines are respected.

Please note that applications for treaty coproduction recommendations must be filed 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.

6. The budget of my project is less than \$2.5 million (French) / less than \$3.5M (English). Do I need a firm commitment from an eligible Canadian distributor for a theatrical release in Canada within one year of delivery for my project to be eligible?

No. You do not need to have a firm commitment from an eligible distributor if your project is in English and has a budget of less than \$3.5M or if your project is in French and has a budget of less than \$2.5M. However, if you do have a distributor attached, it will need to be an eligible Canadian distributor and the distribution agreement must comply with Telefilm's Distribution Terms and Contracts Requirements Policy¹. (See next question.)

7. I received a firm written commitment from a Canadian distributor for the theatrical release of my project. However, the distributor is not considered an eligible Canadian distributor under the guidelines. Is my project eligible?

The answer depends on the project's budget:

- **English project with a budget of less than \$3.5 million or French project with a budget less than \$2.5 million:** The project is eligible. Telefilm does not require a firm commitment from an eligible distributor for a theatrical release for such projects to be eligible. However, if you have a distributor attached, whether at the time of application or during or following production, the distributor, and the distribution plan, must be approved by Telefilm. **Note:** the distribution agreement must comply with Telefilm's Distribution Terms and Contracts Requirements Policy.

- **English project with a budget greater than or equal to \$ 3.5 million or French project with a budget greater than or equal to \$2.5 million:** The project is not eligible. In order to be eligible, such projects must have a firm written commitment from an eligible Canadian distribution company for theatrical release in Canada within one year of delivery, as defined in the [List of required documents](#). The criteria for an eligible distributor are outlined in the Marketing program [guidelines](#). The firm commitment must outline all rights, territory, term and amount of the minimum guarantee and P&A.
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.

8. What officially constitutes a theatrical release?

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.

9. Do I need to have all my financing sources confirmed when I apply?

While it is not necessary to provide commitment letters from all confirmed financial sources at the time of submission, 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

¹ Please note that the Distribution Terms and Contracts Requirements Policy is currently under review.

timeframe. (See evaluation section below.)

10. Do I need to meet with the Telefilm team before I apply?

It is recommended that you contact your Feature Film Executive to discuss your project before submitting your application. The Feature Film Executive may refer you to the Lead, Indigenous Initiatives, Lead, Inclusion Initiatives or the Inclusion Initiatives Advisor as appropriate.

EVALUATION

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

The projects will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 4 of the Program guidelines.

Advisory committees composed of external and internal experts 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 main factors that Telefilm will consider in evaluating submitted projects are:

Creative Elements

- the creative quality and originality of the script (for Production applications) or the Rough Cut and Completion Proposal (for Post-Production applications), which includes an assessment of premise, story, structure, characters, themes, dialogue, conflict, and world-building, and whether it has the potential to be a film that will achieve its creative intentions;
- the cinematic potential of the project and the strength of the Director's Vision;
- additional creative elements such as confirmed or proposed cast and how that may augment other creative elements;
- 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.

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

- the relevant experience and level expertise of the Producer(s), Director and Screenwriter relative to the scope of the project and their capacity to execute the creative vision of the project;
- the past performance of each member of the Key Creative Personnel (i.e., Producer(s), Director and Screenwriter) in terms of critical acclaim, audience engagement, visibility, etc.

Project Viability

- the readiness of the project and overall financial viability of the project, including

- confirmed and achievable financing and the level of confirmed market interest;
- the feasibility of the production schedule and production budget vis-à-vis the scope and aspirations of the project.

Cultural Impact and Audience Reach Potential

- the strength of the marketing/promotion strategy, in terms of the proposed plan to target and reach the intended audience, including the festival and theatrical audience, and to make the project stand out in the current feature film landscape;
- for projects with budgets equal or greater than \$2.5M, the potential for commercial audience reach and the track record and experience of attached Distributors, Broadcasters, and International Sales Agents;
- for projects dealing with the experiences of under-represented communities, the project's potential to reach and speak to these communities.

Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions

- the potential impact of the production including the optimization of the Canadian investments and the leveraging of international financing and resources;
- the contribution of the project to the building of the capacity and expertise of the Canadian partners;
- the contribution of the project to increasing the visibility and promotion of the Canadian audiovisual industry in the international marketplace and with international audiences.

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 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. Applicants will be advised via Dialogue if their application is incomplete and will be given five (5) business days to submit missing or incomplete documentation. The evaluation and decision-making will be done based on the application information and documents received with the application and within this five-day notice period. Documents submitted following this five-day notice may not be taken into consideration in the decision-making.

12. Who makes the decisions on which projects Telefilm will support?

Advisory committees composed of external and internal experts will evaluate the projects based on the evaluation criteria contained in the guidelines and submit their recommendations to Telefilm. The external advisory committee 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. The 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.

The external advisory committee members will be chosen to reflect regional and cultural diversity and gender parity.

There may be different advisory committees based on language, region, budget level, Indigenous stream and audiovisual treaty coproduction status. (See also the Indigenous Stream section below).

Note: Treaty coproduction funding applications will benefit from an extended application period, subject to availability of funds. When submitted outside the main application period for all projects, such projects will be evaluated by an internal advisory committee. Applicants must contact their Feature Film Executive if/when they wish to submit their funding request outside the Program's main application period to confirm if resources are available and to receive permission to submit their application.

13. How will the advisory committees rank and score the applications?

The applications will be evaluated and ranked based on an evaluation grid. There may be different evaluation grids for different categories of projects. Each evaluation grid will have a maximum number of points for each criterion which is appropriate to the realities and norms for that particular category of projects. These evaluation grids will be published on Telefilm's website prior to the opening date 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 (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.

14. What should be included in the Director's vision?

The Director's vision 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, and their motivations for making the film, and their perspective on the subject matter.
- Notes on their unique approach to cinematic elements which will elevate the film beyond what can be understood in the script.

- Discussion of any unique processes that may be important to the film's execution (e.g. non-traditional casting, shooting during certain times of day, etc.)

15. What is the expectation in terms of the experience level and track record of the Key Creative Personnel?

It is expected that the Key Creative Personnel (Producer(s), Screenwriter and Director) have the experience to carry out both the creative and business aspects of the project. The Producer or producing team should have relevant experience delivering projects of a similar scope. At a minimum, the Director should have directed a short film or other audiovisual works that reflect the level of skill necessary to deliver the vision of the proposed feature film.

16. 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 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 that advisory committee members may have about the filmmaker's approach to under-represented 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 Adam Garnet Jones (Lead, Indigenous Initiatives), Ayesha Husain (Lead, Inclusion Initiatives and Content Analyst) and Hager Namly (Inclusion Initiatives Advisor and Content Analyst).

17. My production budget is less than \$2.5M and I want to request a Telefilm amount greater than \$500,000? What will Telefilm take into consideration in my request?

In exceptional cases, Telefilm may, in its discretion, and subject to availability of funds, exceed the \$500,000 cap for projects with production budgets of less than \$2.5 million. The project must have scored very high in the Creative section of the evaluation grid, there must be a demonstrated need (e.g., remote shoot location, specific creative vision costs, etc.). Nevertheless, the total financial participation of Telefilm shall not exceed 49% of the eligible Canadian production costs.

INDIGENOUS STREAM

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

Telefilm has a [webpage](#) dedicated to Indigenous initiatives and Telefilm programs which includes 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. On the webpage, you may also find a useful **Indigenous Initiatives Resources Guide** for Indigenous clients.

Note: Where a project will be produced or completed in an Indigenous language, the application materials must be submitted in English or French.

Before you submit your application, please contact Adam Garnet Jones, Lead, Indigenous Initiatives at adamgarnet.jones@telefilm.ca.

19. How will Indigenous projects be evaluated?

The objectives of narrative sovereignty outlined in the On-Screen Pathways and Protocols: A Media Production Guide will be a factor in the consideration all Indigenous projects and content.

Indigenous projects will be assessed by an advisory committee comprised of Indigenous creators and experts from the industry, who will make recommendations to Telefilm. In its assessment, the 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. All projects will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria set out in Telefilm's Production Program's guidelines. (See also Question 11 above).

20. 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.

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

The advisory committee may recommend 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.

22. 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.

23. Is it possible to request additional funding for remote location and for capacity building for the same project?

Yes. However, the cumulative additional funding cannot exceed \$100,000 and the total financial participation of Telefilm shall not exceed 49% of the eligible Canadian production costs.

24. 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

25. 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.

26. 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.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOLLOWING INFORMATION SESSION

27. I have a project that includes a language other than English, French or an Indigenous language. Is my project eligible for funding under the Production program?

Eligible projects must be in English, French or an Indigenous language. However, Telefilm has made exceptions in the past for films that were produced in part in another language. We are conscious that there is work to be done to allow our programs to better reflect Canada's multilingual creators and stories and that, in some specific cases, the story itself needs to be told in a particular language. We are currently working on a framework to support films in languages other than French, English or Indigenous. Please contact your Feature Film Executive to discuss the specific needs of your project before submitting an application.

Note: In all cases, the application must be submitted in one of the official languages (English or French), including the full script and all required documents.

28. Will Telefilm consider the corporate control of applicants to ensure projects are owned and controlled by racialized creators (as is done in the Indigenous stream)? Will Telefilm be including corporate control in its diversity prioritization?

For this fiscal year, the corporate control of applicant companies is only taken into account in the evaluation of Canadian status and within the Indigenous Stream. Data regarding corporate control of applicants collected this year will be used by Telefilm, among other things, to evaluate the diversity of its portfolio.

29. Is a project more likely to be financed at the Production stage if it received funding from Telefilm's Development program?

No. The evaluation and scoring of a project are based on the evaluation criteria described in Telefilm's Guidelines and herein (Question 11). Whether or not a project received funding from the Development program is not a consideration in that evaluation.

30. Do I need to have an incorporated company to apply or can I set it up if and when I receive a positive recommendation?

Yes. You must apply with a company as described in Section 2.1 of the Program Guidelines.