

CANADA FEATURE FILM FUND (CFFF)

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
GUIDELINES

APPLICABLE AS OF JUNE 17, 2021

Ce document est également disponible
en français

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Program Summary

These guidelines are for the Canada Feature Film Fund (“CFFF”) Development Program (the “Program”). The Program is for the development of eligible Canadian feature films and is intended for Canadian production companies involved in the production of feature films in Canada.

These guidelines provide direction regarding the Program’s objectives, eligibility and evaluation criteria, and the terms and conditions of funding.

Program Intent and Objectives

The guiding principles of the Program are:

- To support the development of feature films that will speak to Canadian and international audiences, and that will bring both cultural impact and audience engagement. Telefilm seeks to fund films that will proceed to production and build and contribute to our Canadian cultural legacy.
- To support teams with a strong sensibility and perspective who will bring original voices and approaches and will advance cinematic expression.
- To support emerging and established teams in advancing their artistic career through ambitious and impactful films.
- To support greater equity and representation in storytelling, that reflects gender parity and representation from various communities including Indigenous, Black and People of Colour as well as members of LGBTQ2+ communities and People with Disabilities from all regions of the country.
- To support Indigenous content that is produced by creators who are Indigenous and/or have engaged in meaningful research, collaboration, and cooperation with Indigenous communities impacted by their projects¹.
- To support creative teams who are from underrepresented communities and/or who have engaged in meaningful research, collaboration, and cooperation with underrepresented communities, where films are dealing with the experiences of those communities.
- To give voice to creative teams from Official Language Minority Communities and those situated outside the main production centers of Toronto and Montreal.
- To provide predictability and flexibility for companies with a strong performance.

Resources within the Canada Feature Film Fund are allocated on a linguistic basis which maintains approximately one-third of funding for French-language projects.

¹ Telefilm encourages all applicants to respect the guiding principles and best practices set out in the [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways Media Production Guide](#).

1. Eligibility criteria for applicants and projects

1.1. General eligibility criteria for all applicants

An applicant must meet all the following eligibility criteria:

- a) be a Canadian-controlled corporation, as determined under sections 26 to 28 of the [Investment Canada Act](#);
- b) have its head office in Canada and carry out its activities in Canada;
- c) operate as a feature film production company.

1.2. Additional eligibility criteria for Applicants under the Prequalified Stream

In addition to the basic applicant eligibility criteria, the applicant must:

- a) have produced at least one Canadian fictional or documentary feature film financed by Telefilm under the [Production Program](#), the [Theatrical Documentary Program](#) or the [Talent to Watch Program](#) that was theatrically released in Canada in the last six years, and have at least a 20% share in the performance ratio of such film(s)²; **And**
- b) have a total performance ratio ranking among the highest ones, subject to linguistic and regional splits³. The performance ratio of the applicant is determined by the sum of the weighted performance ratio of all its projects supported by Telefilm in production and released in the last six years. **Note:** the applicant is responsible for ensuring that its filmography is accurate at all times.

1.3. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Applicants Under the Selective Stream

In order to be eligible under the Selective Stream, the applicant must have produced at least, **either**:

- a) one Canadian fictional or documentary feature film that was theatrically released⁴ in Canada in the last six years, and have at least a 20% share in the performance ratio of such film(s)⁵; **or**
- b) one Canadian fictional or documentary feature film that premiered at a qualifying festival⁶ in the last six years, and have at least 20% share in the performance ratio of such film(s)⁷; **or**
- c) one fictional or documentary feature film funded by Telefilm as part of the [Talent to Watch Program](#) that has been distributed in theatres or on one or more digital platforms in Canada over the past six years. 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 Program⁸.

² Telefilm will use the score sharing of the project as established at the time of contract to determine the proportions.

³ For more information on the selection of the 125 companies, please refer to the [Cheat Sheet on Performance Ratio Calculation and Access to the Prequalified Stream](#).

⁴ In exceptional cases, Telefilm may, in its discretion, consider films released on a digital platform during the COVID-19 pandemic period as eligible. For more details please see the [Essential Information Guide](#).

⁵ If the project was funded in production, Telefilm will use the score sharing of the project as established at the time of contract to determine the proportions. If not, Telefilm will consider the copyright share.

⁶ For the list of qualifying film festivals, please refer to the [Program's webpage](#).

⁷ If the project was funded in production, Telefilm will use the score sharing of the project as established at the time of contract to determine the proportions. If not, Telefilm will consider the copyright share.

⁸ Please see the [Essential Information Guide](#) for more information.

Such feature film(s) must, with respect to Canadian content certification have either been certified by the Canadian Audiovisual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 8 out of 10 points or the prorated equivalent (i.e. a minimum of 80% of available CAVCO points) under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, or been recognized as an Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to the guidelines entitled [Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions](#) on Telefilm’s website).

Official Language Minority Communities

If an applicant is majority-owned and controlled by members of an official language minority community, the applicant is eligible under the Selective Stream if they have produced at least, **either**:

- a) one Canadian fictional or documentary feature film that was theatrically released⁹ in Canada or premiered at a qualifying film festival¹⁰ in the last six years, and have at least a 20% share in the performance ratio of such film(s)¹¹. Such feature film(s) must have either been certified by the Canadian Audiovisual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 6 out of 10 points or the prorated equivalent (i.e. a minimum of 60% of available CAVCO points) under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, or been recognized as an Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to the guidelines entitled [Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions](#) on Telefilm’s website); **or**
- b) one project funded by Telefilm as part of the [Talent to Watch Program](#) that has been distributed in theatres or on one or more digital platforms¹² in Canada over the past six years; **or**
- c) one short film that premiered at a qualifying film festival¹³ over the past six years; **or**
- d) one hour of Television that aired for the first time over the past six years which must have either been certified by the Canadian Audiovisual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 6 out of 10 points or the prorated equivalent (i.e. a minimum of 60% of available CAVCO points) under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, or been recognized as an Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to the guidelines entitled [Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions](#) on Telefilm’s website).

Please note that if a project was released both in theatres and in festivals, 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.

1.4. Additional eligibility criteria for Applicants Under Indigenous Stream

In order to be eligible under the Indigenous Stream, the applicant must:

- be a production company majority owned and controlled by Indigenous¹⁴ persons; and
- have produced at least, **either**:

⁹ In exceptional cases, Telefilm may, in its discretion, consider films released on a digital platform during the COVID-19 pandemic period as eligible. For more details please see the [Essential Information Guide](#).

¹⁰ For the list of qualifying film festivals, please refer to the [Program’s webpage](#).

¹¹ If the project was funded in production, Telefilm will use the score sharing of the project as established at the time of contract to determine the proportions. If not, Telefilm will consider the copyright share.

¹² Please see the [Essential Information Guide](#) for more information.

¹³ For the list of qualifying film festivals, please refer to the [Program’s webpage](#).

¹⁴ “**Indigenous peoples**” is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. “Indigenous” refers to First nations, Inuit, or Metis.

- a) one Canadian fictional or documentary feature film that was theatrically released¹⁵ in Canada or premiered at a qualifying film festival¹⁶ in the last six years, and have at least a 20% share in the performance ratio of such film(s)¹⁷. Such feature film(s) must, with respect to Canadian content certification have either been certified by the Canadian Audiovisual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 6 out of 10 points or the prorated equivalent (i.e. a minimum of 60% of available CAVCO points) under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, or been recognized as an Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to the guidelines entitled [Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions](#) on Telefilm’s website; **Or**
- b) one project funded by Telefilm as part of the [Talent to Watch Program](#) that has been distributed in theatres or on one or more digital platforms¹⁸ in Canada over the past six years; **Or**
- c) one short film that premiered at a qualifying film festival¹⁹ over the past six years; **Or**
- d) one hour of Television that aired for the first time over the past six years which must have either been certified by the Canadian Audiovisual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 6 out of 10 points or the prorated equivalent (i.e. a minimum of 60% of available CAVCO points) under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, or been recognized as an Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to the guidelines entitled [Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions](#) on Telefilm’s website).

Please note that if a project was released both in theatres and in festivals, 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.

1.5. Additional Eligibility Criteria for Applicants under the Stream for Black and People of Colour²⁰

In order to be eligible film under the Stream for Black and People of Colour, the applicant must:

- be a production company majority-owned and controlled by persons who self-identify as Black or People of Colour; **and**
- have produced at least, **either**:
 - a) One Canadian fictional or documentary feature film that was theatrically released²¹ in Canada or premiered at a qualifying film festival²² in the last six years, and have at least a 20% share

¹⁵ In exceptional cases, Telefilm may, in its discretion, consider films released on a digital platform during the COVID-19 pandemic period as eligible. For more details please see the [Essential Information Guide](#).

¹⁶ For the list of qualifying film festivals, please refer to the [Program’s webpage](#).

¹⁷ If the project was funded in production, Telefilm will use the score sharing of the project as established at the time of contract to determine the proportions. If not, Telefilm will consider the copyright share.

¹⁸ Please see the [Essential Information Guide](#) for more information.

¹⁹ For the list of qualifying film festivals, please refer to the [Program’s webpage](#).

²⁰ The expression “**Black and People of Colour**” refers to persons who are non-White in race and not Indigenous. It includes, but is not limited to, those who identify as Black (including Black African, Black-Caribbean), Asian (including East Asian, South Asian, South-East Asian), Latin, Middle-Eastern, North-African as well as individuals who are of bi-racial or mixed race backgrounds. Telefilm respects the fact that terminology (Categories, dropdowns, and definitions) is subject to change and is part of our ongoing and inclusive dialogue with the industry.

²¹ In exceptional cases, Telefilm may, in its discretion, consider films released on a digital platform during the COVID-19 pandemic period as eligible. For more details please see the [Essential Information Guide](#).

²² For the list of qualifying film festivals, please refer to the [Program’s webpage](#).

- in the performance ratio of such film(s)²³. Such feature film(s) must, with respect to Canadian content certification have either been certified by the Canadian Audiovisual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 6 out of 10 points or the prorated equivalent (i.e. a minimum of 60% of available CAVCO points) under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, or been recognized as an Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to the guidelines entitled [Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions](#) on Telefilm’s website); **or**
- b) one project funded by Telefilm as part of the [Talent to Watch Program](#) that has been distributed in theatres or on one or more digital platforms²⁴ in Canada over the past six years; **or**
 - c) one short film that premiered at a qualifying film festival²⁵ over the past six years; **or**
 - d) one hour of Television that aired for the first time over the past six years which must have either been certified by the Canadian Audiovisual Certification Office (CAVCO) as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 6 out of 10 points or the prorated equivalent (i.e. a minimum of 60% of available CAVCO points) under the provisions of the *Income Tax Act*, or been recognized as an Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to the guidelines entitled [Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions](#) on Telefilm’s website).

Please note that if a project was released both in theatres and in festivals, 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.

1.6. Credits – All Streams

The individual lead producer of the applicant company must have received one of the following production credits on the project(s) considered for eligibility: producer or executive producer. Furthermore, the producers, the screenwriter(s) and other key members of the development team who have control over the creative and financial aspects, as well as the exploitation of the projects submitted to Telefilm must be Canadian citizens within the definition of the [Citizenship Act](#) or permanent residents within the definition of the [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#).

1.7. Choice of a Stream

Applicants may only apply under one stream of the Program. If an applicant is eligible under more than one (1) stream, the applicant must choose only one. This choice is final and may not be modified after the financing request is filed.

1.8. Specific Eligibility Criteria for Projects

To be eligible for inclusion in a portfolio of projects²⁶, a project must:

- be written in English, French or in an Indigenous language by a Canadian;

²³ If the project was funded in production, Telefilm will use the score sharing of the project as established at the time of contract to determine the proportions. If not, Telefilm will consider the copyright share.

²⁴ Please see the [Essential Information Guide](#) for more information.

²⁵ For the list of qualifying film festivals, please refer to the [Program’s webpage](#).

²⁶ A body of one or more development projects whereby each project encompasses one or more development phases.

- be intended to be a Canadian (or Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction) feature-length²⁷ fictional film or theatrical documentary film;
- be under the financial and creative control of the applicant, and the applicant must hold all the exclusive rights and options, for at least 24 months, 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;
- be intended to be eligible for production funding under the [Production Program](#), the [Theatrical Documentary Program](#) or the [Talent to Watch Program](#), with either certification by CAVCO as a “Canadian film or video production” with a minimum of 8 out of 10 points or the prorated equivalent (i.e. a minimum of 80% of available CAVCO points) under the provisions of the [Income Tax Act](#), or with recognition as an Audiovisual Treaty Coproduction by the Minister of Canadian Heritage (refer to Telefilm’s guidelines entitled [Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions](#));
- comply with the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) Code of Ethics and with all other programming standards endorsed by the CAB or the CRTC, and not contain any element that is an offence under the [Criminal Code](#), is libellous or in any other way unlawful;
- not have any outstanding deliverables relating to a previous development contract with Telefilm;
- if submitted under the Indigenous Stream, the project must:
 - ✓ be written by an Indigenous²⁸ screenwriter and developed with an Indigenous producer;
 - ✓ be under the financial and creative control of Indigenous Persons.
- If submitted under the Stream for Black and People of Colour, the project must:
 - ✓ be under the financial and creative control of Black or People of Colour.
 - ✓ be written by a screenwriter and developed with a producer who both self-identify as Black or People of Colour.

2. Evaluation Criteria and Decision-Making Process

2.1. Decision-Making Process

2.1.1. Prequalified Stream

The Prequalified Stream will comprise three levels of funding, to which access will be determined by ranking production companies based on their performance ratio. A total of 125 companies will have access to the pre-qualified stream. Depending on their ranking, companies may be in tiers A, B or C.

Tier A consists of 25 companies. These are the eight French-language²⁹ companies with the highest performance ratio and the 17 English-language companies with the highest performance ratio.

²⁷ 75 minutes or more.

²⁸ “**Indigenous peoples**” is a collective name for the original peoples of North America and their descendants. “Indigenous” refers to First nations, Inuit, or Metis.

²⁹ 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.

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 ratio, but also to ensure regional representation across the country. Of these 100 companies, the top 50 make up tier B. The next 50 companies make up tier C.

2.1.2. Selective Stream

Advisory committees will evaluate projects submitted under the Selective Stream based on the evaluation criteria described below.

The decision-making will also 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 director³⁰ self-identify as Black, People of Colour, Indigenous, Women, and members of Official Language Minority Communities.

Furthermore, Telefilm aims to support the production of feature films which contain significant Canadian creative elements. While Telefilm does not intend to restrict filmmakers in their choices of stories, or their natural settings, it will, wherever possible, give priority to projects that present a distinctly Canadian point of view.

2.1.3. Indigenous Stream

As part of its commitment to ensuring the inclusion of Indigenous creative voices, Telefilm will set aside funding for projects by Canadian filmmakers from Indigenous communities. These projects will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria described below by an advisory committee having Indigenous representation, and who will evaluate the projects based on the evaluation criteria described below and then submit its recommendations to Telefilm.

Telefilm encourages all applicants to respect the guiding principles and best practices set out in the [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways Media Production Guide](#).

Please note that applicants who meet the criteria of the Indigenous Stream are not required to submit projects under this Stream and may choose to submit their projects under any other stream for which they qualify.

2.1.4. Stream for Black and People of Colour

As part of its larger goal of achieving a funding portfolio that better represents Canada, Telefilm will set aside funding for projects by Canadian filmmakers who self-identify as Black and People of Colour. These projects will be assessed by an advisory committee having representation from individuals who self-identify as Black or People of Colour and who will evaluate the projects based on the evaluation criteria described below and then submit its recommendations to Telefilm.

Please note that applicants who meet the criteria of the Stream for Black and People of Colour are not required to submit projects under this stream and may choose to submit their projects under any other stream for which they qualify.

Advisory Committee Composition

Advisory committees may be composed of internal members, external members, or a mix of internal and external members.

³⁰ Packaging phase only.

2.2. Evaluation Criteria

The advisory committees for the Selective, and Indigenous Streams as well as for the Stream for Black and People of Colour will evaluate the projects based on the evaluation criteria described below. Each advisory committee will use an evaluation grid to score and rank eligible projects.³¹

2.2.1. Creative Elements

Telefilm will evaluate the creative elements of the project including the originality and quality of the creative materials (which will include the synopsis and the pitch document and may include the treatment or script); the cinematic potential of the film; and elements that speak to Canadian experiences and audiences.

2.2.2. Track Record of the Key Creative Personnel

Telefilm will evaluate the screen-based industry experience of the creative team, primarily the producer and screenwriter (and the director for the packaging phase), including critical acclaim, and audience success. Telefilm will also consider the track record based on past and current performance including their full range of industry experience and level of expertise as it relates to the nature and scope of the project. Lastly, Telefilm will consider any relevant complementary expertise of the creative team.

2.2.3. Cultural Impact and Audience Potential

Telefilm will consider the cultural and/or commercial potential of the project; its potential to find and reach its target audience, whether it speaks to a Canadian and international audience and/or targets an underrepresented audience and whether it has the capacity to stand out in the current feature film landscape.

3. Terms of Funding

Telefilm's financial participation will take the form of an advance repayable in accordance with the terms of the contract between Telefilm and the applicant, usually on the earliest of the following dates: the first day of filming (or any other use of the script) or the date of the sale, assignment or other disposition of the rights to a project.

Telefilm's minimum financial participation in individual projects is \$15,000 and may be up to 100% of the budget for the selected development stage, subject to the maximums set out in the Funding Grid below.

Telefilm's financial participation must be used to cover eligible costs pertaining to the development phase for which funding is requested. Eligible costs include but are not limited to:

- Budget breakdown;
- Corporate overhead (max 20% of eligible costs);
- Demo;
- Design;
- Director fees (ineligible if the Director and the Screenwriter are the same person);
- Fringe benefits;
- Graphic bible;
- Legal fees;
- Option fees including on a literary work (unless paid to the producer);
- Preproduction casting;
- Preproduction scouting;
- Producer fees (max 20% of eligible costs);

³¹ The Evaluation Grid is available on the Program's webpage.

- Research;
- Screenwriter fees, in accordance with the agreement;
- Scriptwriting workshops;
- Storyboard;
- Story Consultant/Script Editor (independent from the producer);
- Travel and related costs to assist in the preproduction scouting, the financing or the final packaging of the film³².

Eligible costs must be directly associated with the development stage of the project. Only Canadian costs are eligible, with the exception of the following costs which can be non-Canadian:

- ✓ Costs related to non-Canadian script editors and consultants whose services do not result in any copyright ownership in the project;
- ✓ Costs related to obtaining an option on literary work or on an original idea.

Please note that Eligible Development Costs must include scriptwriting fees³³.

Telefilm encourages teams to collaborate with a story consultant or a script editor who is independent from the producer.

Funding Grid:

Stream	Maximum Funding Amount per Stream	Maximum number of projects permitted to be submitted by the applicant
Prequalified Stream	Portfolio total: the amount determined by the applicant's total performance ratio	This will be determined by the applicant's eligible funding amount.
	Tier A: \$75,000	Tier A: five (5) projects
	Tier B: \$50,000	Tier B: three (3) projects
	Tier C: \$25,000	Tier C: one (1) project
Selective Stream	\$25,000 per project	1 project
Indigenous Stream	\$25,000 per project	1 project
Stream for Black and People of Colour	\$25,000 per project	1 project
Note: An applicant can only submit an application to one Stream. Funding is subject to availability of funds.		

³² Telefilm unequivocally recommends to applicants that any travel outside of Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic period must comply with any advice or directive issued by the Government of Canada, including the advice as of today's date to avoid all nonessential travel outside of Canada.

³³ For animation projects, scriptwriting fees are not mandatory expenses for second and subsequent drafts.

If a project has previously received Telefilm development financing through another producer, the applicant must assume the outstanding repayment obligation before Telefilm will consider financing such project again³⁴.

All payments from Telefilm will be made by direct deposit.

4. Application Process

All applicants must apply online using [Dialogue](#) and must submit all required documentation as listed on Telefilm's [website](#). All subsequent documentation must be submitted on-line through Dialogue³⁵. If you have technical difficulties, please contact your regional coordinator. If required, please consult the [Service Charter](#) available on Telefilm's website.

Applicants may only submit one portfolio application per fiscal year.

Further Information

For further information on the Program, please see the [Essential Information Guide](#).

5. General information

While compliance with the guidelines is a prerequisite to eligibility for funding, compliance does not guarantee entitlement to Telefilm funds. Telefilm may make adjustments to its guidelines and application forms from time to time as required. Telefilm has full discretion in the application of, or exception to, these guidelines to ensure that its funding is provided to those projects that meet its spirit and intent. In all questions of interpretation of either these guidelines, or the spirit and intent of this program, Telefilm's interpretation shall prevail.

Any information, in any form, provided, obtained, created, or communicated in connection with the application or portfolio is subject to the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#).

All Telefilm programs are subject to the availability of funding.

³⁴ Telefilm must approve the transfer of rights to the new producer who will be responsible for repaying the development advance before/on the first day of principal photography.

³⁵ Applicants will be advised if their application is incomplete and will be given five (5) business days to provide missing documentation, following which additional documentation will not be accepted. Please see the [Essential Information Guide](#) for details.