



Annual Public Assembly 2016

Vancouver, British Columbia

Q&A

We thank the industry for its online and onsite questions. Please find below the responses from Telefilm Canada's Chair and Executive Director.

Do you have any plans to open an office in Calgary?

I am a mid-career Alberta producer with over 30 productions under my belt in television, MOWs and a theatrical feature film. What is the best way to foster and build my relationship with Telefilm in order to be considered for future funding?

Jay Daniel Beechinor, producer

Carolle Brabant: Hello Jay. Regarding your first question, our programs are accessible online on a 24/7 basis, and our Vancouver representatives participate as often as possible in festivals, consultations and industry events in Western Canada to connect with client and partners.

A new office would mean additional costs. We would prefer to invest our resources in projects.

Now for your second question, thank you for your interest! I invite you to contact Lauren Davis (our Feature Film Executive in the Vancouver office) to discuss your projects. Lauren travels to Alberta a few times a year specifically to meet with members of Alberta's filmmaking community, and she'd be happy to meet with you next time she's there.

What does Telefilm intend to do about the inequity in its feature film production funding? Out of \$60.8 million in production funding in 2014-2015, British Columbia only received 3.9%. Given that BC has approximately 13% of Canada's population, this is grossly unfair. I'm a female producer who works with a male writer/director in BC. By favouring female writers and/or directors, you have made it even more impossible for me to compete for a very small pot of BC funding and to get a film produced. How is this fair?

Elvira Lount, producer

Carolle Brabant: Thank you for your questions Elvira. Telefilm Canada supports lower budget films as well as films with higher budgets. Within the lower budget stream of financing, funds are allocated on a regional basis based mainly on population. In that stream the Vancouver office gets its fair share of the allocation for English-language production.

However, in the higher budget stream, it is very competitive because the financial risk is high. Therefore, projects from all regions are compared to one another and we chose the most promising ones. For that reason, regional spending can vary widely from year to year.

It should be noted that investments increased significantly in 2015-2016 in B.C. to \$8.1 million from \$4.6 million last year. And in terms of production, we funded 15 B.C. projects—the highest number since the start of the decade, and three projects more than in the previous fiscal year.

We finance on average 30% of budgets. So sometimes we say ‘yes’, and I agree, it can be a challenge to secure the remaining funding in the Western Region.

As to your second question, our goal is to level the playing field for Canadian female talent. Project quality is still important to us. Gender parity can only benefit the industry as a whole especially when it comes to connecting with audiences whose tastes and interests are changing along with the cultural landscape.

This is a question for M. Roy. You will be completing your tenure as Chair next year. What are some of things you’re most proud of over the last 10 years at Telefilm Canada?

M. Roy: I would say three things...

- 1) **Governance.** A strong corporate governance framework has enabled our Board and the Executive Director to lead Telefilm Canada toward its goals, effectively and efficiently. In particular, with respect to organizational efficiency, I am proud to say that our management expense ratios were always on target. Last fiscal we stood at 5.2%—a historic low for Telefilm. Moreover, we reinvested administrative savings of \$2.7 million in our funding programs.
- 2) **Vision.** During my 10 years as Chair, Telefilm clearly defined its strategic objectives. Case in point, 2015-2016 was the first year of our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan entitled *Inspired by Talent. Viewed Everywhere*. Extending the trend of past years, this plan has a clear vision: we must ensure that our talented creators are known here and around the world. This vision gives even more importance to the audiences whose presence provides a true measure of industry success.
- 3) **Emerging talent.** The quality of debut projects, notably via the Talent Fund-financed Micro-Budget Production Program, has been overwhelming. Our cinema measures up against the very best in the world. Remarkably, talented emerging filmmakers are rubbing shoulders with veteran Canadian directors at international festivals. All these talented Canadians have a passion for creation and a desire to succeed that never ceases to amaze me.

Regarding your recent gender parity announcement, what does “projects of equal quality” mean (is there an issue of unconscious bias)? And does your 2020 objective extend to projects of all budget levels?

Dusty Kelly, Women in Film + Television Vancouver

Carolle Brabant: Thank you for question Dusty. First, Telefilm Canada continually has to choose between projects—this is the reality of a selective investment process.

Whether it’s the creative elements, market interest or the production company’s track record, our same six evaluation criterion still apply:

- Creative elements including the originality, quality and production-readiness of the script, and the director’s vision for the film or the quality of the footage (rough-cut applications);
- Market interest (for projects with budgets of \$2.5 million or more);
- The overall financial viability of the project;
- The production company’s track record;
- The feature film track record of the creative team, primarily the producer, director, screenwriter; and
- The global promotion strategy.

But what we now say is that, for projects of equal quality, we will favour projects that have a woman as director and/or a woman as writer.

Our project financing team—in which women are the majority—is enthusiastic about this announcement. They will be encouraging producers to submit more projects led by women. This is also why the Canadian Media Producers Association and the Association québécoise de la production médiatique were part of the gender parity working group.

And second, yes, Telefilm aims by 2020 to achieve a balanced production portfolio—at all budget levels—that reflects gender parity in each of the key roles of: director, writer and producer.

The Micro-Budget Production Program is great seed initiative, have we seen a migration of recipients to other Telefilm funding programs?

Liz Shorten, Canadian Media Producers Association

Carolle Brabant: Thank you Liz. This is an important question that we get often.

Yes, a number of Micro-Budget Production Program recipients (such as Geneviève Dulude-Decelles, Adam Garnet Jones and Christian Sparkes) have successfully returned to Telefilm Canada for subsequent project financing.

The success of the Talent Fund-financed Micro-Budget Production Program has inspired us to reflect on how to better accompany emerging talent while they make their second feature.

How do you define “of equal quality” when it comes your gender parity objective?

Caroline Combs, filmmaker

Carolle Brabant: Thank you for joining us today Caroline.

Telefilm Canada has six evaluation criteria that it has used for several years:

- Creative elements including the originality, quality and production-readiness of the script, and the director’s vision for the film or the quality of the footage (rough-cut applications);
- Market interest (for projects with budgets of \$2.5 million or more);
- The overall financial viability of the project;
- The production company’s track record;
- The feature film track record of the creative team, primarily the producer, director, screenwriter; and
- The global promotion strategy.

We will continue to use these same elements to assess projects, however we will now be favouring projects that reflect gender parity in each of the key roles of: director, writer and producer.

In terms of lower budget features and theatrical documentaries, we practically have gender parity; our focus is now on achieving this, by 2020, at higher budget levels.