

MICRO-BUDGET PRODUCTION PROGRAM

FUNDING OF MICRO-BUDGET PROJECTS
FROM EMERGING FILMMAKERS

GUIDELINES APPLICABLE AS OF FEBRUARY 3, 2016



PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Program aims to stimulate the use of new digital distribution platforms by emerging filmmakers¹ and to allow these filmmakers to develop an expertise in digital marketing and promotion of audiovisual projects.

This Program will provide financing for the development, production, digital distribution and promotion of a first feature-length film or other format of narrative-based audiovisual content made specifically for online distribution². Once completed, the projects must be made available to the public through one or more digital platforms (e.g. web portals, video portals such as YouTube or Netflix, video on demand, mobile platforms/devices, etc.).

Telefilm Canada's ("Telefilm") support will be provided through three different components: the **Main component**, the **Aboriginal component** and the **Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) component**. Financing will be given to micro-budget projects chosen among projects recommended by selected industry partners for each component of the Program. The list of selected partners per component is available on [Telefilm's website](#).

These guidelines provide direction regarding the Program's targeted objectives, eligibility and evaluation criteria, and the terms and conditions of funding by Telefilm.

PROGRAM INTENT AND OBJECTIVES

This Program intends to:

- stimulate the use of new digital distribution platforms and increase audience access to the works of new Canadian talent;
- encourage and support emerging Canadian filmmakers;
- encourage innovation and creativity at all stages of the development, production, distribution and promotion processes;
- increase the public's access to Aboriginal and OLMC content through innovative distribution channels.

1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1.1. Recommendation Stage

To be eligible to apply to this Program, Telefilm must first receive a recommendation from one of the selected partners stating which project the partner wishes to recommend.

1.1.1. *Key members of the creative team*

If the recommendation is made by a partner for the **Main component**, the partner must confirm that

¹ Emerging filmmakers are producers, directors and writers.

² See section 1.1.2 for more details.

the key members³ of the recommended project's creative team are recent alumni⁴ from one of the partner's production programs or active members⁵ of the partner's film cooperative.

In addition to the above, if the recommendation is made by a partner for the **Aboriginal component**, the partner must also confirm that the key members of the project's creative team are self-declared Aboriginals⁶.

If the recommendation is made by a partner for the **OLMC component**, the partner must confirm, in addition to the criteria applicable to the Main component, that:

- the key members of the project's creative team are Anglophones⁷ living in Québec and that the project will be written and produced in English; or
- that the key members of the project's creative team are Francophones⁸ living outside of Québec and that the project will be written and produced in French.

The key members of all recommended projects must be emerging talent i.e. they must already have produced, directed and/or written at least one short film (i.e. 30 minutes or less) but must not have produced, directed or written a feature length film (i.e. 75 minutes or more).

1.1.2. *Recommended projects*

The recommended projects must be fictional or documentary audiovisual projects produced in English, French or an Aboriginal language that are either:

- feature length films of 75 minutes or more; or
- any other type of narrative-based audiovisual content made in a format specifically designed for online audiences. These types of projects can be comprised of one or more segments which, in total, are between 10 and 74 minutes in length⁹.

All projects must be distributed on one or more digital platforms and their maximum budget must not be higher than \$250,000.

Each selected partner may recommend both a feature film and a narrative-based web project. If a

³ The key members of a project's creative team are the producer, writer and director of a project.

⁴ Recent alumni of a designated partner's production program are students who have graduated in the last five years calculated from the date of recommendation to Telefilm under this Program.

⁵ Active members are people who have participated in workshops, programs and/or other training initiatives offered by the cooperative in the last three years calculated from the date of recommendation to Telefilm under this Program.

⁶ As per Statistics Canada's 2006 Census, self-declared Aboriginals are those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit, and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian, as defined by the *Indian Act of Canada*, and/or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/ref/dict/pop001-eng.cfm>.

⁷ An Anglophone is defined as someone, regardless of ethnic origin or mother tongue, whose main written and spoken language is English.

⁸ A Francophone is defined as someone, regardless of ethnic origin or mother tongue, whose main written and spoken language is French.

⁹ Please consult the FAQs for more details.

partner is a selected partner for more than one component of the Program, the partner may recommend a feature length film and/or a narrative-based web project for each component.

Note that the recommended projects must conform to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) Code of Ethics and to 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.

1.1.3. *Microsite Presentation*

As part of this recommendation stage, the following elements must be presented to Telefilm through a microsite:

- 1) a video pitch of maximum 5 minutes that will:
 - identify the key creative team involved in the project and their individual track records;
 - state the project's working title;
 - identify the genre, the type and the length of the project;
 - outline the creative team's vision;
 - provide a synopsis of the story;
 - identify the target audience and present ideas on reaching and engaging the target audience through a digital marketing and social media strategy;
- 2) a trailer of the project, if available;
- 3) a link to previous work, if available;
- 4) a written synopsis of the project including a description of the creative team's vision;
- 5) a promotion and distribution plan including a digital marketing and social media strategy. This plan should:
 - identify the target audience;
 - identify the goals for audience reach and engagement;
 - describe the release strategy;
 - identify the digital platform(s) on which the distribution of the project will be made;
 - describe how the project will be promoted on the chosen platforms;
 - enumerate the distribution and/or promotion partners that will be pursued;
 - identify the digital marketing expert that will assist the creative team (if this information is available at this stage);
 - add any other information deemed important regarding the promotion and distribution plan;
- 6) a production schedule (from pre-production to digital release);
- 7) total budget amount of the project including the amount allocated for the promotion and distribution of the project;

- 8) any other information that sets this project apart (eg: successful crowdfunding campaign, confirmed cameo by a well-known actor, established fan base on social media).

Telefilm will separately review the recommended projects submitted by selected partners for each component of the Program to determine which projects best meet the evaluation criteria set out in section 2 and can therefore proceed to the application stage.

Note that a project that was not selected for financing under this Program cannot be resubmitted for consideration during another submission period for this Program.

1.2. Telefilm Application Stage

Projects that have been recommended by industry partners and have been determined eligible by Telefilm to proceed to the application stage are not guaranteed Telefilm financing. The key creative teams of these projects must also meet the criteria set out in this sub-section and must provide further documentation as requested by Telefilm at this stage.

Creative teams whose projects have been determined eligible by Telefilm will be asked to incorporate a company which will then apply to Telefilm as provided in section 4. This corporation must:

- operate as a film production company;
- own 100% of the rights of the project;
- be under Canadian control as determined under sections 26 to 28 of the [Investment Canada Act](#);
- be entirely owned and controlled by the key creative team of the project.

Furthermore, the key members of the creative team must be Canadian citizens, within the definition of the [Citizenship Act](#), or permanent residents within the definition of the [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#) and the Canadian creative personnel must obtain a minimum of 8 out of 10 points as calculated under the [Income Tax Regulations](#).¹⁰

2. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation of the projects submitted to Telefilm will take into consideration the following elements:

- the track record of the creative team;
- the quality, originality, and innovativeness of the creative content;
- the quality, originality, and innovativeness of the promotion and distribution strategy on digital platforms;
- the complementary nature of all components of the project (i.e. content, production, distribution and promotion).

¹⁰ See sections 4.02 and 4.03 of the [Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit Program Guidelines](#) for more information on how these points are calculated.

Given that the main objective of this Program is to stimulate the use of new digital platforms, greater weight will be given to the promotion and distribution strategy of the projects. Telefilm will also seek to support a variety of genres and regions in its choice of projects.

3. TERMS OF FUNDING

3.1. Contribution Amount

Telefilm’s funding will be in the form of a non-repayable financial contribution¹¹ that may cover up to 100% of the project’s financing. The maximum contribution amount is set at \$127,500 for feature films. The contribution amount for narrative-based web projects will be prorated based on the total number of minutes of the project¹², each full 10-minute segment providing access to \$15,000. The maximum contribution amount for narrative-based web projects is set at \$112,500.

Telefilm’s financial contribution must be used to cover direct expenses relating to the development, production, postproduction, distribution and promotion of the project.

An amount of \$7,500 of Telefilm’s total contribution amount must be reserved¹³ for the hiring of a digital marketing expert that will help applicants elaborate and put in place a promotion and digital marketing strategy for their project. Further, at least 15% of Telefilm’s total contribution amount (excluding the amount reserved for the hiring of the digital marketing expert) must be used for promotion and distribution expenses¹⁴.

3.2. Availability of Completed Projects

Applicants who have received a financial contribution under this Program must deliver a completed project to Telefilm no later than twelve months after Telefilm’s invitation to apply has been communicated to their partners. The project must be made available to the public through a digital platform no later than three months after completion. For feature films only, the release on a digital platform may be delayed for an additional 6 month period in the event that the project is selected at one or more festivals or in the event of a confirmed theatrical release or broadcast.

Further, all projects must be made available to the public through Telefilm’s channel on the National Film Board of Canada (“NFB”)’s revenue sharing platform at the latest 18 months after completion. Applicants must make sure that their other digital distribution deals allow for this distribution on the NFB platform.

Note that, in order to help applicants make their projects available on digital distribution platforms, Telefilm has partnered with Technicolor who will offer free digital encoding services to the selected projects.

¹¹ All contribution amounts are subject to the overall availability of funds and the number of projects supported.

¹² As estimated by the applicant at the time of application.

¹³ For narrative-based web projects, this amount will be added on top of the amount allocated based on the total number of minutes of the project for a total maximum contribution amount of \$112,500.

¹⁴ See the FAQs for more details regarding the allocation of Telefilm’s contribution.

Finally, applicants will be required to submit periodic audience reports that will measure audience viewership and accessibility of projects across various platforms.

4. HOW TO APPLY

Selected partners must submit their recommendation to Telefilm through the eTelefilm portal by the deadline specified on [Telefilm's website](#).

Applicants whose projects have been recommended by industry partners and have been determined eligible by Telefilm to proceed to the application stage must apply through the eTelefilm portal using an incorporated company. The onus is on the applicant to complete the application process and provide any supporting documents required by Telefilm. Incomplete applications will not be considered. The applicant's inability to provide supporting documentation will result in the application being removed from the evaluation process.

Partners and applicants will be informed by Telefilm of the opening and closing dates of the Program as well as when registration on the eTelefilm portal becomes available.

Please visit our [website](#) for further details on how to apply.

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 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 is subject to the [Access to Information Act](#) and the [Privacy Act](#).