



CANADA
MEDIA FUND

FONDS DES MÉDIAS
DU CANADA

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2024-2025

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Section 1 of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#) shall apply to the Indigenous Program, unless otherwise specified.

2. INDIGENOUS PROGRAM - OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In addition to the requirements set out in these Guidelines, Applicants must comply with (i) the rules and requirements of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#) and (ii) the applicable policies and definitions in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#).

The Indigenous Program (“**Program**”), which forms part of the CMF’s Linear Programs, supports the growth of audiovisual production from First Nations, Inuit or Métis producers. The CMF recognizes the necessity to support the narrative sovereignty of all Indigenous Peoples to Canada and their right to tell their own stories.

Eligible Projects under this Program are administered under a selective process where the CMF evaluates Applications according to an Evaluation Grid. Eligible Projects may receive funds subject to per-project Maximum Contribution amounts and other specified limitations.

Beginning in 2024-2025:

- Eligible Canadian Distributors may contribute more than the minority share of the Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold amount needed to trigger support in this Program (see section 3.2.4 of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#)).
- No more than 35% of funds in this Program will be allocated to feature films in the Drama programming genre.

Support for predevelopment and development activities for Indigenous Peoples to Canada will be offered in first-come, first-served Development and Predevelopment Funding. Please see those Program Guidelines for more details.

2.2 DEFINITIONS

Please see [Appendix A](#) for definitions on the following terms found in these Indigenous Program Guidelines:

- Broadcaster-Affiliated Programming
- Canadian Broadcaster
- Creative Team
- Diverse Community (Key Personnel) Project
- Eligible Canadian Distributor
- Gender Balance (Key Personnel) Project
- Indigenous Peoples to Canada
- In-house Programming
- Production Team
- Related Party

2.3 LANGUAGE OF PROJECTS

Applicants shall make best efforts to ensure that, on average, at least 20% of the original Indigenous version of the Eligible Project’s on-screen dialogue and/or narration has been originally shot in an Indigenous language. Exceptions to this requirement, as determined by the CMF in its sole discretion, will be made on a case-by-case basis. However, in all cases, an Indigenous-language version of the entire Eligible Project must be broadcast (see section 3.2.2 b).

Indigenous-language projects which are versioned into English or French can apply for financing from this Program, from the Broadcaster Envelope Program (English and French), or through a combination of the Broadcaster Envelope (English and French) and this Program.

3. INDIGENOUS PROGRAM - ELIGIBILITY

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

An Eligible Applicant to the Indigenous Program must meet:

- The Eligible Applicant criteria in section 3.1 of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#); and
- Any applicable specific eligibility criteria noted in this section, including the following:
 - Final control in all matters relating to the Applicant company¹ and the Project, and at least 51% of the Applicant company's ownership and of the Project's copyright are retained by an individual producer (or multiple producers) that is a First Nations, Inuit or Métis person ("**Indigenous Owner**").
 - **For clarity, in addition to the Indigenous Owner(s) having final control and meeting this 51% ownership threshold, where an Applicant company is not 100% owned and controlled by an Indigenous Owner(s), no individual Indigenous Owner shall own and control less than 15% of both the Applicant company and copyright in the Eligible Project.**
 - The Indigenous Owner exercises full creative, executive, artistic, technical, and financial control of the Eligible Project.
 - The Indigenous Owner has meaningfully participated in the Eligible Project's development and retains a financial interest in the Eligible Project that is proportional to its ownership.
 - For clarity, where the final control and central decision makers in both the Applicant company and the Project are not with the Indigenous Owner(s) from the Applicant company, the Application will not be considered eligible for funding in this Program. The CMF reserves the right to request additional documentation (including by-laws and articles of incorporation) to ensure the ownership and control provisions are met.

No more than 25% of this Program's funds will be allocated to Projects from In-house and Broadcaster-Affiliated Applicants.

It is important to note that coproductions between Eligible Applicants and ineligible Applicants are only possible where the ineligible Applicant is a (minority) treaty coproduction partner in an audiovisual treaty coproduction.

3.2 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

An Eligible Project in the Indigenous Program must meet:

- The Eligible Project criteria in section 3.2 of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#); and
- Any applicable specific eligibility criteria noted in this section.

Either the screenwriter or the director of the Eligible Project must be a person who is First Nations, Inuit or Métis. For clarity, if the Eligible Project is episodic, this requirement will apply to every episode of the Eligible Project.

For a series in its second or subsequent season, a rough cut or final version of at least one (1) episode of the previous season of the series must be completed and submitted to the CMF in order for it to be considered an Eligible Project in this Program.

¹Including the Applicant company's Board of Directors.

3.2.1 Ownership and Control

In this Program, the Indigenous Owner (defined in section 3.1 above)

- exercises full creative, executive, artistic, technical and financial control of the Eligible Project and has meaningfully participated in its development; and
- retains and exercises all effective controls or approvals necessary for the production of the Project. This includes control and final approval of creative decisions and production financing, distribution and exploitation, and preparation and final approval of the budget, subject to reasonable and standard approval rights customarily required by arm's-length financial participants, including Canadian Broadcasters and distributors.

3.2.2 Eligible Triggering Commitment Requirements and Conditions

In addition to all requirements in section 3.2 of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#), Eligible Projects in this Program must meet the specific conditions below.

a) Canadian Broadcaster

A Canadian Broadcaster, as defined in [Appendix A](#).

In this Program only, as a pilot initiative, the CMF may consider a digital distributor to be a Canadian Broadcaster with regard to Eligible Licence Fees for an Applicant in northern Canada (i.e. Nunavut, Nunavik, the Yukon Territory, or the Northwest Territories) – provided the CMF determines that the digital distributor: is a Canadian-controlled company (as determined in sections 26 to 28 of the *Investment Canada Act*); operates in northern Canada; provides services and/or content dedicated to Indigenous communities in northern Canada; and licenses Eligible Projects for distribution via digital platforms. The CMF will then interpret the remainder of this section 3.2 of these Program Guidelines and section 3.2.4 of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#) in a flexible manner to let the digital distributor provide Eligible Licence Fees. The CMF will decide if a digital distributor qualifies for this pilot initiative case-by-case.

b) Legally binding contract

A Canadian Broadcaster's broadcast licence agreement for the Canadian Broadcast Right:

Must include an unconditional commitment by the Canadian Broadcaster providing the highest Eligible Licence Fee to broadcast and/or make the Eligible Project available to be viewed on any of the broadcast and online platforms the Canadian Broadcaster owns, operates and controls, in peak viewing hours² and closed captioned³, in English, French or an Indigenous-Canadian language, as the first window broadcast, within eighteen (18) months of completion and delivery of the Eligible Project⁴. Please be advised, if the first window broadcast of the Project is in English or French, it is still a mandatory requirement of this Program for at least one Canadian Broadcaster in the project's financial structure to license the Eligible Project's Indigenous-Canadian language rights and broadcast and/or make the Eligible Project available to be viewed on any broadcast and online platforms that Canadian Broadcaster owns, operates and controls, in an Indigenous-Canadian language during the licence term of the Project. Should any Canadian Broadcasters who contribute to a project's Eligible Licence Fee fail to comply with these requirements the licence fee will be deemed not to be an Eligible Licence Fee. The CMF will consider requests for an extension to this period case-by-case. **“Peak**

²For clarity, a Project must meet the ‘**Peak Viewing Hours**’ requirement only when its broadcast by an entity that meets section (a) of the “**Canadian Broadcaster**” definition in [Appendix A](#).

³As applicable, based on the respective platform.

⁴For dual-language productions, this requirement shall be interpreted to mean 18-months from the first completed version.

Viewing Hours” is defined by the CMF as 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm, with an exception for some Children and Youth programming as described in [Appendix A](#). For second and subsequent window broadcasters, the commitment to broadcast the Eligible Project in Peak Viewing Hours (or, if applicable, make the Eligible Project available to be viewed) within eighteen (18) months will start at the beginning of those broadcasters’ licence periods. For clarity, Canadian Broadcasters operating in a language other than the Indigenous-Canadian language may contribute Eligible Licence Fees to meet the Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold and broadcast the Eligible Project in Peak Viewing Hours (or, if applicable, make the Eligible Project available to be viewed) in their language of operations.

Note: The CMF may waive the broadcast/availability requirement for pilots where both the Broadcaster and Applicant agree, upon completion and delivery of the Eligible Project, that the pilot should not be broadcast or made available.

3.2.3 Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold

The **Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold (“Threshold”)** is the minimum amount of Eligible Licence Fees (and, if applicable, Eligible Market Contributions) that an Eligible Project must receive from one or more Canadian Broadcasters (and, if applicable, Eligible Canadian Distributors) to be eligible for CMF funding.

The Threshold in the Indigenous Program is 10% of the Eligible Project’s Eligible Costs.

In addition to the Canadian Broadcaster’s (and, if applicable, the Eligible Canadian Distributor’s) Threshold amounts, licence fees/financial contributions from foreign/scheduled broadcasters⁵ may also count towards the Threshold required to trigger funding in this Program, as long as the Threshold amounts of the Canadian Broadcasters (and, if applicable the Eligible Canadian Distributors) (both separately and in the aggregate) represent the larger share of the Project’s Threshold.

3.2.4 Maximum Terms

The CMF shall assess the maximum allowable period of all broadcast windows granted in consideration for Eligible Licence Fees (the **“Maximum Term”**). The Maximum Term for an Eligible Project in this Program, in the aggregate and including both exclusive and non-exclusive terms, is six (6) years.

⁵Eligibility of foreign broadcasters will be decided by the CMF on a case-by-case basis.

4. INDIGENOUS PROGRAM – CMF CONTRIBUTION

A CMF Contribution to an Eligible Project will follow:

- The criteria in section 4 of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#); and
- Any applicable specific criteria noted in this section.

4.1 NATURE OF CONTRIBUTION

In the Indigenous Program, the CMF may provide a combination of (i) Licence Fee Top-Up and (ii) Equity Investments (as set out in section 4.1 of the [Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines](#)) to Eligible Projects according to a set formula:

The first CMF contribution to the Eligible Project will be in the form of a Licence Fee Top-Up to a maximum of 40% of the Project's Eligible Costs. CMF contribution amounts in excess of this 40% maximum will be in the form of an Equity Investment.

In no case will the total CMF contribution exceed 60% of Eligible Costs, Licence Fee Top-Ups and Equity Investments combined. The CMF considers an eligible Equity Investment request of less than \$100,000 too small for equity participation. Such requests will be automatically converted to a Licence Fee Top-Up.

Applicants should note that if an Eligible Project is accessing funds between multiple CMF Programs, the ratio of (i) Licence Fee Top-Up to (ii) Equity Investment will be applied to the Project's entire budget according to the same Maximum Contribution percentages noted above.

4.2 AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTION

The CMF will solely decide the amount of its financial contribution to an Eligible Project, up to a Maximum Contribution. The Maximum Contribution shall be the lesser of 60% of the Eligible Project's Eligible Costs or the following amounts (depending on the applicable genre):

- Drama and Animation: \$750,000
- Documentary, Variety and Performing Arts and Children & Youth: \$550,000

The CMF has a policy on the inclusion of tax credits in the financing structure for this Program. See [Appendix B](#) (Treatment of Tax Credits) for more information.

4.2.1 Eligible Costs

The provision of one or more apprentice positions for Indigenous People to Canada (as defined in [Appendix A](#)) will be considered an Eligible Cost for this Program.

Additional CMF business policies relating to Eligible Costs are in [Appendix B](#).

4.3 COMBINING INDIGENOUS PROGRAM FUNDS WITH OTHER CMF PROGRAMS

Applicants should note that funding offered through the Indigenous Program may be affected by funds offered through other CMF Programs:

- If an Applicant is eligible to apply for CMF incentives in the same fiscal year (e.g., Regional Production Funding), the amount offered to such Applicant through the Indigenous Program may be lower than the Applicant's originally requested amount.
- Additionally, Canadian Broadcasters may combine funds from their Broadcaster Envelope - English and French allocations with funding from the Indigenous Program in the same fiscal year. The Threshold amount for the Indigenous Program will then apply to the total Eligible Costs. Projects may receive amounts up to the Maximum Contribution specified for the Indigenous Program; any additional funds will be taken from the Canadian Broadcaster's Envelope. The total CMF contribution from all programs is limited to 84% of Eligible Costs.
 - For clarity, when combining funding from this Program with Broadcaster Envelope - English and French financing, if an Eligible Canadian Distributor is contributing to the Project's Threshold, the larger share of the Threshold must come from a Canadian Broadcaster contributing an Eligible Licence Fee.

4.4 ELIGIBLE DIGITAL CONTENT

While no longer a required element for CMF linear content funding, producers can continue to include costs for the production of digital media content related to their linear project. (**Related Digital Content**). For more information on the parameters of Related Digital Content, please see the full definition in Appendix A.

If applicable, Related Digital Media Content costs (including budgeted upkeep and enhancement costs related to a period of up to twelve (12) months after the launch of the content) must be submitted as line item #85 in the Eligible Project's application budget.

The Related Digital Content will be made available to the Canadian public in an Indigenous-Canadian language.

Additional CMF Business Policies relating to Eligible Costs are in [Appendix B](#) of these Guidelines.

5. INDIGENOUS PROGRAM - DECISION PROCESS

5.1 PROJECT ASSESSMENT IN THE SELECTIVE PROCESS

Projects in the Indigenous Program compete for funding according to a selective process. To make funding decisions, the CMF will rely on an Indigenous jury and projects will be selected using the Evaluation Grid below.

Evaluation Grid

Assessment Criteria	Overall Points	Points Details	Notes
Market Interest	15	Market commitment (5) Audience potential (10)	<p>Market commitment is reflected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of financial contributions by broadcasters/distribution platforms/other financiers (including licence fees paid by broadcasters⁶, market contributions paid by a distributors⁷ and/or other financiers of the Project). Market commitments can include theatrical distribution, educational distribution, successful crowdfunding campaigns, etc. Financial contributions from more than once source. An allocation from an English and/or French Canadian Broadcaster(s) Envelope(s). <p>Audience potential is reflected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed presence of marquee elements such as well-known actors/narrators/hosts/composers, significant social media following or recognizable underlying intellectual property. Degree to which the promotion and marketing plan demonstrate the potential reach to audiences (including audiences from Indigenous communities). The promotion and marketing plan should reflect use of non-traditional and/or traditional distribution platforms. For series, renewal for a second or subsequent season will also be taken into account.
Team	24	Track record and experience of the Production and Creative Teams (18) Quality and degree to which the Applicant and creative and production teams are well-positioned to create this project (2)	<p>The Production Team (defined in Appendix A) is comprised of the producers of the Project.</p> <p>The Creative Team (defined in Appendix A) is comprised of the Writers and Directors on the Project.</p> <p>"Well-Positioned" is outlined in the CMF's Narrative Positioning Policy and can be addressed in the submitted Narrative Positioning Statement.</p>

⁶Please note, the maximum points a Project can receive from broadcaster licence fees in this section will be limited to the highest licence fees paid by a broadcaster to a Project produced by an independent production company that is not In-house or Broadcaster-Affiliated with the broadcaster.

⁷Please note, the maximum points a Project can receive from distributor financial contributions in this section will be limited to the highest financial contribution paid by a distributor to a Project produced by an independent production company that is not a Related Party to the distributor.

		<p>Parity 40% of the cumulative paid⁸ positions on the Production and Creative Teams on the Project are held by individuals that publicly identify as women ("Gender Balance (Key Personnel) Project" as defined in Appendix A) (2).</p> <p>Diversity 40% of the cumulative paid⁹ positions on the Production and Creative Teams on the Project are held by members of a Diverse Community¹⁰ ("Diverse Community (Key Personnel) Project" as defined in Appendix A) (2)</p>	
Community & Sustainability	4	<p>Community Engagement Plan (2)</p> <p>Sustainability Plan (2)</p>	<p>Community Engagement Plan: The Applicant and team members have committed to concrete measures to create the content responsibly, thoughtfully and without harm, including community engagement steps, and/or personnel hires, and will provide a written report at the final costs stage confirming the work completed.</p> <p>Sustainability Plan: The Applicant and team members have committed to steps related to environmentally-sustainable activities, practices and/or personnel hires on this project, and will provide a written report at the final costs stage confirming the work completed. This excludes the carbon calculator requirement from section 3.2.5 of the Linear Content – Core Production Guidelines.</p>
Creative Elements	47	<p>Originality and creativity (37)</p> <p>Innovation in form and production values (10)</p>	<p>Creative elements include the subject matter, scripts, themes, issues and narrative, which are assessed on originality and creativity.</p> <p>When considering a Project's potential to add cultural significance and distinguish itself in the current audiovisual landscape – for example adding greater representation in voices from Diverse Communities and sharing new perspectives - can be considered.</p> <p>The appropriateness of the production budget size to the creative material will be considered.</p>

⁸Only paid positions will count towards the evaluation of Gender positions for the Parity points, and the information provided in the Project's budget will take precedence.

⁹Only paid positions will count towards the evaluation of Diverse Community positions for the Diversity points, and the information provided in the Project's budget will take precedence.

¹⁰For this Program, only individuals who are members of a Racialized Community, 2SLGBTQ+ or Persons with Disabilities will count for these points.

Program Objectives	10	<p>Proportion of Indigenous language in the original production (5)¹¹</p> <p>Degree of Indigenous creative, financial, ownership and distribution control (5)</p>	<p>Program objectives encourage the highest level of Indigenous language and control</p> <p>For clarity, only projects that are going over and above the minimal 20% Indigenous language requirement (as set out in section 2.3) will be awarded points under this criteria.</p>
TOTAL	100		

¹¹On Eligible Projects where Applicants can demonstrate that, despite their best efforts, it will not be possible to have any of the Project's on-screen dialogue or narration in an Indigenous language, the CMF will evaluate the degree of Indigenous creative, financial, ownership and distribution control out of 10 points instead of 5 points.