



CANADA
MEDIA FUND

FONDS DES MÉDIAS
DU CANADA

INNOVATION & EXPERIMENTATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2024-2025

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Section 1 of the [IDM Content – Core Guidelines](#) shall apply to the Innovation & Experimentation Program Guidelines, unless otherwise specified.

2. INNOVATION & EXPERIMENTATION – OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Unless otherwise specified, in addition to the requirements set out in these Guidelines, Applicants must comply with:

- i) The rules and requirements of the [IDM Content – Core Guidelines](#), and
- ii) The applicable policies and definitions in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#), namely:
 - a. [Appendix A](#): Section 7 (CMF Definitions)
 - b. [Appendix B](#):
 - i. Chapter 1 (Default Policy),
 - ii. Chapter 2 (Accounting and Reporting Requirements),
 - iii. Chapter 3 (Producer's Fees and Corporate Overhead (PFCO) Policy), and
 - iv. Chapter 5 (Insurance Policy).

The objective of the Innovation & Experimentation Program (the “**Program**”) is to fund Canadian interactive digital media Projects that are innovative and leading-edge.

A Project requesting funding through this Program should have completed the conceptual/ideation and prototype stages and able to demonstrate a clear path to market/distribution. Production support is provided for the creation of a final, market-ready version of an Eligible Project, including localization of the Project and marketing/commercialization activities.

This Program shall fund Projects through a selective process in which Eligible Projects are assessed according to an evaluation grid.

2.2 DEFINITIONS

Please see [Appendix A](#) Section 7 for definitions of the following terms found in these Guidelines:

- Diverse Community
- Diverse Community (Key Personnel) Project
- Eligible IDM Positions
- Gender Balance (Key Personnel) Project
- Related Party

3. INNOVATION & EXPERIMENTATION - ELIGIBILITY

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

An Eligible Applicant to this Program must meet the criteria in section 3.1 of the [IDM Content – Core Guidelines](#).

3.2 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

An Eligible Project to this Program must meet:

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

3.2.1 Innovation

Eligible Projects in this Program must be innovative. Innovation may be expressed in terms of innovative content or innovative technology. While the CMF does not define or delimit what is innovative, the CMF recognizes that innovation can include both breakthrough, novel and revolutionary content/technology and the intelligent re-imagination, reworking or extension of existing content/technology¹. Applicants are encouraged to pursue their own vision of innovation.

3.2.2 Third Party Publisher / Distributor

Eligible Projects must have a letter of intent from a Publishing or Distribution partner (the “**Publisher / Distributor**”) committed to taking the Project to market and to actively promoting the Project. A letter of intent does not need to include a cash financing commitment to the Project.

The Publisher / Distributor must be a third-party – it cannot be the Applicant or a Related Party (as defined in [Appendix A](#)) to the Applicant.

The CMF may waive the Publisher / Distributor requirement where there are clear and acceptable alternative arrangements for taking the Project to market, or where the Applicant can demonstrate that it has the ability to effectively self-distribute the Project.

3.2.3 Miscellaneous Requirements

- a) An Eligible Project must also comply with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- b) A Project that has been refused in the Innovation & Experimentation Program can apply to the Commercial Projects Program (and vice versa). However, a Project cannot be submitted to both the Commercial Projects Program and the Innovation & Experimentation Program in the same spring or fall deadline periods.
- c) A Project that has been refused funding from a particular Program activity (e.g. Prototyping or Production) two (2) or more times since 2010-2011 cannot apply again for CMF-funding for that same Program activity.
- d) The CMF may commit to up to 50% of this Program’s allocation for Applications submitted on the First Closing Date. The CMF will make the remainder of the allocation available for the Second Closing Date.
- e) The Project must be made available in Canada.

¹For clarity, sequels to existing products and advancing existing technology or content will be considered innovative to the extent that the above noted criteria are addressed.

4. INNOVATION & EXPERIMENTATION - CMF CONTRIBUTION

A CMF Contribution to an Eligible Project will follow:

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

4.1 AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTION

Successful Applicants receive funding in an amount appropriate to the needs of the Project and subject to a Maximum Contribution of the lesser of 75% of the Project's Eligible Costs or \$1.5 million.

4.2 ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible Costs must be costs directly related to the Project, including but not limited to:

- Research and preparation of content;
- Salaries and benefits/wages/contracts for Project team (Project management, business development, coding, design, system infrastructure, content development);
- Technology infrastructure (hardware and software);
- Travel and accommodations;
- Project audit fees;
- Other technical and administrative expenses;
- Localization activities;
- Marketing and promotion; and/or
- Reasonable costs related to environmentally sustainable activities, practices and personnel.

Projects must spend a minimum of 25% and maximum of 50% of budget categories B + C of their production budget on eligible marketing and promotion costs.

5. INNOVATION & EXPERIMENTATION - DECISION PROCESS

Evaluation of an Eligible Project will follow:

- The criteria in section 5 of the [IDM Content – Core Guidelines](#); and
- Any applicable specific criteria noted in this section.

This Program shall fund Projects through a selective and competitive process in which Eligible Projects are assessed according to the following evaluation grid.

Assessment Criteria	Weight
<p>Team (13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experience and achievements of the studio within the interactive digital media industry. ▪ Professional experience and achievements of team members within the interactive digital media industry. Team members shall include lead production, creative, technical and/or sales and marketing roles. ▪ Experience and track record of team members working with one another. ▪ Feasibility of the team assembled to carry out and deliver the project. ▪ Quality and degree to which the applicant and creative and production teams are well-positioned to create this project. <p>“Well Positioned” is outlined in the CMF’s Narrative Positioning Policy and can be addressed in the submitted Narrative Positioning Statement.</p> <p>Parity (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Project qualifies as a Gender Balance (Key Personnel) Project i.e. 40% of the cumulative paid Eligible Paid Positions on the Team are held by individuals that identify as women. <p>Refer to Appendix A for definitions of Eligible IDM Positions and Gender Balance (Key Personnel Project).</p> <p>Diversity (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Project qualifies as a Diverse Community (Key Personnel) Project i.e. 40% of the cumulative paid Eligible Paid Positions on the Team are held by members of a Diverse Community. <p>Refer to Appendix A for definitions of Eligible IDM Positions and Diverse Community (Key Personnel Project).</p>	17
<p>Community and Sustainability</p> <p>Community Engagement Plan (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Applicant and team members commit to (i) concrete steps to create the content responsibly, thoughtfully and without harm, including community engagement steps, and/or personnel hires, and (ii) will provide a written report at final costs stage confirming the work completed. <p>Sustainability Plan (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Applicant and team members commit to (i) steps related to environmentally-sustainable activities, practices and/or personnel hires on this project, and (ii) will provide a written report at final costs stage confirming the work completed. 	4

Innovation, Creativity and Advancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Originality, quality and relevance of content or form, and as applicable, narrative/story. ▪ Extent to which the project develops or integrates innovative technologies, and/or proposes a novel and sophisticated approach to the content or narrative/story. ▪ Quality and sophistication of design elements and programming. ▪ Quality and distinctiveness of user experience and interactivity. ▪ Potential for project to have impact within industry and marketplace - to renew, transform or contribute to critical success. As applicable this can include potential to add cultural significance- for example adding greater representation in voices from Diverse Communities or sharing new perspectives. 	60
Financial Viability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budget accuracy and relevance, and financial structure risk (confirmation and validity of investments). ▪ Applicant's financial stability in relation to the size of the Project. ▪ Project completion risk. 	9
Strategic Positioning and Marketing <p>Market Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audience analysis. ▪ Market analysis and positioning. <p>Marketing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of the Project's marketing and promotional strategy and plan. ▪ Diversity and relevance of distribution modes. ▪ Relevance of promotional activities. ▪ Level of interest demonstrated by Publisher / Distributor partners and/or quality of self-distribution plan. 	10
TOTAL	100