

All In

Embedding Equity,
Diversity, Inclusion,
and Accessibility
in the audiovisual industry



CANADA
MEDIA FUND

FONDS DES MÉDIAS
DU CANADA



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Land Acknowledgment

The Canada Media Fund (CMF) would like to acknowledge that this strategy touches upon the lived experience, identity, and belonging of many creators and communities who live from coast to coast to coast in the territory that is today known as Canada. These lands and waters are the unceded and treaty territories of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Throughout this work we have strived to recognize and address the voices of Indigenous peoples as distinct and sovereign.

Many of us who live in this territory today have come as settlers, immigrants, and newcomers in this generation and generations past. The CMF acknowledges those who came here forcibly, particularly because of the transatlantic slave trade.

Finally, we acknowledge that we are located on land that has been the site of human creativity and storytelling for thousands of years. We are mindful of broken covenants, and we strive to make this right with the land and with each other.



1.

Introduction

Introduction

Over the last several years, change has been the only constant. Through waves of modernization, legislation, and innovation, the Canada Media Fund (CMF) has remained future-focused, laying the groundwork for a new program model that elevates the richness of content and empowers its creators.

As the country's largest audiovisual funder, we foster, develop, and finance the best Indigenous and Canadian content across all audiovisual media platforms, ensuring our storytellers are showcased at home and around the world—and this includes critical support for underrepresented creators and companies.

In our 2021-2023 Equity and Inclusion Strategy, we promised “significant and lasting changes over the period of this strategy to ensure content produced in Canada comes from a broad cross-section of communities, offers engaging experiences from a variety of perspectives, and connects with audiences that are increasingly seeking out these compelling, authentic stories.” We are committed to strengthening that mission in everything we do.

Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) is central to our work. We've made inclusion a company-wide mandate. We've created new funding programs specific to underrepresented



communities, and we've broken down barriers to access. We continue to champion a diversity of voices.

All this work, including our 2021-2023 Equity and Inclusion Strategy, was made possible thanks to \$60M in EDI funding over three years from the federal government in Budget 2021, which was then bolstered in Budget 2023 by an additional \$40M over two years for EDI and French-language content. The CMF used these investments to launch initiatives that ensured thousands of content creators from Indigenous and Equity-Seeking Communities, and organizations run by these communities were able to access targeted funding for projects that amplified their voices and perspectives to wider audiences. These creators reported that the CMF's EDI initiatives directly contributed to the growth of their companies and increased their market access. This is a new generation of content makers whose stories advance reconciliation and build acceptance from coast to coast to coast. More information can be found in our [*Creating Change* report](#).

Additional funding announced by the federal government in 2024 will enable us to build on our past work, both externally and internally and ensure the CMF can continue to embed principles of growth and inclusion in every aspect of our operations and achieve the goals set out in our 2024-2027 EDIA Strategy.



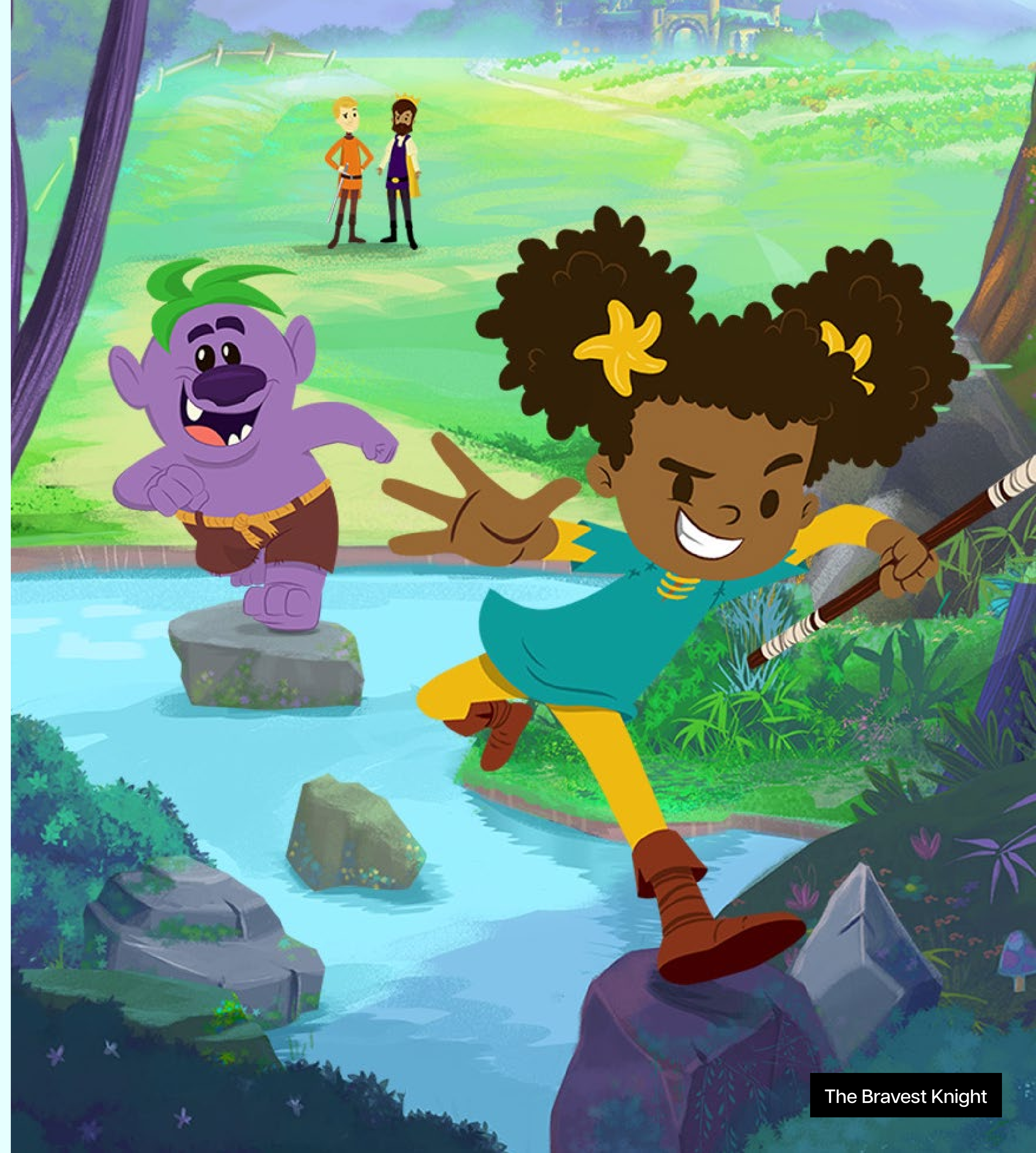
2.

Review of CMF's 2021-2023 Equity and Inclusion Strategy



CMF's 2021-2023 Equity and Inclusion Strategy Objectives

1. Increase access to CMF programs and reduce barriers to inclusion in the new program model.
2. Use equity and inclusion lens to inform corporate decisions, strategy, consultation, and program design to make long-term and ongoing structural changes.
3. Implement approach to data collection and analysis to support evidence-based decision-making, explore alternatives to current mechanisms for determining and rewarding success, and to track progress.
4. Build the competencies and composition of the CMF team needed to serve underrepresented communities.



CMF's 2021-2023 Equity and Inclusion Strategy

Highlights

- **Pilot Program for Racialized Communities (PPRC):** The CMF invested \$37.5M in PPRC over three years, supporting 293 projects by companies owned and controlled by Black and Racialized individuals. PPRC funding led to significant economic impact. Every dollar invested in the program generated \$5.23 toward production volume and contributed \$176.4M to Canada's GDP. 97 per cent of our survey respondents noted that PPRC funding had a positive impact on their project or company. In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the Program for Racialized Communities (PRC) became a regular CMF program.
- **Sector Development Impact:** A total investment of \$9.7M over three years in Sector Development supported 135 projects, with 85 per cent focusing on Indigenous and Equity-Seeking Communities; the program also contributed to the creation of the Black Screen Office and the Disability Screen Office.
- **Narrative Positioning:** In 2023, the CMF published our Narrative Positioning policy, encouraging content creation that is both representative and accountable to all individuals and communities. CMF-funded projects with key storylines, main characters, or subject matter related to Indigenous and Equity-Seeking Communities should only be made by individuals who are well-positioned to tell the story, meaning (a) being a member of the applicable Indigenous or Equity-Seeking Community(ies) connected to the project; or (b) demonstrating comprehensive measures that have and will be undertaken to create the content responsibly, thoughtfully, and without harm.

- **Program Expansion:** The three years of EDI funding from the federal government in Budget 2021 resulted in a 23 per cent increase in projects through our Indigenous Program, a 34 per cent increase in projects through the Diverse Languages Program with 15 languages represented, and the development of 32 industry partnerships focused on Indigenous and Equity-Seeking Communities. Additional funding was also allocated to EDI-specific initiatives in the following Programs: Predevelopment, Conceptualization, and Early-Stage Development.
- **Data-Driven Progress:** The PERSONA-ID system, which started in 2022-2023, tracks the demographic composition of key roles and ownership of CMF program applications. The system has enabled the CMF to evaluate the eligibility of applicants to programs like the Program for Racialized Communities and the Indigenous programs and to gender and diversity incentives. Self-identification is optional on all other programs. However, in its first year, 83 per cent of all key roles on projects funded by the CMF registered to PERSONA-ID. This percentage rose to 89 per cent in 2023-2024. We released our first [**Demographic Report**](#) on the resulting data in March 2024, and plan to deliver a second report by the end of 2024. The aggregate data will continue to guide the CMF's data-based decision-making to reduce systemic barriers, identify inequities and promote greater access and inclusion.
- **Operations and Governance:** An accessibility audit was conducted to determine the CMF's organizational readiness to improve accessibility, with recommendations for language, consultations, projects, guidelines, etc. The CMF board participated in anti-racism training designed for the audiovisual sector. Our Growth and Inclusion team expanded, adding a coordinator and a French market liaison. We prioritized adding our Equity and Inclusion Strategy objectives into the CMF's business plan and strategic objectives and reported on equity and inclusion results in our annual reports. With consent, we also collected self-identification data from CMF staff and board members, including CMF Program Administration staff, to track representation.

- **Accessibility and Language:** All CMF staff participated in accessibility training, which included full staff and individual team meetings. We also developed an in-house French inclusive language guide to address the limitations of gender-specific language. When it was launched, staff were trained in how to effectively use the guide, and it was shared with external translators. The communications team also began reviewing the Government of Canada's Inclusive Language Guidelines in both English and French, while also creating accountability practices in communications processes to ensure consistency of inclusive language. We continued with accessibility standards in design, with considerations when selecting font, colour, contrast, etc. and implementing alt-text where possible. In addition, our Sector Development team created a process for individuals to access personalized accessibility support when applying for CMF funding.
- **Communications:** The CMF's editorial platform *Now and Next* emphasizes underrepresented creators and communities as a key part of its mandate, including two popular video series called *Lights, Camera, Inclusion*—the first season was about racialized creators in the Quebec market and the second season interviewed producers and partners that were doing equity and inclusion work in their communities. The five episodes of season two had a total of 670,000 views. The communications team also created an image repository and put processes in place to ensure all major external communications vehicles represented a diversity of CMF-funded projects. Working with the Growth and Inclusion team, we created a content calendar to acknowledge and celebrate significant awareness opportunities, such as Asian Heritage Month, Deaf Awareness Week, National Coming Out Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day, and so many more.
- **MADE | NOUS:** The *Seek More / Découvrons-NOUS* campaign inspired Canadians to search out content and creators from more backgrounds, cultures, and communities. Featuring six of Canada's top creators telling their stories in their own words, the campaign showed why inclusivity and representation matter in our television, film, gaming, immersive experiences, and emerging arts. The successful campaign saw over 173 million media impressions, 30 million video views, and a 15 per cent increase in traffic to the website from French Canada.

3.

CMF Incentives



CMF Incentives for Indigenous and Equity-Seeking Communities

In addition to specific programs dedicated to Indigenous and Equity-Seeking Communities, all the CMF's non-partnership Programs currently have an Indigenous and/or Equity-Seeking Communities component, either through (i) an incentive (e.g. extra points in evaluation or factor weights in the Broadcaster Envelope Program), (ii) an eligibility requirement e.g. gender, or (iii) designated funding in a Program that is reserved for a targeted group.

The CMF defines the following as Equity-Seeking Communities: Racialized Communities (Black people and People of Colour), 2SLGBTQ+, Disabled Persons/Persons with Disability(ies), Individuals who publicly identify as women and gender diverse, Regional*, and Official Language Minority Communities.

*For reference, the CMF currently defines Regional communities in our Equity-Seeking Communities definition, but these communities are not covered in the Government of Canada's most recent application of this definition. Moving forward, the CMF will continue to provide support to regional projects and partners, but regional communities will not form part of this 3-year EDIA strategy. The CMF plans to develop a broader definition of underrepresented communities, including regional communities, in the future.

There are eligibility requirements to access funds for all CMF programs under the categories Ideation, Linear, and Creation. Check the [CMF website](#) for complete details.



Dress for Excess

4.

Indigenous Strategy



Indigenous Strategy

Indigenous Peoples to Canada is a term that the CMF uses to address and acknowledge the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples who live in the territory that is today known as Canada and are descendants of the original inhabitants of this territory prior to colonization.

The CMF recognizes that the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples is protected in section 35 of the Constitution of Canada. Canada is also a signatory to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). Subsection 16(1) states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-Indigenous media without discrimination.” As such, the CMF asserts that “Indigenous” should be considered a third pillar in the Canadian broadcasting system, alongside English and French.

To reflect our support for this third pillar, and in light of the Indigenous Screen Office (ISO) receiving permanent federal funding and [our co-announcement](#) that the ISO will administer the CMF’s Indigenous Program, we plan to work with the ISO and Indigenous consultants and gather feedback from the industry to draft a separate Indigenous Strategy that outlines how the CMF will, among other objectives, continue to enhance our partnership with the ISO, providing support to Indigenous screen content, organizations, and companies.

For this reason, our 2024-2027 EDIA Strategy focuses on Equity-Deserving Communities.



5.

CMF's 2024-2027 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Strategy: Principles, Scope, and Goals



CMF's 2024-2027 EDIA Strategy

Principles

- ▶ **Active Listening and Learning**
- ▶ **Proactive vs Reactive**
- ▶ **Data-driven**
- ▶ **Results-oriented**
- ▶ **Internal Inclusivity**
- ▶ **Open for Business**
- ▶ **Capacity-focused**

CMF's 2024-2027 EDIA Strategy

Scope

The CMF's 2021-2023 Equity and Inclusion Strategy was critical for aligning the CMF's equity and inclusion goals and ensuring the federal government's investment had a measurable impact on underrepresented creators and companies across the country. The priority of the CMF's 2024-2027 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Strategy is to create structural changes within the CMF that strengthen EDIA principles across the organization and build the foundation of our new content-centric program model that supports storytellers across all platforms.

Through our journey, CMF has come to better understand the critical importance and role of accessibility and full participation. For this reason, we have added Accessibility as a core pillar of our 2024-2027 EDIA Strategy to indicate our priority to ensure accessibility practices are incorporated throughout CMF's internal and external work.



YEAR ONE

With industry modernization, updated regulations, and potential new contributions on the horizon, the first year of our 2024-2027 EDIA strategy will continue to focus on specific communities, while maintaining the new incentives and programs launched during the 2021-2023 Equity and Inclusion Strategy, including Sector Development Support and the Program for Racialized Communities. These changes can be seen in our [2024-2025 Programs launch](#).

YEAR TWO AND THREE

As we move into year two and three of the EDIA strategy, the CMF will continue to consult, assess, and adapt to ensure that we are meeting the needs of ever-evolving Equity-Deserving Communities in Canada, and that new or adapted programs and initiatives are developed through an EDIA lens. Our emphasis, as always, is on collaboration and partnership to ensure the CMF continues to be a leader and advocate for the country's audiovisual sector.

EQUITY-DESERVING COMMUNITIES

The term Equity-Deserving Communities recognizes that we are all deserving of equitable treatment and we all have a role to ensure the equitable treatment of those experiencing oppressions. During the three years of this plan—and using research and data to inform our decisions—we intend to invest in activities which provides further support to Black and Racialized Communities, 2SLGBTQ+, Disabled Persons/Persons with Disability(ies), Individuals who publicly identify as women, and Official Language Minority Communities.

CMF's 2024-2027 EDIA Strategy Goals

- 1.** Embed EDIA objectives into funding channels as the CMF adapts to modernization and regulatory decisions.
- 2.** Strengthen the impact of data and research work to better serve CMF applicants and the industry.
- 3.** Renew approaches to EDIA collaboration and engagement to strengthen the involvement of Equity-Deserving Communities.
- 4.** Utilize our platform to promote EDIA progress within the industry and promote shared accountability toward EDIA actions.
- 5.** Collaborate with Telefilm Canada and other funding partners to align EDIA strategies.
- 6.** Continue to build the competencies and composition of the CMF team to best serve Equity-Deserving creators and communities.



6.

CMF's 2024-2027 EDIA Strategy: Strategic Actions by Department



2024-2027 EDIA Strategic Actions

Programs

Action 1

Design and implement an updated Sector Development Support program for industry growth, inclusion, and accessibility, including clear guidelines and processes to support the growth and international success of companies owned and controlled by Equity-Deserving Communities through the following:

- Capacity building and acceleration (focused on industry development and company stabilization).
- Market access / international support (including targeted support for French content by Racialized creators in international French-speaking markets, such as West Africa and the Caribbean).
- Workforce / skills training development (individual skills building and career development).



Action 2

Expand accessibility support.

- Increase number and specialty of Service Providers.
- Expand eligible activities with feedback from Disabled Community members.
- Provide increased support to Equity-Deserving applicants through the application process.

Action 3

Review CMF's Jury Recruitment and Training Policy to include tools to recognize and address unconscious bias.

- Strengthen decision-making by ensuring selection committees and panels for project evaluation are diverse and include industry experts, advocates, and creators from underrepresented groups.
- Selective programs that benefit specific communities will continue to be adjudicated by representatives from those communities.



2024-2027 EDIA Strategic Actions

Research and Data

Action 1

Implement improvements to PERSONA-ID in 2024-2025, including encouraging use by all applicants and Sector Development participants.

- Explore collecting and reporting data on onscreen talent and CAVCO's key creative and producer-related personnel.

Action 2

Work with the CRTC and industry for a modernized and harmonized approach to data collection and reporting across the industry, based on the success of PERSONA-ID and in response to industry calls during CRTC hearings to expand the use of PERSONA-ID.

- In consultation with industry, establish specific benchmarks and approaches to measuring success.



Action 3

Building on the success of the initial evaluation of our Pilot Program for Racialized Communities (now officially called the Program for Racialized Communities), develop a universal evaluation approach for EDIA programs and incentives and roll out over three years.

Action 4

In addition to continuing existing EDIA data and research work, support and conduct research on industry best practices for accessibility in the audiovisual sector.

Action 5

Put in place tools to monitor and evaluate the results of this strategy and report regularly and transparently to the industry.

Action 6

Commit to discussing industry-wide tracking and accountability measures that document and discourage misuse or unethical use of EDIA-related funding.



2024-2027 EDIA Strategic Actions

Communications, Public Affairs, and Partnerships

Action 1

Foster relationships with diverse industry organizations, audiovisual festivals, and networking events, including a broader support to events that promote inclusion and accessibility in the audiovisual sector.

Action 2

Develop strategic partnerships.

- Support delegations for market-ready producers, creators, and projects from Equity-Deserving Communities to aid a diversity of participants and provide access to relevant national and international markets.



Lou et Sophie

Action 3

Consult on, design, and establish a transparent feedback mechanism for applicants and other users of CMF services to report accessibility issues or suggestions.

Action 4

Complete full accessibility review of CMF website and continue with second phase of structural changes in compliance with best practices and standards as set out in the *Accessible Canada Act*.

- Consult on best practices for accessibility via social media channels and major projects e.g. Annual Report.

Action 5

Launch internal language repository and translation software to ensure consistency in inclusive language, in English and French, across all channels.

- Create glossary of inclusive language used by the CMF.

Action 6

Continue to leverage CMF communications platforms for stronger focus on promotion of Equity-Deserving Communities and organizations served by the CMF.

- With the MADE | NOUS and *Now and Next* platforms continue to create original, EDIA and industry-focused content, in both French and English.

2024-2027 EDIA Strategic Actions

Management, Operations, and Governance

Action 1

Conduct an accessibility audit of CMF operations, from program design to the application process to funding distribution, to identify and act on areas requiring improvement.

- Encourage the industry to offer accessible work environments for Disabled Persons/Persons with Disability(ies).

Action 2

Enhance ongoing internal EDIA training objectives for CMF Board and staff.

Action 3

Work with Canadian Heritage and other partners to contribute to and support government policies that bolsters growth and inclusion in the industry.

Action 4

Adapt and revise CMF policies as needed based on feedback from the industry and our partners and analysis of CMF data.

Action 5

Advocate to the Members of the CMF the importance of including Equity-Deserving Communities on the CMF Board of Directors.

7.

Conclusion

The CMF's 2024-2027 EDIA Strategy outlines a broad and inclusive approach, encompassing multiple Equity-Deserving Communities, and signifies a pledge to utilize data-driven approaches to rectify historical imbalances and monitor impact.

Embedding EDIA throughout the CMF's operational framework ensures equitable resource allocation, which fosters sustainable growth and long-term development.

However, this is a living document—it will change as we change and as the industry we serve changes. At the heart of our culture lies a genuine commitment to engagement—an ongoing cycle of communication and dialogue that empowers us to attentively listen, comprehend, and address the needs and issues of creators and industry organizations.

We are committed to ongoing consultation with communities, creators, and industry partners to ensure our EDIA strategy remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of diverse groups and achieves the goal of greater growth in the sector.

Thank you to everyone who has generously shared your time and energy to see this EDIA Strategy come to light. Your input has been insightful and invaluable.



Hailey Rose

8.

Feedback

The CMF's 2024-2027 Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategy is designed to be flexible to ensure we are adapting to the needs of the creators and companies we serve. Your feedback is crucial to that process.

For more information about our EDIA Strategy, contact our Growth and Inclusion team directly at industries@cmf-fmc.ca.

