CANADA MEDIA FUND
FONDS DES MÉDIAS DU CANADA

INDIGENOUS COMPANY IMPACT SUPPORT PROGRAM

GUIDELINES 2026-2027

Deadline:
Oct. 29, 2026

Accessibility Support

If you require support or accommodations in the application process, the CMF has an Accessibility Support Program, see here, or email access@cmf-fmc.ca.

Interpretation, Application, Disclaimer, and Other Important Information

These Guidelines are for the information and convenience of Applicants to the Canada Media Fund (CMF). They provide an overview of the objectives of the CMF, the manner in which the CMF is administered, and information on typical administrative practices of the CMF. Compliance with these Guidelines is a prerequisite to eligibility for any CMF funding.

The CMF has full discretion in the administration of its funds and in the application of these Guidelines to ensure funding is provided to those projects that contribute to the fulfillment of its mandate. In all questions of interpretation of these Guidelines, the CMF interpretation shall prevail.

Projects that receive CMF funding in a given year are subject to the CMF policies and practices in effect for that fiscal year. To be clear, changes to CMF Guidelines and/or policies made in a subsequent fiscal year will not apply retroactively unless specifically stated. The CMF fiscal year is April 1 to March 31.

Please note: These Guidelines may be changed or modified as required, without notice. Please consult the CMF website at www.cmf-fmc.ca for the latest Guideline news and documentation.

1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Responding to an urgent need and Indigenous priority, the Canada Media Fund (CMF) has launched the Indigenous Company Impact Support (ICIS) program to provide one-time funding for Indigenous-owned companies, with a history of creating Interactive, Digital, and Emergent Media content. This initiative is designed to stabilize and/or grow these companies by investing in professional and company advancement activities. The ICIS program aligns with key principles of Narrative Sovereignty, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the CMF's 2026-2029 Indigenous Action Plan. The program focuses on supporting activities such as:

- Company stabilization or growth
- Business affairs and/or business development
- Training and capacity building
- Community engagement
- Market access
- Marketing and audience development
- Accessibility support
- Translation and language services
- Other relevant activities as identified by Indigenous-owned companies

2. DEFINITIONS APPLICABLE TO COMPANY IMPACT SUPPORT

2.1 FOR THE PURPOSES OF INDIGENOUS COMPANY IMPACT SUPPORT IN 2026-2027, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES SHALL BE DEFINED AS THE FOLLOWING:

a) Indigenous peoples to Canada:
   - First Nations
   - Inuit
   - Métis

2.2 FOR THE PURPOSES OF INDIGENOUS COMPANY IMPACT SUPPORT IN 2026-2027, CANADIAN INDIGENOUS OWNED AND CONTROLLED PRODUCTION COMPANIES SHALL BE DEFINED AS THE FOLLOWING:

b) whereby at least 51% of the Applicant company's ownership are retained by a member (or members) of one (or a combination) of the communities noted in section 2.1a) Indigenous peoples to Canada (i.e., First Nations, Inuit and Métis).

3. INTENDED OUTCOMES

The ICIS program is committed to building a thriving and equitable digital media ecosystem. The intended outcomes enable companies to achieve stability or expand operations in the interactive digital media sector by:

Supporting Company Stabilization and Advancement

- Invest in the creation of business development plans and supporting materials, marketing plans and resources, audience engagement strategies, and/or commercialization activities.

Building Relationships and Financial Opportunities

- Enable participation in domestic and global markets, distribution, exploitation and investment opportunities, as well as networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

Strengthening Business Capacity and Industry Expertise

- Offset costs associated with hiring experts to address gaps in business affairs, strategic planning, wise practices, and legal and financial planning toward increased skills and operational capacity.

Increasing Employment and Professional Development Opportunities

- Identify mentorship and career advancement opportunities for individuals within Indigenous-owned companies.

Expanding Indigenous engagement and participation across the IDM ecosystem

- Foster community engagement through activated cultural protocols, language translation and services, collective ownership models, and hosting practices toward increased community participation.

4. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Indigenous-owned and controlled companies in receipt of CMF funding between 2021 and 2026, through one or more of the following Canada Media Fund or Indigenous Screen Office programs:
    - Conceptualization Program
    - Prototyping Program
    - ISO Interactive and Immersive Program
    - Commercial Projects Program
    - Innovation & Experimentation Program
- Eligible Applicants must have a completed PERSONA-ID and be in good standing with the CMF per reports and deliverables of past funded projects.

5. INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- Non-profit organizations
- Government, quasi-government or government agencies
- Other funding bodies
- Organizations in poor standing/in default with any CMF department

6. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Culturally supportive mentorship, training, coaching, and skills development
- Engage qualified consultants to provide business development and business affairs support, including the refinement of business plans
- Develop investor pitching and market validation strategies to assess audience demand, strengthen market positioning, and demonstrate commercial potential
- Develop business, creative, technical and production expertise required to compete in domestic and international IDM markets
- Support marketing and promotional initiatives to expand into new markets and strengthen existing ones (including the development or enhancement of Nation-to-Nation opportunities)
- Foster meaningful community engagement such as hosting and visiting protocols, community consultation, accessibility support, traditional knowledge and language sharing, and activities of reciprocity.
- Encourage collaborative initiatives between companies and communities or support intersectional community exchanges
- Other activities to be approved ahead of application

Please note that the impact of Eligible Activities can be at the regional, provincial, territorial, national or international levels.

7. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Activities that are primarily content development; conceptualization and/or prototyping, production, digital
- post-production
- Projects that have already launched or meaningfully commenced
- Projects that are primarily research and literature review
- Projects targeting youth under 18 years of age
- Projects aimed primarily at supporting the short film, educational, or fine arts sectors

Please note that activities funded through ICIS cannot have received funding through other CMF programs.

8. ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible Costs must be related to specific initiatives that are incurred directly for the Project. The CMF has the right to refuse or reduce any costs deemed excessive or ineligible. Costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Consulting fees and honorariums for mentors, consultants, experts and community leaders
- Fees and honorariums for participants, mentees and support workers
- Project management, contracted positions, and coordination fees
- Festival and sales market attendance
- Marketing, promotion and audience development
- Travel, accommodation and per diems for participants
- Dedicated facility and equipment rental
- Online platform fees for virtual events
- Administrative expenses
- Other third-party costs directly related to the project (such as securing rights, business affairs expenses)
- Support services such as translation, ASL interpretation, descriptive video, and other accessibility measures
- Expenses related to sustainability measures

9. INELIGIBLE COSTS

Ineligible costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Purchases of capital assets
- Taxes that are subject to rebate to the Applicant (such as HST, GST, QST, VAT), penalties, fines, and pension contributions
- Core business/operational expenses (such as staff salaries outside direct project management/coordination)
- Event merchandise
- Costs for activities already funded by the CMF or other organizations
- Union dues, penalties, fines, pension contributions and any other union-mandated payments
- Prizes

10. MEASURES OF SUCCESS:

Success for ICIS-supported projects will be measured by tangible and measurable outcomes that may include quantitative, qualitative and community-based results, including:

- Company strategic planning, audience development and/or business affairs materials
- Increased distribution, sales, publishing, and export opportunities
- Securing additional project financing
- Enhanced skills development among team members
- Career advancement or job placement for Indigenous professionals
- Expanded community engagement, cultural continuity and participation
- Achieving other meaningful results that contribute to the growth and stabilization of Indigenous-owned companies

11. NATURE AND AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTION

Projects are awarded funding on a selective basis, and the amount awarded to each project will be paid in the form of a non- repayable contribution directly to the Applicant by the CMF.

The CMF contribution will be up to $50,000 per company, based on proposed activities and with a limit of one application per company. The contribution amount is at the sole discretion of the CMF.

Once selected for funding, the Applicant and the CMF will enter into an agreement that will include the details of the Project, key deliverables, and reporting requirements.

12. DEADLINE

October 29, 2026 at 12 Midnight ET

13. APPLICATION PROCESS

Eligible companies will be invited to apply. Application materials will be provided a minimum four (4) weeks from the deadline. Only applications submitted via the outlined process will be accepted.

Applicants will be asked to provide a PERSONA-ID number as part of the application. For more information about PERSONA-ID, please see here.

All activities and expenses must be closed by the time final deliverables are submitted.

Any application which is found to make false claims, references, misrepresentations or omit significant and relevant truths will be disqualified and may be deemed ineligible from re-applying to CMF programs.

14. SELECTION PROCESS

Indigenous Company Impact Support is awarded on a selective basis and juried by a team of CMF staff and external readers, including members of Indigenous and Equity-Deserving Communities. Decisions will be provided approximately sixteen (16) weeks following the Application Deadline. Note that if demand exceeds available funds, the jury may offer less support than the full request of the Applicant.

15. EVALUATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA	
Company Background, Reach and Impact • The Eligible Applicant has detailed a record of success, impact, and leadership within the Canadian screen sector. • The Eligible Applicant has demonstrated that they are well-positioned to undertake their proposed company impact support or advancement activity.	/10
Proposed Activity • The Eligible Applicant has identified an opportunity, need or barrier that underscores the timeliness of their proposed activity. • The Eligible Applicant has presented a compelling rationale for how their proposed activity will stabilize and/or grow their company. • The Eligible Applicant has detailed a thoughtful approach to their activity and allocation of funding in line with the program's eligible activities and criteria and informed by best practices. • The Eligible Applicant has described how they will measure the outcomes and success of their activity in both the short and long-term.	/30
Inclusion, Accessibility and Engagement • The Eligible Applicant demonstrates a meaningful approach to accessibility and inclusion where relevant to their proposed activity. • The Eligible Applicant has considered cultural protocols and community engagement as demonstrated throughout their application and in their budget.	/10
Collaboration, Positioning, and Impact • The Eligible Applicant has addressed their relationship to the proposed participants, communities and experts and offered a rationale for selection, where appropriate. • The Eligible Applicant's proposed activity advances the principles of Narrative Sovereignty and demonstrates the capacity to positively impact the wider Indigenous IDM ecosystem.	/20
Feasibility • The Eligible Applicant can feasibly undertake the proposed activity with the collaborators, timeline and resources detailed in their application.	/10
Budget Clarity and Completeness • The budget is sensible and the line items support the proposed activities. • Payments, rates and fees are clearly identified and meet or exceed industry standards. • Budget categories respect the maximum outlined. • Where applicable, additional funding sources are clearly identified, and the status is indicated (i.e. pending, confirmed).	/20
TOTAL	/100

16. FUNDED PROJECTS PROCESS

Following deadline decisions, Successful Applicants will receive an offer letter. The letter will outline any required deliverables to proceed to an Indigenous Company Impact Support Program Financing Agreement with the CMF.

Payment Schedule*

90% on execution of the CMF Sector Development Financing Agreement
10% on delivery and acceptance of Final Project Deliverables (final cost report, final report, etc.)

*some exceptions may apply.

17. REPORTING

Successful Applicants are required to submit a final report and final cost report as well as any deliverables specified in the contract. Deliverables can only be submitted when all activities have concluded, and final actual expenditures are calculated.

The Final Report Questionnaire will be provided to successful applicants upon signing their agreement. Upon completion of the proposed activity, contracted applicants will be asked to submit the Final Report Questionnaire along with a cost report.