



Alliance of  
Aboriginal  
Media Professionals

November 18, 2013

Ms. Valerie Creighton, President & CEO  
Canada Media Fund  
4 – 50 Wellington Street East  
Toronto, ON M5E 1C6

Dear Ms. Creighton:

On September 26, 2013, members of the Aboriginal production community met with you and your colleagues at a roundtable consultation in Vancouver. We applaud the Canada Media Fund for its vision in ensuring that stakeholders from throughout Canada had the opportunity to offer input on CMF's future policy direction and funding priorities.

The board of AAMP is respectfully submitting the attached recommendations based on comments made at the Aboriginal roundtable and through on-going dialogue with our 75 First Nations, Inuit and Metis members.

Attached is a report entitled, "The Alliance of Aboriginal Media Professional's CMF Guideline and Policy Recommendations" which offers background information and suggestions on the following programs:

- AAMP recommends increasing the Aboriginal Language Program to \$9.0 million in 2014/15 in response to the significant oversubscription of ALP in 2013/14 and growth in the Aboriginal production sector, which now accounts for 75-80 production companies in Canada.
- AAMP recommends the creation of an "Aboriginal Production Incentive" to stimulate the licensing of Aboriginal-produced programming to all Canadian broadcasters.
- AAMP recommends that CMF earmark 5% of the Experimental Stream to kickstart the Aboriginal digital media industry through the development, production and marketing of Aboriginal-owned projects.

AAMP members would like to express their deep concern for the methodology used by CMF to measure broadcaster success, which in turn determines the Broadcaster Performance Envelopes amounts. We would like CMF to reconsider the metrics used to measure success amongst broadcasters. As we all know, broadcasters come in all sizes with varying numbers of channels, national reach and budget. We recommend that two categories of broadcasters be measured in separate pools – multi-channel broadcasters and single channel broadcasters. And finally, we submit that the CMF take into consideration that Aboriginal audiences are not being measured accurately by BBM and therefore the audience measurements for APTN are not reliable or accurate.

Thank you for considering AAMP's input on CMF's policy and guidelines.

Sincerely,

AAMP Board of Directors

cc: Stéphane Cardin, VP Industry and Public Affairs, CMF



## **Alliance of Aboriginal Media Professionals**

### **CMF POLICY & GUIDELINE RECOMMENDATIONS November 15, 2013**

*The Alliance of Aboriginal Media Professionals (AAMP) is an association of Canadian First Nations, Inuit and Metis producers, directors, writers and other professionals who work in the television, film and digital media industries. AAMP advocates on behalf of its members for an equitable share of funding from government agencies and access to Canadian audiences for Aboriginal-produced and owned content. AAMP has 75 First Nations, Inuit and Metis members. Its nine member board represents every region of Canada.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The members of the Alliance of Aboriginal Media Professionals are part of the fastest growing, distinct cultural community in Canada. The estimated population of Aboriginal people in Canada in 2011 was 1,400,685 million, or 4.3% of the Canadian population.<sup>1</sup>

Based on data available from APTN, the CMF and AAMP, there are more than 80 Aboriginal-owned production companies in Canada creating television and digital media programming.

Since 1997, the Canadian Television Fund and the Canada Media Fund has allocated funding to Aboriginal language television productions. Since it was launched in 1999, APTN has received license fee and equity investments funding for programming it licenses from Aboriginal producers. This sustained commitment by CMF has been instrumental in the growth of the Aboriginal production sector.

Between 2007/08 and 2011/12, CMF funded 198 convergent projects with total production budgets of \$173 million, contributing to the creation of an estimated 3,333 direct and indirect jobs.<sup>2</sup>

According to research conducted by AAMP and MDR Communications, the majority of Aboriginal producers are concerned “about the long-term sustainability of their businesses since their lack of access to broadcasters other than APTN represents a key barrier in their growth.”<sup>3</sup>

“One of the greatest challenges identified by television producers interviewed for this study is the lack of access to broadcasters other than APTN for financing their projects. Producers observed that the participation of broadcasters other than APTN in Aboriginal television production is very low to non-existent....To promote and encourage the distribution of Aboriginal programming to a wider range of broadcasting services in Canada, the CMF could consider the introduction of incentives to encourage broadcasters other than APTN to trigger projects by Aboriginal producers.”<sup>4</sup>

Canadian broadcasters (other than APTN) have not demonstrated a commitment to Canadian audiences as mandated by the Canadian Broadcasting Act, which states “through its programming and the employment opportunities arising out of its operations, serve the needs and interests, and reflect the circumstances and aspirations, of Canadian men, women and children, including equal rights, the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of aboriginal peoples within that society.”<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted that Francophone minority producers outside of Quebec have secured a broadcast envelope with TFO and a commitment from Radio-Canada to license their programming. This group of producers has an assured portion of the CMF funding every year, indexed to ten percent of the French

BPE's annual allocation. This production community is significantly smaller than the Aboriginal production sector, yet they receive 33% more funding per year in their envelope.

Our production sector has reached a critical point in its growth and in order to thrive and survive, we require a broader range of buyers for our programming. AAMP strongly advocates for the creation of an "Aboriginal Production Incentive" at CMF to encourage a wider range of broadcasters to commission Aboriginal-focused programming from First Nations, Inuit and Metis producers.

In the 2013/14 CMF budget, \$11,466,128 million was allocated to Aboriginal programming (\$6.9 million in the ALP and \$4,566,128 in APTN's BPE). This is a decline of \$4,885,574 from \$16,351,702 in the 2012/13 fiscal year (\$7.0 million in the ALP and \$9,351,702 in APTN's BPE). This represents a significant loss of revenue to Aboriginal production companies in Canada.

In 2009/10, CMF funded 51 Aboriginal programs, in 2010/11, 35 projects, in 2011/12, 38 projects. AAMP estimates that as few as 25 projects (15 ALP, 10 APTN BPE) will be financed in the current fiscal year, a decline of 35% from 2011/12 and 50% from 2009/10. This downward trend requires analysis by CMF, as the loss of these productions impacts Aboriginal producers/creators abilities to share their stories and create technical and creative jobs in Canada.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. Aboriginal Language Program**

- Increase the budget of the Aboriginal Language Program from \$6.9 million in 2012/13 to \$9.0 million in 2013/14.
- Continue to dedicate up to 10% of the Aboriginal Language Program budget for development.
- Limit development funding (with a broadcaster attached) to no more than three projects per production company or producer per fiscal year.
- Set a maximum per project limit for development funding from the Aboriginal Language envelope to match the limit in the English and French development envelopes.
- Allow pre-development budgets to a maximum of \$15,000 to match the English and French pre-development.
- Do not require Aboriginal language pre-development projects to require a broadcaster letter of interest.
- Limit pre-development funding (without a broadcaster attached) to no more than three projects per production company or producer per fiscal year.

### **B. Aboriginal Production Incentive**

- Create the Aboriginal Production Incentive, a new funding stream to enhance Aboriginal producers' potential opportunities to license programming to broadcasters that do not traditionally access the ALP.
- Provide a budget of \$3 million for the API fund and offer it as a first-come-first-served program.
- Allow this to incentive to provide a 15% top up for licensed programming that has a Canadian or Canadian/foreign broadcaster that offers a license of at least 20% of the budget.

- Provide “bonus” points for broadcasters that offer licenses to Aboriginal producers that include English or French BPE contributions to the project.
- Limit the API to projects that are not receiving Aboriginal Language Program funding.
- Offer two intakes per year for the API, with 65% allocated in the first and 35% allocated in the second round.

### **C. Experimental Stream**

- To kickstart the Aboriginal digital media industry, AAMP recommends that CMF earmarks 5% of the development, production and marketing budget of the Experimental Stream specifically for Aboriginal-owned projects.

1. Stats Can – Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Metis and Inuit (2011)
2. The Aboriginal Screen-based Production Sector in Review: Trends, Success Stories and the Way Forward (MDR Communications, 2013)
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Broadcasting Act (S.C. 1991, c. 11)