



CANADA  
MEDIA FUND

FONDS DES MÉDIAS  
DU CANADA

# **LINEAR CONTENT PROGRAMS**

## **CORE DEVELOPMENT AND PREDEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

### **2024-2025**

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# 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

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## Interpretation, Application, Disclaimer, and other Important Information

These Guidelines are for the information and convenience of Applicants (as defined in section 3.1) 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 Programs, 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 its Programs, Guidelines, Agreements and whether Applicants and/or Projects meet the spirit and intent of any CMF policy, the CMF interpretation shall prevail.

All Applicants and broadcasters (where relevant) must abide by the Accounting and Reporting Requirements (ARR) of the CMF and follow applicable business policies as created and amended from time to time. Business policies, including the ARR, may be found in [Appendix B](#) and are also available from the CMF website at [www.cmf-fmc.ca](http://www.cmf-fmc.ca). Information included in [Appendices A](#) and [B](#) is an integral part of these Guidelines.

Projects that receive CMF funding in a given year are subject to the Guidelines and CMF policies 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](http://www.cmf-fmc.ca) for the latest Guideline news and documentation.*

## Provision of Documentation

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that the CMF receives all relevant documentation and to update such documentation and information after a material change. The CMF may request other documentation and information to conduct an assessment and evaluation of the project and, once assessed, to complete CMF file reviews. For the purposes of project assessment and evaluation, the CMF reserves the right to rely solely on the written and audiovisual materials initially submitted by the Applicant.

## Failure to Comply

If an Applicant fails to comply with these Guidelines, as determined by the CMF, then the CMF may refuse the application, revoke the eligibility status of the Applicant's Project and may demand repayment of any sums paid to the Applicant.

## Misrepresentation

If, at any time, an Applicant, as required by the Guidelines or as requested by the CMF, provides false information or omits material information in connection with an Application, the Applicant may suffer serious consequences. These may include, among other outcomes:

- Loss of eligibility for funding of the current Project;
- Loss of eligibility for funding of future Projects;
- Repayment of any funds already advanced, with interest; and/or
- Criminal prosecution, in the case of fraud.

These measures may be imposed not only on the Applicant but also on related, associated and affiliated companies and individuals (as determined by the CMF at its sole discretion). Any Applicant receiving approval for funding will be required to sign a legally enforceable agreement, which includes further provisions concerning misrepresentations, defaults, and related matters.

## PERSONA-ID self-identification information

The PERSONA-ID self-identification allows individuals to disclose their demographic information directly and securely to the CMF.

The CMF shall rely solely on the self-identification information associated with each individual's PERSONA-ID number to determine (as applicable) eligibility for Programs, exclusive reserved portions of Program budgets, Broadcaster Envelope credit, Evaluation Grid points and/or for statistical and analytical purposes.

All PERSONA-ID self-identification information in connection with the Project is provided in accordance with the [PERSONA-ID Terms of Use & Privacy](#).

For more information about PERSONA-ID, please visit the [CMF's PERSONA-ID page](#).

## 2. LINEAR CONTENT – CORE DEVELOPMENT AND PREDEVELOPMENT – OVERVIEW

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

When applying to the CMF for development or predevelopment funding of a linear content project<sup>1</sup>, Applicants must comply with the eligibility criteria contained in the following key documents:

1. **Linear Content – Core Development and Predevelopment Guidelines (THIS document)**
2. **Linear Content – Program Guidelines**
3. [Appendix A](#) – Definitions and Essential Requirements
4. [Appendix B](#) – Business Policies

While the Linear Content – Core Development and Predevelopment Guidelines (“**Core Guidelines**”) set out *general eligibility* requirements applicable to *all* CMF Linear Programs, the Linear Content - Program Guidelines (**Program Guidelines**) set out the *specific* eligibility requirements for *each* CMF Linear Program.

The Development and Predevelopment Program Guidelines are:

- [Broadcaster Envelope Program \(Development\)](#)
- [Development and Predevelopment Funding](#)
  - Francophone Minority Development allocation
  - Indigenous Development and Predevelopment allocation
  - Northern Development allocation
  - Predevelopment allocation
  - Quebec French Regional Development allocation
  - Racialized Community Development and Predevelopment allocation
- [Slate Development Pilot Program](#)

### 2.2 DEFINITIONS

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

- Canadian Broadcaster
- Circumpolar North
- In-house Programming
- Indigenous Peoples to Canada
- Related Digital Content
- Related Party

### 2.3 FLEXIBILITY FOR INDIGENOUS-LED PROJECTS

Beginning in 2024-2025, projects from companies owned and controlled by individuals who are First Nations, Inuit, or Métis will be granted additional flexibility. Please see Schedule A below for more information.

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<sup>1</sup>With the exception of some CMF Partnership Programs. Please see those specific Program Guidelines for more information.

### 3. LINEAR CONTENT – CORE DEVELOPMENT AND PREDEVELOPMENT – ELIGIBILITY

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#### 3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

**In addition to any further requirements/qualifications noted in the specific Linear Content – Program Guidelines,** an Eligible Applicant to the CMF is either a for-profit (i.e., a taxable Canadian corporation, within the meaning of Canada's *Income Tax Act*) production company<sup>2</sup> or a Canadian Broadcaster (defined in [Appendix A](#)) that:

- a) Is Canadian-controlled as determined in sections 26 to 28 of the *Investment Canada Act*.
- b) Has its head office in Canada.
- c) Is in good standing with all applicable talent and industry associations and guilds.
- d) Has affirmed and attested that the Project submitted for funding complies with the [CMF's Narrative Positioning Policy](#).

**AND**

- e) All individuals that own and control the Applicant company/Applicant Canadian Broadcaster have registered for a PERSONA-ID account(s) and have provided this account number as part of their Application.

Applicants must own and control all rights necessary to produce and exploit the Eligible Project. Entities that provide services but do not own the applicable rights are not eligible to apply to the CMF.

*Note: For the purposes of the CMF Linear Content Guidelines, the term Applicant includes all co-applicants, and/or all Related Parties (defined in [Appendix A](#)), associated, affiliated or parent companies and/or individuals (as determined by the CMF at its sole discretion), as applicable.*

#### 3.2 ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

**In addition to any further requirements/qualifications noted in the specific Linear Content – Program Guidelines,** an Eligible Project must be linear audiovisual content that meets the following requirements (as further explained in this Section):

- the CMF's Essential Requirements;
- the CMF's Genre Requirements (as set out in [Appendix A](#));
- the Ownership and Control Requirements;
- the Eligible Triggering Commitment Requirement and Conditions
  - a letter of interest (for predevelopment funding);
  - minimum required Development Fee (for development funding)<sup>3</sup>; and
- the Miscellaneous Requirements.

An Eligible Project must be developed as a Canadian production or intended as an audiovisual treaty coproduction. A Canadian scriptwriter must be involved in all stages of development. For Eligible Projects meant for Canadian audiovisual treaty coproductions, the active creative contribution of a Canadian scriptwriter is required.

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<sup>2</sup>Applicants who are unincorporated, but meet all other requirements, may apply for development or predevelopment financing if they have never received CMF funding before. Applicants, however, will be required to incorporate prior to signing a Financing Agreement with the CMF.

<sup>3</sup>This requirement does not apply to Projects seeking funding in the Slate Development Pilot Program.

The Applicant must have acquired all rights and options to the Eligible Project, exclusively for at least twenty-four (24) months from the Application for funding in this Program, which are necessary for the adaptation of the original work or concept, the scriptwriting, the production and worldwide distribution (with appropriate case-by-case exceptions for a purchased format).

Eligibility for Development or Predevelopment funding does not guarantee Applicant or Project eligibility for further CMF development or production funding.

### 3.2.1 Essential Requirements

An Eligible Project must meet the Essential Requirements listed here. For a series (or mini-series, as applicable), the Essential Requirements apply to each episode of the cycle, even if all episodes are not submitted for CMF funding. The CMF solely decides whether an Eligible Project meets the Essential Requirements and its interpretation shall prevail.

- 1) The Eligible Project will be certified<sup>4</sup> by the Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office (CAVCO) and has achieved 10/10 points<sup>5</sup> (or the maximum number of points appropriate to the Eligible Project), as determined by the CMF using the CAVCO scale.

*Note: For In-house Programming only, CRTC project certification as a “Canadian program” will be accepted in lieu of CAVCO certification for the purposes of meeting Essential Requirement #1.*

- 2) Underlying rights are owned<sup>6</sup>, and significantly and meaningfully developed, by Canadians.

- 3) The Eligible Project is shot and set primarily in Canada.

Further details on Essential Requirements and permissible genre-specific exceptions are in [Appendix A](#).

The CMF recognizes that Eligible Projects at the predevelopment and development stage are necessarily nascent, evolving works that may not strictly comply at application with all requirements of section 3.2 and its subsections. As such, Eligible Projects must be reasonably intended to comply with the three Essential Requirements above, as appropriate to each category of production and programming genre, as set out in [Appendix A](#), plus all other requirements of sections 3.2.1 through 3.2.5. The CMF shall solely determine whether a predevelopment or development Eligible Project is reasonably intended to comply with these sections.

#### 3.2.1.1 Audiovisual Treaty Coproductions

With respect to CMF eligibility for Projects intended to be audiovisual treaty coproductions, only Canadian Applicants may apply for development and predevelopment funding (and only Canadian costs are eligible for funding).

For information on audiovisual treaty coproduction between Canada and other territories please see [Telefilm Canada’s treaty coproduction guidelines](#).

### 3.2.2 Genre Requirements

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<sup>4</sup>Exceptions may be granted by the CMF for exempt broadcasters regulated by the CRTC via *Broadcasting Order CRTC 2015-88*.

<sup>5</sup>Some exceptions exist for projects from Applicants owned and controlled by individuals who are First Nations, Inuit, or Metis. Please see Schedule A below for more information.

<sup>6</sup>For content created with the assistance of AI technology, it is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that (i) all underlying rights to Eligible Projects are owned and meaningfully developed by Canadians and (ii) Eligible Projects have unobstructed access to all underlying rights.

The CMF supports the following genres: Drama, Documentary, Children and Youth, and Variety and Performing Arts. The CMF defines each in [Appendix A](#) (some flexibility exists for Children and Youth programming and Indigenous content).

### 3.2.3 Ownership and Control Requirements

- a) It is under Canadian ownership and Canadian executive and creative control.
- b) It is under the financial control of Canadian citizens or permanent residents.
- c) It is, and has been, controlled creatively and financially by a Canadian production company during all phases of development.
- d) Generally, no more than 49% of the development financing is provided by a single non-Canadian entity, person or related entity. Interim lending of more than 49%, however, may be provided by a non-Canadian arm's-length entity in the business of lending money and taking security.
- e) The Applicant retains and exercises all effective controls or approvals necessary for any stage of the development consistent with those of a producer. This includes control and final approval of creative decisions and 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.
- f) The Applicant owns all rights (including copyright) and options necessary for the development, production and distribution in Canada and abroad (with appropriate case-by-case exceptions for a purchased format) and retains an ongoing financial interest in the Eligible Project.

### 3.2.4 Eligible Triggering Commitment Requirements and Conditions

All applications for predevelopment financing must include a letter of interest from a Canadian Broadcaster. In some Programs, however, there is additional flexibility where the CMF will accept a letter of interest from a participating provincial or territorial funding agency or Digital Distributor as deemed eligible by the CMF. Please see the [Development and Predevelopment Funding Guidelines](#) for more details.

All applications for development financing must include Development Fees<sup>7</sup> by a Canadian Broadcaster. In some Programs, however, there is additional flexibility where the CMF will accept Development Fees from a CMF-approved community channel or a Digital Distributor as deemed eligible by the CMF. Please see the [Development and Predevelopment Funding Guidelines](#) for more details.

Development Fees must meet or exceed a minimum amount, expressed as a percentage of the Eligible Costs of the Project (i.e., Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold) to be eligible for CMF development funding. Please see section 3.2.4.1 for more information.

#### 3.2.4.1 Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold

An Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold is the minimum amount of financial contribution an Eligible Project must receive from the marketplace in order to unlock CMF funding for that project.

In development, the Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold is the minimum amount of Development Fees that an Eligible Project must receive from the Canadian Broadcaster, a CMF-approved community channel, and/or a Digital Distributor as deemed eligible by the CMF to be eligible for CMF funding.

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<sup>7</sup>This Eligible Triggering Commitment requirement does not apply to Projects seeking funding in the Slate Development Pilot Program.



### 3.2.5 Miscellaneous Requirements

The Eligible Project must meet these criteria:

- a) It conforms to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) Code of Ethics and to all programming standards endorsed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), including the CAB Violence Code and the CAB Equitable Portrayal Code.
- b) It is a new production. A new production is one which is not substantially a repackaged version of a previously produced production. In the case of a series, the CMF will consider the entire cycle to determine if the project is a repackaged version (e.g., some "making-of", "best-of" and/or "catch-up" episodes may be permitted). Projects comprised mainly of stock footage may be new productions provided the footage is not merely repackaged in whole or from large segments for the Project.
- c) When working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, cultures, concepts and stories, the CMF encourages all Applicants to respect the guiding principles and best practices set out in the [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways Media Production Guide](#).
- d) The CMF encourages all Applicants to implement more environmentally-sustainable practices and cleaner technologies – and reduce the use of unsustainable resources – in the development, production and exploitation of their Projects.

For content created with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology,

- the CMF encourages all Applicants to respect the CMF's [AI Guiding Principles](#); and
- it is the responsibility of the Applicant to ensure that (i) all underlying rights to Eligible Projects are owned and meaningfully developed by Canadians and (ii) Eligible Projects have unobstructed access to all underlying rights.

## 4. LINEAR CONTENT – CORE DEVELOPMENT AND PREDEVELOPMENT – CMF CONTRIBUTION

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### 4.1 NATURE OF CONTRIBUTION

While the below section offers a general overview on the types of CMF contributions, the specific type and amount of a CMF contribution to an Eligible Project varies by CMF Program and is detailed in the applicable Program Guidelines.

In the Linear Development and Predevelopment Programs, Eligible Projects receive non-interest-bearing advances. 100% of the Eligible Project's advance must be repaid on or before the earliest applicable event of repayment as described here:

i) The first day of official preparation for principal photography of the Eligible Project (regardless of the platform for which it is produced) or upon other use of the script/Creative Materials.

OR

ii) The transfer, sale, assignment, or other disposition of the script/Creative Materials.

### 4.2 AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTION

The specific amount of CMF contribution to an Eligible Project varies by CMF Program and is detailed in the applicable Program Guidelines.

The Canadian Broadcaster's entire Development Fee and any other confirmed sources of development financing must be included within the financial structure prior to confirmation of the CMF contribution amount, up to the Maximum Contribution level.

#### 4.2.1 Eligible Costs

In Development and Predevelopment Funding, only Canadian costs are Eligible Costs. Eligible Costs are costs set out in the development or predevelopment budget for the Eligible Project or the final cost report as applicable (including both Related-Party and non-Related-Party costs) – plus costs the CMF considers necessary and minus costs the CMF considers excessive, inflated or unreasonable.

CMF participation is calculated on the Eligible Costs of a Project and assessment of a Project's Eligible Costs is at the CMF's sole discretion. The CMF estimates Eligible Costs at the time of application, based on budgets for the Project. Eligible Costs may include cost increases between budget and approved final costs.

In Predevelopment, Eligible Costs should primarily be devoted to early-stage creative materials.

The following will not be considered Eligible Costs:

- In development<sup>8</sup>, with the exception of the option or acquisition of rights and the expenses associated with acquiring those rights (as long as they are not paid to a person with an Ownership Interest as defined in [Appendix B](#)), costs incurred more than twelve (12) months prior to the Applicant entering into an eligible development agreement<sup>9</sup>; or
- In predevelopment, costs incurred before the 2024-2025 CMF fiscal year will not be considered Eligible Costs.

Please note the CMF predevelopment and development budget template outlines allowable Eligible Costs.

The CMF will allow reasonable costs related to environmentally-sustainable activities, practices and personnel connected to a Project that receives linear development or predevelopment funding.

While gifts to the public are ineligible as marketing expenses, gifts made to Indigenous communities recognized as cultural practice and referenced in the [On-Screen Protocols & Pathways Media Production Guide](#) will be accepted as Eligible Costs.

#### 4.2.2 Eligible Digital Content

While no longer a required element for CMF linear content funding, producers can continue to include costs for the development 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](#).

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

#### 4.2.3 Related-Party Transactions

All Related-Party fees, Related-Party allowances and any other Related-Party transactions must be:

- a) Disclosed to the CMF; and
- b) In accordance with the current CMF Accounting and Reporting Requirements in [Appendix B](#).

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<sup>8</sup>Suitable exceptions will be made for the Slate Development Pilot Program.

<sup>9</sup>An eligible development agreement is the current, legally binding agreement between the Applicant and a Canadian Broadcaster that triggers CMF development funding and includes a Development Fee that meets the applicable Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold.

## 5. LINEAR CONTENT – CORE DEVELOPMENT AND PREDEVELOPMENT – DECISION PROCESS

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The CMF utilizes a combination of automatic and first-come-first-serve (FCFS) decision processes in its Linear Development and Predevelopment Programs. Please refer to each set of Program Guidelines for specifics on how decisions are made.

For FCFS Programs, the CMF reserves the right to limit how many Projects are awarded funding to a single Applicant in a given funding application round.



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# **SCHEDULE A**

# **FLEXIBILITY FOR**

# **INDIGENOUS-LED PROJECTS**

## **2024-2025**

## **Introduction**

Beginning in 2024-2025, the CMF is introducing three new flexibility measures to reflect the experiences of Indigenous Peoples to Canada (defined in [Appendix A](#)) and to recognize the unique circumstances of the Indigenous production community. These measures will apply to all CMF Linear Content Programs.

### *Indigenous Applicants Based in the Circumpolar North<sup>10</sup>*

#### **1. Essential Requirement #1 Flexibility**

Essential Requirement #1 requires that an Eligible Project receiving Linear Content funding must be certified by the Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office (CAVCO) and has achieved 10/10 points (or the maximum number of points appropriate to the project), as determined by the CMF using the CAVCO scale.

Eligible Projects from Eligible Applicants that are owned and controlled by individuals who are First Nations, Inuit or Métis working in Canada's North will be granted the following flexibility on this requirement as determined on a case-by-case basis:

- Provided the majority of the Project's CAVCO scale positions are filled by Canadians, the CMF will also allow a minority of the Project's CAVCO scale positions to be filled by individuals working in the Circumpolar North (defined in [Appendix A](#)) who are not Canadian.

This flexibility will apply to all CMF Linear Programs across all genres at all phases of production.

#### **2. Eligible Triggering Commitment Flexibility**

An Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold is the minimum amount of financial contributions an Eligible Project must receive from the marketplace in order to unlock CMF funding for that project.

While the CMF currently only allows Canadian Broadcasters (and, if applicable, Eligible Canadian Distributors) (each defined in [Appendix A](#)) to contribute to a Project's Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold<sup>11</sup>, Eligible Projects from Eligible Applicants that are owned and controlled by individuals who are First Nations, Inuit or Métis working in Canada's North will be granted the following flexibility on this requirement, determined on a case-by-case basis:

- Non-Canadian broadcasters from the Circumpolar North may contribute to a Project's Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold (either in combination with Canadian Broadcasters and, if applicable, Eligible Canadian Distributors, or acting as a sole trigger).

The applicable rights, Maximum Term and other material elements connected to Projects where a non-Canadian broadcaster from the Circumpolar North contributes to the Eligible Triggering Commitment Threshold are subject to CMF approval and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

For clarity, all CMF-funded production-stage Projects must be made available to Canadian audiences within eighteen (18) months of completion and delivery of the Eligible Project. Therefore, if a non-Canadian broadcaster from the Circumpolar North is the only entity that contributes to a Project's Eligible Triggering Commitment, the Applicant must still ensure that the Project meets the Canadian Premiere Requirement (defined in section 3.2.4.1 of the [Linear Programs – Core Production Guidelines](#)) and is made available in Canada via a Canadian Broadcaster within eighteen (18) months of completion and

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<sup>10</sup> Please see [Appendix A](#) for the definition of Circumpolar North as defined by the [University of the Arctic](#) (UArctic).

<sup>11</sup> Additional exceptions exist for some Development and Predevelopment Programs – please see Addendum A to the [Development and Predevelopment Funding Guidelines](#).

delivery of the Project or it will be considered an Event of Default pursuant to [Appendix B](#) and the Applicant's CMF Financing Agreement.

*All Indigenous Applicants*

### **3. Genre Flexibility**

Provided an Eligible Project meets the other applicable requirements of the Documentary definition (set out in section 4 of [Appendix A](#)), documentaries from Applicants owned and controlled by individuals who are First Nations, Inuit or Métis may include "how-to" programming related to Indigenous cultural elements (e.g., content related to Indigenous food, dance, language, etc.).

This flexibility will be extended to all Linear Programs at the predevelopment, development and production stages.