



Independent Production Fund | Fonds indépendant de production

Short Form Series Development Program

GUIDELINES

Deadline for Proposals: **March 2, 2026, 5 pm (ET)**

Objectives

The Independent Production Fund (“**IPF**”) encourages the development and growth of Canadian drama series and adapts its financing activities to most effectively fulfill needs identified as requiring support.

The Short Form Series Development Program (the “**Program**”) is designed to assist independent producers to create high quality original scripted short form series.

Projects will be in a better position to attract partners, financing, distribution and move into production.

The focus of the Program is to support outstanding story-driven content by providing funding that will enhance the development of strong creative materials, encourage the incubation of new talents and the participation of experienced professionals, provide opportunities for insightful business development and establish the quality and reputation of projects proceeding through the Program.

Project Eligibility

To be eligible for support, projects must:

1. be new and original (second or subsequent seasons of a series are not eligible);
 2. be conceived as scripted, episodic short-form dramatic content¹ with a minimum of three episodes and episodic running times that are less than 20 minutes;
 3. not have already applied for production financing;
 4. have a confirmed creative team at the time of application including producer and writer; a qualified and experienced story editor or development executive (who is a separate person than the writer and producer) must be confirmed on the creative team at the time of application.
 5. 75% of the project’s eligible expenditures must be Canadian costs;
 6. be scheduled and budgeted so as to provide all required deliverables to the IPF by October 7, 2026 (see Deliverables Required Upon Completion below)
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¹ “Drama” shall be defined as fictionalized live action or animation programming that meets the CMF’s definition of Drama or Children and Youth Programming in [Appendix A](#)

7. all rights and options for the development, production and exploitation of the project must be acquired by the eligible Applicant exclusively for at least 24 months and the project is, and remains throughout its production, under Canadian ownership and Canadian executive, creative and financial control; and
8. be developed in either English or in French.
9. have been submitted no more than three (3) times in total.

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for support, Applicants must:

10. be an independent production company that:
 - is for-profit: (i.e. a taxable Canadian corporation, within the meaning of the Canada *Income Tax Act*);
 - is Canadian-controlled as determined for the purposes of sections 26 to 28 of the Investment Canada Act;
 - has its head office based in Canada; and
 - does not meet the definition of In-house or Broadcaster-Affiliated, as set out in s.2.2 of the CMF's [Development Program Guidelines](#).
11. have an attached confirmed Canadian writer.
12. Either the producer or writer must have previous credited experience (as a producer or writer) on scripted episodic or short form content (including short films);
13. in cases where the producer and writer/creator are the same person, this person must have previous credits as either a producer or writer on scripted episodic or short form content (including short films)
14. agree to participate at training events with industry experts, which may be organized by the IPF or its industry partners
15. be limited to one (1) application per year²

Application Procedures

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Applications to include:

- a completed application form found in the application portal at <https://application.ipf.ca/Login.aspx>
- Incorporation papers
- a Creative Pitch for the short form series in a maximum of three (3) pages, including a complete synopsis of the series, story arc over the season, description of lead characters, and may include a typical episode format, length, number of episodes etc. NOTE: Documents uploaded with more than 3 pages will be deemed ineligible.

² An individual producer may only submit one application each year and may not appear in any producer-related role on any other application. A production company and all of its subsidiaries in which there is any overlap of ownership may together, only submit one application per year

- a one (1) page vision document³
- CV of the producer, writer, creator, story editor and/or development executive including relevant production credits
- URL links (or other) to previous credited work of either the producer or writer
- confirmation in writing from a story editor and/or development executive including responsibilities, proposed schedule and fee
- a development phase budget (Required Budget Template for this program available [here](#))
- a development phase schedule (Note: all deliverables must be completed and delivered to IPF by October 7, 2026)
- Proof of any other confirmed development financing (if applicable), where the financial structure includes additional sources of funding beyond the \$30,000 from the IPF program (including investment from the applicant's company, in-kind contributions, or deferred fees).
- a document containing information on previous phases of development (if applicable)
- a sustainability checklist for scripted development (Required Checklist Template for this program available [here](#))
- the Final Application Checklist completed and signed by the applicant. (available [here](#))

Eligible Expenditures

The Program may support costs associated with the following roles or activities:

- Screenwriter(s)
- Story editor/development executive (Note: although an experienced story editor or development executive may be provided by end users such as broadcasters or distributors or distribution platforms, they are not an eligible budget *expenditure*)
- Production manager (preparation of a budget and schedule)
- Marketing/promotion or audience engagement professional
- Printing and graphic designer for concept or pitch materials
- Professional fees – research, legal, accounting
- Travel
- Producer fees (only if this role is a stand-alone position and not combined with any of the other expensed positions) Maximum 10% of the eligible budget.
- Production expenses for the production of proof-of-concept content

For clarity, 75% of the project's eligible expenditures must be Canadian costs.



³A vision document is a place for the creator to sell their short form series to the evaluators beyond the three page creative document. It is an outline of the passion to create the series – why does it need to be made now, what drives you to create it – and what you hope it will accomplish when it is created and released to audiences. Inspire us with your enthusiasm!

Financial Participation

The maximum funding available for each eligible project is \$30,000. Funding will be in the form of a repayable advance.

The IPF may fund 100% of the project's eligible expenditures through the Program. If, however, the project's budget exceeds \$30,000, additional financing such as producer investment, deferrals or services, distribution advance, platform development deal or licence, must be confirmed at the time of application.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the funding approved through the Program will be advanced on signature of the IPF Financing Agreements. The final 25% will be issued on receipt and approval of all contracted deliverables and a final cost report.

Each project awarded funding through the Program will repay the advance as follows:

- In the event that the series is produced with financial participation from the IPF, 100% of the IPF's portion of the advance will be repaid from the first production payment.
- In the event that the series is produced without financial participation from the IPF, 100% of IPF's portion of the advance will be repaid on the first day of principal photography. In addition, the IPF will also receive 10% of the Producer's profit participation in the series, subsidiary rights and subsequent works based on the project developed through the Development Program.

Evaluation Process

Recipients will be selected and notified in April 2026.

Applications will be initially evaluated by a Selection Committee overseen by the IPF with final decisions made by representatives from the IPF.

Evaluators look for originality, quality of written creative materials, the experience of story editor or development executives, their commitment to the project, the experience of the writer/producer team, the overall potential for success and the appropriateness of the budget and development activities.

Funding will be awarded through the Program on a 2/3 (English) and 1/3 (French) basis.

For more details on evaluation criteria, [click here](#)

Deliverables Required Upon Completion of Project Development

Producers who receive funding in this program will be required to produce and submit the following deliverables:

- Synopses of the series and for each episode of the first "season", including story arc, character descriptions, locations, etc.
- 3 episode scripts
- Produced and released a video proof-of-concept delivered with a robust analysis of audience analytics (Note: There is no maximum length required for the video.)

- 3 still images from the proof of concept
- A preliminary production budget
- A preliminary financing plan
- Outlined production schedule
- A list of potential or confirmed lead performers and other key creative positions
- Audience identification and preliminary engagement plan
- A list of distributors and specific platforms/channels which have been, or will be pitched
- A sustainability plan for writing and production, including a draft carbon footprint
- Final cost report

Artificial Intelligence (AI) – Guiding Principles

RESPONSIBLE: Any adoption of AI should be ethically responsible and measured. It should include considerations for the protections of intellectual property, privacy and data and be aware of the potential for bias and discrimination.

COLLABORATIVE: Any adoption of AI should be considered as a collaboration between humans and technology with the aim of amplifying human capacities rather than replacing them.

TRANSPARENT: Any adoption of AI should be transparent and accountable. It should provide meaningful and appropriate contextual information regarding its application and usage.

Remaining Questions, please visit IPF's [FAQs](#).