



For immediate release  
July 7, 2003

### **Bell Broadcast and New Media Fund increases industry support**

In the past five and a half years the Bell Fund has invested \$25 million in over 230 television programs and their associated new media projects and has worked closely with new media content creators. As a result of these partnerships with the industry, a lot has been learned about the production, financing and marketing of rich media content associated with television programming. The Bell Fund has undertaken research, analyzed the project data it has accumulated, and most importantly, consulted with the production community to determine what challenges they face and how the Bell Fund can best adapt and respond to the needs they have identified.

As a result, the Board of Directors of the Bell Fund has revised and updated its mandate and created new initiatives to support the growth and international profile of the industry. It has also approved a series of strategies to modify the eligibility criteria and financial participation it can offer to television and new media producers. These have been designed to encourage creative and experimental opportunities, to leverage other funding sources and to provide on-going support for successful projects to ensure viable and sustainable models of production. In keeping with the Bell Fund's goal of providing consistent and streamlined services to the industry, administration and evaluation procedures have been clarified and designed to respond to the industry's needs. These efforts will result in more funding to producers, closer ties with broadcasters, and recognition of the realities of financing rich media digital content.

The Bell Fund's core mandate to advance the Canadian broadcasting system by encouraging and funding the creation of excellent Canadian digital media, has been expanded to include several new objectives:

- To promote partnerships and sustainable businesses in the broadcast and new media sectors
- To engage in research and sharing knowledge
- To enhance the national and international profile of industry stakeholders.

To accomplish these goals the Bell Fund intends to actively undertake research activities to support the industry such as its recently completed *Beyond Ratings – New Metrics for New Media*. It will design and support professional development programs to provide training in areas identified by the industry as requiring development. The Bell Fund will also encourage promotional and marketing opportunities for digital projects associated with television programming.

The Bell Fund's Guidelines for project funding have been revised in recognition of the funding challenges that new media producers continue to tackle. A new focus on "excellence" replaces the emphasis on "innovation" which has been the critical evaluation factor for Bell Fund eligibility. Access to increased funding for the *new media* component was approved through the following key changes:

- Production financing is increased to 75% of the costs of production to a maximum of \$250,000. Previously, projects were only eligible for up to 50% of project costs.

2 Carlton St., Suite 1709  
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3  
Tel.: (416) 977-8154  
Fax: (416) 977-0694  
e-mail: bellfund@ipf.ca  
www.bellfund.ca

4200, boulevard Saint-Laurent  
Bureau 503  
Montréal (Quebec) H2W 2R2  
Tél.: (514) 845-4418  
Télé.: (514) 845-5498  
Courriel: fondsbell@ipf.ca  
www.fondsbell.ca

*“The Bell Fund has done more for the Canadian new media community than any other form of public or private fund, and ... it is praised, studied, and emulated around the world. It is a vital national fund that bridges across broadcast communities and is responsible for the creation of extraordinary projects across all genres.”*

- CFTPA

- A new funding bonus will be awarded to match any broadcaster *cash* contribution to a maximum of \$50,000. Productions therefore could receive a maximum of \$300,000 from the Bell Fund. Contributions from Canadian and non-Canadian broadcasters will be matched.
- Development financing is increased to 75% of the costs of development to a new maximum of \$50,000. The previous maximum was \$25,000.
- A 10% cash requirement by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party for Development projects is no longer an eligibility requirement.
- Second and subsequent seasons of production are now eligible to apply for full funding. Previously only 2<sup>nd</sup> seasons of the new media component were eligible for funding and were reduced to 60% of the funding awarded previously.

The Bell Fund also provides grants to the *television* program associated with the new media project. The following key changes were approved:

- Eligible grants have been increased to up to 75% of the Canadian broadcaster’s licence fee, to a maximum of \$75,000. Previously, Bell Fund grants were capped at 50% of the licence fee.
- Television productions that have not yet *completed* principal photography are eligible for funding. Previously only those projects that had not yet *commenced* principal photography were eligible.
- Television production companies may apply for a maximum of three production projects per year. This was previously limited to two production per year.

Various additional administrative and procedural changes were approved to facilitate project funding including changes to payment schedules, an increase in eligible marketing expenses, revised E & O requirements and a clearly defined evaluation grid.

The complete revised Guidelines will be posted on the Bell Fund website in early August at [www.bellfund.ca](http://www.bellfund.ca). The new regulations will be effective as of the next application deadline on October 1, 2003.

The Bell Broadcast and New Media Fund receives approximately \$7 million a year from Bell ExpressVu for the funding of television and associated new media projects. In addition, CTV/BCE Benefits have pledged a \$10 million endowment to the Bell Fund to support the development of the industry.

*The Bell Broadcast and New Media Fund is administered by the Independent Production Fund.*

- 30 -

For further information: Andra Sheffer  
416-977- 8154  
[bellfund@ipf.ca](mailto:bellfund@ipf.ca)

Claire Dion  
514-845-4418  
[fondsbell@ipf.ca](mailto:fondsbell@ipf.ca)

[www.bellfund.ca](http://www.bellfund.ca)