



GUIDELINES

TV Development Online

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Bell Fund Offices:

Toronto:

2 Carlton Street
Suite 1709
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1J3
Telephone: (416) 977-8154
Fax: (416) 977-0694
Email: info@bellfund.ca
Web: www.bellfund.ca

Montréal:

4200, boulevard Saint-Laurent,
Bureau 503
Montréal, Québec H2W 2R2
Telephone: (514) 845-4418
Fax: (514) 845-5498
Email: info@fondsbell.ca
Web: www.fondsbell.ca

1. Mandate

The Bell Fund advances the Canadian broadcasting system.

The Bell Fund:

- Encourages and funds the creation of excellent Canadian digital media,
- Promotes partnerships and sustainable businesses in the broadcast and digital media sectors,
- Engages in research and sharing knowledge,
- Enhances the national and international profile of industry stakeholders

2. Structure

The Bell Fund is a not-for-profit organization. It has been certified by the CRTC as an independent production fund eligible to receive and administer contributions from broadcast distribution undertakings under section 29(2) of the *Broadcasting Distribution Regulations*.

The Fund is governed by a nine member Board of Directors which operates as an arm's-length corporation with representatives from broadcasting, the television and digital media production sectors and from Bell TV and its affiliates.

The Fund has offices in Toronto and Montreal.

3. Program Overview

Objective:

To enhance the development of potential new television programming by supporting the production of content produced for online and/or mobile testing with audiences to gather qualitative and quantitative feedback to inform the future broadcast television project. The testing is intended to be publicly available but may include closed panels or focus groups based on the strength of the application.

4. Applicant Eligibility

1. Applicants must be independent producers or broadcaster-affiliated production companies (which will in the aggregate, be eligible for a maximum of 25% of the funds awarded in any fiscal year). The definition of "independent producer" and "broadcaster-affiliated production company" shall be as set out in Appendix A.
2. Applicants must Canadian-controlled within the meaning of the Investment Canada Act and as defined under section 1106(1)(c) of the Regulations under the Income Tax Act. The individual Producer applicant must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
3. Applicants must demonstrate a sound financial position and the required expertise and relevant experience to successfully complete the respective components of the project.

4. Applicants must have creative control over the content to be developed for television and hold the rights for linear and interactive productions on all digital platforms and for television.

5. Project Eligibility

1. The content must be created for testing on a digital platform (web/mobile), but with the objective of eventually being produced for television broadcast.
2. The program must have a development agreement or licence with a Canadian broadcaster indicating its intent to develop the program for eventual television broadcast, and partnering in funding the development of the web/mobile digital content and promoting it.
3. Programs may be in any genre, format or for any demographic, excluding news, current affairs or sports programming.
4. Formats of this digital test content will be flexible but must be designed and delivered initially on digital platforms. In some cases the Bell Fund may consider supporting projects that involve broadcasting the funded content at the same time as the online testing occurs, if the testing plan clearly demonstrates that the main purpose of the project is to gain insights from online/mobile testing and if there is a demonstrated strong push from on-air to online. Please contact the fund to discuss eligibility of such projects prior to application.
5. The rationale for digital testing, methodology, expected outcomes, data collection and analysis, and how the testing will inform the strategies for the creative and content must be clearly identified and endorsed by the broadcaster. Testing may be used to measure audience engagement, obtain audience feedback, to test characters, to test storylines, to test new formats, etc.
6. The funded content must be designed and produced for, and delivered on, a digital platform, including the website of the broadcaster and any other appropriate distribution platforms.
7. The funded content should be launched within 6 months of approval of funding by the Bell Fund and the testing phase completed within 10 months of approval of funding by the Bell Fund.
8. The future television program must be intended to meet Canadian content certification with at least eight out of ten points as certified by CAVCO, or be an official Canadian treaty coproduction.
9. The content must be in compliance with the laws, regulations, standards and policies applicable to broadcasting and to intellectual property, and it will not infringe on any public or private rights nor contravene any civil and criminal laws in effect.
10. An appropriate credit recognizing the Bell Fund's development support must appear on the online version as well as the future television production.
11. Projects may not be an industrial, corporate or promotional project.

6. Financial Participation

1. The Bell Fund's contribution will be in the form of a grant.

2. The Bell Fund contribution will not exceed 75% of the cost of the online content production to a maximum of \$100,000.
3. The Bell Fund will fund only the costs related specifically to the production of the online test content. Budgets will be subject to Bell Fund approval. Traditional development costs not directly associated with the test content (eg. a series bible, travel, etc.) will not normally be eligible expenses for the purposes of this TV Development Online fund.
4. Disbursements will be made in 3 installments:
 - 75% on execution of Financing Agreement between the producer and the Bell Fund;
 - 15% on launch of the online test content and submission and approval of an up-to-date cost report; and
 - 10% on completion of the testing period and submission and approval of final reports as required by the Bell Fund Financing Agreements.

7. Evaluation Process

1. Applications are reviewed to ensure that all eligibility criteria are met and that the required documentation is complete.
2. Applications are assessed by industry consultants who evaluate the broadcaster support and promotion of the digital content, rationale and objectives for the digital testing, methodology and data analysis procedures, production strategies, expectations and measures of success. All final funding decisions are made by the Board of Directors of the Bell Fund.
3. It is the intent that funding decisions are made by the Board of Directors six to eight weeks after the deadline for application.
4. Projects that do not receive funding may only be resubmitted if the resubmission addresses any notes provided from the previous application and there is an improvement to the application . These changes should be outlined in a separate document or in the cover letter. An unsuccessful project may only resubmit one additional time in the applicable program.
5. Successful applicants must finalize financing of their projects within 90 days or the Bell Fund's commitment may be cancelled at the Board's discretion.

All interpretation of these Guidelines and all policy decisions are at the Board's discretion and the Board reserves the right to final judgment in this regard.

8. Rights

1. The broadcaster may negotiate exclusive rights to the online content for a maximum period of six (6) months after the testing is completed (ie maximum of 16 months from funding approval), upon which the broadcaster may acquire exclusive broadcast rights within Canada based on the developed content.

2. Upon expiration of this period, if the parties are unable to negotiate an agreement to further develop or produce and license the program, the Producer may enter into negotiations with any other third party with respect to the production and distribution of the program.

Appendix A

Access to the Bell Fund is limited to corporations, partnerships and joint ventures which are independent producers or broadcaster-affiliated production companies:

Independent Producers

An “Independent Producer” is a production company that is not an “affiliate” of any licensed Canadian broadcaster or programming undertaking (a “Canadian Broadcaster”). The Bell Fund uses the Canada Business Corporations Act (“CBCA”) definition of the word “affiliate” when assessing the relationship between a production company and a Canadian Broadcaster. The production company should operate principally as a Television or Digital Media production entity. Eligible applicants to the Bell Fund must be a Canadian-controlled corporation as defined in subsection 1106(1) of the *Income Tax Regulations* under the definition of “Canadian” with its head office based in Canada.

Broadcaster-Affiliated Production Companies

To be eligible, a “Broadcaster-Affiliated Production Company” must be a separately incorporated entity and distinct from the operations of its affiliated Canadian Broadcaster. In effect, a production company is an affiliate of a Canadian Broadcaster if:

- one is a subsidiary of the other;
- both are subsidiaries of the same body corporate; or
- each is “controlled” by the same person.

Production entities which are affiliated with publicly-funded Canadian Broadcasters (e.g. CBC/SRC) are not eligible to apply for funding.

An Independent Producer and a Broadcaster-Affiliated Production Company are eligible to jointly apply for a co-production project, or may apply via a jointly-owned and/or controlled entity or joint venture.

Canadian broadcaster

A licensed Canadian broadcaster is a broadcaster licensed by the CRTC, including private, public, educational, specialty, pay-per-view broadcasters, and VOD services.