



Slate Development Guidelines

2020

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Overview of the Bell Fund

Mission

To support Canadian media content makers in creating for and connecting with, audiences here and everywhere.

Since 1997 the Bell Fund has received over \$200 million in financial contributions from Bell TV to support Canadian, independent producers in the development and production of great Canadian content. In 2001 the Bell Fund was awarded an endowment of \$10 million from Bell TV, as a result of a tangible benefits package. The revenues generated by this endowment are made available for development funding.

Background

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, television and digital media sectors and from Bell TV. The Fund has offices in Toronto and Montreal.

The Board of the Bell Fund has complete discretion in the administration of Bell Fund programs including, without limitation, determination of eligibility of applicants and projects and all funding decisions. All Board decisions are final. Program guidelines may be changed at any time, provided that guidelines publicly posted at the time of a Program deadline will be the applicable guidelines for that application. Producers are encouraged to ensure that they have reviewed the most current guidelines, templates and policies available on the Bell Fund website prior to submitting their application.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Slate Development program is to help independent production companies build and diversify their development slate by offering financial support for the planning and development of original intellectual property ("IP"). Preference will therefore be given to applications that support up to three projects, each with its own original IP.

Failure to Comply and Misrepresentation: Any failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the guidelines and or any misrepresentation of information in connection with an application, as determined by Bell Fund, may result in the application being deemed ineligible and repayment of any advanced funds (with interest) may be demanded. It might also affect the eligibility of future applications.

2. Application Requirements (please read carefully)

Bell Fund reserves the right to deem ineligible any application considered incomplete. Applicants should ensure they meet all eligibility requirements prior to applying as this is a highly competitive fund and requests for funding will exceed the amount of funding available.

The following conditions must be met for an application to be considered.

- Proposed development activities may not start prior to the Bell Fund deadline.
 - Projects that are already under consideration for production financing (from any source) should not apply.
 - All associated documents must be signed and dated by appropriate parties.
 - Each IP is eligible for no more than two rounds of Bell Fund financing.
- a. **Market Interest** must be provided for each project in the slate by either completing the [Market Interest Form](#) or providing a [meaningful letter of interest](#). This document is an expression of support from a broadcaster, digital platform or distributor as described here:
- A Broadcaster: Canadian programming undertaking, public or private, licensed to operate by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC);
 - A Broadcaster: An online service owned, controlled and operated by a Canadian licensed programming undertaking including operating as a Hybrid VOD service (CraveTV, Club Illico)
 - A Digital Platform that features Entertainment Programming and is accessible to Canadians (Canadian or Foreign owned).

- o A Distributor (Canadian or Foreign). The distributor generally distributes third party content in addition to its own content and has the experience necessary to negotiate terms, marketing and promotion spends and other promotional activities in favour of the producer. In the case of a digital property the distributor must be 'industry recognized' as a distributor of digital content.

- b) The Intellectual Property (IP) of each project in the slate must be original though it may be an adaptation of an existing licensed property. All rights and underlying rights must be owned, optioned or controlled sufficiently to develop, produce and exploit the program throughout the world.

- c) At least one project must be a **linear video** program or series.

- d) **10% financing** must be confirmed in writing, for each project in the slate, from a source other than Bell Fund or the Producer. While in-kind and deferred costs are not eligible as the (10%) cash contribution, these may be included in the budget if necessary and reasonable.

- e) A **finance plan and budget** must be submitted, for each project in the slate. All financing must be in place at time of application, minimally with signed commitment letters from each source

Note: Financing from other Funding/Provincial Agencies (including 10% 'third party' financing)

You may apply to the Bell Fund with unconfirmed financing from other Canadian funding/provincial agencies (such as IPF, Creative B.C. Quebecor, Telus, etc.), provided that notification is received within 90 days of the Bell Fund notification.

Details must be uploaded with your Bell Fund application including name of funder, name of funding program, amount pending, deadline date and expected date of notification.

Applicants must inform the Bell Fund of the decisions of other funders as soon as they are notified. If applicant must seek alternative financing, they must inform the Bell Fund of the plan immediately. Alternative financing is subject to Bell Fund approval and must still be confirmed within 90 days of Bell Fund notification.

3. Eligible Applicant

Applicant must be an incorporated Canadian Production Company.

Canadian Production Company

- a. Is a for profit company carrying on business in Canada and a resident of Canada for the purposes of the Income Tax Act - owned and controlled by Canadians as determined in sections 26-28 of Investment Canada Act
- b. Is incorporated in Canada
- c. Has a Canadian business address as its head office

The CRTC defines an independent production company as a production company in which a television licensee owns or controls, directly or indirectly, less than 30% of the equity. This definition will apply to broadcaster-affiliated companies as well.

Please Note

Up to 25% of the available funds in a program may be accessed by broadcaster-affiliated companies.

Given the limited funds available, a Company comprised of and/or exercising common control over, several production companies is only entitled to one application per deadline.

4. Funding Contribution

Funding is available as a non-interest bearing advance **of 75% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$100,000 for the slate**, repayable from production financing (on a per project basis).

Minimum funding that can be requested is **\$25,000** for the slate.

The Bell Fund has the discretion to reduce the amount awarded in order to allow funding for more applicants.

5. Eligible/Ineligible Content

Most genres and types of programming are supported, with the exception of feature films and MOWs. Ineligible content includes subsequent seasons, primarily re-purposed footage, industrial, corporate, promotional, infomercial, interstitial, wraparound segment and filler content.

6. Evaluation Process

1. Applications are reviewed to ensure that eligibility criteria are met and that the required documentation is complete.
2. Eligible applications are assessed by an independent jury.
3. It is the intent that funding decisions are made by the Board of Directors six to ten weeks after the application deadline.
4. Projects may be submitted a total of two times. Re-submissions must address any notes provided from the previous application. These changes should be clearly outlined.

The Bell Fund Slate Development [Assessment Criteria](#) contains the key criteria that are examined in the evaluation process.