



PITCH READINESS PROGRAM for MULTI-EPISODE PRODUCTIONS (PRE-MARKET DEVELOPMENT FUND)

Program Guidelines

The following documents are an integral part of the guidelines for Manitoba Film & Music's (MFM) **Pitch Readiness Program for Multi-Episode Productions (Pre-Market Development)**:

- 1) Program Guidelines (this document)
 - 2) Supporting Documentation [Checklist](#)
 - 3) Calculation Criteria for Manitoba Expenditures ([Schedule A](#))
 - 4) Manitoba Film & Music [Audit Guidelines](#)
 - 5) Manitoba Film & Music [Artificial Intelligence Policy](#)
- All documents are available on the [Manitoba Film & Music website](#).
 - MFM's application can be accessed and submitted on MFM's [SmartSimple portal](#).
 - Please consult this "[How to Apply](#)" [guide](#)" to gain access to MFM's portal.
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In recognition of the need to stimulate the creation and development of innovative and marketable projects and of the significant costs of taking those projects to the marketplace, Manitoba Film & Music (MFM) accepts requests for funding to assist producers of multi-episode productions that have not yet obtained broadcaster or distributor financial support to prepare the strongest pitch presentations possible.

Broadcasters have an expectation of an increasingly sophisticated level of pitch proposal. The Pitch Readiness Program (PRP) will provide financial support to producers to create a fully developed pitch, maximizing the project's marketability to targeted broadcasters and distributors.

Web-based series are eligible for the PRP, where funding would be used to secure both distribution and financing.

A. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for financial support, the applicant must:

- be a resident Manitoba producer, defined as a producer who operates a production company in Manitoba that is majority owned and controlled by Manitoba residents.

Note: Applications must be submitted by an eligible Manitoba resident producer. The Eligibility Requirements detailed in the MFM Audit Guidelines shall apply.

- have a minimum of two years of production experience as a producer and have previously produced at least one project (minimum 30 minutes in broadcast length), which has been either screened by a major network/streamer (such as CBC/Gem, Bell/Crave, APTN/Lumi etc.) or distributed by a recognized distributor (such as Elevation Pictures, Mongrel Media, Lionsgate, etc.).
 - Producers who do not meet this requirement, but who are judged to have equivalent experience (including experience in interactive digital media) may be deemed eligible at MFM’s sole discretion. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate this.
- have proof of ownership in the underlying property and the necessary, corresponding current rights or options to develop, produce, and exploit the production throughout the world (may be shared in the case of co-development applications).

To be eligible for financial support, the project must:

- be a series or mini-series (with a minimum of two thematically connected episodes).
- be a scripted and fictional (drama or comedy), documentary, variety, or children’s production.
- be live-action or animation.
- be in early concept/development stages without the financial participation of a broadcaster or distributor.
- be primarily intended for broadcast, be it television or web-based.

Co-productions or co-ventures will be considered eligible, but MFM will require evidence that the resident Manitoba producer shares ownership in the project.

Projects do not have to be intended primarily for the Canadian market but must meet all other guidelines herein to be eligible.

The project must be in the compliance with the laws, regulations, standards, and policies applicable to broadcasting and to intellectual property, and the project must not infringe upon any public or private rights and must not otherwise contravene the Canadian civil and criminal laws in effect.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of genres and programming formats that are **NOT ELIGIBLE** to apply for MFM funding:

- sponsored productions, sports, news, game shows, current affairs
- public affairs, lifestyle productions, “how-to” productions, reality television
- instructional television, infomercials, music videos, formal or curriculum-based educational programming
- talk shows, talk shows “culturels,” award shows, galas, reporting, and current events

- religious programming, fundraising productions, benefits, tributes, promotional productions
- pep rallies, travelogues, and interstitials
- pornography

MFM retains the sole discretion to determine whether a project meets genre and format eligibility.

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications are assessed based on creative, economic, and strategic considerations that support MFM’s mandate to strengthen Manitoba’s screen-based industry, foster diverse voices, and generate cultural and economic impact in the province.

Applications submitted to MFM will first be assessed to ensure that all required documentation has been submitted correctly and that the producer and the project meet basic eligibility criteria.

Eligible projects will then be assessed based on the following criteria:

- **Applicant Experience and Track Record** – The experience and capacity of the applicant company and producing team, including the ability to advance projects from development into production, and demonstrated financial stewardship and compliance on prior projects.
- **Manitoba Ownership and Control** – The degree of Manitoba company ownership and control of the project and its intellectual property.
- **Creative Team Capacity** – The experience and expertise of the key creative personnel and involvement of Manitoba-based creatives.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – The extent to which the project supports diversity and equity within its leadership, creative team, and content.
- **Creative Merit** – The strength, originality, and clarity of the project’s creative vision, including the quality of the script or concept.
- **Economic Impact Potential** – The extent to which the project engages Manitoba labour during development, utilizes Manitoba facilities and services, and demonstrates intent for production and post-production to occur in Manitoba.
- **Market Readiness** – The strength and viability of the project’s development and marketing strategy, including a clear understanding of target audiences, market positioning, and alignment with broadcaster and/or distributor mandates. Consideration is given to the proposed development plan, including the scope of the pitch, targeted partners, and the project’s readiness to engage the marketplace.

Applicants must demonstrate how MFM’s funding will enhance the project’s marketability.

- Web series producers must outline how MFM’s funds will support a specific strategy to secure distribution, financing, or sponsorship (*noting that the production cannot be commercial, promotional, or sales-focused*).
- **Project Feasibility** – The overall viability of the development plan, including the proposed budget, financing structure, schedule, and clarity of proposed activities and deliverables.

These elements help inform MFM’s funding decisions including the level of financial participation. The relative importance of each consideration may vary depending on the nature, scale, and objectives of the project.

C. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Funding will be offered in the form of a recoupable advance that must be repaid on the first day of principal photography of the production. Any sale or transfer of ownership (either copyright or share) by the Manitoba producer must be at fair market value, and “first-dollar-in” proceeds must be used to repay MFM’s development loan immediately.

Eligible Production Companies may receive up to the following per project caps:

- Up to \$10,000 per project for scripted, fictional programming (*including drama, comedy, and scripted children’s programming*).
- Up to \$5,000 per project for non-fiction programming (*documentary, variety, children’s non-fiction programming*).

In addition, per project funding will not exceed up to 50% of the pre-market development budget.

Each project may only receive one round of PRP funding.

Based on available funding, MFM reserves the right to limit production companies to a maximum of two applications to the PRP per fiscal year.

Please note that should the recipient also apply for MFM’s Television and Web-Based Development Fund, the amount provided via the PRP will be included in the calculation of the per project funding cap at the development stage. Please refer to MFM’s [Television and Web-Based Development Fund guidelines](#) for additional information on project caps.

D. NOTES REGARDING ELIGIBLE COSTS

The recoupable advance must be used exclusively for direct third-party pre-market development costs that, in MFM's opinion, will significantly improve the product's marketability, such as, but not limited to:

- story editors
- consultants
- researchers
- marketing specialists
- travel
- sales and promotional materials

Producer fees, corporate overhead, and payments to employees are not eligible under this program.

Please note that should the recipient of pre-market development funding apply for development funding with MFM, the expenses included in the PRP budget cannot be included again in the development budget.

If the producer has third-party funding the producer must apply to the MFM PRP with the same budget, schedule, and deliverables, as supported by the arms-length third-party agreement. Copies of budgets prepared for third-party funders must be provided to MFM.

E. DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables will be expected to release the final drawdown:

- copies of the deliverable(s) that were intended to be completed at this phase (*e.g. bible, treatment, proof of concept, pitch deck, demo*)
- final cost report
- [Manitoba employment report](#)
- list of Manitoba expenditures (those funds paid to Manitoba-based individuals and companies). [See Schedule A for Calculation Criteria.](#)

MFM reserves the right to request submission of any additional documents that may be necessary in the determination of the phase's final costs.

Final Reporting templates are available on [MFM's website](#).

F. IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Eligibility under these guidelines does not guarantee financial support. The funding decisions of MFM are final.

Sale or Transfer of Project:

The percentage of project ownership held by the Manitoba producer must be maintained.

Any sale or transfer of ownership (either copyright or share) by the Manitoba producer must be at fair market value, and “first-dollar-in” proceeds must be used to repay MFM’s development loan. MFM must be informed of the sale or transfer within five business days and all MFM funding for the project must be repaid in full within 10 business days.

If the producer loses control of the project through option lapse (and the project does not go into production), then MFM’s financial contribution will become a forgivable loan. However, if the producers (or a related company) subsequently regain control, or become re-involved in the project during the life of the project or re-option the project then MFM remains entitled to have all its advance repaid at first day of principal photography.

Application Requirements:

MFM reserves the right not to review any application considered to be incomplete or inconsistent with the present guidelines, or to require additional information before proceeding with the application.

Applications which are incomplete and/or do not provide the minimum complete documentation will not be reviewed or assessed.

All documents submitted must be signed and dated by the Manitoba producer.

All documents must be named, dated, and versioned to correspond with the current financing structure. Agreements cannot be stale-dated.

Any changes or revisions to creative, financial, or other supporting documents must be submitted in a timely manner, and no later than the submission to any other funder.

Applicant companies (or their affiliates) must be in good standing with MFM at the time of application. Applications from those companies in default on any contractual obligation to MFM will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify its status with MFM prior to applying for funding.

It is the applicant’s sole responsibility to have their own independent legal counsel review the MFM Funding Agreement to ensure that the contents and the responsibilities within the Funding Agreement are fully understood and agreed upon. In the event the applicant requests to have changes to the MFM standard agreement, all legal fees incurred by MFM to review the request will be at the expense of the applicant.

Investment Acknowledgment:

Any documents or media presented to broadcasters, distributors, and the public must clearly acknowledge receipt of pre-market development funding by MFM. MFM's funding agreement will include specific acknowledgment requirements.

MFM reserves the right to review and update these and any guidelines at any time, without notice. Please refer to the [MFM website](#) for any changes or revisions to our guidelines or documentation. In all questions of interpretation of these guidelines, or regarding the spirit and intent of MFM's funding programs, the interpretation of MFM shall prevail.

SCHEDULE A

Calculation Criteria for Manitoba Expenditures

General: A Manitoba expenditure refers to any production expense that is paid to a Manitoba resident or company*.

Specific considerations:

Airfare:

- Include 50% regardless of how it is booked.

Per Diem:

- Include 50% for Manitobans working outside Manitoba.
- Include 100% for Manitobans working inside Manitoba.
- Include 50% for non-Manitobans working inside Manitoba.

Hotel/Accommodations:

- Include 0% outside Manitoba.
- Include 100% inside Manitoba.

Vehicle Rentals:

- Include 0% outside Manitoba.
- Include 100% inside Manitoba.

Interim Financing/Bank Fees:

- Include 100% if it is through a Manitoba bank account, regardless of where the account manager is located.

Insurance:

- Include 100% if through a Manitoba insurance broker.

Legal:

- Include 100% if through a Manitoba lawyer.

** This Schedule applies only to MFM's Pitch Readiness Program for Multi-Episode Productions and does not apply to the Manitoba Film & Video Production Tax Credit Program.*