



## TELEVISION AND WEB-BASED DEVELOPMENT FUND

### Program Guidelines

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The following documents are an integral part of the guidelines for Manitoba Film & Music's (MFM) **Television and Web-Based Development Fund**:

- 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](#).
  - This 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, the Manitoba Film & Music (MFM) Television and Web-Based Development Fund will provide funds to support the development of television and web-based projects that have already secured third-party financing that represents an acceptable market trigger for broadcast or distribution.

The MFM Development Fund will provide financial support to producers to prepare a set of pre-determined deliverables, as outlined by the development arrangements in place with other third-party funders.

The MFM Development Fund will also assist producers of web-based programs to develop their projects for the expanding digital marketplace.

Producers may apply to one of the following two streams:

- (A) [Television](#)
- (B) [Web-Based](#)

## STREAM ONE: TELEVISION

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### **A1. TELEVISION – GENERAL INFORMATION**

To access the television stream of the MFM Development Fund, a project must have secured development-targeted financing from an industry-recognized arms' length third party:

- (a) a broadcaster development licence,
- (b) a distribution advance, or
- (c) a combination thereof.

MFM retains the sole discretion to determine what, for the purposes of this fund, will qualify as an acceptable third-party market trigger.

Producers may receive up to a maximum of two rounds of development funding from MFM per project. Each round will be for a pre-determined set of deliverables, as determined by the third-party market trigger agreement/budget. Since MFM provides a [Pre-Market Development Fund](#) to support the early development of projects (such as the creation of a project treatment), the earliest acceptable deliverable for the MFM Development Fund is a first draft.

The producer must apply to the MFM Development Fund with the same budget, schedule, and deliverables, as supported by the arm's length third party agreement. Copies of budgets prepared for third-party funders must be provided to MFM.

### **A2. TELEVISION – ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for financial support in the television stream, 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*).

To be eligible for financial support in the television stream, the project must:

- be a series, mini-series (a minimum of two thematically connected episodes), pilot, MOW, or one-off.
- be a scripted and fictional drama or comedy, documentary, variety, or children’s production.
- be live-action or animation.
- have secured a minimum of 20% of the development budget by development-targeted financing from an industry-recognized arms-length broadcaster or distributor, or a combination thereof.

The market trigger’s development participation must be in the form of cash, not services, to be eligible.

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.

Returning series are eligible and do not have to have received MFM Development funding in previous cycles to apply.

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.

### **A3. 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. Applicants must demonstrate how MFM's funding will enhance the project's marketability and provide a pathway to securing production financing or market support. Web series producers will need to show how MFM's funds will support a

specific strategy to secure distribution, financing, or sponsorship (although 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.

#### **A4. TELEVISION - FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION**

Funding will be offered in the television stream 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 \$40,000 per project for scripted, fictional, multi-episode programming (*including drama, comedy, and children’s scripted programming*).
- Up to \$25,000 per project for scripted fictional MOWs and pilots (*including drama, comedy, and children’s scripted programming*).
- Up to \$10,000 per project for documentary and variety multi-episode programming.
- Up to \$5,000 per project for documentary and variety one-offs.

Projects in the Television Stream may receive up to two rounds of funding, up to the noted per project caps.

In addition, the funding per round will not exceed up to 50% of the development budget for the round in question.

Please note that any funds received via [MFM’s Pitch Readiness Program \(PRP\)](#) will be included in the calculation of the per project funding caps at the development stage.

MFM reserves the right to increase or decrease the level of its participation in any given project based on budget, genre, length, and overall demand on the funds available.

## **A5. TELEVISION - NOTES REGARDING ELIGIBLE COSTS**

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

- research
- scriptwriting
- story editors
- development of production budget and financing
- audience research
- focus groups
- options and legal costs

Please note that the story editor and the project writer cannot be the same individual.

Producer fees and corporate overhead may be eligible costs, with each capped at 20% of the development budget for the round in question. MFM reserves the right to review and reduce all eligible costs.

Should the recipient of development funding have previously received funds under [MFM's Pitch Readiness Program \(PRP\)](#), the expenses included in the PRP budget or final cost report cannot be included in the development budget.

Budgets provided must be consistent and timely with those provided to other invested parties.

*SEE "[IMPORTANT INFORMATION](#)" SECTION AFTER THE WEB-BASED STREAM FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION APPLICABLE TO THE TELEVISION STREAM.*

## **STREAM TWO: WEB-BASED**

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### **B1. WEB-BASED – GENERAL INFORMATION**

To access the web-based stream of the MFM Development Fund, a project must have one or more of the following two “triggers:”

- Development or broadcast contract with a web broadcaster/streamer with an industry-recognized track record. Projects with cash advances from the web broadcaster/streamer will be considered stronger.
- Development or distribution contract with a web-content specialist distribution company with an industry-recognized track record.

MFM will assess the development funding of web-based projects based on the following:

- Presentation of a strong, well-developed marketing and promotional plan for the project, including specific strategies for distribution and monetization, including post-broadcast data collection.
- Strength of an audience-building plan, including a social media strategy.
- Strength of the financial plan, both in terms of confirmed, verifiable financing and a strategy for securing outstanding financing, sponsorship, and advertising.
- Maintenance plan, both in terms of content and financial support.
- Scripted, fictional series are a priority.
- Web series or online content development experience of the attached production team.
- MFM will consider the benefits of the project on the development of sustainable indigenous production, the strengthening of the Manitoba screen-based industry and the growth of the local production company.
- All other things being equal, projects with Manitoba-based creators will be a priority.

It is anticipated that the time required for a web-based project to go through the development phase will be shorter than that for a typical television project, as time is of the essence to get the project to the market. To that end, MFM will provide funding to web-based projects in a single phase.

### **B2. WEB-BASED – ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for financial support in the web-based stream, 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.*
- 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*).

To be eligible for financial support in the web-based stream, the project must:

- be a series, mini-series (a minimum of two thematically connected episodes), pilot, MOW, or one-off.
- be a scripted and fictional (drama or comedy), documentary, variety, or children's production.
- be live-action or animation.
- have secured one of the following two "triggers":
  - Development or broadcast contract with a web broadcaster/streamer with an industry-recognized track record. Projects with cash advances from the web broadcaster/streamer will be considered stronger.
  - Development or distribution contract with a web-content specialist distribution company with an industry-recognized track record.

The market trigger's development participation must be in the form of cash, not services, to be eligible.

The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that the market trigger is an industry-recognized web broadcaster or web distributor and that the strategy for monetization is viable.

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.

Returning series are eligible and do not have to have received MFM Development funding in previous cycles to apply.

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.

### **B3. WEB-BASED - FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION**

Funding will be offered in the web-based stream 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, multi-episode programming (*including drama, comedy, and children’s scripted programming*) (*minimum total series broadcast length of 20 minutes*).
- Up to \$5,000 per project for scripted fictional MOWs and pilots (*including drama, comedy, and children’s scripted programming*).
- Up to \$5,000 per project for documentary and variety multi-episode programming (*minimum total series broadcast length of 20 minutes*).
- Up to \$2,500 per project for documentary and variety one-offs.

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

Web-based projects are eligible for a single round of development funding.

Please note that any funds received via [MFM's Pitch Readiness Program \(PRP\)](#) will be included in the calculation of the per project funding caps at the development stage.

MFM reserves the right to increase or decrease the level of its participation in any given project based on budget, genre, length, and overall demand on the funds available.

#### **B4. WEB-BASED - NOTES REGARDING ELIGIBLE COSTS**

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

- research
- script writing
- story editors
- development of production budget and financing
- options and legal costs

For this stream, MFM will also consider costs associated with:

- technical research (such as with respect to web hosting and maintenance)
- market research
- concept research

Please note that the story editor and the project writer cannot be the same person.

Producer fees and corporate overhead may be eligible costs, with each capped at 20% of the development budget. MFM reserves the right to review and reduce all eligible costs.

Should the recipient of development funding have previously received funds under [MFM's Pitch Readiness Program \(PRP\)](#), the expenses included in the PRP budget and/or final cost report cannot be included in the development budget.

Budgets provided must be consistent and timely with those provided to other invested parties.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION: APPLICABLE TO BOTH STREAMS**

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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 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**

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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 Television and Web-Based Development Fund and does not apply to the Manitoba Film & Video Production Tax Credit Program.*