

**WEB DRAMA SERIES PROGRAM**

**GUIDELINES**

**Deadline for Proposals: March 1, 2017 (Phase 1)**

**Deadline for Production Applications: May 1, 2017 (Phase 2 – by invitation only)**

The Independent Production Fund was established in 1991 as a private Foundation with an endowment from Maclean Hunter Ltd., now valued at $36 M. The revenues generated by the endowment and recoupment from investments are used to support the production of Canadian scripted web drama series.

**Objectives**

The intent of the Fund is to assist independent producers/creators to finance the production of original digital drama series created *initially* for the web.

The focus is on the development of high quality, story-driven drama, and the development of new talent.

Successful properties may subsequently be exploited on other platforms such as television, either in their original format or through the exploitation of derivative rights.

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**Project and Applicant Eligibility**

To be eligible for support, projects must:

1. be new and original;
2. be scripted, dramatic content[[1]](#footnote-1)
3. originate and remain under the control of an independent Canadian producer/creator and have, without any limitations regarding formats, media, territories and duration, all rights, title and interest including copyright in the completed production beneficially owned by an individual resident in Canada, by a corporation incorporated under the laws of Canada or a province of Canada, or by any combination of these,
4. in the case of web series previously funded by the IPF, requests for second or subsequent season funding must demonstrate success factors;  applicants must submit a one-page “Proof of Success” document
5. be limited to one (1) application per production company/producer per year,

6. Proposals previously submitted to the IPF web series program that were not approved for funding, may re-apply only IF there is a *significant* change to the project, which must be clearly identified within the Phase 1 Application.

7. Web series that have been produced without IPF financing are NOT eligible to apply to this program.

**\*\*New in 2017:**

8.In order to encourage knowledge-sharing, first-time scripted web series producers must identify and confirm the participation of a business, marketing or creative mentor/consultant on the production team, who has prior scripted web series experience and the appropriate skills to enhance the project. For example, a co-writer, script editor, social media strategist or experienced producer.

9. In order to provide opportunities for talent development, producers with prior scripted web drama series experience should identify and confirm the participation of a “new talent” (with no more than one previous web series credit) in a key creative position.

10. Series should be made accessible through closed captioning and described video, where feasible.



**Financial Participation**

Investments will be made in the form of equity and the Fund seeks a pro rata share of recoupment of its investment and profit participation in the project and through its derivative subsidiary rights and subsequent works.

The terms and schedules of payment and recoupment, the producer's responsibilities and reporting conditions will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

All projects must be contracted by the IPF within 6 months of final financing commitment.



**Application Procedures**

There is a two-phase application process:

**Phase 1: Proof of Concept**

1. **Deadline for Proposals:** March 1, 2017.

For ***new web series*** include:

* a completed application form found in the application portal at <https://application.bellfund.ca/Login.aspx>
* a Creative Pitch for the web drama series in a maximum of two (2) pages, including a complete synopsis of the series, story arc over the season, a typical episode format and outline, etc.
* one (1) page Audience Engagement Strategy, including the target audience, specific strategies to attract and maintain your audience, etc.
* a description of the mentor/consultant, or new talent (as per guideline 8 OR 9 above), their experience and the activities they will undertake
* URL(s) of demo/trailer/video content (no more than 2 minutes running time) which must be posted online and available to the public, with traffic statistics viewable or enabled **March 1 – 31, 2017.**
* All material must be submitted electronically, through the online application portal at <https://application.bellfund.ca/Login.aspx>

For ***web series previously funded by the IPF***, include:

* the “[Web Drama Series – Previously Funded Returning – Phase 1”](file:///C:\Users\Andra%20Sheffer\AppData\Local\Temp\applications.ipf.ca\) form available on the application portal
* A document clearly demonstrating success factors such as audience views for the previous season(s), revenues generated, financial partners, distribution partners, critical acclaim, awards, etc.; to be sent via email to info@ipf.ca

1. **Evaluation Process:**

A short-list of finalists will be selected by April 6, 2017 by a Pre-Selection Committee.

Projects will be assessed based on written material submitted, as well as the online videos, traffic and audience feedback and the creative and production team. For projects previously funded by the IPF, the Board will evaluate the success factors.

Short-listed finalists will be invited to prepare a detailed Production Application for Phase 2 evaluation for potential funding

**Phase 2 (Short-list, by invitation only):**

1. **Deadline for Production Applications:** May 1, 2017.

All material must be submitted electronically, through the online application portal at <https://application.bellfund.ca/Login.aspx>

Applicants are encouraged to consult with the IPF in the creation of their Production Proposals, if required.

1. **Evaluation Process**

An international jury and the Board of Directors will evaluate the Production Proposals and notify successful applicants by the end of June 2017.

Projects are assessed based on analysis of creative materials, audience engagement strategy, traffic metrics and audience feedback resulting from the Video Content posted online in Phase 1 of the application process; production strategies; scheduling; budget and financing; distribution and web strategies; marketing and promotion plans; projected traffic; business model and revenue projections; maintenance strategies, third party financing and endorsements, associated interactive activities, recoupment, etc.

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| 1. | The primary criterion for acceptance by the Fund will be the quality of the project. |
| . | The Independent Production Fund reserves the right to request additional information relating to the production, as required, in order to make its decisions. |
|  | All interpretations of these Guidelines and all decisions are made by the Board of Directors and are at the Board's absolute discretion. All Board decisions are final. |



**Definition of an Independent Canadian Producer**

For purposes of this Fund, an independent Canadian Producer is defined as:

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| 1. | a Canadian-controlled corporation as defined in the tax credit regulations of the Income Tax Act; and |
| 2. | not a holder of a CRTC television broadcasting licence or an "affiliate" of such a broadcaster as defined in the Canada Business Corporations Act. |

1. “Drama” includes drama for all demographics, including children, as well as scripted comedy with a story arc and performers. Series may be live action or animation. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)