



ROGERS
Series Fund

GUIDELINES 2024

APPLICATION DEADLINES FOR 2024

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Wednesday, October 30, 2024

ROGERS SERIES FUND GUIDELINES (2024)

Supporting Canada's independent producers

A. Objectives

Rogers Communications Partnership created the Rogers Series Fund ("Fund") to support the production of high-quality, independently produced television series in Canada.

The Fund has been created to provide equity investment of \$5-7 million per year to Canadian independent producers for television series, triggered by a pre-sale to both: (i) a privately held Canadian broadcasting service with national reach; and (ii) an online undertaking (streamer) that is available to Canadian audiences.

The Fund will invest up to 20% of the lesser of: (i) the total production budget, or (ii) final cost of eligible projects, to a maximum of \$500,000 per project.

The Fund will support television series in the following programming genres: drama, documentary, children's programming, educational, instructional, performing arts, and variety programming.

There will be two funding deadlines in 2024.

B. Eligible Projects

A television series ("Series") must meet each of the following eligibility requirements to qualify for the Fund:

1. The Series must have a minimum of six 30-minute episodes.
2. The Series must fit within one of the following programming genres and formats: drama, documentary, children's programming, animation, educational, instructional, performing arts, and variety programming, and can be scripted or unscripted. News, reporting and actualities, and sports programming are not eligible.
3. The Series must have a Canadian Broadcast Commitment with an English-language, private Canadian licensed television service¹ with national reach. A Canadian Broadcast Commitment is defined as (1) a cash licence fee of fair market value; and (2) a guarantee of a prime time² broadcast within two years of delivery.
4. The Series must have a Streaming Commitment, defined as a pre-sale of the Series in the form of a fair market value cash licence fee, with an Eligible Streaming Service. An Eligible Streaming Service is defined as an online undertaking that is: (1) private (i.e.

¹ Conventional or discretionary programming service that is not government-owned.

² Prime time is between 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm. An exception is made to the prime time requirement in the case of children's programming.

not government-owned), (2) registered with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (“CRTC” or “Commission”) under the *Online Undertakings Registration Regulations*;³ and, (3) contributing – either directly or as part of a broadcasting ownership group – under the CRTC’s contribution regime to support the production of Canadian and Indigenous content.

5. The language of the original version of the Series may be English, third-language, or Indigenous.
6. The Series must achieve at least 6/10 Canadian content certification points in accordance with the Canadian content rules administered by the CRTC and the Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office (CAVCO).
7. Canadian distribution rights to the Series must be held by a Canadian company.
8. In the case of a returning Series, the applicant must provide: (1) audience viewership numbers for the current season on air; and (2) a list of international sales made to date for all episodes.
9. The Series must conform to all programming standards endorsed by the CRTC, including the Canadian Association of Broadcasters’ *Code of Ethics*; *Equitable Portrayal Code*; and *Violence Code*, as amended from time-to-time and approved by the Commission.
10. The Applicant must provide for closed captioning and described video in the production budget, and must provide evidence to the Fund upon completion of production and delivery that closed captioning and described video have been incorporated into all programs financed by the Fund.

C. Eligible Applicants

1. The Applicant must be a taxable Canadian corporation as defined under the *Income Tax Act* that:
 - a. is a Canadian-controlled entity as defined under sections 26 to 28 of the *Investment Canada Act* and is under the effective control of Canadians;
 - b. has its head office in Canada; and,
 - c. derives its primary source of income from the creation of film and television, and digital media content.
2. If part of a corporate group of affiliated or associated companies, the Applicant must operate and be incorporated separately from the affiliates or associates.
3. The Applicant must: (1) own all rights (including copyright) and options necessary for the production and its distribution and exploitation of the Series in Canada and

³ Appendix 1 to Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2023-329.

abroad; and (2) retain an ongoing financial interest in the Series.

4. Co-ventures that have received Canadian certification by the CRTC are eligible.
5. A maximum of 25% of the Fund's annual allocation may be accessed by broadcaster-affiliated corporations.

D. Financial Participation

1. The Fund's equity investments will be awarded as follows:
 - a. A cash equity investment of up to 20% of the lesser of: (a) the total production budget, or (b) final cost, to a maximum of \$500,000 per project. This investment will give the Fund an undivided copyright ownership interest in the production, globally, and the resultant benefits thereof.
 - b. In a co-venture, the cash equity investment shall not exceed 20% of the financial obligation of the Canadian producer partner as per the co-venture agreement, to a maximum of \$500,000.
 - c. In an official treaty co-production, the cash investment from the Fund shall not exceed 20% of the Canadian portion of the budget as per the co-production agreement, to a maximum of \$500,000.
2. The Fund will determine its participation in a project on a case-by-case basis.
3. The Fund's investment may not be used, either directly or indirectly, to reduce amounts received by the Applicant pursuant to a Canadian Broadcast Commitment or Streaming Commitment on a given project.
4. The Fund will recoup its investment no less favourably than on a pro rata and pari passu basis with all other equity contributors.

E. Diversity Bonus

1. If at least 51% of the single-purpose production company's ownership, voting control, and of the project's copyright are retained by creators who identify as Indigenous⁴ and/or as members of a Racialized Community⁵, the Series may be eligible for a bonus of up to 20% of the requested investment ("Diversity Bonus").

⁴ 'Indigenous' refers to the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples who live in the territory that is today known as Canada, and are descendants of the original inhabitants of this territory prior to colonization.

⁵ 'Racialized Communities' refers to Black People and People of Colour. Black People, also known as Afro-Canadians, are individuals who are originally or direct descendants from Sub-Saharan Africa including those with origins in the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America. People of Colour include Latin Americans; Middle Eastern people or West Asians or North Africans; South Asians; Southeast Asians; East Asians; Bi- or Multi-racial people who identify as non-White.

2. The Diversity Bonus will be awarded based on the availability of funds and at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
3. To apply, an applicant must file the Diversity Bonus Attestation along with the other application materials (see Section 'G'). We recognize that a project's single-purpose production company may not have been incorporated at the time of application to the Fund. In these instances, we will rely on the intended ownership structure. **Please note:** Changes to the ownership and copyright information submitted in the application may result in ineligibility for, and revocation of, the Diversity Bonus.

F. Additional Terms and Conditions

1. Successful applicants must finalize financing of their projects within 120 days of the date of the commitment from the Fund. If all financing is not confirmed within that time, the Fund's commitment may be extended or cancelled at the Fund's discretion.
2. All licence fees, service and equity arrangements must be applied toward the cost of production.
3. The aggregate of producer fees plus corporate overhead may not normally exceed 30% of the B+C portions of an industry-standard production budget.
4. Principal Photography may commence prior to the Fund's application deadline. However, in no event shall completion of post-production and delivery of any episodes to the trigger streaming service or to the trigger broadcaster have taken place before the applicable application deadline.
5. Prior to the start of Principal Photography, standard production insurance coverage must be in effect and an application for Producers Errors and Omissions Insurance coverage must have been made.
6. The application must include all episodes of the same cycle, and may not include episodes from any other cycle of the Series.
7. When a distribution advance or revenue guarantee is being provided by a company related to or affiliated with the producer, for the purposes of recoupment, the Fund may treat the advance or guarantee in the same manner as an equity contribution (i.e. pro rata and pari passu).

G. Required Documents

Application

All applications must include the following documentation:

1. Synopsis of Series (max. one page)

2. Detailed treatment
3. Complete and detailed production budget (dated), in industry standard format. Must include closed captioning and described video.
4. Financing breakdown and proof of financing already secured
5. Production schedule
6. Detailed marketing strategy
7. Description of the applicant production company and its activities.
8. Producer statement (max. one page) that includes all of the following:
 - rights already sold to distributors, broadcasters, and/or streamers (incl. \$ amounts and term)
 - available rights
 - sales projections
 - distribution plan
 - recoupment expectations (e.g. how and when can the Fund expect to recoup its investment)
9. Proposed recoupment structure, including all proposed profit share percentages and any territory splits. **Please note:** Approval of the application does not necessarily mean the proposed recoupment has been accepted by the Fund.
10. Biographies and filmographies of key personnel, including producers and all personnel assuming a point position as set out under CRTC policies for the recognition of Canadian programs.
11. Proposed cast and crew lists.
12. Documentation demonstrating the Series has secured a Canadian Broadcast Commitment and a Streaming Commitment (such as a firm letter of commitment), as defined in Section 'B'.
13. If requesting the Diversity Bonus, the signed Diversity Bonus Attestation (downloadable from the Financing tab of the online application portal).
14. Series renewal applications must include the following:
 - audience numbers for prior seasons
 - international sales to date
 - samples of social media activity, trending
 - traditional press earned
 - awards
 - a list of sales to-date of the prior season(s) of the Series

The Fund reserves the right to request additional information relating to the production as required, and to consult with other financial participants in order to evaluate the application.

Successful Applicants

All successful Applicants will be required to submit further documentation, including but not limited to:

1. Locked budget and financing structure
2. List of related-party costs/transactions
3. Cash flow
4. Cost reports
5. Proposed recoupment structure
6. All final financing and distribution agreements
7. Tax credit certificates (if not available, then opinion letter from an accounting firm + submitted tax credit applications).
8. Legal opinion on chain of title, addressed to the Rogers Documentary and Cable Network Fund.
9. Liability, production package, and E&O insurance policies naming the Rogers Documentary and Cable Network Fund as loss payee/additional insured.
10. Certificate of Incorporation and corporate information for production company and parent company(ies)

H. Evaluation Process

1. Eligible applications will be assessed through an evaluation of creative, financial and marketing/distribution plans.
2. **Decisions will normally be made within ten to twelve weeks from the application deadline date. ONLY COMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL BE REVIEWED.**
3. In the case of an unsuccessful application, producers may only re-apply to the Fund once with the same Series, i.e. a maximum of two applications per project.

4. While there will be no regional envelopes, the Board of Directors will remain cognizant of Canada's diversity of expression and will undertake to consider all of Canada's regions as well as minority language communities in its funding decisions.
5. All interpretations of these Guidelines and all decisions made by the Board of Directors are at the Board's absolute discretion. All decisions are final and are not subject to reconsideration.

Factors for Success

1. As per Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2016-343, the following criteria will be considered when determining the potential for success of a Series:
2. Applications for new Series:
 - a. producer track record
 - b. international pre-sales / financing
 - c. creative team
 - d. audience appeal in Canada
 - e. international audience appeal
 - f. sales potential
 - g. distribution
3. Applications for Series Renewals:
 - a. producer track record
 - b. international pre-sales / financing
 - c. creative team
 - d. audience appeal in Canada
 - e. international audience appeal
 - f. sales potential
 - g. distribution
 - h. audience numbers
 - i. international sales
 - j. social media awareness / media
 - k. awards earned

I. Administration

1. The Fund is funded by Rogers Communications Canada Inc., and is administered by the Rogers Documentary and Cable Network Fund, a federal, not-for-profit corporation incorporated under the *Canada Corporations Act*. The same corporation also separately administers the Rogers Documentary Fund.
2. The Fund operates at arm's length from Rogers Communications Canada Inc. under the governance of an independent Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has sole and exclusive responsibility to make funding decisions and to supervise their implementation. The day-to-day operations of the Fund are overseen by an Executive

Director who reports to the Board of Directors. The Fund office is located in Toronto. The Fund is a Certified Independent Production Fund (CIPF) as determined by the CRTC.

3. The Board of Directors reserves the right to make changes to the Guidelines and to the application deadline periods at its sole discretion.

J. Follow-Up Reporting

1. The Fund will require successful Applicants to submit regular distribution reports relating to their project on a semi-annual basis for the first three years after completion of the Series and annually thereafter.
2. All production revenue due to the Fund shall be remitted promptly and concurrent with the distribution reports.

K. Credits

1. The Fund requires an acknowledgment of its support in the programming credits and related promotional and print materials. The credit shall be the same size and prominence as that given to other investors.

L. Information

For additional information, please go to: www.rogersgroupoffunds.com