

# Program Guidelines

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The mandate of the TELUS Fund is to finance exceptional content that promotes the well-being of Canadians. We are looking for stories with the potential to entertain, engage emotions, create empathy and enlighten the health choices of Canadians.

Please subscribe to the [TELUS Fund website](#) to receive the latest news. On the website you will also find answers to [frequently asked questions](#). If you still have questions, contact the Fund by email to [info@telusfund.ca](mailto:info@telusfund.ca).

## 1. ABOUT THE TELUS FUND

The TELUS Fund is made possible by the success of the Optik TV service reaching more than 1 Million TELUS TV customers in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec. The Fund is an independently governed, not-for-profit corporation certified by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (the Commission) as a Canadian Independent Production Fund.<sup>i</sup>

The TELUS Fund has full discretion in the administration of its programs and the application of these program guidelines to ensure funding is provided to those projects aligned with the Fund's mandate. In all questions of interpretation of these program guidelines, the Fund's interpretation shall prevail. These guidelines are subject to change without notice.

## 2. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The Fund uses a broad definition of health that encompasses physical, mental and emotional well-being. [Funded projects](#) are as diverse as the determinants of healthy Canadians which range from lifestyle and environment, to culture and services.<sup>ii</sup>

## 3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The Fund will receive submissions from companies that are:

- experienced in the business of producing professional media content,
- for-profit taxable corporations (within the meaning of Canada's Income Tax Act),
- headquartered in Canada,
- Canadian-controlled (Sections 26 to 28 of the Investment Canada Act), and
- owners of sufficient copyright permissions<sup>iii</sup> to create and exploit the content.

## 4. ELIGIBLE CONTENT

The health subject area will typically feature prominently in the central storyline of the content and launch campaign. The content must ultimately be owned and controlled by Canadians and include a significant contribution from the Canadian independent production sector.<sup>iv</sup>

All Applicants must include a link to a **professional trailer or pilot episode** with their submission that highlights the storyline and its potential to reach and positively impact the target audience.

Requests for development financing may include a link to a **pitch video** that is less than 3 minutes and provides a sense of the subject area, the team, and key project elements.

## PROGRAMMING

**More than 90%** of financing from the Fund is allocated to the creation and promotion of Programming intended for viewing from beginning to end without significant end-user interaction or customization. Programming must be within the Program Categories defined by the Commission (except for news, reporting and actualities, and sports).<sup>v</sup>

## NON-PROGRAMMING

**Up to \$500,000** is available each year to create and promote Non-Programming that is story-driven, interactive and customizable by the user. Non-Programming includes for example videogames, complex websites, mobile applications, curriculum, podcasts, and eBooks. Priority within this limited amount is given to Non-Programming that enhances the viewing experience of funded Programming.

Non-Programming expenditures and financing must be tracked and reported separately from Programming.

## **5. MINIMUM SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS**

**The TELUS Fund does not commission health content.** At each stage of financing, applicants must demonstrate demand for the content from Expert Organizations, Third Party Financiers and Distribution Platforms.<sup>vi</sup> In those cases where the Applicant is requesting financing for both Programming and Non-Programming components, each component must individually achieve these Minimum Support Requirements to be eligible for consideration.

### EXPERT ORGANIZATIONS

Applicants must demonstrate demand for the content from at least one Expert Organization. The Expert Organization must be a not-for-profit organization, headquartered in Canada, that is unrelated to or affiliated with the Applicant and nationally recognized for its expertise and activities in the health subject area of the project.

The involvement of distinguished Expert Organizations ensures content is free of editorial bias, presents verified research, and does not cause gratuitous offence. Letters of support must:

- describe the health problem and why it matters,
- explain how the content is an original and fresh approach in the subject area, demonstrates innovation in the field and presents novel solutions,
- describe how the content will promote the health and well-being of Canadians,
- commit expertise to ensuring the highest standard of accuracy, integrity, fairness and comprehensiveness in the treatment of the subject matter, and
- commit resources to increasing discoverability of the content within their network.

In those rare health subjects where no such national organization exists, the Applicant may submit a combination of letters from expert individuals and local, provincial and regional organizations located across the country. The combination of letters obtained must demonstrate a **national perspective** on the subject area.

### THIRD PARTY FINANCIERS

Applicants must demonstrate demand for the content from Third Party Financiers committing **cash** financing of **at least 5% of the budget**. Third party financing may include for example:

- grant from an Expert Organization
- licence fee from a Distribution Platform
- repayable advance from a selective funding program
- cash from a crowdfunding campaign
- equity investment from a private investor
- sponsorship sale

The letters of commitment from Third Party Financiers must confirm the financing is toward the creation of the same deliverables for which the Applicant is requesting TELUS Fund financing, detail any rights acquired, include a payment schedule, and define terms of repayment, if any.

Following are examples of types of financing and financial sources that **do not** meet the intent of this requirement and will not be included when calculating the minimum 5% threshold:

- Non-cash financing (e.g. deferrals and in-kind services)
- Financing from parties related to or affiliated with the Applicant (e.g. production company investment, minimum guarantee from a related distributor)
- Financing from programs that automatically allocate financing to eligible projects regardless of the storyline (e.g. first-come first-served, rebate on production expenditures, bonus top-up on financing obtained)
- Forecast financing based on certain expenditures (e.g. provincial and federal tax credit programs).

#### DISTRIBUTION PLATFORMS

Applicants must demonstrate demand for the content from a Distribution Platform in the business of making large volumes of comparable content directly available to Canadians. The deal memo from the Distribution Platform must outline the licence terms (e.g. fees, exclusivity, territories). Eligible Distribution Platforms may include for example a:

- broadcast channel accessible by Canadians<sup>vii</sup>
- distributor guaranteeing a minimum theatrical release in Canada
- YouTube channel owner with more than 20k Canadian subscribers
- social media influencer with more than 20k Canadian followers
- digital platform with over 20k Canadian users<sup>viii</sup>

The Fund will use information provided in the [Distribution Platform Support Form](#) to determine eligibility of the Distribution Platform to meet this requirement. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include a [Distribution Platform Support Form](#) for each Distribution Platform committed to the Project to confirm the level and nature of their support and the reasonableness of forecast success objectives.

Deal memos from distributors and sales agent undertaking to sell the content on behalf of the Applicant **do not** meet this requirement. In those rare situations where there is no identifiable Distribution Platform from which to obtain written support and self-distribution is proposed, the Applicant must demonstrate a successful track record of achieving at least 20k Canadian consumers with comparable content.

## 6. STAGES OF FINANCING

TELUS Fund financing is available to develop, produce and increase the discoverability of health content in Canada. There are no per project maximums for Production and Discoverability Funding. Applicants are encouraged to request only what they need to achieve measured success. At the development stage, Applicants may request up to \$75,000 or 75% of the development budget, whichever is less.

Financing is in the form of a recoupable advance similar in nature to an unsecured, non-interest bearing, forgivable loan. The Fund acquires no right, equity interest or profit participation in the actual production. The recoupable advance is not subject to HST/GST. Most provincial and federal tax credit programs have determined financing from the Fund to be akin to a grant or subsidy reducing the eligible tax credit.

### DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Story ideas that have advanced to a treatment are eligible to apply for development funding to secure the project team, subject matter experts and financial sources; undertake further research on the subject matter and target audience; advance the creative materials; prepare pitch materials, create a trailer or pilot episode to aid in obtaining support; develop marketing and impact strategies; and prepare detailed implementation plans.

### PRODUCTION FUNDING

Production funding is available for fully developed, production-ready proposals to create, promote, and drive audience reach, engagement and impact. Content budgets must include allowances for:

- close captioning<sup>ix</sup> and described video,
- data collection tools to report on measures of success for at least 24 months, and
- a launch campaign extending for at least 6 months which includes for example marketing, publicity and promotion expertise; promotion elements, images, electronic press kits; a basic website; digital marketing activities (e.g. online advertising, permission marketing, social media, data collection); and paid advertising.

### DISCOVERABILITY FUNDING

Discoverability funding is also available for exceptional health content that has achieved measured success (for example: more than 500k total 2+ Average Minute Audiences, 20k Canadian subscribers, or an average 20k Canadian views to substantial completion). This funding is intended to continue driving viewership, renew and refresh the Programming, and maintain the audience's experience in Canada. Discoverability plans must include allowances for:

- new content creation,
- close captioning<sup>x</sup> and described video for existing and new Programming,
- data collection tools to report on measures of success for at least 24 months, and
- a marketing campaign for new content plans extending for at least 6 months.

Applicants must demonstrate demand **for the discoverability plans** from Expert Organizations, Third Party Financiers and Distribution Platforms (see [Minimum Support Requirements](#)). The submission must also include a report on measured success using the [Exploitation and Discoverability Report](#) and new forecast future success targets with TELUS Fund financing.

## 7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Since opening the TELUS Fund in 2013, the Board of Directors has funded 130 submissions. The Evaluation Criteria in [Appendix A](#) are informed by the best practices and lessons learned from 48 projects that have since launched. They include:

- Innovation in the health area,
- Reach and measured success, and
- Project team.

The Board of Directors has sole and exclusive responsibility for funding decisions. The Directors evaluate and weigh the submissions individually against evaluation criteria and, in comparison to, others in the TELUS Fund portfolio. Criteria are not intended to restrict an Applicant's creativity nor limit the full discretion of the Board of Directors. They are provided as a guide to making a successful submission.

Funded projects with the highest measured success typically demonstrated medium to high alignment in most evaluation criteria. Future submissions that achieve medium to high alignment in many evaluation criteria will be most competitive during the evaluation process. These submissions are encouraged to apply for the level of financing necessary to achieve measured success.

Lessons learned from previously funded content suggest that submissions demonstrating a low to medium alignment in most criteria typically have the lowest likelihood of achieving the Fund's mandate. These submissions are unlikely to receive TELUS Fund financing and are not encouraged to apply.

## APPENDIX A – EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Innovation in the health area		
Evaluation Criteria	Low alignment and unlikely to receive TELUS Fund financing	High alignment and strong potential to receive >\$300k and/or 75% of the budget
Alignment with the TELUS Fund's mandate	- Expert Organization does not explain how the content will promote the well-being of Canadians	- Experts demonstrate how the content will promote the well-being of Canadians
Content is an original and fresh approach in subject area	- High volume of content already exists in the health area - No research undertaken on comparable content or impact	- Experts in area explain how the content demonstrates innovation in the field, presents novel solutions; uses innovative information and technology
Target audience impacted by health issue	- Less than 500k Canadians	- More than 3M Canadians - Content reflects the realities of the Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC)
Reach and influence of Expert Organization	- Individual experts, local or regional organizations; - Small networks of demonstrated influence	- Nationally recognized Expert organizations - Combination of marquee experts provide a national perspective - Large networks of demonstrated influence
Level of support from Expert Organization(s)	- No commitment of expertise or resources to support success	- Resources and expertise committed to support success objectives
Underlying research of distinguished subject matter experts	- Limited evidence confirming health issue and positive results from storytelling in this area - Highly debatable alternatives	- Published research confirming the health issue - Research demonstrates positive impact of storytelling in this area
2. Reach and measured success		
Evaluation Criteria	Low alignment and unlikely to receive TELUS Fund financing	High alignment and strong potential to receive >\$300k and/or 75% of the budget
Content plans	- One-off broadcast hour - Topical, short shelf life	- Renewal of successful television series - Multiple episodes of programming - Evergreen, long shelf life
Level of third-party financing support	- 5% financing from third parties	- Third parties sharing in >50% of the financial risk
Diversity of financial structure	- Request to the Fund is >49% - Multiple financial sources unconfirmed	- Request to the Fund is <35% - Other financing confirmed
Reach and track record of confirmed Distribution Platforms	- 20k subscribers, average episode views, or total 2+ Average Minute Audience - Local community reach - Single platform	- National reach to English and French viewing audiences - Average 1M total 2+ Average Minute Audience with comparable content - More than 1M subscribers - Average of 150k views to substantial completion of comparable content - Multiple platforms committed to the project
Level of support from Distribution Platforms	- No cash financing from platform - No marketing commitment	- <a href="#">Distribution Platform Support Form</a> included with submission - Financing from Distribution Platform is >20% of the budget - Guaranteed marketing expenditures

Marketable attachments	- No recognizable attachments	- Television series with strong brand recognition - Nationally recognized Expert Organization - Support from key influencers and celebrity talent
Marketing expertise	- None confirmed	- Marketing research already undertaken, and experts committed to the project
Marketing resources allocated	- Success depends on festival invitations, word of mouth, and earned media - 5% of budget or \$50k set aside for launch campaign	- At least 10% of budget or \$150k set aside for launch campaign - Marketing campaign extends over a 12-month period

### 3. Project Team

Evaluation Criteria	Low alignment and unlikely to receive TELUS Fund financing	High alignment and strong potential to receive >\$300k and/or 75% of the budget
Experience of Team	- No track record of success with comparable content	- Solid track record of success with comparable content - Women are included in key leadership roles - Members of the OLMC community are represented
Quality of the submitted video <sup>xi</sup>	- Low production value - Sequence of videos and images copied from the internet without authorization - Longer than 3 minutes for Dev Stage - Raw footage from an interview	- Professionally produced trailer or pilot episode that highlights the storyline and its potential to reach and positively impact the target audience. - Pitch video of less than 3 minutes that provides a sense of the subject area, the team, and key project elements.

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- i [Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2016-343](#)
  - ii [What Makes Canadians Healthy or Unhealthy](#)
  - iii Copyright clearances for exploitation worldwide on all platforms and devices for a period of at least 24 months from first transmission of Programming in Canada or launch of Non-Programming (whichever occurs last).
  - iv Programming must earn a minimum of 6 out of 10 points as certified by the [Canadian Audiovisual Certification Office \(CAVCO\)](#), be certified by Telefilm Canada as an [official international co-production](#), or be certified according to [the Commission's requirements](#) as Canadian content or an international co-venture in collaboration with non-treaty international partners. Non-Programming must include Canadians in key roles and spend at least 75% of the budget on Canadian costs.
  - v [Link to the Commission's definition of eligible program categories](#) NOT including news, reporting and actualities, or sports.
  - vi The Fund in its sole discretion may consider, on a case by case basis, waiving or delaying receipt of letters of commitment from Third Party Financiers or deal memos with Distribution Platforms, particularly at the development stages. The Fund's decision making will be strongly influenced by the written support obtained from Expert Organizations.
  - vii Canadians access Programming via hundreds of **broadcast channels** delivered on a linear schedule through a cable, satellite, internet protocol television, or antenna-based system. Provided the channel is accessible by Canadians, the Distribution Platform may include for example Canadian or foreign owned networks; local, regional, affiliated broadcasters; educational broadcasters; Category A services and Canadian or foreign owned discretionary services operating in Canada. The Distribution Platform must provide the Applicant with documentation confirming they are in the business of making comparable content directly available to Canadians and typically achieve at least 20k Canadian consumers with comparable content. Applicants are encouraged to include the [Distribution Platform Support Form](#) with their submission.
  - viii Canadians access content via hundreds of **Digital Platforms** delivered through the internet, smart phones, and wearable devices. Provided the Digital Platform is accessible by Canadians, the Distribution Platform may include for example: On-demand channels; Pay per view channels; Over the top services; Influencers on social media platforms; Multi-Channel Networks; Websites; custom applications; game consoles, and virtual reality platforms. The Digital Platform must provide the Applicant with documentation confirming they are in the business of making comparable content directly available to Canadians and typically achieve at least 20k Canadian consumers with comparable content. Applicants are encouraged to include the [Distribution Platform Support Form](#) with their submission.
  - ix The quality standards are set out in Quality standards for English-language closed captioning, [Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2012-362](#), 5 July 2012.
  - x The quality standards are set out in Quality standards for English-language closed captioning, [Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2012-362](#), 5 July 2012.
  - xi A link to a **professional trailer or pilot episode** will be considered for production applications and a **pitch video** of less than 3 minutes for development applications.