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CIFVF Film and Video Development Applications: A Guide

Deadline for 2008

March 6, 2008

Applications must be received by 4:00 PM at:

Canadian Independent Film & Video Fund

666 Kirkwood Avenue, suite 203

Ottawa, ON K1Z 5X9

To all applicants:

Before investing time and resources preparing an application, you should ensure that you and your project meet the Fund's eligibility criteria. To this end, you should begin by reading the CIFVF's Eligibility and Selection Criteria for Film and Video Applications. Copies of these documents and the application forms are available at the CIFVF office and on its Web site: www.cifvf.ca.

The CIFVF receives about 200 applications at each Deadline, many more than the Fund can support and only a proportion of the applications will be successful. A well-prepared and presented application package, setting out a business-like proposal, will give you your best shot at success. The information and advice that follows will help you prepare just such a package.

The Application Package

A complete application package for CIFVF financing consists of

- A. Four copies of the signed application form and four copies of the supporting documentation that CIFVF requires. Each set of copies must be bound, or presented in a binder, with a table of contents that identifies the page or tab number for each section of the submission. Numbered or colour-coded dividers should separate the sections.

Application packages which are not bound and tabbed will be returned to the applicant.

Please note that there are separate requirements for development financing and production/postproduction financing. The requirements for production and post-production are described in a separate document.

- B. A processing fee of \$50.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

- ❖ The full application package must arrive at the CIFVF office by 4:00 P.M. on the day of the Deadline. The CIFVF will not accept applications arriving after that date, even if they bear postmarks for the date of Deadline or earlier.
- ❖ Applications and all the supporting documentation for projects that will be produced in both English and French must be submitted in one language only.
- ❖ CIFVF office will review each application package and advise the applicant, by fax or email, whether it is complete. If your application package is not complete, you will have 72 hours to deliver the missing material to the CIFVF office.
- ❖ Failure to provide a complete application will render your project ineligible for consideration for the current Deadline.
- ❖ The CIFVF will only begin to accept applications one month prior to the Deadline date. Any applications sent in before this time will be returned to the applicant.

A. Application Form

Your application form must

- ❖ be completed and signed by you, as the producer.
- ❖ be typed or, if completed by hand, printed in a readily legible style.
- ❖ contain the applicant's telephone and fax numbers, and email address. If you do not have access to a fax machine, or if your telephone is also a fax modem, please specify.

The application form contains a checklist of the supporting documentation required by the CIFVF. By signing the application form you are confirming that you have addressed all of the Fund's criteria.

B. Documentation for Development Applications

Your application package for development financing must include the following supporting documentation presented in the order listed:

1. Application Form
2. Concept
3. Proof of market
4. Funding sources
5. Development budget
6. Production sources of funding
7. List of key personnel & C.Vs
8. Work plan
9. Rights Acquisition Checklist and related documentation

The CIFVF requires four copies of the documentation. Each set of documents must be bound, or presented in a binder, with a table of contents that identifies the page or tab number for each section. There should be nine dividers for the nine sections. There are three ways to prepare the copies and you should choose one of the methods that are described below:

- You may use dividers with tabs that you label with each of the nine section headings listed above.
- Alternatively, you may use dividers with tabs that are pre-numbered and include an index page, which is the table of contents, indicating the section title of each pre-numbered tab.
- Or you may use dividers that are colour-coded with tabs that are colour-coded. In this case, the index page, which is the table of contents, should indicate the section title of each colour-coded tab.

If you are unclear about tabs, [click here](#) to see pictures of the three methods described above.

Please include all information relating to a specific item in the relevant section. For example, all information relating to personnel should go in section 7; the letter from the distributor should be included in section 3- proof of market demand and not at the end of the proposal.

The CIFVF will not accept applications that are not bound and tabbed with a table of contents. Applications that are not bound and tabbed will be returned to the applicant.

Language of the Application: Given that separate French-language and English-language juries evaluate the proposals, all documents in the application package should be in one official language or the other but not in both English and French.

2. Concept or Story Outline

There are no hard and fast rules for the length of a concept/story outline. The CIFVF does suggest that it is at least two or three pages long. It is not necessary to include with your application all of the background material you may have found during your research; however, you must provide the CIFVF with sufficient information to evaluate your application.

Your concept or story outline must:

- say what the proposed project will be about;
- describe the project's focus, including the people or events being highlighted and how they relate to the subject matter;
- make clear whether the film/video will be subject-driven or character-driven;
- identify the project's intended style: how it will look; its visual treatment; what will be seen and heard on screen. The visual treatment or style of the project will include such elements as rhythm and pace, music and, especially in the case of documentaries, the planned use of locations, archival footage, on-screen or behind-camera interviewers or presenters, etc.;
- illustrate the subject matter's sustainability for the duration of the project.
- address the originality of the idea- what makes it unique and interesting? And
- discuss the feasibility of the execution of the project: are there factors that will be difficult to manage? For example, if your project requires access to police, an institution or the military, access will be difficult without very high-level approval. You should discuss how this will be managed, what steps you will take to guarantee the successful completion of the development stage.

These are just some of the factors that will be used in evaluating your project. To this end, you may wish to look at the development marking system that can be found on the CIFVF web site under the "Guidelines & Application Process" section. In addition, the CIFVF's Web site page "Production Information & Links" identifies industry guilds, such as the Writers Guild of Canada, and organizations, such as provincial associations and funding agencies, that can provide applicants with guidance in preparing effective script and treatment documentation.

3. Proof of Market

The proof of market demand documentation defines and evaluates the potential non-theatrical market for the proposed project. It must address each of the following:

- ❖ **Intended or Target Audience** – You must identify the intended audience(s) for the project, i.e., identify whether the proposed project is intended for distribution to educational institutions, specialty television channels, health, community groups, cultural or social services, business or other non-theatrical markets. In preparing this material, it is suggested that you consider responding to the following questions:
 - For whom, or to whom, is the project being made or directed?
 - If it is intended for the educational market, is it directed at pre-school, elementary level, high school, college or university students? In what part of the curriculum would it be used? Does it conform to the curriculum framework guidelines? How will it be 'versioned' to fit within class time limits? Will other tools such as

teachers' guides accompany it? How will these be created and published?

- If it is intended for other market sectors, who are the targeted users/audiences? For example, if it is intended for the health sector, are the targeted users doctors, nurses, or patients?
 - Is there a secondary audience and, if so what is it?
 - If the project is being produced for an educational or specialty television market, what is the targeted type or demographic of that audience? It is insufficient to state that the project is intended for a general audience.
- ❖ **Competing or Analogous Products** - In all likelihood, there are other products available in the market on the same subject as your proposed project. You need to undertake research to see what already exists, how your project differs from them, and why there is a need for your production. For example, your film/video may take a completely different approach, or it may be a more current update on the topic. Establishing the market's need for your project is crucial. The CIFVF suggests you:
- Discuss your project with distributors and examine distributors' catalogues. Distributors know their markets and can provide you with valuable insight.
 - Contact librarians in public libraries or educational institutions who are also knowledgeable about what is already available.
 - Research Internet databases.
 - Consult end-users, particularly specialist health, community service or social groups, who are knowledgeable about what is already available.
 - If the project will also be distributed online, research using a search engine (e.g, Google) and a review of websites that relate to the subject matter of your project should be included. A review of social networking websites such as Youtube can be searched to determine if other projects with relevant subject matter exist.

A list of the sources you used in preparing this assessment should be included in this documentation. Please see example on our website.

- ❖ **Assessment of Users' Audio-Visual Needs/Summary of Discussions with End-Users** - Once your target audience(s) has/have been identified, you should consider how the intended viewers would use the production. Some questions that may be useful in addressing this requirement are:
- Is the length of the proposed project appropriate for the context in which it will be used? For example, if it is intended for elementary schools with class periods of 30 or 40 minutes, a 45 minute film/video would not be appropriate.
 - From the users' perspective, what are the main issues that need to be covered in your project? Is the approach you intend to take appropriate to their needs? Will it be useful to them?
 - How will the intended audiences use it? Will users watch the film/video alone, in workshops or as part of group discussions? Will there be printed discussion or activity material to accompany it and how will this requirement be met?
 - If the project is also to be distributed through the Internet, describe how the end users will find and watch the video. Will the video be part of a website that offers

additional information on the subject matter? Will the video be part of a greater experience to engage the end user to participate in an initiative related to the subject matter?

In the process of assessing user needs, you or others on your behalf may have consulted groups representing the target audience, spoken with subject matter experts, conducted focus groups and/or surveyed prospective users/viewers. Rather than submit all of the information that your research may have produced, your submission should summarize and assess the results of that work. Nevertheless, you should include a list identifying the sources that were consulted.

Please note that the CIFVF expects you to prepare the assessment of users' needs in your own words. The letters from the end users (see below) support your application; they do not replace your assessment or summary of your discussions with end users.

If you are still unclear about how to prepare this section, [click here](#) to see an example of an assessment of users' audio-visual needs.

- ❖ **Evidence of Support from End-Users** - You must provide up to five letters, and no more, from representative end-users and/or subject matter experts that offer evidence that your proposed project has the potential to be well-received by its intended market. Each letter should address the following questions:
 - ◊ Why would the film/video be of use?
 - ◊ How will it be used?
 - ◊ Is it useful as a springboard for discussion?
 - ◊ Does it offer a fair portrayal of the subject?
- In recognition of the importance of the specialty and educational television market, one of these letters may be from a broadcaster.
- The user's/expert's name, title and place of work should be clearly identified in the letter.
- Sending these letters to the CIFVF by email is not sufficient: it is important that the letters be on letterhead and signed by the writer of the letter.
- Letters of support should not be older than one year prior to the CIFVF deadline. This requirement is to ensure that there is still an interest in the project in question.
- The following are not accepted as letters of support from end users:
 - ◊ Letters of recommendation from other producers or influential members of society attesting to the experience of the producer are not considered letters of support from end-users.
 - ◊ Letters from individuals featured in the project are not considered as being at arm's length.

You will be interested to know that end users' letters sometimes mention aspects of the project which help distributors in determining the marketing of the project.

- ❖ **Canadian Non-Theatrical Distribution** - you must provide a letter of interest from a Canadian-owned and controlled private sector distributor that has at least two years of

experience and is active in the non-theatrical market. Consistent with its mission, the CIFVF supports Canadian non-theatrical distributors operating in the private sector whose primary purpose is distribution. Therefore, it cannot accept distribution arrangements with public sector agencies, whether federal or provincial, or with the distribution arms of CRTC-licensed broadcasters. The CIFVF will accept letters of interest only from non-theatrical distributors who are listed on the CIFVF web site.

The distributor's name, title and place of work should be clearly identified in the letter. Sending letters by email is not sufficient: it is important that the letters be on letterhead and signed by the writer of the letter.

4. Funding Sources

In this section, you must identify all your confirmed or pending sources of funding and the amount each will contribute to show how you will cover the development costs of your project. Please remember that the CIFVF will contribute no more than 49% of the budgeted costs of development, to a maximum of \$10,000.

You must enclose a copy of the commitment letter(s) from any funding source that has confirmed participation in your project. You must include letters of confirmation from anyone (producer or crew) who is making a deferral or investment to the project. Where decisions on other funding requests are pending, you must indicate the date on which the request was made and when an answer is expected. Please also include this information in your work plan (see below).

Any new funding secured during the time that the applications are being reviewed by the CIFVF should be communicated to the CIFVF.

5. Development Budget

This section must provide a detailed breakdown of the development budget. The costs that may be included in the development budget are personnel, travel, script development, underlying or development rights acquisition, financial packaging (including research and approaches to potential funders), market research, distribution planning, and production budgeting. Under certain circumstances, costs for the preparation of a demo may be included. Amounts for contingencies should not be included in the budget. There is a development budget template on the CIFVF web site under "Forms & Tools". It is not mandatory to use this particular template if you are already using another one.

6. Production Financing Plan

In this document you must identify the estimated cost of the total production and describe how it will be financed. A production budget is not required; only a financing plan/financial structure. In preparing the estimate of total production cost through to delivery of the completed production, you must account for any costs associated with accompanying material for the end-users, such as teachers' guides. There is a template for a financing plan/ financial structure on the CIFVF web site under "Forms & Tools" that you may use.

The assessment of intended and potential sources of financing may include the CIFVF. Please refer to the *Eligibility and Section Criteria: Film and Video Applications* for information about the maximum level of potential CIFVF financial participation.

7. Key Personnel

Your submission must provide:

- ❖ a list of the key creative personnel who will be involved in developing the project and their role. The nationality of each person must be noted.
- ❖ a resume, CV or filmography (2 pages maximum) for the producer (s). Resumes, CVs or filmographies for the director and the writer(s) if they have been selected at the development stage should also be included.
- ❖ if your proposed project is a documentary involving specific individuals or groups as its subject, a list of those individuals or groups must be included.

For First-Time Producers (this is in addition to the documentation listed above):

- ❖ While it is not mandatory, the CIFVF recommends that a first-time producer demonstrate that he/she has complied with one of the following criteria:
 - is associated with an experienced producer as evidenced by a signed and dated letter from the senior producer confirming his/her commitment to help the new producer and/or;
 - has become a member of a film/video cooperative that can provide assistance throughout the production process as evidenced by a letter from the cooperative confirming the new producer's involvement and indicating that the cooperative has knowledge of the new producer's project and/or;
 - has taken steps to inform him/herself about the producing process by taking a production course or workshop as evidenced by a detailed description of the course and the registration form for the course/workshop.

As mentioned, it is not mandatory that a new producer comply with any of the three criteria listed above but it will improve his/her mark in the Background/Experience section of the CIFVF project marking scheme (found under the Guidelines & Application Process section of the CIFVF web site).

8. Work Plan

You must include a work plan detailing the research and development that is being proposed, the methodology and work to be undertaken to complete development, and effort needed to raise financing for the production. Your plan must also include a schedule, with key dates and milestones and must take into account the fact that the CIFVF's decision on the application will take between 8 to 10 weeks. Unless development will be continuing irrespective of the CIFVF decision, this time frame should be reflected in the schedule. Dates on which requests to other funding agencies have been made and dates of their expected decisions must also be indicated. It is more useful to prepare the plan using actual dates (i.e., month & year) as opposed to stating only the number of days involved for each task. An example of a work plan can be found on the CIFVF web site under "Resources".

9. Rights Acquisition

You must hold copyright in the completed project. To that end, you must provide evidence that all rights necessary to produce and distribute the film/video are held or, at a minimum, are accessible to you. You must complete and submit the form entitled Rights Acquisition Checklist

which is found on the Fund's website under Forms & Tools .

Copyright and Clearances - You must show that you have addressed the important elements of copyright ownership and clearance of rights in your production planning. In doing so you must consider the following questions:

- Do you own the copyright in the concept or underlying work upon which the project will be based? Alternatively, do you have an agreement, or an option to enter into an agreement, with the copyright holders of any underlying work that grants to you the necessary rights to produce a project based on the underlying work? Do you have chain of title in the form of signed documents showing your acquisition of the copyright or the necessary rights in any underlying work on which the project will be based?
- Do you have a writer's agreement that assigns copyright, or licenses the necessary rights, in the script or research to you as the producer?
- Have you obtained clearances for use of existing music and/or performances, as well as archival or stock footage or any previously recorded images such as photographs or graphics, which will be employed in the project?
- Have you acquired licenses to use any trademarks, trade-names or logos that may appear in the project?
- Have you ensured that you can acquire the right to distribute the intended project in any other proposed markets such as domestic television broadcast or international markets? For example, you may need to obtain clearances not only for Canadian non-theatrical use but also for Canadian television and for international rights on any pre-existing footage, literary material, music etc. to be included in your finished production if your distributor intends to exploit these markets.

Releases - Where individuals and/or groups are the principal subjects of the project, letters of agreement or personal release forms from the principal subjects must be provided with the application. At the application stage for development financing, release forms are required only for the main subject(s) of the project (which may include people, locations, buildings, businesses, personal property or products, etc.) and for films about music. Release forms are not required for individuals and/or groups who are not the principal subjects. However, you should be aware that you must acquire releases for all subjects of the project for the completed production, and that the list of rights set out above is not exhaustive. Sample releases are on the Fund's web site under Forms & Tools, though you are not required to use those forms.

The CIFVF web site page Production Information and Links contains information that you may find useful in ensuring that all rights and related legal requirements are adequately addressed. Please note, however, that the CIFVF is not responsible for the information provided on the linked websites and resources, and urges you to obtain independent legal advice to ensure all necessary rights and clearances have been obtained for your project.

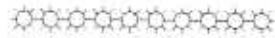
C. Processing Fee

A cheque or money order in the amount of \$50.00, payable to the *Canadian Independent Film & Video Fund*, must be enclosed with the application and supporting material.

Other Documents

The following are available from the CIFVF office and Web site:

- ❖ Application Forms
- ❖ Eligibility and Selection Criteria: Film and Video Applications
- ❖ Guide for Production and Post-production Applications



For further information contact:

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