



May 7th, 2009

In 2008, Telefilm Canada and the Rogers Group of Funds announced the renewal of a three-year funding agreement for the Program, that is, for the period from 2008-2009 to 2010-2011. As a result of the partnership between Telefilm and the Rogers Group of Funds, the Program will have an annual budget of \$1.375 million, apportioned two thirds (2/3) for the English-language market and one third (1/3) for French-language productions.

Telefilm and the Rogers Group of Funds have undertaken this initiative to consult key industry players in the aim of revising the Program and its guidelines for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. As such, you have until May 28, 2009 to submit your comments. We would encourage you to distribute this letter and related information to your members as they will have the opportunity to submit their comments directly via Telefilm's [website](#).

The consultation will make it possible to gather comments on the proposed changes to the Program's guidelines for 2009-2010. It will also enable Telefilm Canada to gather more detailed information on the challenges and opportunities facing the industry, in order to assist the Corporation in updating its five-year corporate plan to be released in 2010-2011.

Please find attached information pertaining to the Telefilm Canada–Rogers Group of Funds consultation on the Theatrical Documentary Program. Telefilm undertakes to maintain the confidentiality of comments received.

We value your participation in this consultation process and we look forward to receiving your feedback.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. Friesen".

Elizabeth Friesen
Chief Operating Officer
Telefilm Canada

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robin Mirsky".

Robin Mirsky
Executive Director
Rogers Group of Funds

Attachment

**THEATRICAL DOCUMENTARY PROGRAM
TELEFILM CANADA AND ROGERS GROUP OF FUNDS
CANADA FEATURE FILM FUND**

1. BACKGROUND

In 2007-2008, Telefilm Canada extended its commitments to the Theatrical Documentary Pilot Program. By investing \$1 million drawn from the Canada Feature Film Fund (CFFF) and by developing new partnerships with the Rogers Group of Funds and the NFB the Program has supported since its creation in 2005-2006 10 productions and the completion of several projects. Telefilm and the Rogers Group of Funds subsequently signed a three-year agreement, covering the period from 2008-2009 to 2010-2011, to set up the current program.

The Program's objective is to increase Canadian audiences for Canadian feature films, by encouraging the production of Canadian feature-length documentaries for theatrical distribution in Canada.

Telefilm and the Rogers Group of Funds have undertaken this initiative to consult key industry players in the aim of revising the Program and its guidelines for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. As such, you have until **May 28, 2009** to [submit your comments](#) .

2. ENVIRONMENT

Through the Program, Telefilm and the Rogers Group of Funds' involvement makes it possible to fund up to five productions a year, thereby doubling the current annual volume of Canadian productions. Canadian audiences' appetite for feature-length documentaries continues to grow, as evidenced by the success of such titles as *Le Dernier Continent*, *Manufacturing Landscapes*, and *Les Voleurs d'enfance*, as well as by the critical raves that greeted the release of such productions as *Saving Luna* and *Voyage au bout de la torture*.

However, feature-length documentaries made primarily for theatrical release have a harder time staking a place within funding programs for documentaries and documentary series created for television. In 2006-2007, the Canadian industry produced only six feature-length documentaries out of a total of 435 documentary productions¹. This low production volume can be attributed to limited resources in the marketplace and the absence of broadcasting windows and incentives for theatrical release. The Theatrical Documentary Program allows the industry to take advantage of new business opportunities and in the long term provide Canadian audiences with a greater diversity of Canadian productions.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THIS CONSULTATION

The consultation will make it possible to gather comments on the proposed changes to the Program's guidelines for 2009-2010. It will also enable Telefilm Canada to gather more detailed information on the challenges and opportunities facing the industry, in order to assist the Corporation in updating its five-year corporate plan to be released in 2010-2011.

a) Proposed changes to the Program

Regarding basic criteria for eligible projects:

- Reduce the minimum production budget from \$750,000 to \$600,000 for applications submitted for the production assistance component;
- Reduce the minimum post-production budget from \$750,000 to \$450,000 for applications submitted for the post-production assistance component;

¹ Based on data published in *2008 Profile – An Economic Report on the Canadian Film and Television Production Industry*, CFTPA, Dept. of Canadian Heritage and APFTQ.

Regarding basic criteria for the evaluation of the projects :

- Add the following criteria: quality of the research report; presentation of the characters/subjects; appeal for Canadian audiences (cinema and other platforms);

Regarding eligible costs for the post-production stage:

- Add a note saying that the projects must be submitted before picture editing is finalized;

Regarding the submission deadline:

- The next submission deadline will be July 31, 2009 to facilitate establishing the projects' financial structures, taking the industry's other submission deadlines into account.

b) Challenges and opportunities

What are the principal challenges or opportunities facing feature-length documentary production in:

- 1) Putting in place a financial structure and conditions tied to obtaining investment from a broadcaster or distributor from the local and the international market?
- 2) Access to decision makers and major players of the industry such as distributors, broadcasters, coproduction partners, etc.?
- 3) The impact of new broadcasting platforms and multiplatform environment in which new productions must be broadcast?
- 4) Professional development, access to international festivals and/or setting up promotional activities to increase sales and pre-sales volume?