

## Canada Media Fund Announces New Flexibility Measures

*Lindsay E. Dykstra, Stephen I. Selznick*

**May 19, 2020**

### New Canada Media Fund COVID-19 Measures

On May 13, 2020, the Canada Media Fund (CMF) announced the introduction of several new measures intended to increase the flexibility of its programs and policies in support of eligible applicants and broadcasters during the COVID-19 pandemic. The announcement comes on the heels of the federal government's commitment to direct \$88 million dollars of COVID-19 emergency relief funding to the CMF in support of Canada's screen-based industries, which have been particularly hard-hit by the pandemic. (*For more information, please see our other articles from May 11, 2020 and May 19, 2020.*)

The CMF supports the development and promotion of Canadian content by distributing funding annually through several different programs under two main funding streams. The *convergent stream* supports the creation of drama, variety and performing arts, children and youth, and documentary programming for television and other media platforms. The *experimental stream* supports innovative software applications and interactive digital content. This funding is largely channelled through broadcasters, via the CMF's envelope programs, that team-up with producers to develop and produce Canadian content. In the normal course, CMF-funded projects must adhere to specific financial and timeline requirements, as well as other requirements mandated by the CMF in order to maintain their funding.

### CMF Operational Flexibility is the Key Takeaway

The key takeaway from the May 13, 2020 CMF announcement is "flexibility." The newly announced measures comprise both operational flexibility and policy flexibility initiatives and will apply to projects funded by the CMF prior to 2020-2021 that are not yet complete, as well as to project applications made or contemplated for the 2020-2021 period. These measures introduce the possibility of more flexible payment schedules, extended production deadlines, an increase in the maximum funding percentage of the CMF's contribution to performance and development envelope programming, francophone minority programming and indigenous programming; and more leeway for broadcasters in the allocation of their performance and development envelope funds.

The added flexibility will reduce the financial strain on producers and broadcasters, support the continuity of CMF-funded projects, and support the creation of new eligible projects in 2020-2021 which might otherwise struggle to meet the CMF's strict requirements in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The applicability of some

# Cassels

of the CMF's new measures will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and it is recommended that stakeholders contact their assigned CMF analyst for further information.

All other policies and requirements of the CMF will continue to apply. Given the evolving nature of the pandemic, it is anticipated that the CMF will continue to monitor developments and adapt its policies as needed.

The CMF's full list of changes can be found [here](#).

---

*This publication is a general summary of the law. It does not replace legal advice tailored to your specific circumstances.*