

Observatoire du documentaire Documentary Network

NEWS
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THE DOCUMENTARY NETWORK OF CANADA CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT ON DOCUMENTARY FILM OF CANADA MEDIA FUND GUIDELINES

On March 26, 2010, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, The Honorable James Moore, announced the guidelines for the **Canada Media Fund**, which will put greater emphasis on content for interactive digital media.

Following the April 9, 2010 meeting of its Board of Directors, the Documentary Network of Canada is concerned that some of the 2010 guidelines may actually restrict production of Canadian documentary films. Nathalie Barton, Chair of the Documentary Network, explains: "The Canada Media Fund requires that 50% of the monies it gives to television broadcasters go towards projects with interactive digital content. That, along with funding cuts that affect CBC/Radio-Canada in 2010, will inevitably result in fewer one-off documentaries being made. The situation is troubling because it makes one-off documentaries more vulnerable when they are, in fact, essential to the vitality of the documentary genre."

The key issue for the Documentary Network, whose members comprise the main organizations active in the documentary industry across Canada, is that broadcasters will be required to devote 50% of their CMF envelopes to projects that create value-added content for Internet and mobile devices. Because overall funding remains essentially the same, broadcasters will have no choice but to cut financing to documentary productions, since a significant proportion of the funding they receive must be slated for new media applications.

The smaller envelope going to CBC/ Radio-Canada from the Canada Media Fund this year will inevitably result in fewer documentaries being produced by Canada's public broadcaster. It is worth remembering that the CBC has always allocated funding to the production of one-off documentaries, which require relatively more resources per hour compared to documentary series.

Several Documentary Network members also expressed concern about the 50% flex allowed to broadcasters, which means this year some of them may allocate funds to other kinds of productions rather than documentaries. The Documentary Network will be looking closely at the results of the new selective mechanism applied to English-language point-of-view documentaries, given the drop in documentary programming by English-language Canadian

broadcasters. To ensure greater support for French-language documentary production, Documentary Network members hope the CMF will adopt a funding mechanism specific to the francophone situation next year, under its Broadcaster Performance Envelope rules.

The Documentary Network has been an active stakeholder in the consultations that helped shape the protocol for the Canada Media Fund. Nathalie Barton expresses the group's determination to continue to be involved: "We intend to remain vigilant, submitting proposals and joining discussions to ensure that documentary survives in our television landscape."

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Further information:

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The communiqué is endorsed by the following members of the Documentary Network:

Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec (APFTQ)

Association des producteurs francophones du Canada (APFC)

Association québécoise des techniciens de l'image et du son (AQTIS)

Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ)

Astral Media/Les Chaines Astral

Directors Guild of Canada

Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC)

Les Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal (RIDM)

Société Radio-Canada (SRC)

Télé-Québec

The Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA)