

The image features a central logo consisting of a black circle with the white text "IPF" inside. This logo is surrounded by several overlapping, colorful circular bands in shades of blue, green, yellow, and orange. The background is a collage of images: a person in a dark, textured outfit, a woman with long braids, a woman with a dog in a wire crate, and a group of men in military uniforms. The overall color palette is dominated by warm oranges and yellows on the left, transitioning to cooler blues and greens on the right.

IPF

AGENDA



- ABOUT THE IPF
- WHY SHORT FORM SERIES?
- DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS
- SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT
- SHORT FORM SERIES PRODUCTION
- EVALUATION PROCESS & TIPS
- APPLICATION TRENDS
- SHORT SERIES PROJECT LIFECYCLE
- OBSERVATIONS & TIPS



What Do We Do?

The Independent Production Fund supports Canadian creators, writers, and producers by providing development and production financing for narrative television and short form series.





Since inception investment of \$83M in 500+ projects, including:

161 Short Form Series Productions (since 2010)

60 Short Form Series Development projects (since 2020)





IPF Funding Programs

1. **Short Form Series Development Packaging Program**
2. **Short Form Series Production Program**
3. Cogeco TV Production Program
4. Professional Development Grants for Industry Events



WHY SHORT FORM SERIES?

What Are Short Form Series

- Episodic series
- 20 mins or less per episode
- Also called Webseries or Digital Series
- IPF only supports **scripted** short form series

Why Short Form Series Matter

- Opportunity for new voices, emerging talent
- Fewer barriers to entry vs traditional media
- Smaller budgets, less financing required
- Experiential learning and growth opportunity
 - Create bigger role for yourself
 - Build up your resume
 - Build up your company
 - IP creation and ownership
- Overall reduction of risks and timelines

What Works for Short Form?

- **DO NOT** make broad spectrum, attention-grabbing content seeking big P2+ audiences
- **DO NOT** make a shorter version of your typical 30 or 60 minute show
- **DO** be unique, and be confident in that unique POV
- **DO** target niche, taboo or under-represented characters, topics and locations
- **DO** have a passion and/or personal connection to the story

What Works for Short Form?

- Authentic
- Unique but relatable
- Aspirational themes
- Funny / Comedic
- Niche / Underserved audience
- Timely & Socially relevant

**WHAT IS THE
DEFINITION OF
SUCCESS?**

Defining Success

Narrowly Defined Success: Revenue

- Domestic distribution licenses
- International distribution licenses
- Advertising Revenue Sharing
- Merchandising
- Subsequent Works
- Format Sales
- Other revenue related activities...

Defining Success

Broader Definition of Success: Personal Growth

- Grow your experience and knowledge
- Bump up your resume and credits
- Grow your company and/or slate & create IP
- Gain critical acclaim & awards
- Create audience engagement & gain market research
- Increase industry engagement / grow your network
- Also, revenue!



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SHORT FORM
SERIES
DEVELOPMENT

SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

The Short Form Series Development Packaging Program is designed to assist independent producers **create high quality original scripted short form series.**

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SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

Successful projects will be in a **better position to attract partners, financing, distribution and move successfully into production.**

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The logo for the Independent Production Fund (IPF) is a circular emblem. It features a dark green outer ring, a white inner circle, and the letters "IPF" in a bold, black, sans-serif font centered within the white circle. The logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide, overlapping the orange background.

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SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

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Program goals:

- Develop strong creative materials
- Encourage the incubation of new talent & new voices
- Encourage the participation of experienced professionals
- Provide opportunities for insightful business development



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SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

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What type of series are eligible?

- Short Form Series (episodes are less than 20 mins)
- Must be scripted (fictional/drama)
- Any genre - Drama, Comedy, Sci-Fi, Horror, Romance, Action etc.
- Anthology series are permitted
- Animated series permitted
- Focus is on new and original creative concepts



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SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

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Other Eligibility Criteria:

- Must be a **Canadian Production Company**
- A Canadian writer must be attached to the series
- Minimum 75% of expenses must be Canadian

Not eligible:

- Series with episodes running over 20 mins
- Non-Fiction Series (Docu-series, Reality series)
- Subsequent Seasons



SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

Application Planning

Creative Pitch

- Synopsis of the series
- Season story arc
- Main character description(s)
- Format of typical episode
- Maximum of 3 pages

SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

Application Planning

The Team

- Canadian writer with previous credited experience as a producer or writer
- Producer
- Mentor - experienced Story Editor or an experienced Development Executive

SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

Application Planning

One Page Vision Document

- The vision document for the creator to sell their short form series to the evaluators beyond the other applications materials

SHORT FORM SERIES

DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

Application Planning

Additional Required Documents

- Development Budget
- Development Schedule
- List of previous development phases (if applicable)

SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

Successful Applicants Receive

- Up to \$30,000
- Funding is in the form of a repayable advance
- To be paid back upon first day of principal photography

SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

IPF is an Equity Investor

As a financier and partner, the IPF will participate financially via a % of profits made from the series

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SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

Eligible Expenses

- A demo, proof-of concept or trailer
- 3 episode scripts
- Updated synopses of the series and for each episode of the first season, including story arc, character descriptions, locations, etc - series Bible

SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

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Proof Of Concept Video

- Visual demo of written content
- No required length, but typically 1-2 minutes
- Should seek to demonstrate tone, setting, style, characters, and action / anything complex
- Purposed:
 - seek audience feedback / prove target audience assumptions
 - seek production funding

The logo for the Independent Production Fund (IPF) is located in the bottom right corner. It consists of the letters "IPF" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a dark green circle. The circle is partially overlapped by a larger, semi-transparent orange circle that is part of the slide's decorative design.

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SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

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Proof Of Concept Video

- Publishing proof-of-concept video online for ~30 days is great way to collect information
- Data collection can also be via test audience screenings
- The goal is a deeper understanding of target audience assumptions.
- Audience metrics should be analyzed honestly and unbiasedly
- Views on are only one small part of the analysis. Engagement is more important.



SHORT FORM SERIES DEVELOPMENT PACKAGING PROGRAM

The Goal

The materials created during the Development Packaging Program phase will be used to seek production financing and potential licensors



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SHORT FORM
SERIES
PRODUCTION

SHORT FORM SERIES PRODUCTION

ONLY projects that are successfully funded via the **Development Packaging Program**, and completed all development activities on time, are eligible to apply to the Short Form Series Production Program

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SHORT FORM SERIES PRODUCTION

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Application Requirements

- Bible: Synopses of the series and for each episode of the first season, including story arc & character descriptions
- 3 episode scripts
- A proof-of-concept video with test audience analytics
- Preliminary production budget
- Preliminary financing plan
- List of potential or confirmed performers and other key creative positions
- Preliminary production schedule
- Audience identification and preliminary engagement plan
- A list of target distributors and / or platforms / channels



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SHORT FORM SERIES PRODUCTION

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- The maximum funding available for short form production projects is **\$200,000**
- The funds are issued as an **equity investment**
- As an equity investor and partner, the IPF will participate financially via a % of profits made from the series



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EVALUATION PROCESS

EVALUATION PROCESS

Who are the evaluators?

IPF Evaluators are made up of Canadian Industry professionals, IPF board members, and graduate level film students - supported by members of the IPF staff.

Up to 50 individuals participate in the evaluation process for IPF programming each year.

EVALUATION PROCESS

What are evaluators looking for?

CONCEPT

The creative concept is important. Innovative approach to the story, something not seen before, or a familiar story from a new POV.

EVALUATION PROCESS

What are evaluators looking for?

WRITING

Evaluators look at hundreds of pitches, having great writing is critical. If the writer is new, hire/partner with a more experienced writer.

EVALUATION PROCESS

What are evaluators looking for?

TEAM

If the team is new to producing, allocate budget to hire a more experienced team member in the role of Story Editor and/or Development Executive.

EVALUATION PROCESS

What are evaluators looking for?

FEASIBILITY

Is this project doable for the proposed budget? Are there financial obstacles that do not have solutions when looking towards production?

SHORT FORM SERIES
PROJECT LIFECYCLE

Short Form Series Lifecycle

- Get the Idea
- **Define Success for You**
- Build a Team
- Research Target Audience
- Seek Development Funds
- **Develop Concept Materials**
- **Confirm Target Audience / Develop Marketing Plan**
- **Complete Concept Pitch Materials**
- **Seek Production Funding / Financing**
- Production
- Distribution 1 (financing commitments)
- Distribution 2 (recoupment / revenue)
- Reflect - What next? (next season, next format, next project)

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IPF Development Packaging & Production Funding Program

- Application portal opens in early Feb
- Deadline for Development applications first week of March
- Development funding decisions announced in mid April
- Development funds released spring / summer
- Deadline for Production applications first week of October
- Production funding decisions announced mid-November

IPF APPLICATION TRENDS & EXAMPLES

New in 2023

In 2023, the CMF increased their annual commitment to the **IPF Development Packaging Program** based on the success of the first 3 years.

- Total annual budget increased to \$900,000
- Roughly 30 projects can be approved

Application Trends

- 130-170 applications submitted to Development Packaging Program annually
- ~2% ineligible (incomplete, non-canadian, etc)
- 20 projects funded each year in 2020, 2021, 2022
- Increasing to ~30 projects in 2023
- ~\$30K per project

Production Budget Trends

- Typical budget range: \$400K - \$800K
- Typical number of episodes per season: 6-10
- Typical episode running time: 8-15 minutes
- Typically 60-90 mins of total content
- Typical cost per minute: \$5000 - \$12000
- IPF investment often 20%-40% of the budget

Example Financing

Fund Source	Amount	Type	% of Funding
IPF	\$200,000	Equity	62.0%
Broadcaster	\$15,000	License	4.5%
Prov & Fed Tax Credits	\$96,645	Tax Credit	30.0%
Producer Investment	\$12,000	Equity	3.5%
Funding Total	\$323,645		

Example Financing

Fund Source	Amount	Type	% of Funding
IPF	\$200,000	Equity	43.0%
Other National Fund	\$150,000	Grant	32.5%
Producer Investment	\$10,500	Equity	2.5%
Broadcaster	\$100,000	License	22.0%
Funding Total	\$460,500		

Example Financing

Source	Amount	Type	% of Funding
IPF	\$200,000	Equity	30.8%
Other National Fund	\$150,000	Grant	23.1%
Provincial Agency	\$175,000	Grant	27.0%
Broadcaster	\$80,000	License	12.2%
Crowdfunding	\$15,000	Donation	2.3%
Federal Tax Credits	\$30,000	Tax Credit	4.7%
Total Financing	\$650,000		

SHORT FORM SERIES
INSIDER TIPS

INSIDER TIPS

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Do not rush your application

Whatever time you think it will take you, give yourself more time. Plan to finish a completed draft early in the process so you have time to refine your pitch and sweat the details.



INSIDER TIPS

Sweat the details

Plan to reread multiple times before submitting.
Grammar mistakes matter. Spelling mistakes matter.
Your application represents the integrity and brand of
your team and project.

INSIDER TIPS

Don't do it alone

Ask us questions. Reach out to us via email. Book a call with us. Talk to someone who has applied in the past and was successful. Work your extended network.

INSIDER TIPS

Connect the dots

Make sure all the dots connect throughout the application. The budget needs to match the creative. The creative needs to fit well with the audience engagement plan. An application is only as good as the sum of its parts.



INSIDER TIPS

Do your homework

Look at previous funded series on the IPF and others websites. Network with those teams and seek their guidance. Learning from others past mistakes and successes will accelerate your growth and increase your chances for success.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

BIGGER PICTURE

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Technology has stabilized

- The tech part of digital disruption has settled down
- The platform side of digital-first content used to be more unstable due to tech disruption and ongoing legal discussions
- Today - there is much more stability regarding tech and platforms which has created opportunity for growth and experimentation for new platforms

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BIGGER PICTURE

Business models are **NOT** stable

- Platform trends continue to be cyclical and new players are constantly testing new models
- Right now - buzz and growth expectation for FAST platforms (Free Ad Supported TV) platforms
- Important to stay in tune with the platform / business model changing waves as they are important potential financing and revenue partners

BIGGER PICTURE

Platform Partners

- Content is still king - even short form series
- Business models and platforms will continue to evolve
- Stability of tech has made it easier for new platforms to launch
- Finding the right platform partner is important to your financing, revenue and other long term goals
- Test audience data and analysis can be important part of finding a platform commitment

CLOSING THOUGHTS & RECAP

Why Short Form Series Matter

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- Create audience engagement & gain market research
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- Also, revenue!

Thank You!

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