



**Women in Production Action Plan
Update for Broadcast Year 2021-2022**

31 January 2023

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INTRODUCTION

1. In December 2018, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (the Commission) hosted an industry summit to discuss concerns regarding the participation and involvement of Canadian women in key creative production positions. At that meeting, the Commission invited senior executives of Canada's largest English- and French-language public and private-sector broadcasters to discuss the potential of developing voluntary action plans tailored to their business and markets that could specifically address this issue and bring lasting solutions.

2. In response to the Commission's request, on 30 September 2019, we filed an action plan with the objective of achieving gender parity in key creative positions by 2025 (Action Plan). That objective applies to English- as well as French-language programming, reflecting our support and involvement in Canadian independent production in both languages. We further agreed to provide the Commission with updates on our Action Plan in subsequent broadcast years. The purpose of the present document is to outline our production projects and initiatives in the 2021-2022 broadcast year.

3. Of note, broadcasters are now also submitting Production Reports to the Commission in accordance with BIB 2019-304.¹ These Production Reports include detailed information about Canadian productions and acquisitions for all of our television services, including the list of production partners, budgets and licence fees for each program. They also contain itemized, per-program information regarding the participation of women in the same key creative production positions highlighted in our Action Plan. The most recent Production Report from Bell Media was filed on 30 November 2022, and already covers all of our program production expenditures for the 2021-2022 broadcast year.

4. There is little doubt that Canadians continue to deal with the ramifications of the global pandemic, and the production sector is no exception. Government lockdowns and other public health measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the industry's ability to deliver on production projects due to increased costs and delays in production schedules. Labour shortages also contributed to delays in production. Notwithstanding these

¹ Broadcasting Information Bulletin CRTC 2019-304, *Production Report to be completed annually by large English- and French-language ownership groups.*

challenges, with internal support, our Original productions were able to continue, and we are proud that many popular shows were able to premiere in 2021-2022.

1.0 OUR GENDER PARITY OBJECTIVE FOR 2025

5. As noted above, our Action Plan has the objective of achieving gender parity in key creative positions by 2025. To assist the Commission in evaluating our progress in meeting this target, our Action Plan provided baseline information for independent productions at Bell Media. Appendix A provides summary data for women in the key creative production roles in each of three categories (Drama, Comedy, and Factual). We have also updated it to include data from the most recent broadcast year. This represents a summary of the information detailed in the Bell Media Production Report filed on 30 November 2022.

6. The Canada Media Fund (CMF) has separately developed initiatives to increase gender balance in key creative positions (which differ from those identified by the Commission). Broadcasters are required to spend a minimum of their CMF performance envelope allocations on projects where at least 40% of the total number of key creative positions are held by women. The thresholds set by the CMF started at 15% of each broadcaster's envelope in 2017, and are now at 50% in 2022.

7. The current wording of our agreements with producers specifically indicate such a funding objective and require producers to use their best efforts to meet the CMF gender balance requirement. In the last CMF English and French-language performance envelopes, we met the required threshold of 50%.

2.0 AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

8. Bell Media already works closely with Canadian producers in an effort to ensure that our Canadian programming includes a variety of creative inputs and points of view. Under the leadership of our senior executives, the Original Programming team continues to be in regular contact with the talented Canadian production community and with writers, directors and actors. They are proactive in their ongoing search to identify new creative talent involved in productions throughout Canada, and review emerging Canadian talent and current programming trends to stimulate new programming and outreach ideas.

9. During the 2021-2022 broadcast year, the number of women in key positions on the Bell Media Quebec team was maintained:

- Suzane Landry is Vice-President, French-Language Content Development, Programming and News;
- Mélanie Bhérer is General Manager, Variety, Lifestyle, Documentary and Digital Content;
- Sophie Parizeau is General Manager, Fiction; and
- Lucie Quenneville is General Manager, Programming Strategies and Acquisitions.

10. This stability underscores our commitment to the career advancement of women to play a leading role in the Canadian television industry, and the production of original, compelling and exceptional content in Quebec.

11. In broadcast year 2021-2022, Bell Media's production executives attended 767 meetings with producers and creators from across the country, and received nearly 891 pitches for project ideas in the English-language market. Members of the Original Programming team attended 42 industry events, and were actively involved in 14 different educational initiatives throughout Canada. During a challenging year to travel, Bell Media production executives continued to engage in industry events, some of which were again in virtual format while others were attended in person.

12. Members of our French-language production team held more than 327 meetings with independent producers, partners and talent from Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. These meetings, still aimed at developing the best projects for Bell Media's French-language television services, were held mainly virtually but a higher number of events were attended in person. Our team also participated in 27 industry events involving independent producers that were held in a virtual format. All those events allowed programming managers to meet the representatives of more than 99 production companies.

13. All of these industry outreach meetings provide us with a unique opportunity to broaden the awareness of this important issue and strengthen our resolve to work together with our industry partners as we strive to meet our gender parity objective for our independent production slate.

14. Outside of production itself, we have also participated in industry initiatives which sought to increase the participation of women in production. As such, we welcome the opportunity to work with other broadcasters, producers, and industry partners to further develop ways to address this issue. Over the course of the year, we were involved in events such as the *Black Women Film Pitch Workshop*, *Women in the Director's Chair Workshop*, and the *Women in Film & Television Meet Up*. We also participated in events from the Alliance des femmes des industries creatives (allia), formerly called the Femme du cinéma, de la télévision et des médias numériques (FCTMN).

3.0 COLLECTIVE INDUSTRY ACTION

15. While we are prepared to work with the Commission and pursue the objective of gender parity by 2025, the reality is that we cannot do it alone. There are practical considerations that effectively impact our ability to develop and implement initiatives in this area.

16. While we commission and work on program projects, independent producers are more directly involved in the production process and have significant operational authority throughout the steps of that process. As a result, while we can set gender parity targets and develop action plans, Canadian independent producers must also become involved, and allocate the appropriate time, attention, and resources that we may need for any number of industry initiatives in the years ahead.

17. We must also work with other broadcasters and digital media companies, now and going forward. It will take a concerted and collaborative industry effort to apply principles and best practices on an industry-wide basis.

4.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

18. As mentioned earlier, Bell Media also submits Production Reports to the Commission, providing detailed information about each of the Canadian productions and acquisitions, for all television services, including specific information regarding the participation of women in a number of key creative production positions. Our most recent Production Report was filed on 30 November 2022 and contains such information for the period of September 2021 to August 2022.

19. On an annual basis, we will continue to provide the Commission with an update of our Action Plan. Such an update will contain production participation information and an overview of the initiatives undertaken during the year to increase the participation of women in our Canadian independent productions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

20. We look forward to continuing our work on this ambitious and important industry initiative over the years to come, and in working with the Commission, and alongside other industry partners, to further expand the contributions of Canadian women in key areas of Canadian programming.

Appendix A
Bell Media - Women in Production
Percentage of Key Roles Held By Women (By Genre)
(as of August 2022)

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE GROUP						
KEY ROLE	DRAMA		COMEDY		FACTUAL	
	BY 19/20 AND 20/21	BY 21/22	BY 19/20 AND 20/21	BY 21/22	BY 19/20 AND 20/21	BY 21/22
Producer	57%; 30%	79%	26%; 38%	28%	45%; 38%	38%
Director	33%; 50%	90%	67%; 14%	46%	15%; 14%	22%
Writer	65%; 60%	73%	17%; 58%	43%	35%; 20%	47%
DOP	0%; 0%	33%	0%; 0%	13%	1%; 4%	15%
Editor	22%; 50%	83%	0%; 2%	29%	14%; 22%	31%
Showrunner	0%; 0%	60%	0%; 20%	43%	0%; 0%	61%
FRENCH-LANGUAGE GROUP						
KEY ROLE	DRAMA		COMEDY		FACTUAL	
	BY 19/20 AND 20/21	BY 21/22	BY 19/20 AND 20/21	BY 21/22	BY 19/20 AND 20/21	BY 21/22
Producer	56%; 40%	44%	50%;49%	48%	61%; 56%	66%
Director	28%; 0%	12%	23%; 20%	27%	23%; 32%	34%
Writer	46%; 50%	54%	21%; 29%	42%	38%; 32%	33%
DOP	0%; 0%	0%	9%; 0%	0%	7%; 5%	3%
Editor	57%; 60%	35%	38%; 37%	30%	52%; 33%	31%

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