Authenticity GUIDELINES

The following questions are reminders of what to do and ask yourself to signify whether a project is authentic. The guide will lead to further reflection and work to ensure authenticity of the content.

- Have you read *Being Seen* and *ImagineNative On-Screen Protocols and Pathways*?

- Have you reviewed the *Being Seen Considerations for Community Engagement Plans*?

- Can you explain your connection to the community(ies) portrayed in the story or explain your plan to ensure authenticity of the story?

- Do you have a plan to ensure diversity within your creative team?

- Do you have a plan to ensure diversity within your production team?

- Have you budgeted money and scheduled time for cultural consultation or community engagement?

- Have you discussed strategies for authentic casting with your director and casting director?

- Have you budgeted for interns or job shadowing to help build the diversity of the talent pool?

- Will you be implementing anti-racism, anti-harassment, anti-oppression training for your production team? Will you be tracking who on your team has previously taken such training?

- Do you have contingency plans should any of your diversity or authenticity plans not be successful? For example, if you cannot find a screenwriter from a specific community, what is your plan to ensure authenticity?

- Have you planned for reflection and possible reporting on the success of your diversity or authenticity plans?

Demographic DATA

Fill out the following form as a way to inform your creative team about the specific location that is the setting for your story and as a tool to support your creative when pitching broadcasters and applying for funding.

Project Name:

[   ]

Location (Is it a specific city or region? If it isn't, what location most resembles it?):

[   ]

Percentage of the population based on Statistics Canada using their ethnocultural categories (link is to 2021 census tables):

Indigenous: [   ] %   Latin American: [   ] %

South Asian: [   ] %   Southeast Asian: [   ] %

Chinese: [   ] %   West Asian: [   ] %

Black: [   ] %   Korean: [   ] %

Filipino: [   ] %   Japanese: [   ] %

Arab: [   ] %

Other factors related to the Project (e.g., age, income, language at home, immigration status, place of birth for recent immigrants, religion):

[   ]

Note that Statistics Canada collects limited demographics on the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and the Persons with Disabilities communities.

[   ]

Share information on the audience behaviour of your racialized demographic based on Being Counted: Canadian Race Based Audience Survey:

[   ]

Guidelines for EVALUATORS

Authenticity and Identity for Applicants

- The following guidelines for evaluators are general concepts that should be adapted to the evaluation criteria of each fund. Consistent with *Being Seen* they address only Black, People of Colour, 2SLGBTQIA+ and Persons with Disabilities identities. For insight into Indigenous eligibility please see the resources developed by the Indigenous Screen Office.

- Many questions on authenticity and identity require a subjective analysis, which is part of the work of evaluation. Evaluators will bring their own lived experience and identity to the analysis. The impact of the analysis on the evaluation will depend on the evaluation grid of the applicable fund.

Track Record for the Applicant Country

- If the company says that it is supporting underrepresented voices, review the projects and teams (staff and those engaged for the project) to assess whether it appears that they are supporting and mentoring underrepresented talent or if there is no evidence to support the statements. Are underrepresented talent only in junior positions or engaged as outside consultants or are they advancing into positions of authority? Companies must be taking active steps towards increasing representation and not making vague statements and/or promising future hires.

- Consider the ownership structure if it is an experienced mainstream company working with less experienced underrepresented talent. There are many potential ownership structures but assess whether the experienced company is providing the less experienced company with mentorship and opportunities to benefit from success or whether the less experienced company is giving up the rights to the project without sufficient tangible or intangible benefit.

- Promises to engage unnamed people from underrepresented communities should not be sufficient to trigger a positive analysis as applicants are generally not held accountable for failing to engage the promised talent. Funds will determine the level of commitment required (contract, letter of commitment, letter of interest, list of identified talent) to support a positive analysis.

- Consider whether key communities or identities are represented in the key creative team or if there is a plan to include external inputs. If a community is significant to the story and characters (e.g., a story about the historic Black community of Halifax), assess more value to coming from that community (e.g., a showrunner from the Black Halifax community) and less to an adjacent community (e.g., a screenwriter from the Black Jamaican-Canadian community in Toronto) or unrelated community (e.g., a white screenwriter who has researched the community or engaged a consultant).

- Assess more value to members of key communities being in positions of authority (e.g., showrunner, co-writer) rather than positions without authority where their perspective could be ignored (e.g., outside consultant).

- For secondary communities and identities, assess the value of having a plan to incorporate perspectives in the creative through research, junior roles, outside consultants or engaging with and listening to performers from those communities.

- Consider whether key communities or identities are represented in the key creative team or if there is a plan to include external inputs. If a community is significant to the story and characters (e.g., a story about the historic Black community of Halifax), assess more value to coming from that community (e.g., a showrunner from the Black Halifax community) and less to an adjacent community (e.g., a screenwriter from the Black Jamaican-Canadian community in Toronto) or unrelated community (e.g., a white screenwriter who has researched the community or engaged a consultant).

- If there is not enough representation from relevant communities due to a shortage of qualified talent, are there plans to mentor or provide learning opportunities to junior talent to help build the talent pool while also accessing their perspectives.

- Are the community members directly aligned with the community they are said to represent or is there anything in their bio to suggest a wider experience. For example, if the story is about a Hindu Indo-Canadian then a Muslim Pakistani-Canadian may not have the necessary lived experience depending on the story and how they relate to it.

- Self-identification is an important concept but keep an eye out for red flags that suggest that the identity may not be accurate. For example, identities that shift depending on the content in different projects or not publicly disclosing identity could be reason to explore further. Identity can be fluid and evolving. Some identities, particularly 2SLGBTQIA+ and Persons with Disabilities, have a history of hiding to avoid bias. Failure to self-identify on a past project does not mean talent cannot now identify as a member of an underrepresented community. However, occasionally talent will claim membership in a community where the ties are tenuous. For those funds where evaluation points are granted based on the participation of underrepresented identities, false or misleading identity could lead to funds being inappropriately allocated.

The Content

- If the story is being told by someone from outside a community, consider whether it is too sensitive for an outside storyteller, even with research or consultants. There is a short list of topics, generally surrounding trauma, that are considered by communities to be off limits to storytellers from outside a community. Examples include slavery and gender transition.

- Other topics might be acceptable for an outside storyteller provided that they demonstrate an awareness of the sensitivities and have a plan to manage them. For example, a story of mental health in immigrant communities would need input both from mental health experts and members of those immigrant communities.

- Does the plan have consultants or subject matter experts engaged early enough in the development to be able to impact the content or is there an appearance that they are to be brought in at a later stage to rubber stamp or fix 'minor' errors. Are they included in the budget and the schedule?

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