

BULLETIN – TELEFILM’S DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR 2010-2011

Telefilm has recently made some changes to development funding that shifts the burden of development to screenwriters. Agents and writers need to be aware of the changes coming, so we’ll try to keep you abreast of these as we work with Telefilm on the issue.

Our current information (and further changes may come) is that as part of the application process they have shifted the funding continuum from “Outline to Treatment” to “Treatment to Draft.” **Please note this is not the same “Treatment” as defined in the IPA, confirmed by Telefilm staff.** After alerting them of the potential for confusion over this term, Telefilm is considering changing the name of this stage to “Story Outline”. In any case **Writers should not be doing this stage on spec.** (See more below under “Stages Funded” about what “Treatment” means in the Telefilm process.) WGC members cannot work without a contract, and remember that contract is with a producer, not Telefilm, and it’s the producer’s job to raise the money to fund this stage in order to make their application.

Stages funded:

Telefilm used to fund an “Outline to Treatment” stage. Now they are funding “Treatment to Draft”.

To clarify, the WGC’s is defined in Article 260 of the IPA as a scene-by-scene breakdown, in 20,000 words or less. Additionally, this is a stage worth a minimum of \$20,074.

Telefilm is looking for a Treatment/Story Outline with a minimum of 10 pages. This stage corresponds to the Development Proposal in Article A212 of the IPA, which requires a maximum of 10 pages and presents the basic story elements and general description of the characters for the feature.

WGC members should not be writing this Treatment/Story Outline stage on spec.

This writing is a service that requires a contract. Development Proposals are found under the IPA in Article B201. The fee for a Development Proposal is entirely negotiable; there is no minimum under the IPA. Think about the time it will take to write a Development Proposal for a feature film and charge accordingly. In order to get Insurance and Retirement on this fee it must be an IPA contract.

While there may not be a Screenplay contract in place at the time the Story Outline/Development Proposal is contracted, remember that if and when a full Screenplay is contracted, if a contract requires more than a Treatment (per the IPA definition), First and Second Draft and Polish, there must be an additional fee for any additional stage. (That additional stage fee can be negotiable.)

Funding amounts:

Telefilm is now allotting \$80,000 as a maximum overall amount per project for the script. This is broken down as:

\$30,000 for the first stage, Treatment/Story Outline to Draft

\$25,000 for the second stage, Second Draft

\$25,000 for an additional draft

Our information is that under the new guidelines, producers can only charge fees and overhead against these development amounts.

Overscale Script Fees

Overscale Script Fees are always subject to negotiation between the producer and the writer. Under the new guidelines, Telefilm will not approve contracts with overscale script fees unless there is third party financing, or in exceptional circumstances, as determined by Telefilm Canada. Telefilm's new guidelines are up on their website at:

http://www.telefilm.gc.ca/03/311.asp?doc_id=126&fond_id=1

The WGC will continue to work with Telefilm to ensure that writers are properly financed at the development stage.

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