



# Understanding the International Landscape for Canadian Documentaries: Treaty Coproduction, Promotion and Sales

BY: Maria De Rosa and Marilyn Burgess  
FOR: Documentary Organization of Canada

communications  
**mdr**

**DOC**  
DOCUMENTARY  
ORGANIZATION OF CANADA  
DOCUMENTARISTES  
DU CANADA

Funded by the Government of Canada  
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Funding for this study was  
provided by Ontario Creates



Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Ontario Creates, the Rogers Group of Funds, the CMPA, or the Government of Canada. The funders, the Government of Canada and their agencies, and the CMPA are in no way bound by the recommendations contained in this document.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

<b>I. General Portrait of Trends in Canadian Documentary Treaty Coproduction and International Sales of Canadian Independent Documentaries</b>	<b>4</b>
1. Key Trends in International Treaty Documentary Coproductions	4
2. Key Trends in International Sales of Canadian Independent Documentaries	6
3. Summary Observations	8
<b>II. Perspectives on Opportunities, Challenges and Lessons Learned From International Coproduction of Canadian Documentaries</b>	<b>9</b>
1. Opportunities and Challenges	9
2. Lessons Learned from International Documentary Coproductions	11
3. Summary Observations	
<b>III. Perspectives on Opportunities and Challenges For the International Promotion and Sale of Canadian Independent Documentaries</b>	<b>16</b>
1. Opportunities and Challenges	16
2. Summary Observations	19
<b>IV. Measures to Support International Coproduction, Promotion and Sales of Documentaries in Selected Jurisdictions</b>	<b>20</b>
1. Measures to Support Greater International Coproduction	20
2. Measures to Encourage International Promotion and Sales	21
3. Summary Observations	22
<b>V. Conclusion and Future Directions</b>	<b>23</b>
1. Concluding Overview	23
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Annex 1: Selected Bibliography</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Annex 2: List of Interviewees</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Annex 3: Initiatives to Support International Coproduction, Promotion and Sales in Selected Jurisdictions</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Annex 4: Case Studies of International Documentary Coproductions Undertaken by Canadian Producers</b>	<b>34</b>



# INTRODUCTION

## 1. OVERALL CONTEXT AND GOALS OF THE STUDY

The international market presents opportunities for Canadian documentary producers to coproduce, promote and sell their works. When a television program or film is coproduced with an international partner under the framework of an international coproduction treaty, it allows producers to pool financial, creative and technical resources with international peers. An international treaty coproduction typically enables a higher overall production budget and ensures a release in the territories of the coproducing partners. Better-financed films or television programs are more exportable, and benefit from a higher proportion of international pre-sales.

Within this context, Communications MDR was engaged to conduct a study aimed at the following:

- ▶ to identify international financing, treaty coproduction and distribution/sales opportunities and challenges for Canadian independent documentaries; and
- ▶ to provide market and sector intelligence that will support the development of a high-level approach aimed at enhancing international financing and treaty coproduction opportunities; and international promotion, and sales of Canadian independent documentaries; thereby encouraging the growth of the Canadian documentary production sector.

## 2. Approach and Methodology

The consultants conducted an analysis of available data on trends in the financing of official Canadian documentary treaty coproductions. An official treaty coproduction is a production certified under the framework of an international coproduction treaty between Canada and

other jurisdictions. For these analyses, the consultants relied on data provided by CAVCO, the Canada Media Fund and Telefilm Canada, as presented in recent studies on the independent film and television sector in Canada, and on a directory of certified treaty coproductions published on the website of Telefilm Canada. Telefilm Canada is responsible for evaluating and recommending projects likely to be recognized by the Department of Canadian Heritage as audiovisual treaty coproductions.

The data analysis extended to trends in international sales of certified Canadian independent documentaries (domestic productions and treaty coproductions). This analysis examined both foreign pre-sales and sales of completed productions.

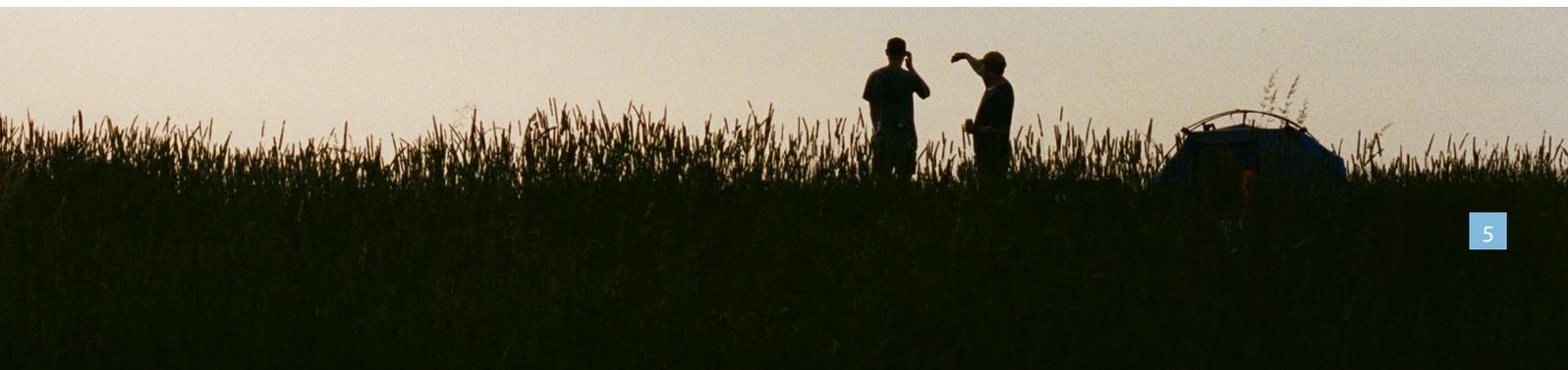
The consultants conducted a review of literature to identify approaches to encouraging international coproduction, promotion and sales in selected jurisdictions. These included the United Kingdom (UK), France, Germany, Denmark and Australia. Annex 1 provides a selected bibliography and Annex 3 presents the findings of the review of measures taken in selected international jurisdictions to encourage greater international treaty coproduction, promotion and sales of documentaries.

Twenty-eight in-depth interviews were conducted with Canadian documentary producers experienced in international coproduction, international distributors and sales agents, representatives of international festivals, markets, and promotional agencies. Annex 2 provides a list of interviewees. The study included six case studies of international Canadian documentary coproductions. Annex 4 contains the case studies. The goal of the case studies was to identify lessons learned for coproducing in the international market.

### Scope and Limitations

The directory of treaty coproductions published by Telefilm Canada was limited to partner countries and did not provide financial information.

Trends with respect to certified co-ventures were outside the scope of the study





### 3. Structure of This Report

This report is divided into five sections as follows:

**Section I** provides a general portrait of trends in Canadian documentary treaty coproduction and foreign sales of Canadian independent documentaries;

**Section II** examines the perspectives of stakeholders on opportunities and challenges in undertaking official treaty documentary coproductions and the lessons learned from case studies of international coproductions undertaken by Canadian producers;

**Section III** describes the perspectives of stakeholders interviewed for this report on the opportunities and challenges of promoting and selling Canadian independent documentaries in international markets;

**Section IV** describes the measures developed in selected international jurisdictions to encourage greater international coproduction, promotion and sales of documentaries; and

**Section V** provides a summary of findings and conclusion.

## I. General Portrait of Trends in Canadian Documentary Treaty Coproduction and International Sales of Canadian Independent Documentaries

This section provides a general portrait of trends in the international treaty coproduction of documentaries by Canadian producers, in terms of how many are made, with which countries and the financing brought to projects by foreign partners. This section then goes on to examine trends in the sale of Canadian independent documentaries (domestic productions and treaty coproductions) in foreign markets, including foreign pre-sales and sales of completed productions.

### 1. Key Trends in International Treaty Documentary Coproductions

International treaty coproduction is an important vehicle that allows Canadian documentary producers to combine creative, technical and financial resources with foreign partners to make larger budget documentaries destined for both domestic and international markets. Each coproduction treaty sets minimum standards for financial participation, creative participation and the circumstances under which “third party” countries can be involved in the production.

## 1.1 Ninety-Nine Treaty Documentary Coproductions from 2015 to 2019

In the five years from 2015 to 2019, Canadian companies produced a total of 99 documentaries as official treaty coproductions. A total of 19 treaty coproductions were feature documentary films, and 80 were television documentaries, including 35 series and 45 one-off documentaries.

The most important coproducing partner countries for Canadian international treaty documentaries are France and the UK. There were 32 bi-partite and 3 tri-partite coproductions with France, and 29 bi-partite coproductions with the UK.

Other countries that Canadian documentaries have coproduced with are Germany and Israel. There were two tri-partite treaty coproductions with France, Germany, Israel and Switzerland, respectively.

Figure 1 shows the number of treaty coproductions by country and by format.



**Figure 1:** Total Number of Official Treaty Documentary Film and Television Productions, by Partner Country, and by Format, 2015-2019

Coproducing Countries	Feature Film	TV One-off	TV Series	Total
France	1	16	15	32
United Kingdom	1	13	15	29
Germany	3	3	1	7
Israel	4	3		7
Australia	1	2	1	4
Switzerland	2	1		3
Italy	1	1		2
Brazil			1	1
Chile		1		1
Denmark	1			1
France, Israel*			1	1
France, Switzerland*		1		1
Germany, Austria*		1		1
Germany, France*		1		1
Greece		1		1
Ireland	1			1
Israel, Switzerland		1		1
Japan	1			1
Mexico	1			1
New Zealand			1	1
South Africa	1			1
Spain	1			1
Grand Total	19	45	35	99

Source: Coproduction Database of Telefilm Canada published on Telefilm's website. \*Indicates a tri-partite treaty coproduction.

# 1.2

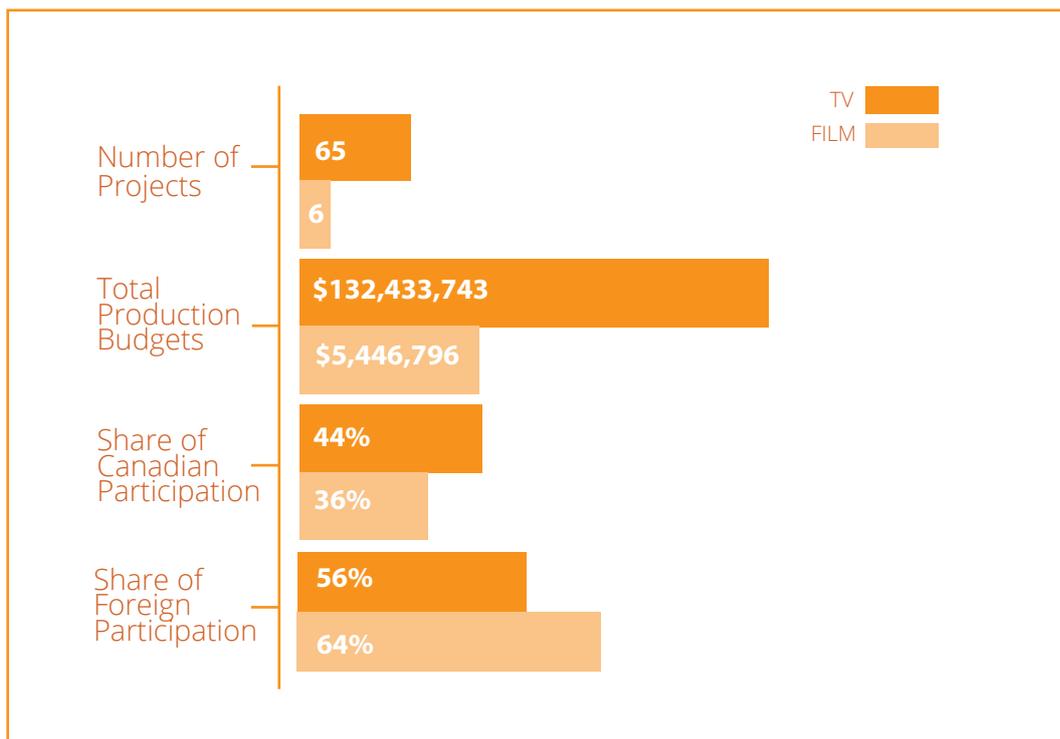
## Foreign Participation Accounts for Majority of Financing in Documentary

The most recent profile of the independent documentary production sector, shows that the foreign financial participation in the overall production budgets (Canadian and foreign production costs combined) of treaty documentary coproductions accounts for over 50% to overall production budgets in the years from

2012-2013 to 2016-2017.

In the English-language market, foreign participation in the financing of certified documentary treaty television coproductions accounted for 56% of total overall budgets. Foreign participation accounted for 64% of total overall budgets in treaty coproductions of English-language theatrical documentary films. (See Figure 2.)

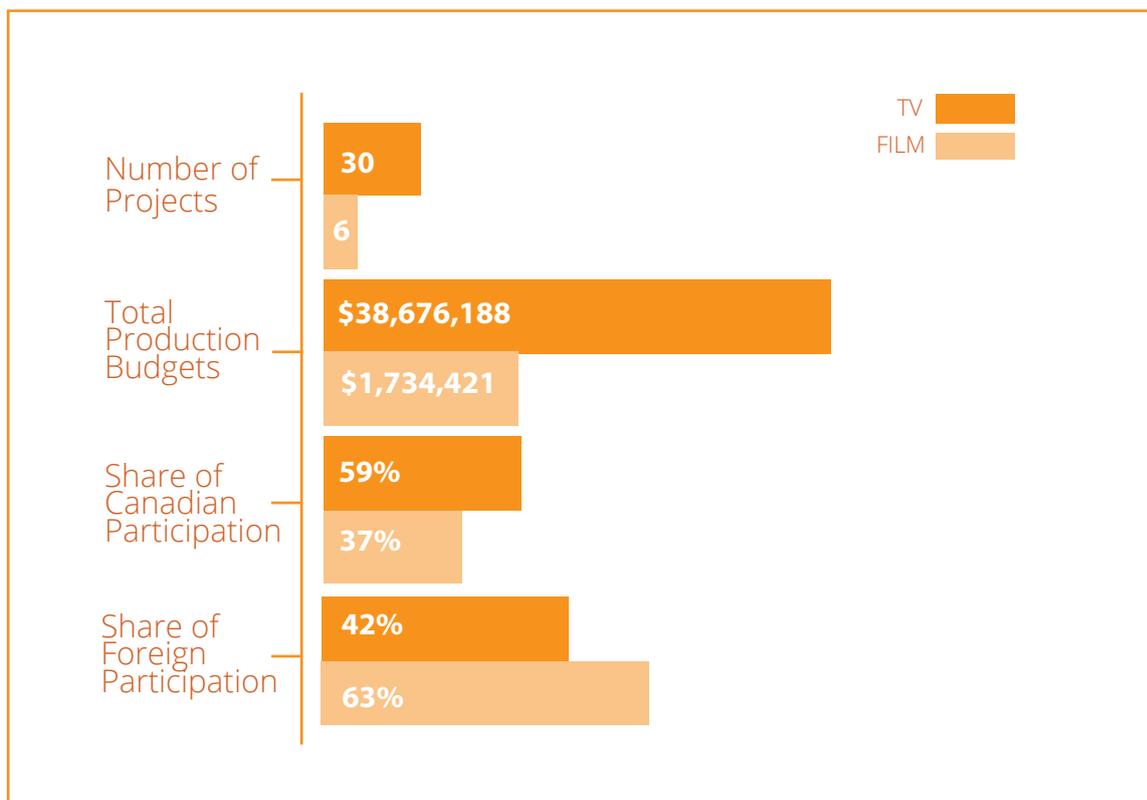
**Figure 2:** Share of Canadian and Foreign Participation in English-language Independent Documentary Treaty Coproductions, 2012-2013 to 2016-2017



Source: CAVCO

Over the same period, foreign participation in the financing of French-language documentary treaty television coproductions accounted for 42% of total overall budgets (Canadian and foreign production costs combined). Foreign financial participation accounted for 63% of total overall budgets of French-language theatrical documentary film treaty coproductions. (See Figure 3.)

**Figure 3:** Share of Canadian and Foreign Participation in French-language Independent Documentary Treaty Coproductions, 2012-2013 to 2016-2017



\*Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Source: CAVCO



## 2. Key Trends in International Sales of Canadian Independent Documentaries

Trends in foreign sales provide clear evidence of international demand for Canadian independent documentaries (domestic productions and treaty coproductions).

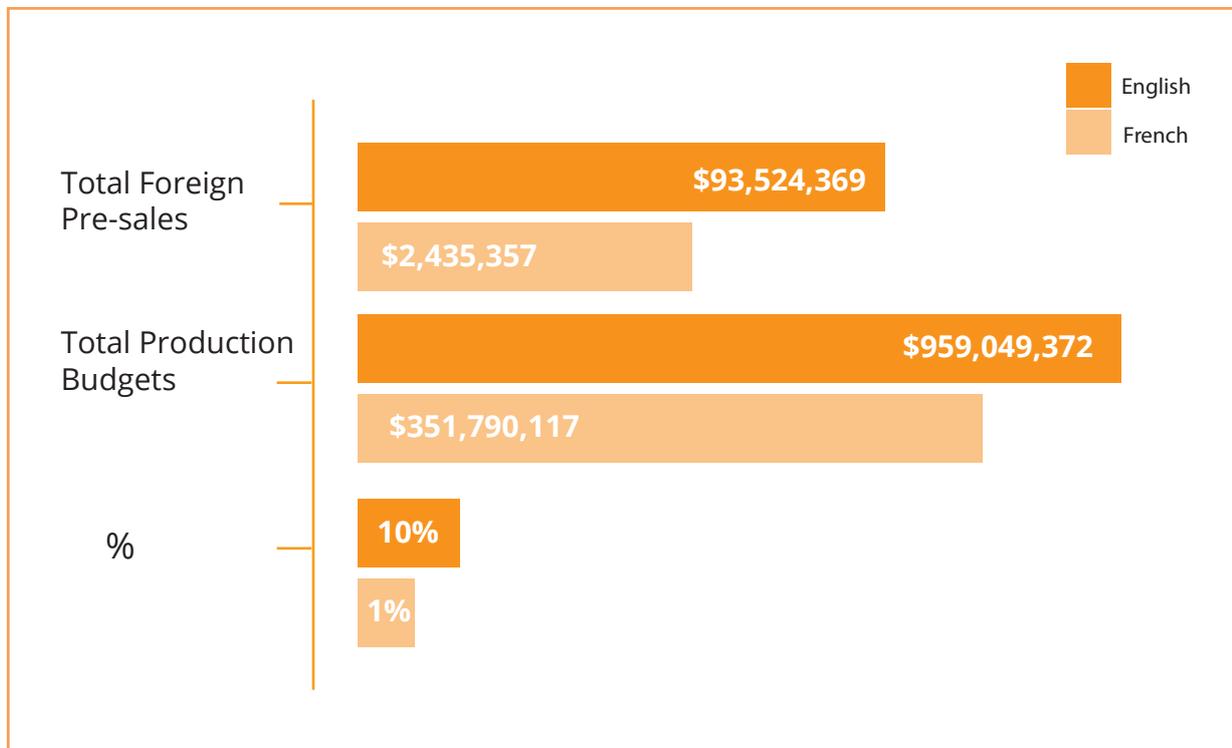
### 2.1

#### Ninety-Six Million Dollars in Foreign Pre-sales of Canadian Documentary Productions from 2012-2013 to 2016-2017

As reported in the most recent economic profile of the documentary production sector, Canadian independent documentaries (domestic and treaty coproduction) attracted approximately \$96 million in foreign pre-sales, in the five-year period from 2012-2013 to 2016-2017. (See Figure 4.)

Foreign pre-sales are important to the financing of Canadian independent documentary productions in both language markets, accounting for 7% of all production financing. A higher percentage of English-language production budgets can be financed through foreign pre-sales, due to the dynamics of the different language markets.

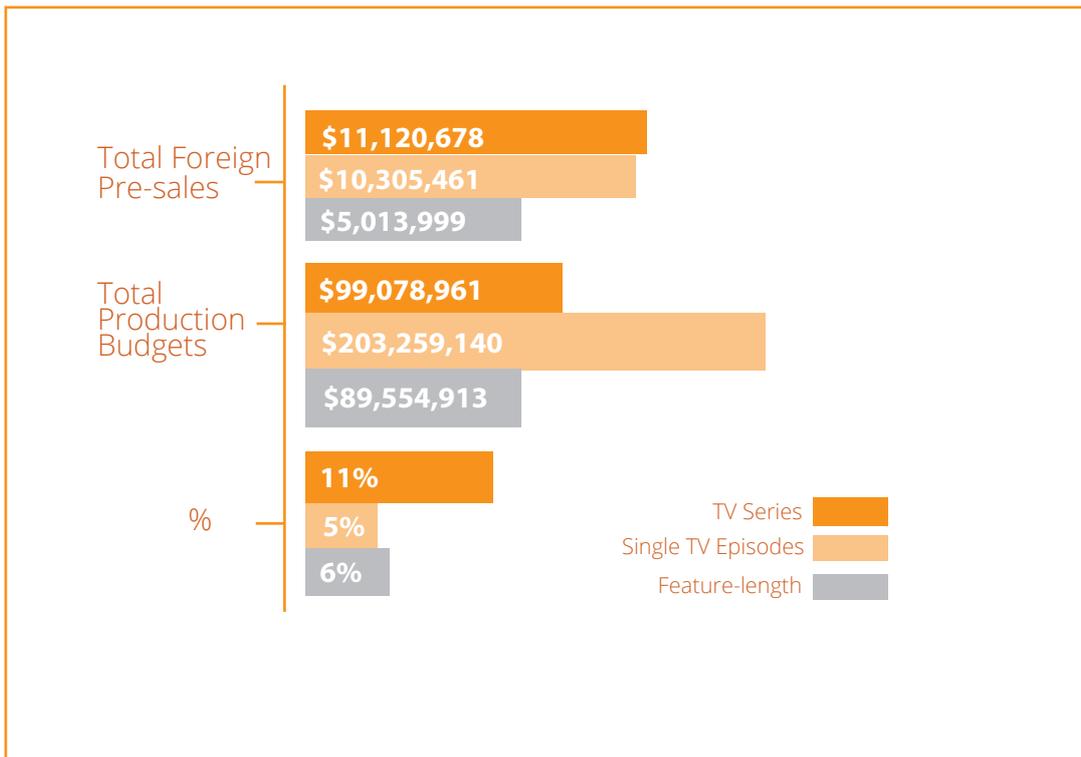
**Figure 4:** Total Foreign Pre-sales of Documentaries, All Formats, by Language, 2012-2013 to 2016-2017



Source: CAVCO

As is shown in Figure 5, in the English-language market, foreign pre-sales and distribution advances accounted for 11% of total documentaries series production budgets and 5% of total budgets of single documentary episodes (“one-offs”). Foreign pre-sales and distribution advances accounted for 6% of total financing of feature-length documentaries.

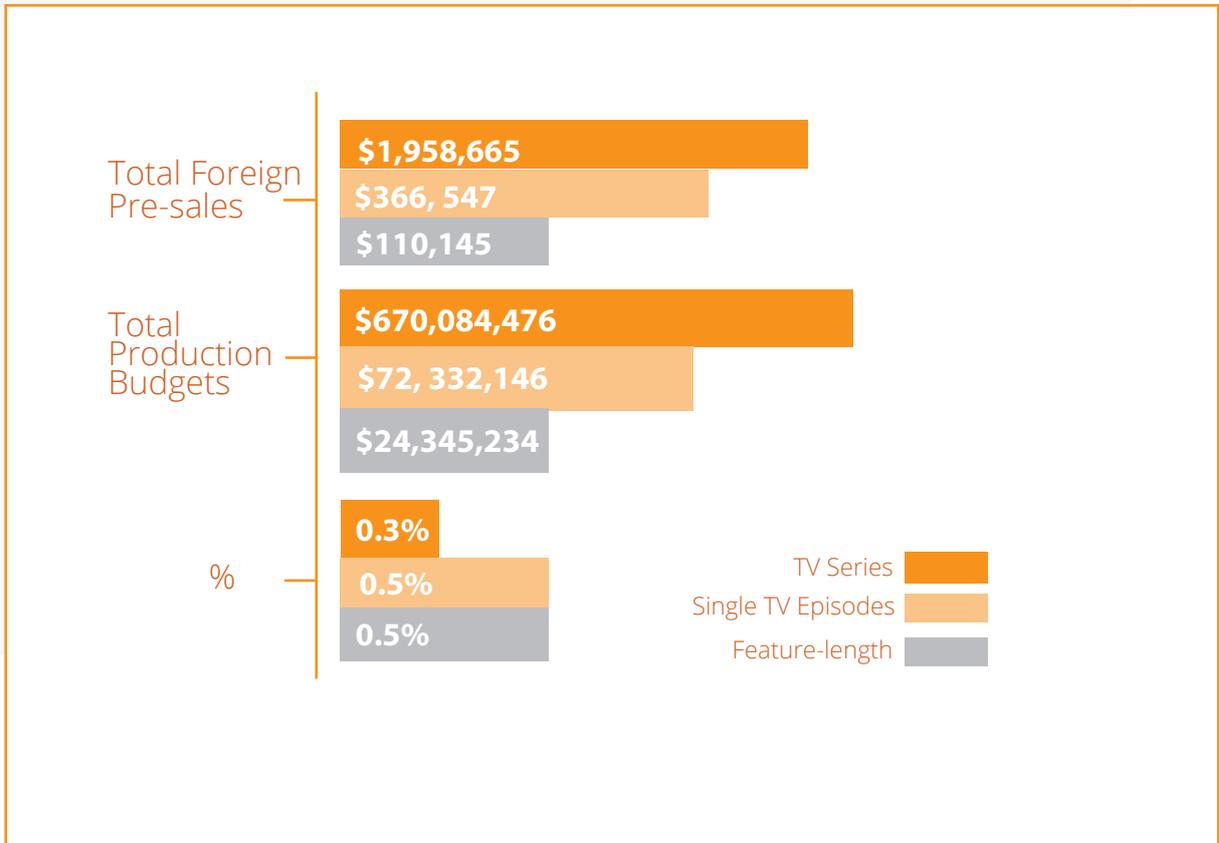
**Figure 5:** Foreign Pre-sales of English-language Documentaries, 2012-2013 to 2016-2017



Source: CAVCO

In the French-language market, foreign pre-sales and distribution advances accounted for 0.3% of total documentaries series production budgets and 0.5% of total budgets of single documentary episodes (“one-offs”). Foreign pre-sales and distribution advances accounted for 0.5% of total financing of feature-length documentaries. (See Figure 6.)

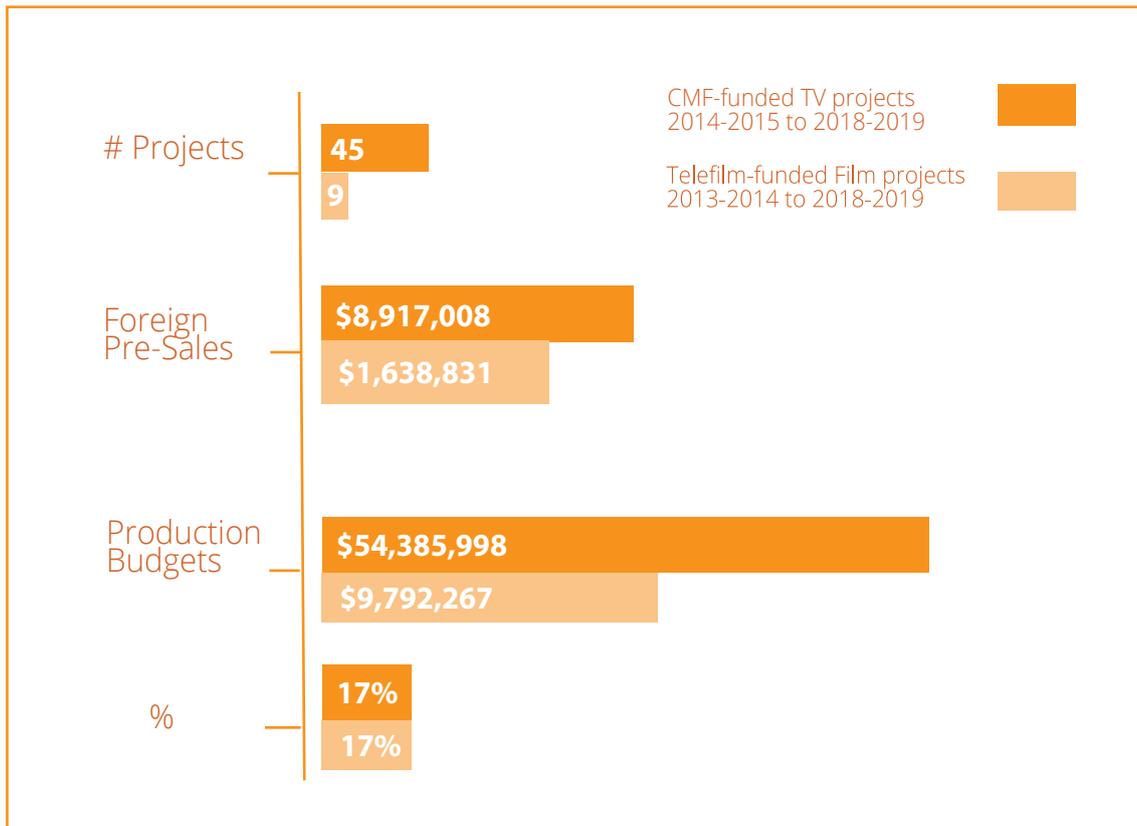
**Figure 6:** Foreign Pre-sales of French-language Documentaries, 2012-2013 to 2016-2017



Source: CAVCO

Foreign pre-sales account for a higher proportion of total production financing in projects supported by the Canada Media Fund (CMF) and Telefilm Canada, at 17%, respectively. As reported in a recent study on exports of Canadian film and television productions, Canadian documentary television projects funded by the Canada Media Fund generated a total of \$8.9M in foreign pre-sales over the years from 2014-2015 to 2018-2019. From 2013-2014 to 2018-2019, 9 theatrical documentary projects funded by Telefilm Canada generated \$1.6 M in foreign pre-sales. (See Figure 7.)

**Figure 7:** Foreign Pre-Sales of Documentaries Funded by the CMF and Telefilm Canada, by National Funder, 2013 - 2019



Source: CAVCO

## 2.2

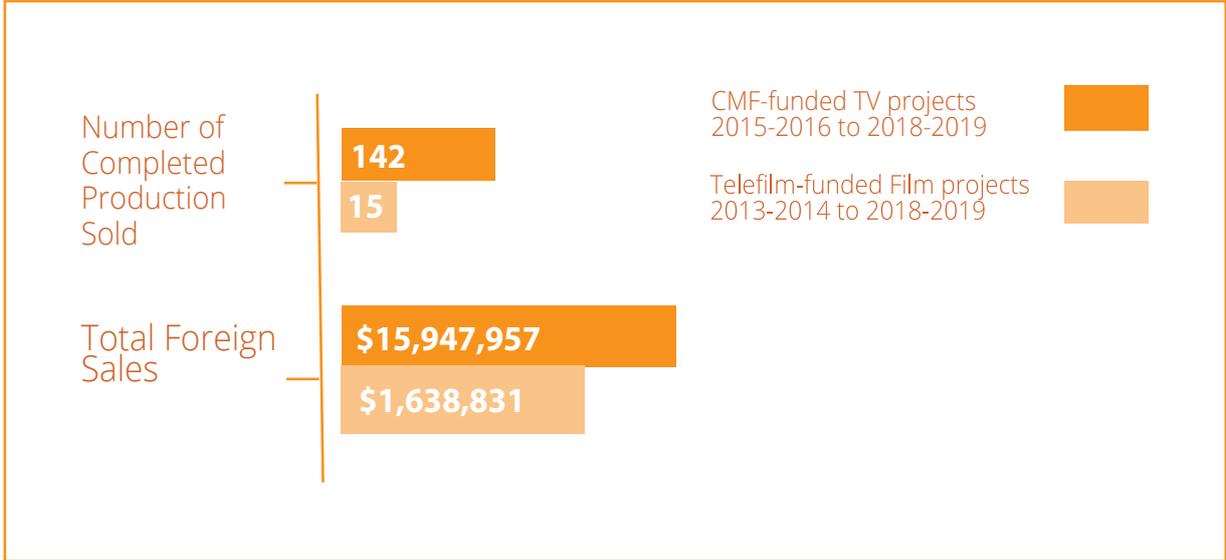
### Seventeen Million Dollars in Foreign Sales of Completed Documentaries

Projects funded by the Canada Media Fund and Telefilm Canada generate sales in international markets after the production is completed, which provide an important stream of revenues to production companies, as these sales are not used to finance the production.

In the five years from 2015-2016 to 2018-2019, 142 completed documentary productions supported by the CMF generated foreign sales of \$15.9 million.

In the years from 2013-2014 to 2018-2019, a total of 15 completed Canadian theatrical documentary productions funded by Telefilm Canada generated foreign sales of \$1.6 million. (See Figure 8.)

**Figure 8:** Foreign Sales of Documentaries, by National Funder, 2013 - 2019



Source: CAVCO



## ▶ 3. Summary Observations

It is clear from trends in international treaty coproduction and sales of Canadian independent documentaries, that international markets are important to this sector. In the five years from 2015 to 2019, 99 Canadian independent documentaries were produced under the framework of an official coproduction treaty. The vast majority, 80%, were television projects. The majority of independent documentary coproductions were undertaken with France and the UK, each accounting for about 30% of the total number of independent documentary coproductions.

International treaty coproductions and foreign sales are significant sources of financing for the production of Canadian independent documentaries, and provide a stream of revenues for Canadian production companies.

Foreign financing contributed by international coproducing partners accounts for over 50% of total production financing of treaty documentary coproductions, allowing higher overall production budgets (Canadian and foreign combined).

Pre-sales of Canadian independent documentaries are another indicator of demand for Canadian documentaries from international buyers, and represent an important source of production financing. From 2012-2013 to 2016-2017, Canadian independent documentary productions attracted almost \$96 million in pre-sales. It is easier to finance English-language productions through foreign pre-sales. Foreign sales of completed film and television productions examined in similar periods attracted a total of \$17 million.

## II. Perspectives on Opportunities, Challenges and Lessons Learned From International Coproduction of Canadian Documentaries

This section presents the perspectives of stakeholders interviewed for this study on the challenges and opportunities with respect to the international coproduction of Canadian documentaries. It also presents the lessons learned from case studies of international coproductions undertaken by Canadian documentary producers.

### 1. Opportunities and Challenges



#### 1.1 Larger-Budget Productions and Creative Collaboration

International treaty coproductions provide numerous opportunities for Canadian documentary productions, including access to foreign buyers, tax credits and public funds, locations, talent and expertise. Canadian producers interviewed for this study described how entering into international treaty coproductions allowed them to produce with larger overall production budgets and reach greater audiences, as well as providing opportunities to work with international talent and subject matter.

Stakeholders pointed to the funding available from Canadian federal and provincial tax credits, federal and provincial funders and broadcasters, which can help attract international partners. However, some producers interviewed for this study noted that there is a need to strongly encourage Canadian

broadcasters and public funders to support Canadian documentary films that will resonate in the international marketplace.

In spite of the heavier administration burden and cost, treaty coproduction on higher budget series provides the opportunity for future revenues that can make a company more sustainable. Producers also pointed to new business opportunities that had arisen for them from relationships established through international coproduction.

For some producers interviewed, it is the creative fit between the two production companies that is the most important consideration when embarking on an international coproduction. Higher budgets and pooled talent can lead to greater commercial and creative impact.



## 1.2

### International Demand for Compelling Documentary Stories

Our interviews with representatives of international markets and festivals, distributors and sales agents stated that, based on their experience, there is international demand for compelling documentary stories. One of the challenges noted by Canadian producers is the lack of demand for compelling stories with more international appeal on the part of Canadian broadcasters. It was pointed out that Canadian broadcasters tend to favour Canadian documentaries with a Canadian focus and are generally averse to sub-titled content, which can limit coproduction opportunities.

This finding is supported by the case studies undertaken for this report. (See Annex 4.) The projects featured in the case studies are based on subject matter with broad appeal, ranging from global social and political issues, to science and nature themed docs. This is consistent with findings from other export studies on the types of documentary subjects sought by international buyers.

## 1.3

### Opportunities in International Jurisdictions

Canadian producers interviewed for this study noted their success with undertaking international coproductions with France, Germany, Switzerland, Israel and the UK.

Canadian producers interviewed for this report described gaining access to substantial licence fees from foreign broadcasters and distribution rights as two of the benefits of undertaking treaty coproductions. Public broadcasters in countries such as France and Germany were said to be interested in licensing international treaty coproductions by independent documentary producers. Interviewees noted that international partners with local relationships are often better positioned to access buyers in their respective jurisdictions.

Canadian documentaries were said to be well regarded in international markets. Some producers interviewed were of the view that available funding in Canada facilitates coproduction by making Canadian projects attractive from a financial perspective. Also attractive to foreign partners was said to be the deep talent in documentary production that exists in Canada.

As Canada does not have an international coproduction treaty with the United States (US), a different approach is taken by producers working with American partners. Stakeholders noted that there are opportunities to make substantial pre-sales to US broadcasters. As noted by interviewees, the US is an important market for films by Black directors, featuring predominantly Black interviewees and telling stories that resonate within Black communities. Some of these films will have greater success in the US than in Canada or Europe.

Canadian documentary projects involving US partners may be structured as official co-ventures.. Official co-ventures allow for some access to Canadian sources of public funding and may incentivize Canadian broadcasters to offer a higher licence fee. However, as noted by one producer, partnerships with the US can be challenging. This is primarily due to the absence of any coproduction treaty.

# 1.4

## Administrative Complexity and Costliness of Compliance

International treaty coproductions are recognized as complex to structure, and can represent a significant administrative burden on producers. In order to qualify as a national work in all countries that are party to a treaty coproduction, a project must fulfil the financial, technical and artistic requirements in each jurisdiction as set out under the specific treaty framework or frameworks, in the case of multi-party coproductions. A critical difficulty with putting together international treaty coproductions is the need to balance Canadian expenditures and the involvement of Canadian creative with the value of Canadian investment in the production. To these requirements are added the specific criteria associated with each source of public funding. Balancing these requirements necessitates accessing relevant expertise to avoid inadvertently disqualifying a production.

It was noted by stakeholders that many smaller production companies, as well as many BIPOC-led companies regardless of their size, often have less resources at their disposal and less industry support to undertake large budget films or television series that would benefit from international coproduction.

There are cases where producers may decide not to enter into a treaty coproduction. For example, for some documentary projects, requirements such as spending thresholds and/or the attachment of key creative personnel from the partner countries, may be too restrictive. For others, the requirement to submit applications for treaty certification 30 days in advance of the start of principal photography may disqualify their projects. It was noted that this rule is better suited to production in genres other than documentary. Documentaries may also require more flexibility with respect to production schedules than the treaties allow.

As noted in the interviews, the elevated level of compliance associated with international treaty coproductions makes these projects more time consuming and they may take longer to close. Most producers interviewed for this report indicated that under a certain budget, typically identified as one million dollars, the cost and effort associated with complying with treaty requirements may not be justified.

# 2.

## Lessons Learned from International Documentary Coproductions



Our case study analysis of successful international documentary coproductions allows us to identify lessons learned.



## 2.1

### Overview of Projects Case Studied

Figure 9 provides a summary overview of the projects examined in the case studies. Two projects examined are being co-developed internationally, while a third is a coproduction for which production is not yet completed. Official treaty coproductions examined were evenly divided between minority and majority coproductions (3 each), while one project was a collaboration with the US outside of any treaty framework. Four of the projects were feature-length documentaries, one was a mini-series and one was a single television episode.

Four projects involve France as the coproducing partner country. Ireland, South Africa and the US are involved in one project each. Four of the seven projects examined are being produced with a major broadcast license from ARTE France. In terms of domestic broadcasters, three of the projects examined have licenses from CBC, another has a Radio Canada license. Three of the projects examined in the case studies involved licenses from a private broadcaster, including Bell Media in Canada, eTV in South Africa and RMC Découverte in France.

The documentaries examined also have sizeable budgets and reach, thanks to their status as international coproductions. All of the projects examined have total production budgets of over \$1M (all countries and all episodes). Four projects are represented by international distributors.

Projects featured in the case study analysis were presented at major international festivals including at the Sundance Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, Hot Docs, Sheffield Doc/Fest and the Cannes Marché du Doc. Amongst the awards garnered by featured projects were prestigious prizes such as the Hot Docs Special Jury Prize for Canadian Feature Documentary, the Jackson Wild Media Award for Best Conservation Film, and the Trophée Or at the 2019 Deauville Green Awards (in the category of Handicap, Diversity, Solidarity). Featured projects were also nominated for prestigious awards, including for the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance, the Truth Award at the Dokufest International Documentary and Short Film Festival, and Best Science in Nature Film award at the Jackson Wild Media Awards.

The pandemic disrupted planned promotion and marketing activities for one film's festival tour, and delayed the release of another film. As film festivals turned to virtual programming and producers were unable to travel to them, planned promotional activities had to be cancelled. Illness due to COVID-19 delayed the post-production timeline of another project.



**Detailed case studies can be found in Annex 4 of this study.**



**Figure 9:** Summary Overview of Case Studies

Co- Production Companies	Title	Media	Pro-duction budget	Majority / Minority	Partner Counties	Major Broadcaster Distributor	
						Domestic	Foreign
EyeSteel-Film / Storyscope	Influence (2020)	Feature length	\$1.3 M	Minority	South Africa	CBC	ARTE, eTV, Cinetic Media
Intuitive Pictures/ Point du Jour	The Gig is Up: A Very Human Tech Doc (in PROD)	Feature length	\$1.2 M	Minority	France	CBC	ARTE Point du Jour International
Hungry Eyes Media/ Hispaniola Productions/ Rada Film Group/NFB	Stateless (2020)	Feature length	\$1.1 M	Non-treaty	US	NFB	PBS
Ideacom International/ Bonne Pioche	Human +: The Future of our Senses (2019)	5-Part TV Mini Series	\$2.2 M	Majority	France	ICI Explora, ICI RDI TVO AMITV AMI Télé	RMC Découverte, Terranoa
Merit Motion Pictures/ Films à Cinq	Reef Rescue (2020)	Single TV episode	\$1.6 M	Majority	France	CBC	ARTE, Terra Mater
Screen Siren Pictures/ Wildfire	Children of the Church (in DEV)	Feature length		Minority	Ireland		
Films/Films à Cinq	The Concert That Broke Up the Beatles (in DEV)	Feature length	\$1.5 M	Majority	France	Bell Media	ARTE

## 2.2

### Lessons Learned from the Case Studies

#### 2.2.1 Attend International Markets and Festivals to Seize Opportunities

The case studies reveal the critical importance of attending international markets and festivals in order to identify new opportunities and strengthen business networks. EyeSteelFilm seeks partnerships with filmmakers who can benefit from their expertise and who can help them elevate their films to a higher standard for festivals and theatrical distribution, and notes that for a creative collaboration, it is necessary to first meet a potential partner in person.

Merit Motion Pictures was able to identify an opportunity for partnering with Vulcan Productions on a trip to the World Congress of Science and Factual programmer. The fact that the producer had met the head of development at Vulcan a year prior facilitated the partnership. A few months later, Vulcan made a significant investment in the production. Hungry Eyes Media noted that visibility at festivals is essential to drive sales. The North American festival circuit provides important opportunities for films about Black communi-

#### 2.2.2

#### Develop Capacity to Access Relevant Expertise

It is clear from the case studies that successful international coproductions benefit from access to specialized knowledge and expertise. Being able to coproduce successfully requires having enough, and the right, people in the company to handle the complexity of coproduction, as was noted by Intuitive Pictures.

Coproductions benefit from the deep knowledge and understanding that the partners have of their respective markets. Producers also noted the greater facility of working with partners whose knowledge extends to both partner jurisdictions. As described in the case studies, two Canadian producers, Merit Motion Pictures and Screen Siren Pictures, worked with French coproduction partner

Films à Cinq, which is headed by a Canadian producer (Sally Blake). Her familiarity with both the Canadian and French systems was said to be crucial to knowing how best to structure the Canada-France treaty coproduction.

As producers amass experience, their capacity to undertake higher value projects through treaty coproductions increases. Idéacom, which has amassed significant expertise in navigating coproduction requirements, has made long-term investments in training staff in its coproduction partners company, ensuring highly qualified collaborating producers, and enhancing its capacity to undertake treaty coproductions.

#### 2.2.3

#### Establish Relationships of Trust

The case studies developed for this report point to the critical importance of having established international business relationships based on trust, to successfully undertake an international treaty coproduction. Solid business relationships, some of them longstand-

ing, are evident in all of the case studies. Screen Siren Pictures noted the positive impact that participating in international missions had had on its development of lasting business relationships.

The case studies developed for this report point to the critical importance of having established international business relationships based on trust, to successfully undertake an international treaty coproduction. Solid business relationships, some of them long-standing, are evident in all of the case studies. Screen Siren Pictures noted the positive impact that participating in international missions had had on its development of lasting business relationships.

Long-standing relationships facilitate coproduction by fostering trust between partners and in the best cases, creative affinities. Coproducing with partners abroad allows Intuitive Pictures to take on higher budget documentaries, while also benefiting creatively. Intuitive Pictures also benefits from long-term relationships with regular collaborators in Canada, including crew members and directors they have worked with before and some of the finest post-production studios in the country which are based in Montreal.

Long-standing and strong relationships developed over more than two decades with its partners, producers, distributors and broadcasters in Canada and France assure that Idéacom International can seize opportunities that arise in the international market. French distributor Terranoa brought the project Human + to the company's attention. Idéacom was able to rely on its existing relationship with Bonne Pioche to enter into a coproduction arrangement.

Coproductions, especially across multiple time zones, can be challenging from a communications perspective. Anything that can be done to help companies develop their international networks will encourage greater coproduction.

## 2.2.4

### Tailor the Model of Collaboration to the Project

It is clear from the case studies developed for this report that the path of collaboration taken by each project is unique. The case studies provide examples of projects where producers have successfully tailored the model of collaboration to the project and structured their partnerships to fit the needs of the project. In some cases, producers are working through majority or minority treaty coproduction arrangements. Hungry Eyes Media

worked with a US partner on a non-treaty coproduction, which accessed a major broadcast licence from the US market. EyeSteelFilm noted that, depending on the project, it may provide production services without entering into an agreement governed by a coproduction treaty.

## 3. Summary Observations

There are opportunities and challenges associated with undertaking international treaty coproductions. Amongst the opportunities are that treaty coproductions enable the financing of higher budget productions and facilitate greater creative collaboration. With higher budgets and pooled creative input, treaty coproductions have increased quality and can reach greater audiences.

There is an international market for compelling documentary stories that resonate widely with audiences in multiple jurisdictions. Canadian producers are finding opportunities to work within treaty coproduction frameworks with partners in France, Germany, Switzerland, Israel and the UK, amongst others.

Treaty coproductions represent an administrative burden on Canadian producers. For smaller companies, compliance requirements may create a barrier, discouraging their participation in these complex undertakings.

The case studies of Canadian documentary coproductions provide a number of lessons learned. These include: the important role played by international markets and festivals in allowing Canadian independent documentary producers to identify new opportunities and expand their business networks; the im-

portance of having access to relevant expertise in order to structure and manage a treaty coproduction and ensure compliance with the treaties; the critical role of established relationships of trust between coproducing partners to continue to make international coproductions; and the importance of structuring the partnership to fit the needs of the project.

### III. Perspectives on Opportunities and Challenges For the International Promotion and Sale of Canadian Independent Documentaries

This section presents the challenges and opportunities with respect to the international promotion and sales of Canadian independent

## 1. Opportunities and Challenges

### 1.1 Online Distribution Opportunities

Interviews with international distributors, festivals and markets revealed how the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated online sales and distribution opportunities for Canadian independent documentaries. In response to COVID-19, new streaming platforms have emerged, such as virtual cinema platforms (Kino Marquee and Documentary Online Cinema), as well as expanded festival and mar-

ket screening rooms online (for example at Sunny Side of the Doc) and the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). For some stakeholders interviewed, it is becoming increasingly clear that new online models will probably last long after the pandemic. Some interviewees speculated that the theatrical market for documentaries may never recover from the effects of the pandemic.

Subscription-based streaming platforms, in particular those which have a documentary brand, such as HBO Max and the CBC's GEM, were perceived by interviewees to provide future opportunities for distributing documentaries. Stakeholders cautioned however that while the online streaming platforms of broadcasters may provide significantly wider access to audiences, they may not necessarily translate to higher license fees.

According to interviewees, festivals have extended their online programming. For example the IDFA online screening room,

Doc Leipzig and Hot Docs at Home. Stakeholders indicated that distributors have in some cases been able to negotiate higher screening fees in light of the greater regional reach of some online festival programming, enabled by geoblocking technology. It was noted that this type of exposure may be favourable for films that may not necessarily make a sale, and whose run is focused on the festival circuit.

Some producers and distributors interviewed spoke of a greater use of B2B sales platforms such as VUURL to make sales.

## 1.2 Hybrid Models of Online Programming at International Market Events

Hybrid models of business programming at international market events have proliferated, combining in-person and online activities such as virtual webinars, pitch sessions and screenings. Some online programming has expanded to year-round offerings, such as extended training initiatives. These were said to allow markets and festivals to engage with participants throughout the year.

Stakeholders interviewed for this study noted new challenges as well as opportunities with respect to the promotion and sale of Canadian documentaries at virtual markets and festivals. Interviewees noted that online events work best for producers who already have their networks and contacts. It is reportedly more difficult to make new contacts or to

get a meeting during an online event, as decision-makers were said not to dedicate the same amount of time as they would if they had travelled to an event. In addition, online platforms do not allow for serendipitous exchanges and meetings with buyers that are a hallmark of live events.

On the other hand, some producers who said they are participating virtually in international festivals and markets were of the view that as a result they can attend more events. International festival and trade market representatives also noted that, as more pitch sessions move online, they have the potential to be more inclusive of producers who might not be able to travel to the event.

## 1.3

### Priority Markets

Stakeholders interviewed noted that attendance at international markets is important for Canadian producers to build relationships and drive the sale of Canadian documentaries, to seek pre-financing of projects and develop partnerships for treaty coproduction projects. The priority events identified by interviewees were: Sunny Side of the Doc, a bridge to the European market at which Telefilm and SODEC join forces to promote Canadian documentaries; the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers; MIPCOM, as the largest market, and MIP TV, which this year is hosting MIPDOC. In the US, Realscreen and Jackson Wild, for wildlife documentaries, are described as priority events. Some producers point out that specific missions to key international markets, such as those organized by the Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA), are an effective way to help producers expand their business networks.

Other events valued by interviewees as places where they could build their international relationships were Hot Docs, Les Rencontres Internationales du Documentaire de Montréal (RIDM), and the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). The European Film Market was identified by interviewees as very relevant for emerging producers. Telefilm Canada, SODEC and the Canadian Media Producers Association provide support to the Toolbox initiative at the European Film Market. Targeting diverse producers with less international experience, the initiative provides roundtables and networking events to help producers get the most out of the market. Interviewees also pointed to the European Film Market's DocSalon - a dedicated documentary platform for networking and exchange between buyers, sellers, directors and producers of documentaries.

## 1.4

### Marketing Assets and Pitch Sessions

Pitching sessions at priority events were described as ideal to make contacts with potential buyers or potential coproduction partners. Interviewees involved in promotion note that films that are pitched at high profile events have a greater chance of international success later on due to the early buzz, which may lead to additional opportunities for promotion through high-profile residencies. These films were said to have a greater chance of eventually being invited to prestigious festivals.

Producers stated that they need access to resources to develop their marketing assets,

particularly in development, to support their efforts to seek financing. According to some producers interviewed, producers seeking financing in development lack resources to create marketing assets, at a time when the need is greatest. Resources are needed to hire writers and designers to prepare professionally produced, scalable pitch documents and to support their evolution as the project evolves. Producers acknowledge that these costs may eventually be assumed by distributors, but as they seek initial financing it is producers who must bear the costs.

## 1.5

### Market Preparedness Initiatives

Stakeholders noted that any initiative that can help Canadian producers identify potential international coproduction partners, help increase networking as well as initiatives to help first time coproducers prepare for new markets are beneficial to documentary producers. A number of initiatives have been developed to support better outcomes for documentary producers at international events. One such initiative that was mentioned by interviewees is the SODEC-LAB, organized in conjunction with the Rendez-vous International du Documentaire de Montreal (RIDM).

Through the SODEC-LAB, industry mentors work with companies interested in accessing new international markets to prepare their pitch, identify the buyers to target, and provide support and networking opportunities at trade events, to enable participants to meet buyers informally as well as formally. The

SODEC-LAB have taken place at Hot Docs, the Berlinale, CPH:DOX and Sunny Side of the Doc. The latter two events occurred virtually this year due to the pandemic and the SODEC adapted its support through the Labs accordingly.

Stakeholders interviewed noted that BIPOC producers face greater difficulty in accessing international markets. For example, it was recognized that films about Black communities and / or films led by a majority Black key creative team or production company face a systemic lack of access to major international festivals in Europe. Initiatives designed to assist BIPOC producers to access international markets are needed. The view was also expressed that Indigenous distributors require access to resources to promote and market Indigenous-led productions in international markets.

## 1.6

### Dedicated Promotional Initiatives for Canadian Documentaries

There exist a variety of coordinated approaches to promoting content to buyers at international trade events, not least of which is the Canada Pavilion, led by Telefilm Canada in partnership with other industry stakeholders. Stakeholders were appreciative of the Canada Pavilion, however also expressed the need for additional opportunities for the promotion of Canadian documentaries at major markets. For example, producers interviewed noted that Telefilm Canada's

promotion of Canadian documentaries at the rough-cut stage at the Cannes Doc Showcase event, was a successful event that should be repeated at the European Film Market. Initiatives targeting BIPOC-led documentary production companies are needed to increase their access to international festivals and markets.

## 2. Summary Observations

There are opportunities and challenges identified by stakeholders on the international promotion and sales of Canadian documentaries. Among the opportunities are new online programming by international festivals and markets. With distribution evolving to ever more digital platforms, it will be important to ensure that Canadian documentary producers have opportunities to distribute their productions through virtual channels.

There is confidence that virtual activities will continue to constitute part of the programming at international events into the future, and that hybrid events will become the norm, even after international travel and live exchanges resume. Critical events identified by interviewees include Sunny Side of the Doc, the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers; MIPCOM, Realscreen, Jackson Wild, the European Film Market,

Hot Docs, Les Rencontres Internationales du Documentaire de Montréal (RIDM), and the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA).

Dedicated documentary promotional initiatives at markets and festivals are needed to enhance the international profile and sales potential of Canadian documentaries. Producers also need support for marketing assets to support their production financing efforts. More producers could benefit from support to develop their relationships with potential foreign buyers or partners and prepare producers for attending international markets. Initiatives targeting BIPOC-led documentary production companies are needed to increase their access to international festivals and markets.

## IV. Measures to Support International Coproduction, Promotion and Sales of Documentaries in Selected Jurisdictions

This section provides the findings of a literature review on measures that exist to encourage international coproductions, promotion and sales of documentaries in the jurisdictions of France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Denmark and Australia. More detail on the measures examined is provided in Annex 3.

### 1. Measures to Support Greater International Coproduction

#### 1.1

##### Funding Initiatives Dedicated to International Coproductions

Multilateral funding agreements to support international coproductions exist between European nations through Eurimages (about €27.5 million or CAD \$42.2 million), and between circumpolar jurisdictions through the Arctic Indigenous Fund (about CAD \$1 million). Canada has entered into funding agreements with each of these Funds, providing access to them by Canadian producers.

Germany and France have entered into numerous bi-lateral agreements to support the development and production of projects intended as treaty coproductions, including documentaries. Germany has created programs to support the

international feature film coproductions with Poland and France, and programs to support the co-development of international feature film coproductions with Poland, France and Italy.

For its part, France has entered into agreements, to support international coproduction of feature films, including documentaries, with Italy, Greece, Portugal and Tunisia. France has also entered into bi-lateral agreements to support the co-development of film or television treaty coproductions with Italy. These co-development programs support documentaries intended to be produced as treaty coproductions.

## France

French broadcasters provide sizeable licence fees for documentary productions. Of the total number of documentary hours produced with support from the CNC, 390 hours of documentary television were produced as majority French coproductions. A further 40 hours of documentary programming were produced as minority coproductions. These projects attracted a total of €25.4 M (CAD \$39.6 M) of investment from their foreign partnering countries.

RMC Découverte, Arte and France 5 are the main national broadcasters of documentaries in France. The most popular types of documentaries broadcast by these networks are social documentaries, history and nature documentaries.

## Germany

In Germany, public broadcasters have a significant documentary mandate. German public broadcaster ZDF has multiple documentary slots and through its subsidiary ZDF Entreprises produces and acquires documentaries in multiple areas from history to science to wildlife and nature. ARTE Deutschland TV GmbH can provide significant licence fees to producers of documentaries.

Germany provides public funding for feature documentary films. In 2019 the national German funder, FFA, allocated €1.05 M (CAD \$1.64 M) to eight feature documentaries. While the number of documentary coproductions is not known, Germany is known for a high level of coproduction. After the UK, Germany most-often coproduces with non-European countries.

# 1.2

## Dedicated National Funds for Minority International Coproduction

As a means to strengthen its moderately-sized production sector, Denmark favours support for international minority treaty coproductions. The Danish Film Institute provides financing through the Minority Coproduction Funding to in-

ternational feature film coproductions, which includes a stream of funding for documentaries. The Fund supports 4 to 6 minority documentary coproductions each year.

## 2. Measures to Encourage International Promotion and Sales

A range of initiatives exist in the jurisdictions examined intended to promote and encourage international sales of documentaries. They include the hosting of international markets, dedicated promotional initiatives for documentaries, and financing support for export preparedness.

France has two dedicated agencies for promotion and sales. Unifrance is a government agency that supports international sales of French films. Industry organization TV France International (TVFI) supports international promotion and sales through market events and its B2B online platform Screenopsis.

Through German Documentaries, a partnership between the German Documentary Association and German Films (the national film promotion agency), the two organizations promote German documentaries at the European Film market and other international markets around the world.

In the UK, the Accelerator Program of the independent producers association, PACT, is a training program available online to UK independent producers to assist them with developing their export strategies. Sales agents work together under the banner of Film Export UK to promote their films at international markets. The BFI supports international sales of festival films through its BFI Film Export Fund.

The Danish-based industry organization Filmkontakt Nord, which has a mandate to promote Nordic documentaries internationally, organizes the Nordisk Panorama International Market and financing event, Nordisk Forum.

The Australian International Finance Fund launched in 2020 provides support for producers to elevate their skills and ensure they have the tools to exploit international sales opportunities.



## 3. Summary Observations

France and Germany have made international coproductions, promotion and sales a priority. This is shown by the number of bi-lateral initiatives to support greater treaty coproduction between their respective countries and others elsewhere. France is home to two international promotional agencies, for film and television, respectively. Germany too has a national film promotion agency, German Films. This organization works with the documentary industry to promote German documentaries. In the UK, industry-led initiatives support international promotion and sales, under a common branding initiative of the UK government, the Great campaign.

For its part, Canada does not have a dedicated promotional agency for films or television productions. Promotion and marketing are supported by the Canada Media Fund and Telefilm Canada.

In the Nordic region, Denmark seeks to encourage more international coproductions through the Danish Film Institute's Minority Coproduction Fund, and through its involvement in the Arctic Production Fund targeting Indigenous-led projects. By comparison, Canada does not have a dedicated coproduction fund at the national level that could stimulate more coproduction.

## V. Conclusion and Future Directions

### 1. Concluding Overview

A number of Canadian documentary producers are successfully leveraging international opportunities to coproduce compelling documentaries that showcase the country's strong tradition of documentary excellence and deep talent to Canadians and the world. The international relationships forged through these projects strengthen producers' capacity to seize new opportunities, while successful projects may provide a stream of revenues through ongoing sales in international markets. Canadian documentaries are well regarded on the international scene, receiving global acclaim and awards at major festivals. As evidenced by data on sales, they are being

acquired by international broadcasters, sales agents and distributors.

With higher licence fees from Canadian broadcasters, more programming slots for higher budget internationally coproduced documentaries, and more dedicated promotion of Canadian documentaries at international events, Canadian producers could take even greater advantage of opportunities afforded by international markets, stimulating growth and a higher profile for Canadian documentaries on the world stage.

#### 1.1.

#### **An International Strategy for Canadian Documentaries**

This study has laid the groundwork on which to build an international strategy to increase international networking, treaty coproduction and sales opportunities for Canadian independent documentaries. While every project is different, there are clearly opportunities being exploited by Canadian producers, not least with France, the UK and Germany for

television, and with Israel for theatrical documentaries. While France and Germany are commissioning a wide range of documentaries, including social issue productions, producers interviewed for this report noted a preference for wide-appeal documentaries, such as nature or history programs, on the part of the major broadcasters in the UK.



Wherever possible dedicated treaty coproduction funds in partner jurisdictions should be leveraged to increase opportunities for Canadian documentaries. These include opportunities afforded by Eurimages and the DFI's minority coproduction Fund. The benefits of minority coproduction were documented in a 2017 study, *Exporting Canadian Feature Films in the Global Market*, which found that minority international coproductions generate the most sales for Canadian producers. The study recommended the establishment of a coproduction fund in Canada that would provide support for minority coproductions.

A key consideration for an international strategy will be to address the barriers faced by smaller production companies and the particular challenges facing BI-POC-led production companies. Australia, and the member countries of the Arctic Indigenous Fund, present opportunities for Canadian documentaries led by Indigenous producers. Australia has a sizable Indigenous production sector active in

documentaries. In the years from 2010 to 2019, 51 Indigenous producers had producing credits on Australian documentary titles and 61 Indigenous directors had a directing credit on Australian documentaries.

At the time of writing this report, the COVID-19 pandemic had wrought considerable upheaval to the audiovisual sector globally. It is anticipated that many of the innovations introduced during the pandemic, such as virtual cinema networks and hybrid market events, will continue into the future. These present opportunities for Canadian producers. At the same time, it is hoped that exceptions made for international coproductions, such as to allow the hiring of non-nationals to shoot in remote locations (due to COVID-19 related travel bans) may inspire greater flexibility on the part of coproducing countries in the future. Any future international strategy will be informed by these developments.

# Glossary

**Coproduction:** The production of an audiovisual work by more than one producer in which each co-producer co-owns the rights to the work, as defined in a coproduction agreement. The latter defines the creative and technical details of the production, the distribution of management and responsibilities, the exploitation of rights and share of income, and the territories where the co-producers will jointly or exclusively exploit the property.

**International Treaty Coproduction:** An international coproduction between producers from different countries, which adheres to the requirements of a coproduction treaty. Coproduction treaties list the requirements (financial, creative and technical) for a coproduction to be categorised as “national”, allowing the production to receive national public funding in each jurisdiction governed by the treaty. The coproduction must be approved by the authorities representing each signatory to the agreement. In Canada, treaty coproductions are administered by Telefilm Canada, for ultimate certification by Canadian Heritage through the Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office (CAVCO).

**Majority Treaty Coproduction:** The country providing the majority of the financing is referred to as the majority coproduction country. A “Canada/France majority coproduction” indicates that Canada is providing the majority of the coproduction’s financing.

**Minority Treaty Coproduction:** The country providing a minority of financing is referred to as the minority coproduction partner. A “Canada/France minority coproduction” indicates that Canada is providing a minority of the coproduction’s financing.

**Non-Treaty Coproduction:** An international coproduction in which the partners have elected not to apply for official coproduction certification, e.g., where no coproduction treaty exists between the participating countries, or where the production budget does not justify the costs associated with complying with a coproduction treaty.

**Official International Co-venture:** In Canada, international coproductions involving production companies from countries with which Canada does not have a coproduction treaty may be certified as official co-ventures by the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). These productions can benefit from production-services tax credits and can be counted by broadcasters towards the fulfilment of their Canadian programming obligations.

Sources:  
Hot Docs, Hot Docs Guide to CoProduction, 2016.

## Annex 1: Selected Bibliography

Abbatecianni, Davide, "Nordic film bodies publish first responses to the COVID-19 outbreak," Cineuropa, March 23, 2020.

Alcinii, Daniele, "BBC, ZDF, Love Nature pen copro for Offspring's 'Animals at Play'," Realscreen, June 28, 2019.

British Film Institute, BFI Statistical Yearbook: Screen Sector Production, 2020.

Canadian Media Producers Association, Profile 2019: An Economic Report of the Screen-based Production Industry, 2020.

Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC), "Bilan 2019," Les dossiers du CNC, Number 342, May 2020.

Creative Industries Trade and Investment Board (CITIB), International Strategy for the UK Creative Industries 2019-2022.

Danish Film Institute, Facts and Figures 2020: Production and Exhibition Figures for 2019.

De Rosa, Maria & Burgess, Marilyn, Exporting Canadian Feature Films in Global Markets: Trends, Opportunities and Future Directions, for the Canadian Media Producers Association, May 2017.

De Rosa, Maria & Burgess, Marilyn, Exporting Canadian Television Globally – Trends, Opportunities and Future Directions, for the Canadian Media Producers Association, May 2017.

De Rosa, Maria and Marilyn Burgess, Exporting Canadian Screen-based Productions in a Global Market: Trends, Opportunities and Future Directions, prepared for the Canadian Media Producers Association, 2020.

De Rosa, Maria and Marilyn Burgess, Getting Real 6: A Profile of Documentary Production in Canada: 2012 – 2017, prepared by Communications MDR for the Documentary Organization of Canada, 2019.

Documentary Organization of Canada, DOC Submission – Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2019 – 379, 2019.

European Audiovisual Observatory, "Brexit: The impact on the audiovisual sector," IRIS Plus, Strasbourg, 2018.

European Audiovisual Observatory, Film Production in Europe: Production volume, co-production and worldwide circulation, 2017.

European Audiovisual Observatory, International Coproduction: A Success Formula for European films? Presentation to the Cannes 2018 conference, June 5, 2018.

European Audiovisual Observatory, "The Legal Framework for International Coproductions," IRIS Plus, Strasbourg, 2019.

German Films, German Films Abroad 2019: Facts and Figures, 2020.

Hopewell, John and Jamie Lang, "How Will Film Festivals React to the Covid-19 Crisis?," Variety, Apr 27 2020.

Hot Docs, 2018 Documentary Audience Research, September 2018.  
Hot Docs Guide to Coproduction, Hot Docs, 2016.

Howcroft, Chloe, "Best of PSM: Collaborate or Die?," Public Media Alliance, September 23, 2019.

Howcroft, Chloe, "The financial impact of Covid-19 on European public broadcasters," Public Media Alliance, May 13, 2020.

Kanter, Jake, "BBC Studios Signs Wide-Ranging Co-Production & Content Sales Deal With Sony-Backed Chinese Streamer Bilibili," Deadline, October 18, 2020.

"Le Marché Documentaire," Les synthèses du CNC, no. 4, June 2018.

MIP, What do Buyers and Commissioners Want, MIP Trends, 2019.

MIP, "Tencent Video fosters growing young audience for global docs," MIPTV News, April 8, 2019.

Mitchell, Robert, "BBC Studios, ZDF Form Development and Coproduction Partnership," Variety, April 18, 2019.

Presence, Steve, Andrew Spicer, Alice Quiqley and Lizzie Green, Keeping It Real: Towards a Documentary Film Policy for the UK, UWE Bristol, UKRI, Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2019.

## Annex 2: List of Interviewees

1. Mathieu Béjot, Sunnyside of the DOC
2. Nathalie Bourdon, National Film Board
3. Michelle Bruce, Belle Vie TV
4. Nathalie Clermont, Canada Media Fund
5. Erin Creasey, Ontario Creates
6. Nicholas de Pencier, Mercury Films
7. Trish Dolman, Screen Siren Pictures
8. Élane Dumont, SODEC
9. Ina Fichman, Intuitive Pictures
10. Arnie Gelbart, GalaFilm
11. Prem Gill, Creative BC
12. Jennier Holness, Hungry Eyes Media
13. Merit Jensen Carr, Merit Motion Pictures
14. Robert Lange, Kensington Communications
15. Wendy Lidell, Kino Lorber
16. Michael McMahon, Primitive Entertainment
17. Hervé Michel, TV France International
18. Bob Moore, EyeSteelFilm
19. Josette D. Normandeau, Idéacom International
20. Jan Rofekamp, Films Transit International
21. Yorinde Segal, International Documentary Festival Amsterdam
22. Bernard Simek, German Films
23. Shane Smith, Hot Docs
24. Heidi Tao Yang, Hot Docs
25. Nadja Tennstedt, Doc Salon, European Film Market
26. Lucie Touboul, Dogwoof
27. Jesse Wentz, Indigenous Screen Office
28. Bob Wong, Creative BC

## Annex 3: Initiatives to Support International Coproduction, Promotion and Sales in Selected Jurisdictions

### 1.1 Dedicated Programs of Support for International Coproduction in Selected Jurisdictions

#### Multilateral Funding Agreements

##### Eurimages

Eurimages, a cultural support fund of the Council of Europe, provides financial support to feature-length films that are international fiction, animation or documentary coproductions, which provides access to the fund for Canadian production companies with an eligible coproduction project. Total available funding is about €27.5 million or CAD \$42.2 million per year.

##### Arctic Indigenous Fund

The Arctic Indigenous Fund is a circumpolar partnership between Greenland (Denmark), Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Canada, Nunavut and the US (Alaska). The Fund provides a platform for collaboration between Indigenous producers in Arctic regions and supports Indigenous-led coproductions. Total available funding is about CAD \$1 million per year.

##### National Support Funds

###### DFI Minority Coproduction Fund

The Danish Film Institute provides financing through the Minority Coproduction Funding to international minority feature film coproductions involving a Danish producer. The Fund includes a stream of funding for documentaries. The program aims to “strengthen partnerships and creative exchange between Danish and international producers,” and encourage “the opportunities afforded from coproductions – international financing, cultural and business exchange and distribution.” With an annual budget of approximately DKK 2.5 M (CAD \$521K), the documentary stream of the program supports between 4 and 6 minority feature-length documentary coproductions each year.

## Bilateral Funding Agreements

### German-Polish Film Fund

German-Polish Film Fund is a partnership between the German Federal Film Board (FFA), the Polish Film Institute, and two regional German funds: Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung (MDM) and Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg (MBB). The Fund allocates €500K (CAD \$775K) to support project development of international German-Polish films. The Fund may award up to €150K (CAD \$ 232K) to full-length feature, animation and creative documentary coproductions between Germany and Poland.

### German-French Minitraité

The German French Minitraité (German-French coproduction agreement) allocates support to international German-French coproductions, allocating €3 M (CAD \$4.7 M) for eligible coproductions each year. The fund is managed in Germany by the Federal Government Representative for Culture and Media (Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, or BKM) and the German Federal Film Board (Filmförderungsanstalt, FFA) and by the National Center for Cinema (Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, CNC) in France.

### Support for the Coproduction of Franco-Italian Cinematographic and Audiovisual Works

A partnership between the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC) of France and the Italian Ministry for Culture and Tourism (MICBAC), this fund provides support to eligible treaty coproductions including in the documentary genre. Funding for the coproduction of eligible feature films can attain €200K (CAD \$310K).

### Support for the Coproduction of Franco-Greek/Portuguese/Tunisian Cinematographic Works

France has entered into partnerships with Greece, Portugal and Tunisia to support the international coproduction of feature films, including in the documentary genre. These are based on bi-lateral funding agreements between the CNC in France and respectively, the Centre for Greek Cinema (GFC), the Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual (ICA) in Portugal, and the Centre national du cinéma et de l'image (CNCI) in Tunisia. These funds provide assistance ranging from €200K (CAD \$310K) to €450K (CAD \$697K) to eligible coproductions.

## 1.2

### Dedicated Funding for Co-development of International Coproductions

#### German-French Minitraité

The German-French Minitraité (see above) allocates €200K (CAD \$310K) for the co-development of international German-French coproductions each year.

#### German-Polish Co-development Fund

German-Polish Film Fund (see above) provides support for co-development and may award up to €70K (CAD \$110K) to the international (co-development) of full-length features, animations and creative documentaries.

#### German-Italian Coproduction Development Fund

The German-Italian Coproduction Development Fund is a partnership between the German Federal Film Board (FFA) and the Italian Ministry for Culture and Tourism (MiBACT). Established to encourage closer collaboration between German and Italian filmmakers, the fund allocates

€100K (CAD \$155K) for the co-development of international treaty coproductions, including feature length documentaries.

#### Support for the Co-Development of Franco-Italian Cinematographic and Audiovisual Works

A partnership between the Centre National du Cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC) of France and the Italian Ministry for Culture and Tourism (MiBACT), this fund provides support to the co-development of eligible treaty coproductions including in the documentary genre. Funding for the co-development of eligible feature films can attain €50K (CAD \$78K). Funding for the co-development of eligible television series cannot exceed 40% of eligible development costs, to a maximum of €50K (CAD \$78K).

## 1.3.

### Dedicated Measures to Support International Sales and Distribution

#### France

TV France International (TVFI) is a French industry association dedicated to promoting the sales of French TV programs worldwide and facilitating international coproduction. Rendez-Vous Bi@rritz is a

market organized by TVFI that is dedicated to the viewing and the selling of recent French programs, similar to the North American Up Fronts. The event welcomes about 260 foreign buyers, who attend by invitation. TVFI also supports international promotion and sales through the B2B



platform Screenopsis which is the largest database and online screening room providing information on over 20,000 French programs to support their sale. The online platform tvfrance-intl.com is an exporting tool for member companies, providing an international database with information on 15,000 content buyers of audiovisual programs from over two hundred countries throughout the world.

## Germany

The national film promotion agency, German Films, working in partnership with the German Documentary Association, have developed a joint initiative to promote and brand German documentary films in international markets. Under the “German documentaries” initiatives, the two organizations promote German documentaries at the European Film market and other international markets around the world. The initiative also publishes an online catalogue featuring some 200 new films that are available for distribution worldwide, while a website provides further information on German documentary productions. The European Film Market’s DocSalon is a dedicated documentary platform for networking and exchange among buyers, sellers, directors and producers of documentaries. Part of the DocSalon at the European Film Market initiative is an event called Toolbox, for diverse producers with less international experience. It provides participating producers with access to mentors and consultants, as well as structured activities to

encourage greater networking with festivals and other industry experts. This initiative receives support through Telefilm Canada, SODEC and the Canadian Media Producers Association.

## UK

The British Film Institute (BFI) Film Export Fund aims to enhance the export opportunities for British films selected at important international film festivals, by providing support for publicity and/or marketing activity and assisting with the technical and logistical costs involved with a high profile festival appearance.

The UK independent producers association, PACT, supports international business development and exports by organizing delegations of UK independent producers and special missions to international television markets around the globe. A special mission is planned for documentary producers to participate in Reelscreen Summit 2021. The PACT Accelerator is a training program available online to UK independent producers to assist them with developing their export strategies. The industry organization Film Export UK provides member sales agents and distributors with promotion and sales support through its umbrella spaces at international market events. These initiatives are supported by the government’s common branding initiative, the Great campaign.

## Denmark

Filmkontakt Nord is a Copenhagen-based industry organisation dedicated to promoting Nordic documentaries and shorts internationally and strengthening professional networks. It organizes the Nordisk Panorama International Market that promotes Nordic documentaries to international buyers as well as the international documentary financing event, Nordisk Forum.

## Australia

The Australian International Finance Fund provides new support for producers by connecting creative teams with industry mentors and consultants to elevate their pitching, further develop their marketing and business plans, and ensure they have the tools they need to make the most of the current and changing international marketplace.

## Annex 4: Case Studies of International Documentary Coproductions Undertaken by Canadian Producers

### 1. EyeSteelFilm



#### The Production Company

EyeSteelFilm is a Montreal-based production company co-founded by Daniel Cross and Mila Aung-Thwin that is dedicated to socially engaged cinema and an interactive, inclusive direct filmmaking ethos. The studio is currently run by Co-Presidents Mila Aung-Thwin and Bob Moore, who brings a focus on international co-producing.

The company's focus is on long-form, auteur-driven documentaries made for theatrical exhibition. Some of the company's biggest hits include award winners *Rip: A Remix Manifesto* (2008), *Last Train Home* (2009), *China Heavyweight* (2012), *I Am the Blues* (2015), *Wintopia* (2019) *Yung Chang's Up the Yangtze*, one of the highest-grossing docs of 2007; and *A Cambodian Spring*, which won the Hot Docs Special Jury Prize and was nominated for a BAFTA.

The company is further diversified through its distribution activities, building relationships with US buyers and forming production partnerships and selling to global broadcasters. Efforts aim to make the company less dependent on any single source of financing. The company also launched its own distribution company, which rents films to theatres across Canada. In addition to a steady stream of revenues, distribution provides valuable market intelligence.

The company's international collaborators include Super Channel, PBS, CBC, National Geographic Channel, The History Channel, BBC Storyline, YLE, TV2 Denmark, ZDF ARTE, The documentary Channel, SBS, CTV and the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).

## The Project

*Influence* (2020), is an international co-production between EyeSteelFilm and South Africa's StoryScope and Chronicle Productions, produced by Neil Brandt of Storyscope (South Africa) and Bob Moore of EyeSteelFilm (Canada). Storyscope is an experienced South African production company, passionate about nurturing authentic African voices that challenge stereotypes. Neil Brandt is one of four founding partners. The company's current production and development slate includes factual, fiction and advocacy projects underway with CBC Canada, Arte France, CGTN China, A&E USA, SABC, eTV and MNET.

*Influence* charts the recent advancements in weaponized communication by investigating the rise and fall of the world's most notorious public relations and reputation management firm: the British multinational Bell Pottinger. Exploring the "dark art of geopolitical spin-doctoring", the film was written and directed by award-winning journalists and filmmakers Richard Poplak and Diana Neille, whose journalism exposed the reputation-management firm Bell Pottinger.

## Financing

EyeSteelFilm raised significant financing from ARTE in France. A big part of the ARTE license was allocated to the South African partner who ran the shoot, while EyeSteelFilm provided the Canadian cinematographer and editor. For their part, the South African coproducer accessed a generous license from South African broadcaster e.TV.

Production financing in Canada received a license from the CBC documentary Channel that triggered funding from the Canada Media Fund, the Rogers Cable Network Fund and the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC), as well as federal and provincial tax credits. There were numerous pre-sales to other broadcasters around the world, including major broadcast licenses to Arte (France/Germany) and e.TV (South Africa). The film also obtained financing from the Blue Ice Docs, Hot Docs Partners Fund, the National Film and Video Foundation of South Africa and the Sundance Institute Documentary Funds.

## Promotion and Distribution

*Influence* premiered at the Sundance Festival in January, 2020, where it was nominated for the Grand Jury Prize – a first for South African film directors. It was also nominated for a Truth Award at the Dokufest International Documentary and Short Film Festival later that year. The film played at major documentary film festivals including the Sheffield International Documentary Festival, Hot Docs, DOXA, a Human Rights Film Festival Berlin, and DMZ Docs. The film was also shown at the Moscow International Film Festival and the Durban International Film Festival. The film was also screened at the Cannes Marché du doc in 2019 and 2020 the European Film Market (Berlin) in 2020. Telefilm Canada assisted with financing for the international marketing of the film, which took place during its festival run and participation at international markets.

The theatrical release of Influence was temporarily held back as the producers waited to see what sales opportunities might develop in connection with a big Hollywood fiction film rumoured to be in development on the same subject. Influence is now selling around the world. It had an early sale to Scandinavian distributor, NonStop Entertainment and was released theatrically in Sweden, where theatres were not locked down during the early part of the COVID 19 pandemic. International sales are ongoing, including a sale to New Zealand and ongoing talks with distributors in the US and the UK. Deals with the US have taken a longer time than usual to close, in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which created significant confusion in the market early on, and in part because of the high number of presales. The film had its world broadcast premier on CBC in May 2020, airing on Hot Docs at Home on CBC GEM, and on the Documentary Channel.

## Lessons Learned

EyeSteelFilm is always on the lookout for potential coproduction projects that

align with their socially engaged ethos. The company recognizes that its engaged style of documentary filmmaking is attractive to buyers and to potential co-production partners. The company seeks partnerships with filmmakers who can benefit from their expertise and who can help them elevate their films to a higher standard for festivals and theatrical distribution. For a creative collaboration, it is necessary to first meet a potential partner in person.

The small number of financing sources in the Canadian market means that the company is going more often to the international market for financing. They identify projects through international festivals and markets, and prior to the pandemic, spent about 1/3 of one producer's time attending these events. Because they have established business relationships, Hot Docs is perceived by the company to be a very efficient market. However, the producer notes that for companies without such relationships, the current context of the pandemic must be making it very difficult to find funders, buyers and partners.

## 2. Intuitive Pictures



## 2. Intuitive Pictures

Ina Fichman of Intuitive Pictures has been producing award-winning documentary and fiction films for television and theatrical release, as well as digital projects, for over twenty-five years. She has worked with first time and established directors in Canada and around the world, including “some of the finest creators, ‘ideas people’” in developing projects that are both innovative and have a wide audience appeal. The company’s credits include *The Oslo Diaries* (2018), *Inside Lehman Brothers* (2018), and numerous other award-winning films and interactive documentaries such as *Once Upon a Sea* (2020), that have played at major international festivals, including Hot Docs, Sundance, IDFA, CPH: DOX, and TIFF. Based in Montreal, Intuitive Pictures has developed an expertise in international coproduction amassed over many years. Intuitive Pictures works regularly with international collaborators, including Israeli and European broadcasters, and producers in France and Israel. The company has coproduced with Medalia Productions and Blimey in Israel, as well as long-time French collaborator Point du Jour.

### The Project

*The Gig is Up: A Very Human Tech Doc*, is a France/Canada treaty coproduction between Point du Jour and Intuitive Pictures, on the pros and cons of the platform (or “gig”) economy.

Point du Jour has been producing award-winning documentaries, series and weekly magazines for the French and international markets for over 25 years. Many of its films are international coproductions with partners in North America, Europe, Japan and Australia. The company’s distribution arm, Point du Jour International, handles distribution and pre-sales, in France and the international market, of documentaries produced by Point du Jour as well as selected films from third-party producers.

Call it gig work, gig economy, platform work, crowd work, crowd sourcing, ghost work... Most people know it as Uber, Bird, Lyft, TaskRabbit, Crowdfunder, Deliveroo, Meituan or Amazon Mechanical Turk. The gig economy is worth over USD 5 trillion globally. People were lured to it by the promise of flexible working hours, not being confined to the office, being your own boss... Getting paid for the value of your work and not based on your gender, race or looks. Has this worked out? What are the human costs of this ‘brave new world’? How is it transforming our lives? Through its engaging characters - gig workers and platform founders from China, Nigeria, France, the UK, Florida, California – the film reveals the new opportunities, but also the precarious nature of this economy that clearly calls for “a new social contract”. We’re sharing a moment of the lives of these “invisible” workers from very different parts of the world whose stories are deeply connected - between them and across various platforms.

## Financing

This project originated in Canada. With a Canadian writer-director attached to *The Gig is Up* (Shannon Walsh) Intuitive Pictures was able to raise Canadian financing. First, Telefilm Canada's Theatrical Documentary Fund came onboard followed by the documentary Channel, which triggered the Canada Media Fund, Canadian and Quebec Production Tax Credit. *The Gig is Up* had been in development by Intuitive Pictures and their long time collaborator Point du jour for a few years and both companies interested ARTE France in the project, who came onboard even before the Canadian financing was in place. Given the size of the budget, \$1.2 M, this coproduction was necessary.

The project is a typical coproduction for Intuitive Pictures, in which creative elements are split between the two coproducing territories. The film's writer-director is Canadian, while the co-writer and composer are French. Shot internationally with a Canadian director of photography, the film is being post-produced in Canada.

## Promotion and Distribution

*The Gig is Up* is intended for theatrical release and a first broadcast airing on ARTE television in France and the documentary Channel in Canada. Point du Jour International is exploiting world distribution rights, excluding North America. Intuitive Pictures aims to exploit the film's English-language rights by taking on a US-based sales agent.

Producer Ina Fichman is aiming for a high profile festival release as she sees that the issue of the gig economy is trending around the world. This will leverage the international profile of Canadian writer-director, Shannon Walsh, whose numerous films include *Illusions of Control* (2019) and *H2Oil* (2009), which have been

theatrically released and played in over 70 film festivals worldwide. Her documentaries have also been broadcast internationally on Netflix, CBC, Discovery, Al Jazeera and Canal-D, and shown in museum spaces at the 56th Venice Biennale and the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

The project's completion timeline has been impacted by COVID-19. The film was already in post-production in Canada when the pandemic hit, with editing undertaken in Montreal while director Shannon Walsh worked remotely from Vancouver. However, editing was slowed by the health crisis and completion of the film is now scheduled for December 2020.

## Lessons Learned

Being able to coproduce successfully requires having enough (and the right) people in the company to handle the complexity of coproduction. Producers can raise substantial funding in the Canadian market, which can help attract international partners. However, the producer notes that there is a need to strongly encourage Canadian broadcasters and public funders to support documentary films that will resonate in the international marketplace.

Long-standing relationships facilitate coproduction by fostering trust between partners and in the best cases, creative affinities. Coproducing with partners abroad allows Intuitive Pictures to take on higher budget documentaries, while also benefiting creatively. Intuitive Pictures also benefits from long-term relationships with regular collaborators in Canada, including crew members and directors they have worked with before and some of the finest post-production studios in the country which are based in Montreal. Anything that can be done to help companies develop their international networks will encourage greater coproduction.

### 3. Hungry Eyes Media



#### The Production Company

Co-founded by writer and producer Jen Holness and writer-director Sudz Sutherland, Hungry Eyes Media is a BIPOC-led award winning production company. Overseeing a staff of five, President Jennifer Holness has produced numerous documentaries, including *Badge of Pride* (CBC and PBS) and *Speakers for the Dead* (CBC/NFB), which she co-directed. She is the executive producer of the feature doc *Black Zombie*, currently in production with CBC's Doc Channel and is currently directing her second feature documentary, *Subjects of Desire*, with TVO Canada. A documentary series about Black Canadian history is in development with Corus.

Hungry Eyes Media established Hispaniola Productions, in partnership with US-based Rada Films, with the goal of telling stories by, for, and about communities of colour. The Toronto-based company is led by Jennifer Holness (Hungry Eyes Media) and Michèle Stephenson (Rada Films Group).

#### The Project

*Stateless* (2020) is a Canada/US coproduction between Hispaniola Productions and the National Film Board of Canada. It is Hispaniola Productions' first feature

production. The Rada Film Group is a media production company committed to creating compelling and thought provoking visual stories by, about and for communities of colour. It is helmed by the Sundance award-winning team of Michèle Stephenson and Joe Brewster (*American Promise*). Producer Lea Marin, at the helm for the NFB, is an award-winning Toronto-based producer whose most recent film credits include Astra Taylor's *What Is Democracy?*, which premiered at TIFF in 2018 and Charles Officer's *Unarmed Verses*, which won the Best Canadian Documentary Feature Award at Hot Docs 2017.

Written and directed by New York-based Haitian-Canadian Michèle Stephenson, *Stateless* traces the complex tributaries of history and present-day politics, as state-sanctioned racism seeps into mundane offices, living room meetings, and street protests. Anyone defending marginalized groups faces threats of violence. In this dangerous climate, a young attorney named Rosa Iris mounts a grassroots campaign, challenging electoral corruption and advocating for social justice. As Rosa balances her congressional run with her dedication to her family and community, the full scope of her fight is revealed.

## Financing

With a budget of \$1.1 M, the producers sought financing from Canada and the US. The NFB came on board early in development and again as a co-producer and partner in production. Funding from Telefilm Canada and the Rogers Group of Funds through the Theatrical Documentary Program, and the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund followed.

Just less than half the budget was raised in the US, where Stephenson is well-regarded for her film *An American Promise* (2013), which won the Special Jury Award at Sundance and was nominated for three Emmys, including Best Documentary and Best News Coverage of a Contemporary Issue. The project made a major license sale to PBS for its signature documentary series *POV*, and an international sale was made to Al Jazeera for non-exclusive world rights. *Chicken & Egg* pictures, which supports women filmmakers of non-fiction content for social change, provided a grant, as did a number of foundations, including Cinereach, Gucci Tribeca Documentary Fund, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures Fund for the Arts Grant Program, Sundance Documentary Film Program, Surdna Foundation and TFI Pond5 Program. The project was completed with the support of Women Make Movies, Inc. through its Women in Film Finishing Fund.

## Promotion and Distribution

The film was set to premiere at Tribeca in the early spring of 2020, however the

company's detailed promotion plan could not be executed as the festival was badly impacted by Covid-19. The film won the Special Jury Prize at Hot Docs for Best Canadian Feature Documentary and was named Best Feature Documentary at the Blackstar Film Festival in Pittsburgh. The film was also screened at Caribbean Tales in Toronto, DOXA in Vancouver, the Calgary International Film Festival and the Atlantic International Film Festival in Halifax, and well as many Black and Latino Black festivals in the US: Boston Latino International Film Festival, Philadelphia Latino American Film Festival, the AFI Latin American Film Festival, and internationally at the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival. The film was awarded the Best Feature Documentary prize at the BlackStar Film Festival, and the Best Feature Film Audience Award at the Boston Latino International Film Festival. *Stateless* was also featured at the RIDM festival in Montreal in the fall of 2020.

## Lessons Learned

The US is an important partner to Canadian filmmakers and provides access to an important market for films by Black filmmakers that tell stories that resonate within Black communities, with a potential audience of over forty million Black Americans. The producer notes that in her experience, decision-makers in the US have tended to be more diverse. However, in the absence of any coproduction treaty, partnership models can be challenging.

A major challenge for films led by Black key creative teams and produced by majority Black production companies is the perception from Canadian and European

decision-makers that the audience for such films is limited to Black audiences within the United States. Of the many films produced by Black filmmakers in the US each year, only a few make it to international festivals. However, the popularity of the filmmakers' previous films is clear.

Stateless was not selected for major European documentary festivals such as the IDFA or Berlin. As noted by the producer, a systemic lack of access to

international film festivals can hamper the development of careers, lead to fewer international pre-sales and smaller domestic broadcast licenses. Without pre-sales or significant broadcast licenses, productions take longer to finance, and companies are undercapitalized as a result.

#### 4. Idéacom International



##### The Production Company

A Canadian leader in strategic partnerships and high-end coproductions, Idéacom International is an audacious, independent television and digital media production company that's always on the lookout for innovative and thought-provoking content. With its strong focus on science, health, and history, the Montreal-based firm has produced more than 500 hours of bold original series and documentaries since 1973, and has garnered over 100 awards and nominations along the way. Led by Josette D. Normandeau, Idéacom has amassed expertise in international high-end television coproduction, undertaking programs on

international topics with local relevance that will also appeal to international buyers. The company's most recent titles include **Human + The Future of Our Senses**, *Conversations with Dolphins*, *Who Was the Real Neanderthal?*, and the blockbuster documentary series *Apocalypse World War I*.

The company has established relationships with international partners, working often with French producers, who can provide access to buyers in their markets. Regular coproducing collaborators include the French production companies Bonne Pioche, CC&C and AB (both Mediawan Group company), Factual Factory (a Satisfaction Group cie), Little Big Story and Pernel Media. The com-

pany also has established relationships with many international broadcasters, including PBS, Channel 4, ARTE, France 2, France 3, France 5, RTBF, RTS (Switzerland), NHK, National Geographic, Discovery Channel, American Heroes Channel and Science. Ideacom has since 2017 partnered with prolific production and distribution house Cineflix Media (Montreal, Toronto, Dublin, London, NYC) to facilitate and accelerate the production of blue-chip scripted and unscripted content for the global market.

## The Project

Human +: The Future of Our Senses (2019) is a Canada/France coproduction between Idéacom International and Bonne Pioche Télévision. Bonne Pioche produces award-winning documentary series and premium documentaries for television, as well as feature films, including content with an international focus and financing, high production standards and innovation.

Human + brings viewers into the enigmatic world of scientists, researchers, and entrepreneurs who are revolutionizing the way people see, touch, taste, hear, and smell. Each episode delves into the awe-inspiring and emotional stories of people whose lives are being transformed through some of the most cutting-edge advances in technology of the five senses: touch, sight, hearing, taste and smell. The series won the Trophée Or at the 2019 Deauville Green Awards in the category of Handicap, Diversity, Solidarity.

## Financing

The project originated with French distributor Terranoa, a leading French distributor of high-end factual content who

first proposed the project to Idéacom and provided a minimum guarantee. With a budget of \$2.2 M for this series, Idéacom sought out an international coproduction partner

Financing for the project included broadcast licenses from RMC Découverte, ICI Explora, ICI RDI, Ami TV and Ami Télé, TVO as well as financing through the CNC, Creative Media Europe, Canada Media Fund and the Telus Health Fund. Financing was also obtained in the form of a minimum guarantee from the French distributor Terranoa and tax credits.

## Promotion and Distribution

Terranoa first brought the project to the attention of Idéacom. The company is a leading French distributor of high-end factual content, with fifteen years' experience and a catalogue of over 1300 hours of programming that includes history, science, wildlife, travel and adventure, as well as general factual entertainment series. The company invests in completed productions and helps gap finance projects it scouts from the international market. Terranoa is selling Human + to the world except Canada.

## Lessons Learned

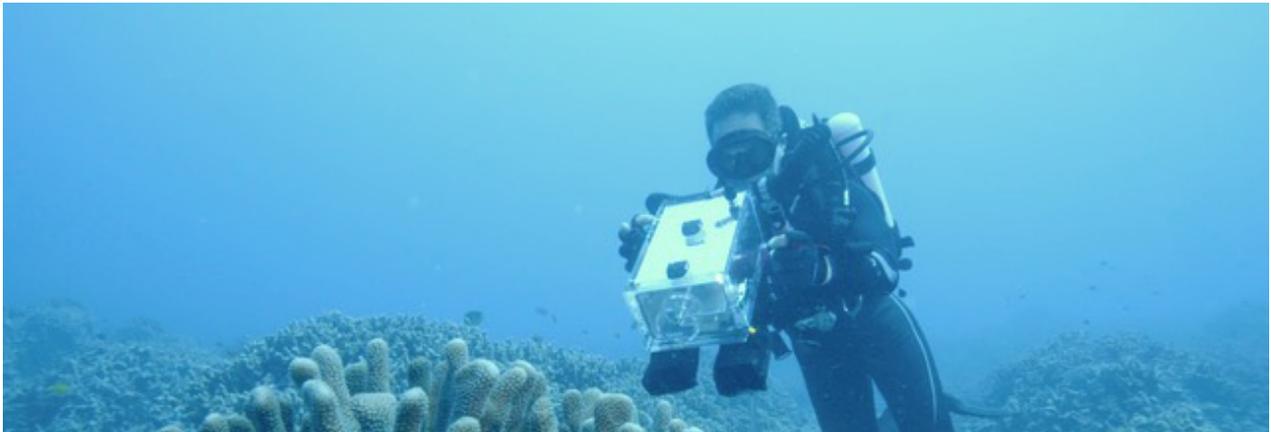
Long-standing and strong relationships developed over more than two decades with its partners, producers, distributors and broadcasters in Canada and France assure that Idéacom International can seize opportunities that arise in the international market. Human + was brought to the company's attention by leading French distributor Terranoa, who provided a minimum guarantee. As the sum total of financing available in Canada was insufficient to finance the higher

budget series, Idéacom was able to rely on its existing relationship with Bonne Pioche to enter into a coproduction arrangement.

Coproductions benefit from the deep knowledge and understanding that the partners have of their respective markets. In spite of the heavier administration burden and cost, treaty coproduction on higher budget series provides

the opportunity for future revenues that can make a company more sustainable. Working with a small number of highly qualified collaborating producers in Canada and France, some of whom were trained by the company, Idéacom has amassed significant expertise in navigating coproduction requirements, providing it with the capacity to do high-end documentary series and one-offs,

## 5. Merit Motion Pictures



### The Production Company

Founded 30 years ago by industry veteran Merit Jensen Carr, Merit Motion Pictures is a sought after co-producer of award-winning factual entertainment that specializes in human interest, science, and natural history documentaries and series. Merit is passionate about telling great visual stories that challenge and expand our knowledge of the human condition and the natural world. MMP productions include Turtle Beach, a coproduction with Renegade Pictures (UK) for CBC, BBC, ARTE and Blue Ant,

award-winning multi-platform series One Ocean awarded Best Interactive/New Media Production at the Jackson Wild Film Festival and the hit US/Canadian series, Polar Bear Town. Recent theatrical documentary releases are: Call of the Forest; Beyond the Spectrum and Almost Almost Famous. International partners include the ZDF/ARTE; Animal Planet; BBC; Shaw; National Geographic Channel; Smithsonian Channel; PBS; Knowledge Network; Terra Mater; Canal D and Super Channel.

## The Project

Reef Rescue is a natural history/science coproduction between MMP and CAPA/Films à Cinq, produced for CBC and ARTE. Vulcan Productions (affiliated to the Vulcan Foundation) is a US social impact documentary production company founded by Paul G. Allen, co-founder of Microsoft with Bill Gates. Vulcan Productions has announced that it will be closing at the start of 2021, in light of the unprecedented crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reef Rescue follows three leading scientists, Ruth Gates (US), Madeleine van Oppen (Australia) and Julia Baum (Canada) unlocking the secrets of how coral has evolved over millions of years. Scientists predict that in 30 years, nearly all of the world's coral will be lost, as part of an environmental disaster threatening food security for hundreds of millions of people worldwide and irreparably harming ocean ecosystems. But new ground-breaking scientific discoveries are offering a glimmer of hope. Reef Rescue unveils the ground breaking science behind "super corals" and a radical new plan to save the Earth's imperiled coral reefs. The film is directed by respected Canadian filmmaker Su Rynard, whose 2015 documentary *The Messenger* garnered critical acclaim and was granted numerous awards. *Mosquito* (2017) was awarded the Golden Sheaf Award for best documentary in the research and science, nature and technology categories.

## Financing

This project was developed for CBC's *The Nature of Things* and ARTE in France, with French coproduction partner Films à Cinq. With few documentary platforms

in Canada, advancing projects to production is highly competitive. Finding a lead Canadian woman scientist and securing international financing was key to the CBC's decision to greenlight the project. With Vulcan on board, CBC's *The Nature of Things* and ARTE greenlit the one-hour documentary with a budget of \$1.8 M.

## Promotion and Distribution

Vulcan brought UK distributor, DRIVE, on board to distribute the project internationally. The news of a major win at Jackson Wild has brought significant international interest. Last month NOVA acquired US broadcast rights and plans to broadcast Reef Rescue on Earth Day 2021. Vulcan Productions and the Vulcan Foundation fund significant impact campaigns for all its projects. Plans for US outreach are underway with interest from several major US and international non-profit partners. Royal Canadian Geographical Society is developing an educational program for the film and is promoting it on its various platforms.

The show was recently awarded Best Conservation Film at Jackson Wild Media Awards (JWMA) and nominated for Best Science in Nature Film. Based out of Jackson, Wyo., the JWMA are considered to be "the highest bar of achievement in the natural history filmmaking industry" and have been dubbed "nature film's equivalent to the Oscars."

## Lessons Learned

This project demonstrates the critical importance of being present at industry events in order to network and make meaningful connections. A trip to the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers was serendipitous for the project. When Jensen Carr and her co-pro-

ducer, Sally Blake attended a seminar led by Vulcan, they learned that Vulcan was looking for a documentary featuring the work of visionary coral scientist, Dr. Ruth Gates, a key character in the project they were pitching at the conference. The fact that Jensen-Carr had met the head of development at Vulcan a year prior also helped facilitate a partnership. A few months later, Vulcan made a significant investment in the production.

Working with charitable foundations can provide projects with support for development, access to coproducers and support for marketing. Philanthropic funding is becoming increasingly important to social issue documentaries. Many foundations are open to collaborations with documentary films to reach common goals for social impact, and as a result, pitching sessions, impact producers and donor circles have arisen to facilitate introductions

between filmmakers and charitable financiers.

Having knowledgeable people to assist is critical to a successful coproduction. Films à Cinq coproducer Sally Blake is a Canadian producer based in France, familiar with both the Canadian and French systems and that experience was crucial to knowing how best to structure the Canada-France Treaty coproduction.

The generous Manitoba Film and Video Production Tax Credit and the international financing enabled the partners to raise the \$1.8M budget required to shoot coral reefs around the world. According to the producer, the international team that the treaty coproduction with France allowed the producers to assemble greatly enhanced the visual impact of the show.

## 6. Screen Siren Pictures

### The Production Company

Founded by president and producer Trish Dolman, Screen Siren Pictures is an independent television, film and digital media company based in Vancouver. With established relationships with local and global industry partners, the company fosters unique Canadian voices and emerging, diverse talent from around the world. The company's award-winning documentaries include: *Eco-Pirate: The Story of Paul Watson* written and directed by Trish Dolman (2011), and *Indian*

*Horse* (2009), produced with industry veteran Christine Haebler, which went on to become the most successful Canadian theatrical release in 2018. *The New Corporation*, a sequel to the most successful Canadian documentary of all-time, premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2020. The company's projects have been screened at major international festivals, including Cannes, Berlin, Sundance, Hot Docs and TIFF and have been honoured by The Prix Italia, The Leo Awards, and the Canadian Screen Awards.

Over its 23-year history, Screen Siren has produced numerous treaty coproductions. Its international partners have included German producer Egoli Tossell Film, UK-based Scott Free Films, and Spanish-based sales agent Moonrise Pictures. The company has produced with a wide number of distributors, broadcasters and streaming platforms, including Sony Pictures Classics, Sony Worldwide, Elevation Pictures, eOne, Netflix, the BBC, Bankside Films, Wild Bunch, CBC, Bell Media/CTV, Crave, Channel Four, Showtime, Sundance Channel, Discovery Canada, documentary Channel, Knowledge Network, Corus/History Canada, TMN/MovieCentral, AETN, ARTE, ABC Australia, Vision TV, Superchannel, Al Jazeera among others.

## The Projects in Development

### Children of the Church

Screen Siren Pictures is currently developing two international coproductions, for which they are closing financing. Children of the Church is a minority coproduction, co-developed by Wildfire Films in Ireland, headed by Martha O'Neill, and Screen Siren Pictures (Trish Dolman).

Celibacy, fatherhood, love, lies and betrayal. These are the true stories of the legion of invisible sons and daughters of Catholic priests.

### Financing

Canadian financing includes a broadcast license from the CBC, and funding from the Canada Media Fund, the Rogers Documentary Fund, and Creative BC, through the Creative BC + Screen Ireland co-development financing initiative. The intent of this initiative is to foster film and television production between Irish producers and British Columbia producers. The ac-

tivities supported by this funding allowed Screen Siren Pictures to develop tangible material to move the project forward and generate broadcaster interest, which led to a Canadian broadcast license that in turn triggered further Canadian financing.

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has impacted the financing of the project. Production funding deadlines at the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) were pushed back, resulting in a delay in financing the Irish portion of the project.

### The Concert That Broke Up the Beatles

The Concert That Broke Up The Beatles is a majority Canada/France coproduction with Chapman Productions (Ontario) and Films à Cinq (France). Paris-based Films à Cinq is headed by Canadian and French producing duo Sally Blake and Martin de la Fouchardière, specializing in documentaries about science, cinema and art. Combining English- and French-language skills, Films à Cinq has built a far-reaching network of contacts in the international market, and involvement in numerous coproductions between French and English speaking countries. The company's work has been shown on major television networks, been nominated for Emmys, selected at Cannes and enjoyed cinema releases in North America.

Toronto, 1969. A Beatles in crisis. A concert promoter with a crazy idea. A renowned documentary filmmaker fighting for access. All these stories collided at one of the greatest rock concerts in history, which changed the music world forever.

## Financing

Screen Siren Pictures sought an international coproducer to help complete the financing of the film.

The film was licensed by Bell Media in Canada and subsequently pre-sold to ARTE, and obtained Canadian financing from the Canada Media Fund through the English Regional Production Bonus, the Rogers Cable Network Fund and the Rogers Documentary Fund. Coproducing with Films à Cinq is enabling Screen Siren Pictures to access the French-language market.

## Lessons Learned

International co-development initiatives are crucial to enabling new projects to get off the ground, and encouraging greater coproduction. The Creative BC co-development initiative with Ireland allowed both of the company's projects

to advance in development and move closer to production. The Creative BC + Screen Ireland initiative allowed Screen Siren to join the project's development in a meaningful way, by accessing crucial early stage development funding. The initiative enabled both projects to be developed with bigger budgets, international talent and subject matter, and access to international buyers through the coproducing partner's business relationships abroad.

Coproductions, especially across multiple time zones, can be challenging from a communications perspective. Films à Cinq, with a Canadian producer at its helm, ensured greater understanding of the rules of coproduction in the partner jurisdiction. Films à Cinq was therefore a natural partner on the project, given Canadian producer Sally Blake's familiarity with the Canadian market and documentary production context.



docorg.ca | info@docorg.ca  
@DOCorg  
facebook.com/Docorg