



Newsletter

Comments and procedure to participate
to the consultation launched by the CRTC
to review the Local Programming Improvement Fund (LPIF)

First of all : some explanations:

Created in 2008 by the Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) the Fund for the Improvement of local programming (LPIF) has set the **following objectives**:

- to ensure that viewers in smaller Canadian markets continue to receive a diversity of local programming – particularly local news programming;
- to improve the quality and diversity of local programming broadcast in these markets; and
- to ensure that viewers in French-language markets are not disadvantaged by the smaller size of those markets.

The LPIF will be financed through contributions paid by cable and satellite tv distributors. The contribution have been set to 1.5% of gross revenues from broadcasting activities of these companies. However, all these companies have billed their respective customers for that amount.

The CRTC had agreed to proceed to a comprehensive review of the LPIF in the third year of its operation. It will then be "maintained, modified or abandoned," says the CRTC.

The indicators of success identified by the Commission and that will be used for the review are the following:

- the number of original local news stories broadcast during the three years prior to the implementation of the LPIF and the number of original stories broadcast in each year of the Fund's operation;
- evidence of increased audiences to local news and other local programming, including comparisons with audience data from before the implementation of the LPIF;
- evidence of increased resources allocated to local newsgathering;
- evidence of the increased diversity of local programming offered; and
- other quantifiable evidence of audience satisfaction, such as public opinion polling.

Important questions to answer on the LPIF:

- Are the objectives of the Fund (mentioned above) are still relevant?
- Are there other objectives that the Commission should consider?
- Did viewers have seen an improvement in local news in their regional station? (More news, more newscast?)
- Did viewers have seen an increase in the number of local / regional programs on air in their regional station (other than local news : cultural programs, political debates, sports coverage etc. ...?)
- Has the political, cultural and social life of the region has improved since the introduction of the LPIF?

- Did the funds and their use by the broadcasters (like Radio-Canada for example) are sufficient to improve the life of the region?
- If it is the case, the improvement in the presence and coverage of CBC in your area has had an impact on other private broadcasters in your area? Did they improved as well?

Some elements that should be included in a presentation:

It is important to remember that the Local programming Improvement Fund is not just a way to remedy an inadequate funding of Radio-Canada CBC by government. This kind of argument will be put forward by those who oppose the LPIF

Fund financing must be useful to all broadcasters, both private and public ... all must have an equal access to this funding source.

Being a viewer or a local/regional organisation, emphasis should be placed on the practical value of the fund: do we have more news, more coverage, especially on weekends, public holidays, do we appear ourselves more often on TV; is there programs other than news that enhance our region: culture, sport?

The loss of funds could mean a reduction of local programming (news and other) in our region, considering the weakness of our local economy to spend more on advertising

Financial reports submitted by cable and satellite operators to the CRTC show that their level of profitability is strong and that the contribution to the Fund does not pose a financial problem. Especially since this amount is reflected in the bills of individual customers.

The past teaches us that the involvement of Canadians in these debates is extremely valuable for the CRTC who tends to listen to citizens, more than the unions.

What to do and how to do!

Whether you are a citizen or an organization, everyone should make sure to share it's opinion regarding LPIF to the Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission. By what means?

- **Submission to the CRTC:** providing further analysis. You do not have to appear to submit a brief point of view. Read the document "Consultation Notice"
- **Intervention to the CRTC** for a concrete example of the usefulness of the funds for the region. You must notify the Board prior to appear when filing the brief or letter.

- **Letter to the CRTC:** a simple letter, not very long to say that the region enjoys the benefits of local programming television stations, including Radio-Canada, and that you supports the funding and survival of LPIF.
- **Invite** your business, your organization to submit and support (in writing).

Useful links and addresses:

The CRTC Notice of Consultation is here:

<http://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2011/2011-788.htm>

Intervention, comment, answer form is here :

<https://services.crtc.gc.ca/pub/Intervention/Submission-Soumission.aspx?lang=e&EN=2011-788&ET=N#SEO>

Or see the end of the consultation document (above) and follow instruction

Other documents related to the LPIF:

<http://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2008/pb2008-100.htm>

<http://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2009/2009-406.htm>

Deadlines:

- **The deadline for filing interventions is 15 February 2012 (should be received by)**
- Public hearing commencing on **16 April 2012**

**Conference Centre, Portage IV, 140 Promenade du Portage,
Gatineau (Quebec).**