

## **Reelworld** officially unveils its groundbreaking **#HerFrameMatters Protocol Guideline** with the objective of transforming the Canadian screen industries

Announced at this year's **2024 Banff World Media Festival**, the protocol guideline will enhance diversity and representation and elevate Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour in Canadian media

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**Reelworld** is happy to announce the launch of the **#HerFrameMatters Protocol Guideline**, around the depiction of racially diverse women on screen, at the 2024 Banff World Media Festival. This pivotal research, conducted by the **Reelworld Foundation**, aims to revolutionize the historical practices of the Canadian screen industries by changing the stereotypical depictions of Black, Indigenous and Women of Colour in Canadian screen content; improving the working conditions of Indigenous and racialized women in our industry; and fostering the creation of more authentic and nuanced women characters on screen.

“Since the inception of film and television there have been and continue to be negative stereotypes of racially diverse women on our screens,” notes **Tonya Williams**, founder and executive director of **Reelworld Foundation** and **Reelworld Screen Institute**. “These images have had real-life consequences of increased violence and oppression of diverse women everywhere. It is time we do a deep dive and start creating authentic and well-defined depictions of Women of Colour.”

*“The Government of Canada is proud to support Reelworld Foundation's #HerFrameMatters Protocol Guideline, a significant step towards fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Canadian screen industries. This not only promotes authentic storytelling but also ensures that the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour are represented and respected. By supporting this important work, we are taking the necessary steps to a more inclusive and representative media landscape that reflects the diversity of our country.”* — **Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth**

The **#HerFrameMatters** Research Study and Protocol Guideline serve as a critical starting point for rethinking entrenched practices and mindsets within the industry. The study underscores the necessity of transforming the landscape to tell more genuine and nuanced stories involving Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour characters. Such changes will not only enhance these stories but also significantly improve the working lives of women within the industry.

In 2021, **Reelworld Foundation** received funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to create a Protocol Guideline for Canadian production companies, broadcasters, and

streaming platforms. This funding was aimed at changing the negative stereotypes of Black women, Indigenous, and Women of Colour in the content created for audiences.

**Reelworld Foundation**, with the support of **Reelworld Screen Institute**, has created this Protocol Guideline to benefit everyone in Canada's screen industries—both creators and consumers of Canadian content. This work conveys the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour based on collective lived experiences within the Canadian screen industries and an understanding of how industry practices have contributed to one-dimensional and stereotypical portrayals of women from underrepresented groups.

These protocols are culturally appropriate and ethical guidelines that will help comply with Narrative Positioning policies required by major funding bodies. Considering the ongoing efforts to modernize Canada's broadcasting framework by the **Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)**, these guidelines are timely and essential.

The Protocol Guideline, informed by the #HerFrameMatters **Research Study**, provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the unequal and unfair realities faced by Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour. Academic research consultant Dr. Patience Adamu, PhD, led the study, which uses an exploratory mixed-method research design where the qualitative data collection is done first, and the quantitative data collection is done afterward (with a broader audience) to test the insights gleaned in the first phase. Interviews were conducted with key informants from Canada's screen-based industries, followed by focus groups with creatives (defined as directors, producers, and writers) and performers. The final component of the qualitative research investigation was a collaboration with Ipsos to better understand women audiences. Next in the quantitative data collection was an industry survey, which was open for five months and shared widely with the industry.

Each section of the Protocol Guideline highlights key issues identified through the research and offers actionable directions on how to tackle these challenges. The guideline concludes with positive examples and guiding questions designed to help industry professionals make the best decisions for their productions, casts, and crews.

The Canadian film and television industry has recently made strides to ensure greater representation and more equitable access to the resources needed to tell Canada's stories, including those of Asian, Black, Indigenous, Latin, MENA (Middle Eastern and North African), and Women of Colour (henceforward 'Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour'). However, there is still much work to be done. Recent research, including the 2023 Women In View report, highlights the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indigenous and racialized women in the Canadian screen industries. The research further reveals that many Canadian women creatives and performers from underrepresented groups have faced tokenistic and performative industry efforts that are inherently harmful.

### **Key Insights and Motivations:**

1. **Empowering Authentic Storytelling:** The research emphasizes the importance of representing Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour characters in a more authentic and nuanced manner. This involves challenging stereotypes and ensuring diverse voices are heard and seen on screen.
2. **Industry Practice and Mindset Shifts:** To foster these authentic stories, it is crucial to change industry practices and mindsets. This includes reevaluating hiring practices, promoting inclusive policies, and actively challenging biases within the industry.
3. **Elevating Decision-Making Roles:** A significant component of this transformation involves increasing the presence of Black, Indigenous, and Women of Colour in higher-level decision-making positions within the Canadian screen industries. Their perspectives are essential for driving meaningful change and ensuring diverse stories are told.

The Reelworld #HerFrameMatters Protocol Guideline is now available to view and download on the Reelworld website, along with the Ipsos & Reelworld Audience Study. The Research Study will be available online shortly.

**Reelworld Foundation** urges industry stakeholders to embrace these guidelines as a tool for fostering equity in the Canadian screen industries. By implementing these protocols, we can create a more diverse, inclusive, and vibrant industry that accurately reflects the richness of Canadian society.

**For more information, and to access  
#HerFrameMatters, please visit:  
<https://www.reelworld.ca/research>**

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