



Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2025-193

PDF version

Reference: 2024-270

Gatineau, 1 August 2025

Public record: 1011-NOC2024-0270

Commercial Radio News Fund

Summary

Local news is important for Canadians to stay informed and involved in their communities. In many small communities, radio stations are the only source of local news.

As part of its broader regulatory plan to implement the modernized *Broadcasting Act*, the Commission determined in Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2024-121 that audio online services should be required to make base contributions to a new, temporary fund to support news production by commercial radio stations in smaller markets. It also determined that online streaming services should make contributions to independent television stations through the Independent Local News Fund. Together, these decisions will help to ensure that Canadians have access to local news.

As there was no funding mechanism that specifically supported local news production by commercial radio stations, the Commission invited the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) to file an operational plan to administer the new fund. The Commission launched a public consultation to examine the CAB's proposed plan in Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2024-270.

In this regulatory policy, the Commission approves the plan filed by the CAB for a new, temporary fund to be known as the Commercial Radio News Fund (CRNF), subject to certain modifications. The Commission requires the CRNF to be operational by **31 August 2025**.

In addition, the CAB must file with the Commission, by no later than **30 October 2025**, amendments to the plan relating to governance of the CRNF, the resolution of disputes relating to the fund, and outreach initiatives for stations that serve Indigenous and ethnocultural communities.

Introduction

1. In Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2024-121-1 and Broadcasting Order 2024-194, the Commission issued a decision and imposed orders requiring certain audio online

undertakings¹ to contribute 1.5% of their annual contributions revenues² to a temporary news fund for commercial radio stations operating outside the designated markets of Montréal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Ottawa-Gatineau.³ This fund would provide relief in radio markets where news programming needs are more pressing.

2. In addition, the Commission determined that the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) would be well placed to administer the fund. The Commission therefore invited the CAB to submit a detailed operational plan to administer a new temporary fund that would support news production by radio stations operating outside the designated markets and that would be operational starting in the 2024-2025 broadcast year (i.e., by 31 August 2025). The Commission requested that the plan:
 - demonstrate the CAB's capacity to administer the fund;
 - indicate the date the CAB expects the fund to be operational;
 - provide details related to fund governance, eligibility criteria, accountability measures, reporting requirements, and allocation method; and
 - provide details on the CAB's proposed outreach initiatives for the promotion of the fund to all eligible commercial radio stations, including stations serving ethnocultural and Indigenous communities.
3. On 4 July 2024, the CAB submitted its [proposed plan](#) for the operation of a fund to be known as the Commercial Radio News Fund (CRNF). In its 11 October 2024 response to a Commission request for information and in its intervention and reply, available on the [record for this proceeding](#), the CAB modified its proposed plan.
4. In Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2024-270 (the Notice), issued on 4 November 2024, the Commission called for comments on the CAB's plan for the operation of the CRNF.

Interventions

5. The Commission received over 40 interventions in regard to the proposed CRNF. Parties included various broadcasters, radio and online audio industry associations and

¹ Orders were issued in respect of online undertakings identified by the Commission that make \$25 million or more in annual contributions revenues (i.e., Canadian gross broadcasting revenues less any excluded revenue) and that are not affiliated with a Canadian broadcaster. The contents of those orders are reflected in Broadcasting Order 2024-194, appended to Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2024-121-1.

² As defined in the appendix to that regulatory policy.

³ These are all central markets as defined by Numeris (formerly, the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement).

advocacy groups, unions, and individuals. The interventions and replies are addressed below.

Issues

6. After examining the record for this proceeding, the Commission considers that it must address the following issues:
 - the CAB's capacity to administer the CRNF;
 - eligibility for CRNF funding;
 - the allocation and distribution of funding;
 - the limit on the amount of funding stations can receive;
 - fund governance and accountability;
 - the resolution of disputes;
 - measuring the use of CRNF funding;
 - the timeframe to review the fund;
 - the CAB's outreach plan; and
 - the date for the fund to be operational.

The CAB's capacity to administer CRNF

7. As evidence of its capacity to administer the CRNF, the CAB cited its history as a fund administrator, including for the Independent Local News Fund⁴ (ILNF).
8. Most interveners who addressed this issue⁵ agreed that the CAB has the capacity to administer the CRNF, with some citing its experience with the ILNF. However, the Forum for Research and Policy in Communications (FRPC) stated that it is unclear how the CAB's previous experience would help it administer the CRNF.

⁴ Since 1 September 2017, this fund has been available to support the production of locally reflective news and information by private independent television stations (see Appendix 1 to Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2016-224). In Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2024-121, the Commission designated this fund as a recipient of contributions from online undertakings carrying on audio-visual broadcasting activities. In Broadcasting Decision 2025-133, the Commission set out its decisions in regard to a review of the ILNF.

⁵ Groupe Radio Simard, C.J.S.D. Inc./Northwest Broadcast Ltd./North Superior Broadcasting Inc., Coopérative de travail de la radio de Granby, Friends of Canadian Media, Bell Media Inc., Arsenal Media Inc., the National Campus and Community Radio Association, the Conseil provincial du secteur des communications, Golden West Broadcasting Ltd. and Cogeco Inc. (Cogeco).

9. In the Commission's view, as expressed in Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2024-121, the CAB's previous experience with similar funds provides it with the capacity to administer the CRNF. The CAB has administered the ILNF since 2017, receiving monies from broadcasting distribution undertakings (BDUs) and distributing funding to eligible broadcasters. It reports on the administration of the ILNF annually to the Commission. The CAB has also demonstrated its capacity through the administration of several other funds.⁶ Accordingly, the Commission finds that the CAB has the capacity to administer the CRNF.

Eligibility for CRNF funding

10. The CAB submitted that all licensed commercial radio stations providing news and information programming and operating outside the designated markets should be eligible to receive CRNF funding.
11. The Commission finds that the CAB's proposed eligibility criteria are in line with the Commission's decision, set out in Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2024-121, that the temporary fund should support news production by commercial radio stations outside the designated markets. Accordingly, the Commission approves those criteria.
12. However, the Commission has considered the following in regard to a radio station's eligibility for CRNF funding:
- the provision of news and information programming or of local news;
 - participation of the station in the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC); and
 - various proposals for additional eligibility criteria.

Provision of news and information programming or of local news

Positions of parties

13. Various interveners emphasized the importance of local news.
14. In regard to defining "local news", Music Canada considered that an appropriate starting point would be the following description of "news" set out in the appendix to Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2022-333:

Content Subcategory 11: News: The recounting and reporting of local, regional, national and international events of the day or recent days, with particular emphasis on the topicality of the events or situations selected, or on the constant

⁶ The Local Programming Improvement Fund (discontinued), the Small Market Local Production Fund (replaced by the ILNF), and the broadcasting component of the Federal Government's COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund and COVID-19 Recovery News Support Fund.

updating of information, or both as well as background material about current events when included in newscasts but excluding weather, traffic and sports and entertainment reports.

15. According to the Conseil provincial du secteur des communications (CPSC), for news to count as local, it must be anchored in the station's region and produced and aired by a journalist on the ground in that region.
16. Friends of Canadian Media (FoCM) proposed that local news be considered a subset of local programming. It also proposed requiring radio stations to provide a minimum level of local news programming to be eligible for CRNF funding.

Commission's decisions

17. The Commission is currently reviewing and modernizing its policies for radio and audio streaming for Canada.⁷ In Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2025-52, the Commission questioned whether the definition of "news" was still relevant and whether it should consider adopting a different definition of "news programming" as a subset of spoken word programming. Given that these issues are yet to be determined, the Commission considers that it would be appropriate for the purposes of the CRNF, a temporary fund, to adopt a definition of "news" that corresponds to that for Content Subcategory 11: News, set out in the appendix to Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2022-333, as that definition currently exists. The Commission notes, however, that it may update this definition depending on the results of future processes that will examine news programming and production.
18. As to the question of whether the fund should focus on local news, the Commission is of the view that local news is a particularly important part of a station's local programming. The Commission also recognizes that national and international news are important for communities and that national and international stories can have local interest and impact. Given the current work being done to define "news", the Commission considers that limiting the CRNF to fund only local news at this time would be premature as it would be in advance of possible changes to both policy and the definition of "news" more generally.
19. Nevertheless, to emphasize the importance of using CRNF funding to produce local news, without placing limits on the types of news that the funding must be used to produce, the Commission expects CRNF funding recipients to use part of that funding to produce local news.
20. While there is no official definition of "local news" within the various radio policies, the definition of "local programming" set out in Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2022-332⁸ refers to "material of direct and particular relevance to the community served."

⁷ See Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2025-52.

⁸ Local programming includes programming that originates with the station or is produced separately and exclusively for the station. It does not include programming received from another station and rebroadcast

For the purposes of the above-noted expectation, the Commission will therefore define “local news” as news that is of direct and particular relevance to the community served by the radio station.

Participation in the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council

Positions of parties

21. C.J.S.D. Inc./Northwest Broadcast Ltd/North Superior Broadcasting Inc. (C.J.S.D. et al.), Unifor, the Coopérative de travail de la radio de Granby and the Ontario Association of Broadcasters (OAB) stated that radio stations should be participants in good standing with the CBSC to be eligible for CRNF funding. Both Unifor and the OAB considered that participation would help to ensure that stations receiving funding adhere to the highest journalistic standards. The FRPC, however, expressed concern over mandatory CBSC membership, given that there is a membership fee.⁹

Commission’s decision

22. The Commission notes that commercial radio licensees that originate 42 hours or more of programming in any broadcast week are required to adhere to the CAB’s *Equitable Portrayal Code* as a condition of service, which is suspended if they are a participant in good standing of the CBSC. Most commercial radio licensees are already participants in the CBSC. Requiring all CRNF funding recipients to be participants in the CBSC would help to ensure that the news supported by that fund is held to a standard of quality, in line with journalistic codes and practices. Finally, although there is a fee for membership, the Commission finds it reasonable to expect CRNF-funded radio stations to pay the fee.
23. Accordingly, the Commission requires the CAB to expand upon the approved eligibility criteria to specify that all funding recipients must be participants in the CBSC.

Proposed additional criteria for CRNF funding eligibility

Positions of parties

24. Certain interveners proposed additional criteria for eligibility to CRNF funding.
25. The FRPC proposed that stations should be required to submit the following:

simultaneously or at a later time; nor does it include network or syndicated programming that is five minutes or longer unless it is produced either by the station or in the local community by arrangement with the station. Licensees must incorporate spoken word material of direct and particular relevance to the community served in their local programming, which must include local news, weather, sports coverage, and the promotion of local events and activities.

⁹ This fee applies only to radio stations that are not members of the CAB. For CAB members, there are no additional fees to participate in the CBSC.

- a report to the CAB and to the Commission specifying the average weekly hours of first-run news broadcast in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 broadcast years; and
- a confidential report on their total spending on local news and on the number of their full-time reporters who reside in the communities served, for the same broadcast years.

26. Other interveners proposed additional eligibility criteria relating to, among other things, amounts spent on local news, the number of hours of local news produced, and employing local journalists.

Commission's decision

27. In the Commission's view, additional eligibility criteria would increase the administrative burden on radio stations and make the funding difficult to access. As set out in Broadcasting Regulatory Policy 2024-121, the fund supporting the production of news programming by commercial radio stations outside the designated markets should provide timely relief for these stations. A more elaborate set of eligibility criteria could reduce the fund's ability to do this.

28. In light of the above, the Commission does not consider it appropriate to adopt additional CRNF eligibility criteria as proposed by certain interveners.

Allocation and distribution of funding

29. According to the CAB, the allocation of CRNF funding in each broadcast year should be proportional to the total salaries and wages paid by each station for producing news in the previous broadcast year. This information is recorded in a form that must be provided to the Commission by radio stations whose ultimate owner has annual revenues of \$5 million or more (Form 1130). The CAB proposed that all eligible stations be required to provide it with a copy of that form.

30. The CAB further proposed requiring radio stations whose ultimate owner has annual revenues of less than \$5 million (and that are therefore not required to file Form 1130 with the Commission) to provide their news remuneration data directly to the CAB.

31. According to the CAB's plan, the flow of the funding would be as follows:

- The CAB would receive the contributions to the CRNF from the online undertakings by 31 August, the end of the broadcast year.

- The CAB would calculate the allocations in September of the next broadcast year. The specific amounts to be disbursed would be based on the spending data from the annual returns submitted in November of the previous year.¹⁰
- The distribution of the funds (including all interest earned while the funds are held in trust) would begin the following October. The CAB did not specify the month of the next disbursement but stated that the funds would be disbursed on a biannual basis.¹¹

Positions of parties

32. Various broadcasters,¹² the OAB and the FoCM supported the CAB's allocation method. The FoCM added that the CAB could include a mechanism that would allow the smallest underserved markets, which may not have local television or print news providers, to receive a greater proportion of funding.
33. Golden West Broadcasting Ltd. submitted that staffing local news production in all remote markets is not viable, and that news expenditures should therefore reflect not only salary and wages, but also expenditures used to source relevant local news. According to Arsenal Media Inc. (Arsenal), while news expenditures are an appropriate allocation method for the ILNF given its small pool of eligible stations, this would not be the case for the CRNF with its much larger pool of eligible stations.

Commission's decision

34. In the Commission's view, requiring radio stations whose ultimate owner has annual revenues of \$5 million or more to provide the CAB with Form 1130 would reduce additional administrative burden for the station and avoid subjectivity that could affect the use of the allocation formula. This would also act as an accountability measure for radio stations and for the CAB, given that the CAB and the Commission will receive the same forms from those stations.
35. In regard to the CAB's proposal that radio stations whose ultimate owner has annual revenues of less than \$5 million provide news remuneration data to it directly, this would result in the Commission not having access to the same data as the CAB. To address this issue, the Commission will add a news remuneration line to the form that each of these radio stations must file with the Commission (Form 1135). To apply for

¹⁰ This data is provided to the Commission by radio stations by no later than 30 November following each broadcast year. Radio stations would also submit this data to the CAB.

¹¹ The CAB explained that its proposal to make disbursements biannually reflects that the contributions to the fund are required annually. Further, it stated that biannual disbursements would allow it to address any legitimate adjustments that contributors (or third parties involved in the calculations) may identify or request after initial payments are received, processed based on the allocation formula established by the Commission, and paid out to recipients.

¹² Radio CHNC, Cogeco, C.J.S.D. et al., Coopérative de travail de la radio de Granby, Coopérative Radio Web Média des Sources, and Groupe Radio Simard.

CRNF funding, these stations will be required to share a copy of that form with the CAB.

36. However, this modification to Form 1135 will not have been in place for the 2023-2024 broadcast year annual returns, which were filed with the Commission in November 2024. Given that the CAB proposed to use the returns from the 2023-2024 broadcast year to determine funding allocation for the 2024-2025 broadcast year, radio stations whose ultimate owner has annual revenues of less than \$5 million should instead provide the CAB with a copy of Form 1110, for the 2024-2025 broadcast year. Line 32¹³ of Form 1110 can then be used to determine allocation for the 2024-2025 broadcast year for those stations. Beginning in the 2025-2026 broadcast year, radio stations whose ultimate owner has annual revenues of less than \$5 million will be required to submit a copy of Form 1135 to the CAB in order to apply for CRNF funding.
37. In regard to the FoCM's proposed mechanism for the smallest underserved markets to receive greater funding, the Commission notes that the CRNF will serve smaller markets to the exclusion of the larger markets. Further, as funding will be allocated according to each eligible radio station's news remuneration expenses, each station will bear some responsibility for the amount of funding it receives. Finally, as discussed below, the limit on the amount of funds eligible stations receive will help to ensure that smaller markets receive a fair distribution of funding. For these reasons, the Commission does not consider it appropriate to require the CAB to amend its plan to align it with the FoCM's proposal.
38. In regard to the CAB's plan for the distribution of funding, the Commission finds that the plan will help to ensure that funds are distributed as quickly as possible to all eligible stations.
39. In light of the above, the Commission approves the CAB's plan for the allocation and distribution of CRNF funding, with the filing adjustments noted above.

Limit on the amount of funding stations can receive

40. The CAB initially proposed that a station or a group of stations operated by the same licensee in a given radio market not receive more than 12% of CRNF funding in any given broadcast year.¹⁴ However, in its intervention, the CAB stated that a 12% market cap might be too high and asked the Commission to choose a cap that would ensure a reasonable and fair distribution of funding that reflects an individual station's spending on news.

¹³ "Journalists (included in remuneration reported above)".

¹⁴ The CAB proposed this level as a starting point, in the absence of data that would enable it to assess the impact of different caps.

Positions of parties

41. Music Canada considered that setting a limit on the amount of funding stations receive would ensure that platforms are not disproportionately contributing to the news expenditures of any one station.
42. Interveners generally opposed the CAB's proposed 12% funding cap, with several¹⁵ considering the level to be too high. The FoCM proposed a per market/group funding cap of 1% (based on its estimated annual monetary value of the CRNF and its knowledge of the commercial radio market), given the unlikelihood that any group in a market would reach a 12% cap.

Commission's decision

43. To address the CAB's proposal and concerns expressed by interveners, the Commission considered various options, including basing a funding limit on historical spending by radio stations on news production, on the radio market in which recipient stations operate, and on ownership of radio stations.
44. A limit based on historical spending on news would be based on an incomplete data set given that not all stations have historically been required to submit this data. Given this, the Commission finds that it would not be appropriate for the funding limit to be based on historical spending on news.
45. In regard to setting a funding limit based on radio market, the Commission notes that a radio market can be defined in different ways.¹⁶ Further, an individual undertaking's radio market will not necessarily align with a region's radio market. Moreover, a radio station may have a presence in more than one market, and a licensee may have more than one presence in a regional radio market. The CAB does not have the information to determine which stations belong to which markets. For these reasons, the Commission finds that it would not be appropriate for the funding limit to be based on the market(s) in which a licensee operates a radio station or stations.
46. Unlike the ILNF, for which the funding limit applies to individual television stations or groups of stations in a market, radio industry ownership is more fragmented and spread across many markets. The Commission finds that an approach that applies to an ownership group (which may include one or more licensees) would account for changes in market dynamics and presence in a market(s) following transfers of ownership of radio stations.

¹⁵ C.J.S.D. et al., Arsenal and the FoCM.

¹⁶ As specified in the *Radio Regulations, 1986*, in the case of an AM station, "market" means the AM daytime 15mV/m contour or the central area as defined by Numeris, whichever is smaller. In the case of an FM station, market means the FM 3mV/m contour or the central area as defined by Numeris, whichever is smaller.

47. The Commission also finds that it would be appropriate for an ownership group-based funding limit to apply nationally, rather than within a specific market as proposed by the CAB and by the FoCM. In the Commission's view, issues noted above in regard to a radio market-based limit would also apply to a regional- or provincial/territorial-based limit.
48. In the Commission's view, it would be appropriate to limit the amount of funding for any ownership group to 12% of the CRNF funding available each broadcast year. This would capture the ownership groups with the largest shares of radio revenues outside of the designated markets, while providing room for most ownership groups to increase their current spending on news. Further, this limit would act as a preventative measure should significant ownership group consolidation occur in the future, thereby helping to ensure that funding remains available to smaller radio stations and groups.
49. In light of the above, the Commission requires the CAB to establish a limit on the amount of funding that any ownership group nationally can receive in any broadcast year equal to 12% of the total funding available from the CRNF for that broadcast year. The Commission also requires the CAB to amend its plan for the CRNF accordingly.

Fund governance and accountability

50. The CAB stated that no formal governance structure needs to be established for the CRNF given that its allocation method is based on a clear and objective mathematical formula. According to the CAB, it would be sufficient for the fund to be under the oversight of its Director of Finance and Administration and for normal professional financial controls to apply.¹⁷ The CAB added that it would provide CRNF funding recipients with reports that set out the percentage of funding received, by station.
51. The CAB further stated that it would charge a yearly administrative fee covering various costs (such as banking, audit, and the administrator's time and effort), which would be equal to a maximum of 1% of the value of the fund or \$125,000, whichever is less.

Positions of parties

52. Interveners¹⁸ generally agreed with the CAB's proposed oversight of the fund. Music Canada, however, submitted that the plan does not provide an appropriate governance structure or sufficient reporting requirements to ensure proper accountability and transparency for a fund of the CRNF's magnitude. In its view, the Commission should closely oversee the fund to ensure responsible management of the contributions.

¹⁷ These controls refer to the processes that make for a good internal financial control environment. They include process review procedures, control total verifications, dual approvals, bank reconciliations and segregation of duties.

¹⁸ Cogeco, Coopérative Radio Web Média des Sources, Groupe Radio Simard, the OAB and the FoCM.

Similarly, the Digital Media Association (DiMA) considered the CAB's governance plan to be insufficient and argued that additional accountability measures are required. It recommended that a non-profit organization be established as a governing body for the fund.

53. The National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA) called for additional accountability measures (aimed at the accountability of CRNF recipients) to be added to the CAB plan. It stated that stations must be compliant with their conditions of service¹⁹ and not be in arrears with their Canadian content development (CCD) contributions.²⁰
54. Cogeco Inc. (Cogeco) and Coopérative Radio Web Média des Sources considered the CAB's proposed administrative fee to be appropriate.
55. In its reply to interventions received, the CAB stated that the formal governance structure proposed by Music Canada and the DiMA is unnecessary, reiterating that the funding will be distributed based on a simple mathematical calculation.

Commission's decision

56. The Commission notes that the governance structure for the CRNF, as proposed by the CAB, includes only members of the CAB. As such, it excludes various groups from having a say in the governance of the fund. This creates the possibility that the fund's administration may appear to be self-serving.
57. The Commission therefore requires the CAB to file, by no later than **30 October 2025**, an amended governance structure for the Commission's review. The amendments must set out how the CRNF's governance will represent parties outside of the CAB, including contributors to the fund, journalists, non-members of the CAB, and other independent interested parties.
58. Further, stakeholder engagements involving CRNF recipients, interested parties and contributors could foster transparency. The Commission considers that this would be an important mechanism for presenting the activities of the fund and would serve as a space for discussions. It would also provide greater transparency and accountability on the funding and progress of the fund to recipients and to contributors that are not represented by the CAB. Accordingly, the Commission requires the CAB to initiate stakeholder engagements, such as semi-annual meetings, involving CRNF recipients (including non-members of the CAB), contributors and interested parties.²¹

¹⁹ Supported by the FRPC and C.J.S.D. et al.

²⁰ Supported by the FRPC.

²¹ Reporting on stakeholder engagements is addressed below.

Resolution of disputes

59. The CAB proposed that the CAB CEO Radio Council (the Council) review any discrepancies and disputes that may arise in regard to CRNF funding. The Council is composed of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and senior executives of various radio groups in Canada, all of whom are elected by CAB radio members.²²
60. The CAB added, however, that it does not expect disputes to arise, given the precise criteria tied to spending on news that would be used to calculate disbursements.²³

Positions of parties

61. Groupe Radio Simard and Arsenal proposed that an independent member be added to the Council. In its reply, the CAB stated that in any dispute involving a station that is not a member of the CAB, a non-member will be invited to join a Council meeting. It further proposed that, as a final resort, disputes could be referred to the Commission for resolution.
62. The FRPC stated that the Council does not reflect the diversity of Canada's commercial radio stations and considered that using the Council to regulate the fund could be perceived as self-interested or self-serving. The FRPC proposed, instead, that the Commission settle disputes or invite proposals for an alternative means of dispute resolution.

Commission's decision

63. The CAB's proposed dispute resolution mechanism does not address potential conflicts of interest when it comes to the Council and potential complainants. In the Commission's view, the CAB must ensure that the dispute resolution mechanism it adopts is free from conflicts of interest and includes a mechanism for resolution that is independent of the Council.
64. The CAB's proposal to invite a non-member of the CAB to a Council meeting when a dispute involves a non-member would provide visibility in the process to members and non-members. It would also help to address the FRPC's concern that the Council does not reflect the diversity of Canada's commercial radio stations. The Commission notes, however, that the CAB did not specify how this non-member will be chosen, or how conflicts of interest will be avoided in this process.

²² According to the CAB's bylaws, the Council is responsible for all matters that relate to the private radio industry. These include determining policies and procedures with respect to the particular interests of the radio sector; establishing annual plans and priorities and the corresponding detailed budget; allocating the radio retransmission royalties received from the Canadian Broadcasters Rights Agency; allocating all other radio sector funds in accordance with the budget approved by the board of directors; and appointing committees of members as needed from time to time.

²³ The CAB noted that in the more than ten years of administering the ILNF and the Small Market Local Production Fund that preceded it, no disputes have arisen.

65. Finally, the Commission will not act as a dispute resolution body for the CRNF. It does not act in this capacity for other funds, and such Commission involvement could be seen as wading into the administration of the fund, which is not permissible under the *Broadcasting Act* (the Act). The Commission notes, however, that the CAB's dispute resolution mechanism does not account for disputes that may require a secondary mechanism for resolution, independent of the Council (in the case where a dispute cannot be resolved by the Council to the satisfaction of the complainant, for example).
66. In light of the above, the Commission requires the CAB to file, by no later than **30 October 2025**, an amended CRNF dispute resolution mechanism plan for Commission review. The amendments must set out a secondary mechanism for dispute resolution, independent of the Council, and must address concerns relating to conflicts of interest and provide further details on the CAB non-member that will be invited to Council meetings whenever a dispute involves a CAB non-member.²⁴

Measuring the use of CRNF funding

67. The CAB proposed to model the CRNF annual reports it will file with the Commission on those it files for the ILNF. These reports would include details on the funding amounts received and allocated. The CAB would file the reports by 30 November of each year and include a redacted version for public release that excludes the revenue information of certain entities.
68. Due to its concern over increased administrative burdens for radio stations, the CAB did not propose requiring radio stations to report on how funding they receive is used to meet the CRNF's objectives.

Positions of parties

69. C.J.S.D. et al., Cogeco and the OAB agreed with the CAB's proposed reporting requirements. While certain interveners opposed what they considered to be onerous reporting requirements,²⁵ several considered that the CAB should nevertheless require additional information from recipients.²⁶
70. The NCRA and the FoCM stated that it would be appropriate for CRNF funding recipients to provide qualitative reports on how they used the funding. The OAB noted, however, that narrative information is difficult to measure and evaluate. It proposed that to collect qualitative data, the Commission could instead conduct telephone interviews with a small sample of recipient stations across the country.

²⁴ Reporting on Council meetings regarding disputes is addressed below.

²⁵ The FoCM and C.J.S.D. et al.

²⁶ The NCRA, the FoCM, Music Canada, Unifor, the FRPC and the DiMA.

71. In regard to quantitative reporting by CRNF funding recipients, interveners including Music Canada, Unifor, the FoCM and the NCRA proposed various requirements relating to employment of news personnel, local news expenditures, and the number of hours of local news broadcast.
72. The FoCM, supported by the NCRA, stated that the CAB should provide aggregate local news full-time equivalent counts (split by in-market and out-of-market), aggregate annual expenditures to local news, and aggregate annual hours to local news. In addition, noting that the amount of funding received by recipients should be made publicly available, the FoCM questioned the CAB's plan to provide the public with a redacted version of its report.
73. According to the OAB, if further reporting requirements are imposed, they should be integrated into stations' existing annual returns to the Commission. The CAB agreed with this proposal.

Commission's decision

74. In the Commission's view, a CRNF annual report would act as an important accountability tool for the CAB, contributors to the fund and funding recipients. The report should allow the Commission to ensure that the CRNF is receiving the correct amount of funding and is distributing the funding appropriately. Accordingly, the Commission finds it appropriate to approve the CAB's annual report proposal, but with certain modifications and adjustments.
75. As part of its an annual report to be filed with the Commission, the CAB must include the following information:
- the total funding amount received from all online undertakings;
 - the total funding amount received from each individual online undertaking to the extent that this information is available to the CAB;
 - the total amount of funding distributed to all radio stations;
 - the total amount of funding distributed to each radio station and to each radio ownership group;
 - the CAB's administrative fee;
 - a summary of any meeting held on disputes; and
 - a summary of the CAB's stakeholder engagements (including a list of the participants) involving CRNF recipients, interested parties, and contributors.

76. The Commission considers that it would be appropriate for the CAB to submit a redacted version of its annual report for public release that excludes the revenue information of certain entities.²⁷
77. The CAB must submit its annual report (including the redacted version) by no later than 30 November each year, beginning in 2026, and address it to the Audio Policy Sector. Further, the CAB must submit the report (full and redacted versions) electronically by using the secured service My CRTC Account (GCKey and Partner Log In) on the Commission's [Forms and My CRTC Account](#) webpage and by completing the [Broadcasting and Online News Act Cover Page](#). Instructions on [submitting applications and other documents using My CRTC Account](#) are also available on the Forms and My CRTC Account webpage.
78. Reporting on the use of funding by CRNF funding recipients will allow the Commission to better understand the impact of the fund and will make evaluating the fund easier at the time of its review. However, the Commission is mindful of the administrative burden that reporting may place on radio stations. As such, the Commission considers that reporting requirements should only be imposed as necessary to achieve the above objectives.
79. As of the 2024-2025 broadcast year, the Commission requires all radio stations to report on the average number of journalists they employ. This provides the Commission with information on salaries and wages for news production and on the number of journalists impacted by this spending. The Commission will require radio stations to continue providing this information as part of their annual returns.
80. Further, reporting by radio stations on the average number of hours of news they broadcast in a broadcast week will help the Commission evaluate the impact of CRNF funding and would be helpful when the time comes to review the fund. Accordingly, the Commission will be requiring radio stations to report on the amount of news they broadcast each broadcast week as part of their annual returns, using the definition of "news" specified in paragraph 14 above.
81. In regard to local news, given that, as noted above, the Commission is currently reviewing and modernizing its policies for radio and audio streaming for Canada, and given that it may redefine "news" as an outcome of the proceeding initiated by Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2025-52, it does not consider it appropriate to require specific reporting on local news.
82. Finally, the Commission will require radio stations to report, as part of their annual returns, the amount they received from the CRNF each year.

²⁷ The CAB must submit the redacted version in accordance with section 25.3 of the Act and by following the procedure for the filing of confidential information with the Commission set out in Broadcasting and Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-961. Further, the CAB must follow the common practice when filing reports: contributions made by companies that file aggregate returns should be published, while contributions made by companies that do not file aggregate returns are confidential and should be redacted.

Timeframe to review the CRNF

83. The Commission asked in the Notice whether three years would be an adequate timeframe for reviewing the CRNF.

Positions of parties

84. The FoCM and the Coopérative de travail de la radio de Granby supported the proposed three-year timeframe. The Coopérative Radio Web Média des Sources proposed an annual adjustment to the CRNF up until the three-year review, to ensure that it is adequately funded.
85. The OAB and Music Canada, among others, proposed shorter timeframes for a review of the CRNF. According to the Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA), the fund should be reviewed in as short a timeframe as possible and should be dissolved after three years of operation.

Commission's decision

86. The Commission notes that the ILNF was originally established with a review timeline of five years. In the Commission's view, a review timeframe of less than three years would make it difficult to evaluate the CRNF. Although the Commission originally proposed a three-year review in the Notice, it considers that this may not provide sufficient time to measure the impact of the fund. A five-year timeframe would allow for a more comprehensive review of the CRNF, as it would allow the Commission to better document and understand the fund's impact before determining whether it should be continued or dissolved.
87. In light of the above, the Commission intends to review the CRNF five years after its implementation.

Outreach plan

88. The CAB stated that it would promote the CRNF's availability through a variety of means, including media announcements, posting on social media and on its website, and through its industry newsletter. The OAB supported the CAB's plan to reach commercial radio stations, including those serving Indigenous and ethnocultural communities. It added, however, that the Commission could send a notice to all commercial licensees about the available funding.
89. The Act sets out various policy objectives relating to Indigenous peoples, equity, diversity and inclusion.²⁸ In the Notice, the Commission requested that the CAB's

²⁸ See, for example, subparagraphs 3(1)(d)(iii.1), 3(1)(d)(iii.6), 3(1)(d)(iii.7), 3(1)(d)(iii.11), 3(1)(i)(ii.1) and 3(1)(i)(ii.2).

outreach initiatives promote the fund to all eligible commercial radio stations, including stations serving Indigenous²⁹ and ethnocultural communities.

90. The Commission notes, however, that the CAB's currently proposed outreach plan relies on standard means of outreach, without outlining what specific steps will be taken to ensure outreach to radio stations that serve Indigenous communities and ethnocultural communities.
91. Accordingly, the Commission requires the CAB to file, by no later than **30 October 2025**, for Commission review, amendments to the plan for more robust outreach initiatives. The amendments must specify the specific outreach initiatives that the CAB will undertake to ensure that stations serving Indigenous communities and ethnocultural communities are informed of the CRNF. These additional efforts will serve to contribute to the objectives of the Act.

Date for the CRNF to be operational

92. In the Notice, the Commission stated that the new fund should be operational starting in the 2024-2025 broadcast year. The CAB indicated that it would be prepared to meet this timeline.
93. Certain interveners³⁰ stated that the fund should be operational during the 2024-2025 broadcast year, while others³¹ stated that the fund should be implemented as soon as possible.
94. In light of the above, the Commission requires the CRNF to be operational by **31 August 2025**.

Conclusion

95. In light of all of the above, the Commission approves the plan filed by the CAB for a new, temporary fund to be known as the Commercial Radio News Fund, subject to the amendments set out in this regulatory policy.
96. For ease of reference, the Commission has set out in the appendix to this regulatory policy the requirements relating to amendments to the plan that the CAB must file with the Commission.

Secretary General

²⁹ Indigenous radio stations are not eligible to receive CRNF funding as they are not commercial radio stations. However, they have access to funding that can be applied to news production through the Local Journalism Initiative, which is administered by the Community Radio Fund of Canada.

³⁰ Groupe Radio Simard, Coopérative de travail de la radio de Granby, and Arsenal.

³¹ Klondike Broadcasting Ltd., Byrnes Communications Inc., Bayshore Broadcasting Corporation, Radio CHNC and Vista Radio Inc.

Related documents

- *Review of the Independent Local News Fund*, Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2025-133, 9 June 2025
- *Notice of hearing – The Path Forward – Supporting Canadian and Indigenous audio content*, Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-52, 20 February 2025, as amended by Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-52-1, 24 March 2025, Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-52-2, 4 April 2025, Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-52-3, 15 April 2025, and Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-52-4, 26 May 2025
- *Call for comments regarding the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' proposed plan for the operation of a temporary fund supporting local news production by commercial radio stations in smaller markets*, Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2024-270, 4 November 2024
- *The Path Forward – Supporting Canadian and Indigenous content through base contributions – Finalization of conditions of service*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024-121-1 and Broadcasting Order CRTC 2024-194, 29 August 2024
- *The Path Forward – Supporting Canadian and Indigenous content through base contributions*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024-121, 4 June 2024
- *Revised content categories and subcategories for radio*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2022-333, 7 December 2022
- *Revised Commercial Radio Policy*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2022-332, 7 December 2022
- *Policy framework for local and community television*, Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2016-224, 15 June 2016
- *Procedures for filing confidential information and requesting its disclosure in Commission proceedings*, Broadcasting and Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-961, 23 December 2010

Appendix to Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2025-193

Amendments to the plan that the Canadian Association of Broadcasters must file with the Commission

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) must file with the Commission, by no later than **30 October 2025**, the following amendments in regard to the Commercial Radio News Fund (CRNF) plan:

- **Governance structure**

The amendments must set out how the governance of the CRNF will represent parties outside of the CAB, including contributors to the fund, journalists, non-members of the CAB, and other independent interested parties.

- **Dispute resolution mechanism**

The amendments must set out the secondary mechanism for dispute resolution, independent of the CAB CEO Radio Council (the Council), and must address concerns relating to conflicts of interest and provide further details on the CAB non-member that will be invited to Council meetings whenever a dispute involves a CAB non-member.

- **Outreach initiatives**

The amendments must specify the specific outreach initiatives that the CAB will undertake to ensure that stations serving Indigenous communities and ethnocultural communities are informed of the CRNF.