

# A National Data System and Benchmarking for Racial Equity

## Summary Report

October 2023



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Written by the Racial Equity Media Collective (REMC) - October 2023



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## About this Report

At the heart of REMC's mandate is a commitment to equity for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour creators in Canada's film, television, and digital media industries. Fueled by research and rooted in community engagement, the REMC's mission is to remove barriers to access and increase the production, export and sustainability of BIPOC content and BIPOC-led production companies.

This report seeks to establish clear, research-informed guidelines and targets for the future of the Canadian screen industry. It calls on major public agencies to harmonize their data strategies to create a national data system, and urges the wider implementation of equity targets and quotas.

## How We Got Here

Our inaugural report, published in 2021, underscored the need for quantitative data to measure racial inequity in the Canadian screen sector. The report culminated in a set of core recommendations, including the need to:

- **Implement a national data system that collects data and reports on racial equity in Canada’s screen sector; and,**
- **Design and implement a system of targets and quotas that would increase representation across Canada’s screen sector.**

With these goals in mind, this research project seeks to action these recommendations by providing clear guidance to the industry on the potential design and implementation of a national data system, as well as the design and implementation of targets, quotas, and equity policies.

Over the last year, with support from **Nordicity**, the REMC held over 40 conversations with stakeholders across the Canadian screen industry, including: national, provincial, and territorial funders, broadcasters, professional associations, unions and guilds, festival and industry events, BIPOC sector organizations, policymakers, and producers.

Since our first report was published, the **Online Streaming Act** has come into force, modernizing the Canadian broadcasting system by expanding regulation to encompass online streaming services. The REMC has been at the forefront of advocacy efforts to ensure that the Act also incorporates key equity mandates, which provide legislative impetus for the recommendations laid out in this report.

Those mandates include:



**Consideration of demographic data, including data concerning the participation of Black and other racialized persons in the Canadian broadcasting system;**



**Engagement with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous partners, governing bodies, broadcasters, creators, producers, industry organizations and community members;**



**Engagement with Black and other racialized communities regarding the most appropriate tools to support these communities;**



**Development of measurable targets to support the creation, availability and discoverability of programming made by members of Black and other racialized communities; and**



**Regular and transparent monitoring and reporting.**



# The Current Landscape of Race-Based Data Collection

When our first report was published, organizations across the industry were starting to collect data to track and report on race and other social identities. This effort lacked consistency and the ad-hoc nature of this data collection meant that there were some problematic practices being employed with little transparency as to how data was being used.

Since that time, there has been significant momentum towards change. There is now broad acknowledgement of the need for a safe and effective system to facilitate the collection, monitoring and reporting of data. Industry leaders are having active conversations on how to move forward and there is growing interest in using tools such as target or quotas to increase meaningful representation of equity-deserving groups.


Across our conversations with stakeholders, we learned that sector leaders recognize the impact of data collection to:

- **Develop a baseline of information;**
- **Spur action to increase equity;**
- **Streamline industry processes;**
- **Centralize leadership; and,**
- **Support the development of other equity initiatives.**

With growing acknowledgement of the necessity for data collection, monitoring and reporting across the Canadian screen sector, several organizations have begun collecting and reporting on race-based data.

Three systems stand out as models to build upon or emulate:

1  CMF's PERSONA-ID

2  Creative BC's CIERA

3  Statistics Canada's Culture Satellite Account

# Noteworthy Data Collection Systems

	What it's For	How it Works	Data Sharing
PERSONA-ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures aggregated data across all CMF programs for CMF to obtain a detailed picture of who is applying for funding and working on funded projects.</li> <li>• Used to determine eligibility and compliance with targeted programs, incentives, and requirements.</li> <li>• As of 2023, all shareholders and corporate directors of applicant production companies applying to the CMF must submit their PERSONA-ID number with their application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creators fill out self-identification questionnaire. Once submitted, a unique PERSONA-ID is assigned and shared with the applicant production company to complete CMF application.</li> <li>• Applicant production company does not see or have access to any self-identification information linked.</li> <li>• Allows individuals to share information privately, securely, and directly with CMF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the time of this report, PERSONA-ID is in its second year of data collection and data from the first year was not yet available to be shared.</li> </ul>
CIERA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proprietary tool used to produce annual impact estimates for the province's creative sector.</li> <li>• Used in BC and Nunavut.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three indicators—total GDP, Direct Output, and Total Jobs—are reported annually based on Statistics Canada public datasets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results have been analyzed and shared in three annual impact reports, including most recently 2021-22.</li> </ul>
Culture Satellite Account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proprietary tool used to better measure economic importance of culture, arts, heritage and sport in the Canadian economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures GDP and jobs in the cultural sector on national and provincial level.</li> <li>• Captures international trade of culture products.</li> <li>• Developed by Statistics Canada and supported by multiple federal and provincial departments/agencies, including Canadian Heritage, Telefilm, and Ontario Creates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrates and synthesizes data from a variety of sources including industry surveys, administrative and tax data, into an economic database. Does not include demographic data on individuals working in the cultural sector.</li> </ul>



# Challenges, Learnings & Solutions

Research revealed a clear appetite for a national data system, but the specific needs and concerns of organizations vary. Nordicity examined the most critical conversations, highlighting key challenges, learnings, and potential solutions.

The following key challenges were identified:

- **Governance**
- **Technical Integration**
- **Privacy**
- **Categories & Terminology**
- **Use**
- **Community Trust**

While the challenges and solutions canvassed in the full report are more detailed, see the below charts for easy reference:

	CHALLENGES	LEARNING & SOLUTIONS
GOVERNANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficult to assess which organization(s) are best positioned to lead the system given the interwoven nature of Canada's screen sector.</li><li>• There is no single organization within Canada that can mandate data collection across all relevant industry actors.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is precedent: The <u>Women in Production</u> initiative successfully increased female representation in Canada's screen sector.</li><li>• A steering committee could lead discussion and governance of a data system, addressing gaps across federal government bodies and making decisions swiftly.</li><li>• Robust and transparent compliance frameworks could be created to set out roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including what data is disclosed and to whom.</li><li>• Creating an arms-length non-profit organization to act as a trusted third party would mitigate the valid mistrust that equity-seeking groups have with existing bureaucratic structures.</li></ul>

# Identified Challenges, Learnings and Solutions for Creating a National Data System

## CHALLENGES

## LEARNING & SOLUTIONS



### TECHNICAL INTEGRATION

- There is a need to ensure that information is safely and securely stored.
- How to integrate the system with other organizations' existing systems?
- Need to adopt user-friendly design.

- Learn from existing IT infrastructure, including PERSONA-ID and Statistics Canada systems.
- Create a robust IT architecture which prioritizes security and protection of sensitive personal information.
- IT infrastructure must consider which organizations have access to data and at what level.
- Wherever possible, de-identified or anonymized data should be used in accordance with any relevant provincial laws.



### PRIVACY

- Must protect individual identities and incorporate clear consent.
- Privacy regulations vary between jurisdictions across the country.
- Identity data cannot be traced back to the individual.
- Certain organizations may require granular information to be able to carry out their mandates.

- Clearly disclosing purpose and use of data collection to Individual users should be part collection framework.
- There must be an established process for Individuals to be able to provide, withdraw and modify consent, The process should clearly communicate these nuances.
- There must be a clear definition and communication regarding who has access to which data and why.
- Data collection processes must be malleable enough to address varied and regional privacy legislation.
- Lessons from other industries can help navigate challenges, namely the [Ontario Public Service](#) and the [Canadian Research Chairs Program](#). Both organizations set thresholds for releasing aggregate data to safeguard privacy breaches.
- Must not rely on data protection as an excuse not to take action.

# Identified Challenges, Learnings and Solutions for Creating a National Data System

## CHALLENGES

## LEARNING & SOLUTIONS



### CATEGORIES AND TERMINOLOGY

- Must use inclusive, appropriate, and best-practice identity terminology.
- Must balance individual autonomy over one's identity with having standardized, comparable data across organizations.

- Questions related to terminology must involve representatives of equity-seeking communities.
- Create a system of layered definitions for individuals to have the option to self-identify at broader or more specific levels and only share necessary data.
- Create a system to revisit terminology periodically to adjust to the changing nature of language.



### USE

- A much broader scope for the system is preferred and should extend beyond the film and television industry.
- Consultations must move beyond performative action and toward achieving a cultural change.
- Decision-making processes must be reflective of and informed by community needs.

- The final model must use transparency and clear communication about what data is collected and for what purpose.
- Organizations should be able to tailor the data for their needs.



### COMMUNITY TRUST

- Need to adopt a new, trust-based approach to data collection.

- Establish a foundation of trust with communities through consistent communication driven by transparency and respect.



# Guidelines for Targets, Quotas & Other Equity Tools

Targets and quotas are increasingly being used in the Canadian and global screen industries to address underrepresentation and have proved to be especially powerful tools in the context of gender parity initiatives. Going forward, it is important to design and implement such tools carefully and with due regard to intersectionality in order to ensure they do not yield unintentionally disproportionate impacts for particular groups.

To facilitate just outcomes via the use of equity tools, the industry can establish key principles that will serve as guidelines to inform target and quota-setting:

- ✓ **Developing targets and quotas informed by sound data collection and consultation;**
- ✓ **Recognizing that population distribution offers an entry point to target setting, but underscoring that there is a need to go beyond population metrics and acknowledge historical injustice;**
- ✓ **Setting goals that are realistic**
- ✓ **Evolving targets in step with industry changes;**
- ✓ **Recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all standard across the country;**
- ✓ **Acknowledging that production hubs tend to have larger BIPOC representation (Toronto, Vancouver, etc.); and**
- ✓ **Ensuring that goal-setting is undertaken sensitively to avoid negative industry repercussions.**



# Implementation



## Buy-In

In implementing these changes, we need to ensure there is broad support, buy-in, and special consideration, especially from and for our allies: Indigenous peoples who may be impacted, and communities in French Canada.

Building buy-in for a national data system and equity targets and quotas will require trust from those that have historically been systematically excluded. **Building trust within communities through effective communication and transparency about process and data protection is key.** Additionally, strategies must clearly communicate the benefits of equity tools. The push for buy-in must come from all sides, including policymakers, unions, and guilds.



## Indigenous Peoples

Initiatives focused on collecting data on Indigenous peoples require extensive research, [consultation](#) and partnership. While we did not do a deep dive into Indigenous data governance and sovereignty, the research does underline a few key considerations:

- Core principles of self-governance and self-determination are fundamental to Indigenous peoples and their experiences;
- There is an amplified need to develop a pipeline from recruitment to retention for the indigenous community;
- There is a need to protect intellectual property ownership and narrative control for Indigenous creators; and,
- The funding and tax credit systems should be made more flexible and inclusive for Indigenous creators.

Further research and consultations with key stakeholders, including the Indigenous Screen Office and the First Nations Information Governance Centre are necessary to **ensure these initiatives are sensitive and appropriate.**



## French Canada

French-language minority communities require special consideration when being incorporated into equity initiatives. Notably, **language and terminology around equity is an important consideration.** Franco-Canadians rarely use concepts such as “BIPOC” and “racialized” and so there is an added layer of complexity to their participation in a national data system.

It is important to also note that stakeholders in Quebec’s film and television industry are operating in a sensitive political environment that has **less acknowledgement of underrepresentation and discrimination.** They do not collect data on key creative positions, and they are not currently using targets or quotas. Without key demographic data, they will need to expand or shift their scope of data collection. Encouraging them to do so must be handled delicately and may receive pushback.



# Recommendations

As we look to the future, we recommend a **7-step approach to implement a national data system and adopt industry equity tools**. This approach ensures feedback is collected and incorporated with ongoing learning, testing, and piloting.

## Coordination of the National Funders and Policymakers

1

- National funders and policymakers should take formal steps to harmonize their data collection practices. Given successful buy-in to date, CMF's PERSONA-ID is a strong candidate to serve as the model for such a national data system.

## Stakeholder Engagement

2

- BIPOC community groups should come together to be part of the design and implementation of the national data system.
- A national survey should be conducted to collect feedback from current and future users of the system.
- There should be additional consultations with funders, broadcasters, and gatekeepers to address lingering concerns.

## Creation of an Independent Non-Profit

3

- A non-profit organization should be formed to house the national system. It should mitigate concerns about sharing personal and sensitive information.
- The non-profit should be sustained through stable core funding as well as license fees paid by funders and broadcasters.
- The organization should be governed by a board.

## Incorporation by National Funders and National Benchmark Study

4

- The three national funders (CMF, Telefilm, & NFB) should be the first to incorporate the national data system.
- A study should be undertaken to develop a baseline of representation across national funders.

## **Design and Implementation of Targets for National Funders**

**5**

- The national funders should adopt the principle that “in order to get public money, you must look like the public” through the design and implementation of targets and quotas.
- Targets and quotas ensure meaningful representation.

## **Provincial and Territorial Funders and Broadcasters**

**6**

- An innovative marketing campaign should be implemented across the country. Transparency and impact should be highlighted.
- Major funders and broadcasters should set industry-wide targets based on – at a minimum – population metrics.

## **Expanding the Scope**

**7**

- The National Data system should be expanded to other parts of the film and television industry.
- It should also be expanded beyond the film and television industry.
- The national data system should be expanded to include tax credits and all other public funding provided to creative industries.



# There's (Much) More Work to be Done

A national data system must operate with integrity, involve community members in its conception, design, and implementation, and must take into consideration the special circumstances that different stakeholders have. Additionally, the accompanying equity targets and policies must also be sensitive to the needs of stakeholders while focusing on research-informed targets decided through community consultation.

Implementing this system and these targets will be the lion's share of the work in creating systemic change in Canada's screen sector, but we are optimistic that our industry is up to the challenge.

As this much-needed work progresses, it will be essential that BIPOC communities have a leadership role in the building, housing, and implementation of such systems. REMC is prepared to continue representing the BIPOC communities through data collection and community engagement.



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## Summary Report

Read the full report at [www.re-mc.org/research](http://www.re-mc.org/research)

Email: [admin@re-mc.org](mailto:admin@re-mc.org)



### Racial Equity Media Collective

The REMC is a national not-for-profit organization committed to equity for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) creators in Canada's film, television, and digital media industries. Fueled by research and rooted in community engagement, the REMC's mission is to remove barriers to access and increase the production, export and sustainability of BIPOC content and BIPOC-led production companies.



### Nordicity

Nordicity helps governments make better policy and deliver better services, companies grow and make smart investments, and all our clients make informed, evidencebased decisions. We give our clients the tools they need to adapt, evolve, and thrive in an ever-changing market.

Nordicity is a group of professionals with diverse backgrounds and deep knowledge in their respective fields. In addition to our core team, we draw on our extensive network of associates and partners who add local experience and subject matter expertise.



### Canadian Media Fund

The Canada Media Fund (CMF) fosters, develops, finances and promotes the production of Canadian content and applications for all audiovisual media platforms. The CMF guides Canadian content towards a competitive global environment by fostering industry innovation, rewarding success, enabling a diversity of voice and promoting access to content through public and private sector partnerships. The CMF receives financial contributions from the Government of Canada and Canada's cable, satellite and IPTV distributors.

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