

## **Canada's Guest-of-Honour Campaign for the 2021 Frankfurt Book Fair: Recommendations for Heritage Canada, the Canada Council, and Livres Canada Books**

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### **Summary**

We are researchers at Carleton University who have been working for more than two years on an analysis of the Government of Canada's guest-of-honour campaign for the Frankfurt Book Fair. Our particular interest has been in the ways that this campaign engaged publishers—and particularly the nation's eight Indigenous-owned and -operated publishing companies. Dr. Mason published some initial thoughts on the campaign's branding in the fall 2021 issue of [The Literary Review of Canada](#) that may be of additional interest. A longer version of our study will be published in the American journal [Book History](#) in 2023.

Our research question was as follows: if Frankfurt is a fair for publishers and if “reconciliation” was a key term associated with the guest-of-honour campaign, why were the nation's Indigenous-owned and -operated publishers almost completely invisible at the 2021 fair? Analyzing the guest-of-honour programs that were specifically designed to aid publishers and evaluating the questionnaire responses we received from three Indigenous-owned publishers (Eschia Books, Éditions Hannenorak, and Inhabit Media), we identify the limitations of these programs and enumerate the ways that the campaign might have better served Indigenous-owned and -operated publishers.

The following is a list of our key recommendations:

To place production at the forefront of a federal campaign like the guest-of-honour initiative would mean, in a general sense, leveraging the visibility the campaign affords to highlight the nation's many small publishers. In a more specific sense, it would mean:

- 1) **Establishing targeted translation funding programs** (like the Canada Council's “Incentive for Purchasing Translation Rights and for Publishing in German”) **that**

**eliminate the Big Four** (Penguin Random House [Simon & Schuster], Macmillan, Hachette Book Group, and HarperCollins) **from eligibility**.

- 2) **Ensuring that export development assistance programs** (crucial forms of support for cash-strapped Indigenous-owned publishing companies) have **eligibility regulations that deliberately *include* Indigenous-owned publishing companies**; we recommend adding the Canada Council's Creating, Knowing and Sharing grants to the list of programs that render publishers eligible for export development assistance.
- 3) **Creating specific communications for Indigenous-owned publishers so that they are aware of the federal assistance available**.