

**UPDATE REPORT TO THE YUKON FILM COMMISSION REVIEW
STEERING COMMITTEE**

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General Status:

- 31 interviews completed
- Interviews have been excellent. People have been supportive and candid and are committed to building the film and sound recording industries.
- Research on other jurisdictions has begun.
- Existing reports have been reviewed.
- Next week will concentrate on the research of other jurisdictions and completing the last of the interviews.

Key Themes and Comments Emerging from the Interviews:

Comments on the Current Operation of the Yukon Film Commission

- The basic principles and operation of the Yukon Film Commission has been a success in the past. Its simple and flexible rebate program has been effective and is one of the most innovative in the country. For example, its turn around times are significantly faster than some other jurisdictions. The financing model is effective. The Yukon Film Commission has many successes to its credit.
- Staff are working hard but the operation is currently without direction or focus. The commitment and work of the current staff should be recognized. They are working under very difficult circumstances and without clear direction from government.
- There is no marketing focus. While there is a sense of who the major competition is, there is no analysis or clear competitive strategy. The operation does not have a strong or targeted marketing approach and it is unclear who they consider to be their primary market. This has made efforts unfocussed and they do not currently market in any real way. Participants used words like “we are off the radar screen”, “we are no longer in the game”.
- There are no mechanisms in place to build on repeat business by conducting client satisfaction or “revisit” or “repeat” initiatives to bring back clients from the past.
- There are mixed accountabilities and sometimes a confusion of roles between the Film Commission and NIFIVIA. For example, certain databases which belong in

the purview of the commission because they service the location end of the spectrum do not exist inside the commission.

- Location management policies or lack thereof create a significant need to establish strong guidelines of hiring and service acquisition. The Yukon is in a very unique position in Canada. Its size and nature of development means it must manage issues of confidentiality and potential or perceived conflict of interest in a way that no other jurisdiction in Canada, with the exception of the other northern territories, has to. There is a strong theme of “have’s” and “have nots” in the industry which is potentially very divisive. There are conflicting themes of hiring the best and most experienced and giving people developmental opportunities.
- The Film Commissioner position is a pivotal position for the organization and the number of changes have been very damaging to the organization. This key leadership position will drive the success of the organization. Leadership, strategic thinking, extensive knowledge and the ability to work with and be ultimately accountable to government and the Yukon taxpayers is pivotal. The changing and lack of consistent leadership is a key issue that must be addressed. Current staff are working very hard but ostensibly “without a net” and without a clear context or direction.
- There is no current mechanism outside of arts funding to support sound recording production and development.
- The Filmmakers Incentive Program was viewed very positively but its means are so limited that it can not be considered to be a major industry development tool at this time.
- There has been training but the approach is somewhat fragmented. A clear, concise and well-developed human resource development strategy is needed.
- Issues of accountability exist. Administrators and industry alike noted examples of lack of flexibility, slow responsiveness and difficulty in getting the appropriate permissions which hampered the organization.
- The library and resource role has been effective.

Comments on a Role for the Development of the Indigenous Film and Sound Recording Industries and the Future of the Film and Sound Recording Industries in the Yukon

- There are great opportunities in both film and sound in the Yukon. Participants described their industries as “on the verge of something great”, “ready to make it to the next level”, “positioned for great things.” In film there are significant strengths and depth developed through location work although the intermittent nature has hampered skill development. On the independent side there are a

number of well positioned companies, but a clear strategy for “above the line” development must exist. The lack of support for indigenous development has meant that the skill set is stronger for skills at the location level and that industry development should be a strong focus for areas like directors, producers, associate producers, director’s of photography, writers and other above the line skills.

- Sound recording is well positioned with a relatively strong, albeit self described “fledging” and “developing” industry with “great potential”. There is a great sense of opportunity and a strong singer-song writer tradition in the Yukon which is an essential ingredient to success. There are a number of recording studios, labels and artists managers and form a strong core to start from.
- Location work and support for indigenous development should be viewed as two aspects of a comprehensive industry strategy and not as competitive. They are two sides of the same coin and can be linked to create major industry opportunities.
- Interviewees overwhelmingly stated the need for a strong role within the commission to support indigenous film and television and sound recording development. Specific needs include:
 - Development support
 - Training and mentoring
 - Production support in equity financing or other mechanisms in film
 - Production support for sound recording
 - Marketing support
- There must be a recognition that staff supporting these areas represent different areas of expertise. Sound recording is vastly different from film and cannot be delivered by the same person.
- Support for the industries should recognize where the industries are at and not be based on unrealistic expectations. The support should range from developmental to more expert. There should be the recognition of a significant developmental focus with the capability to finance larger productions as they develop.
- Industry associations have identified the need for core funding.
- There is an even greater role for the commission which interviewees called for: a key leadership role which encompasses the following:
 - Developing a strong industry vision with the industry which will build industries over the next decade which are stable and are responsibly grown. There is a concern that “fast and loose” approaches “irresponsible expectations” should be avoided.

- Being an advocate with federal funders.
- Working with broadcasters such as CBC North.
- Working with other partners such as festivals, educational institutions.
- Being a supportive catalyst for things like a Circumpolar Film Festival.
- Working with the industry associations and in close collaboration.
- Being able to work in a government context and navigate through the necessary Estimates and Treasury Board processes.
- Serving as a resource for the industry in terms of industry information, marketing information and serving a strong supportive role to the developing parts of the industry. This would mean an enhanced library and other resource roles.
- Serving as a “one stop shopping” centre for film and sound recording.
- Being a voice on the national and international scene given the nature of both industries.

Comments on the Structure

- The following features were viewed as key to making an enhanced organization successful.
 - Knowledge and expertise
 - Ability to attract/retain a CEO at industry rates and to be competitive
 - Flexibility
 - Responsiveness
 - Accountability to the government and to the taxpayer
 - Access to decision makers in government at such a level where there is significant influence
- The current operation was viewed as “stuck” but there is recognition that current staff are working hard and under difficult circumstances without clear direction. Structure viewed as hampered by bureaucratic structure and making it a client centred organization factored heavily in this discussion.
- There is virtually no support for retaining the Yukon Film Commission as a fully functioning government run organization. Industry participants pointed to issues of responsiveness, flexibility and knowledge and expertise and key drivers in their opinions. A few people felt it could go back to the Arts Branch or to an external Tourism organization but these were the minority.
- There is strong support for moving it to arms length but there are varying opinions about how far out it should be placed – as an agency reporting to or as a separate organization or non-profit corporation. Most participants agreed that there must be mechanisms to ensure strong accountability to the government and to the

taxpayer. Numerous participants pointed to a Management Board which would include government representation as well as industry and strong and established mechanisms of reporting. Majority agreed that accountabilities should be removed at the day to day operational level but ensured at the larger policy and financial accountability level within a clearly defined framework.

- There must be a role for industry which ensures industry representation in policy and guideline but ensures that there are clear Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Guidelines. The Yukon Film Commission operates within a relatively small industry and this is an extra responsibility for governance.
- The CEO or head position was viewed as pivotal and their skills and leadership are critical to the success of the Yukon Film Commission.