



# Redefining the Concept of Export Competitiveness for Canadians:

## Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2019 Budget

By the Banff World Media Festival



## List of recommendations

The Banff World Media Festival recommends that the federal government:

**Recommendation 1:** In keeping with its sweeping plan to strengthen and expand cultural exports: provide sustained, stable and adequate funding to support Canada's creators and cultural entrepreneurs committed to enabling increased global success.

**Recommendation 2:** Ensure that, in the rollout of its Creative Export Strategy, all involved fully take into account the powerful synergies for cultural export development that can be achieved through dynamic industry interaction with foreign industry decision-makers right here in Canada (as well as abroad).

**Recommendation 3:** Expand its partnership with BANFF with an investment of \$1 million per year for three years for our new Diversity of Voices Market Initiative, a proven, up-and-running support program for both emerging and mid-career Canadian creators with a specific focus on Indigenous, Francophone and women professionals.



## **Introduction**

The Banff World Media Festival (BANFF) is enthusiastic about the government's creative and export-focused goals and appreciates the opportunity to take part in consultations for the 2019 federal budget.

As host of Canada's largest and most important global conference and marketplace for the media content industry, we view this as a key moment for Canada's creative sector as the government builds and strengthens export opportunities and this country's cultural presence on the world stage.

We believe BANFF, with its established place at the heart of Canada's national TV/digital business and a strong existing international profile, is an ideal partner for the federal government as it aims to accelerate Canada's highly valued and world-renowned media industry at home and particularly in the fast-expanding global export market.

BANFF's year-round media development programs and annual Festival are redefining the concept of export competitiveness for Canadians. BANFF has a proven record of success as an ideal space to build and further relationships, find production partners and green-light new projects to be produced, sold and distributed both in Canada and abroad.

With unparalleled opportunities for networking with potential international partners, the BANFF marketplace is designed to help Canadians translate development and production concepts into global success stories. Given the importance of global cultural exports in the federal government's plans, we hope the value of linking Canada's creators with industry decision-makers from around the world in a high-energy, interactive setting will be fully recognized, wherever the meetings take place.

The goals of the federal government are in keeping with the longstanding goals of BANFF, which for 39 years has been considered not just a lifeline for the Canadian independent production community, broadcasters and the production service companies that support the development of new content, but an essential access point to the international entertainment and media industry.

BANFF is a not-for-profit international media and entertainment event owned by the Banff Television Festival Foundation and produced by Brunico Communications Ltd. In addition to the annual four-day Festival, BANFF has evolved to become a year-round endeavour. This includes the launch of two additional events in Toronto and Los Angeles, an online networking platform (BANFFXchange), and two highly respected Rockie Awards events — the International Program Competition, which sees participation from over 40 countries annually, and the esteemed Rockies Gala, which has a strong legacy honouring the most accomplished executives and talent in the global media industry.

BANFF is also coordinating with the federal government in its diversity goals, in particular with our Diversity of Voices Initiative program, which provides Indigenous, Francophone and women professionals with the opportunity to gain essential industry access and training by attending the annual Festival.



## **Fund Canada's creators for global success**

Recognizing that Canada's broadcasting, media and cultural industries add \$48 billion a year to the economy, the government is committed to an overhaul of this country's digital content regime and has prioritized Canada's media sector as a source of innovation, middle-class jobs, exports and economic stimulus.

Given the quality of Canada's creative output, the potential for expansion of such content sales abroad and the contribution to the economy through international financing partnerships are unlimited if the sector can benefit in these endeavours from the adequate support of the federal government.

BANFF is in a unique position to assist in the pursuit of these economic goals and work with the federal government to move Canada's creative output to a new, higher level, with the aim of helping Canadian television and digital media producers develop the connections, expertise and capabilities needed to greatly expand exports globally. But predictability is vital to growth. Stable and adequate funding is needed to ensure Canadian creators have success not only at home, but also globally.

**Recommendation 1: In keeping with its sweeping plan to strengthen and expand cultural exports: provide sustained, stable and adequate funding to support Canada's creators and cultural entrepreneurs committed to enabling increased global success.**

## **BANFF brings the world to Canada**

We very much appreciate the manner in which the government has heeded the sector's call for a more diverse set of funding opportunities for leading export organizations such as BANFF. This is of utmost importance if our creative industries are going to be able to fulfill expectations of reaching new thresholds of overseas activities and exports.

Export competitiveness is an over-arching and fundamental objective at BANFF, both in our year-round media development projects and especially at the annual, four-day Festival.

Each year, the flagship event in Banff, Alta., attracts 1,500+ delegates, including leading figures in the entertainment industry from Canada and abroad. We welcome delegates from more than 25 countries to the Festival annually, and generate global consumer and media trade industry press, highlighting Canada as a key place to do business, and Canadian creators as competitive in the global market.

In 2018, the festival hosted delegations from the UK, Australia and China, joining attendees from across Europe, Asia, Latin America and the United States. Business leaders from around the world attend each year to buy programming, fund projects and partner with Canadians, resulting in the global export of Canadian media content.



With in-depth spotlights on key international territories and extensive pre-booked face-to-face meetings with industry decision makers, BANFF delegates annually advance or sell \$1.7 billion worth of deals in a dynamic environment of business-to-business interactions.

As we like to say, BANFF brings the world to Canada. To expand on the government's recent Creative Export Strategy announcement, it's not only abroad "where the business relationships are being built, the deals are being made, and the jobs are being created" for the creative sector. Export success is also being generated at scale right here in Canada—through BANFF.

It is vital that the government, as it assesses its best funding options under the Creative Export Strategy, keep in mind that up-and-running, effective business development operations here in Canada can, with the proper funding and focus, provide the expertise and global reach needed to help quickly maximize the government's export goals.

Of particular value, BANFF's operations are teamed with those of Playback, Canada's production, broadcasting and interactive media information outlet. Playback's community engagement platform provides year-round dialogue delving deeper into topics raised through BANFF, with issues-driven and creator-centric content overseen by respected industry journalists. This partnership leverages a highly engaged readership: 5,000 quarterly print subscribers, 10,000 daily newsletter readers and 200,000-page views per month.

Overall, our capabilities would allow BANFF to work closely with the federal government and Canada's Trade Commissioner Service to target specific sales and development in 16 emerging markets such as China, India and Brazil, and in developed markets such as Japan, Australia and Europe. It's why the government should reimagine what export means. Not only can Canadian businesses go abroad to sell, but international businesses can come here to buy. Export is two ways.

**Recommendation 2: Ensure that, in the rollout of its Creative Export Strategy, all involved fully take into account the powerful synergies for cultural export development that can be achieved through dynamic industry interaction with foreign industry decision-makers right here in Canada (as well as abroad).**

## **Partnering with the federal government to expand diverse Canadian voices**

In keeping with the federal government's aim to make Canada more inclusive, BANFF's new Diversity of Voices Initiative gives established and mid-career Francophone, Indigenous and women producer/creators the opportunity to take part in the annual Festival. As part of this experience, they gain access to bespoke training and valuable networking opportunities with key industry decision makers.

This year, 88 people took part in the wider program and a select 25 participated in the intensified Diversity of Voices Pitch Program, where they also received individual



mentorship from media leaders, and private pitch meetings with international buyers at the festival. The benefits of this initiative are threefold: essential training and access for under-represented groups; supporting the creation of new cultural media projects representing diverse viewpoints; and a meaningful economic impact as the impetus for new projects to be financed, produced and exported. The program is already functioning well and adds an exciting, inclusive element to the Festival. We would very much like to expand and improve Diversity of Voices so that the valuable, unmatched opportunities it provides can be increased and so that the program can also be extended to more participants, and potentially additional under-represented groups, resulting in even more industry and cultural impact.

**“THIS MULTI-YEAR INITIATIVE WILL ENSURE THAT HUNDREDS OF UNDER-REPRESENTED CANADIAN CREATORS AND PRODUCERS GAIN THE INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRY ACCESS, INFORMATION AND RELATIONSHIPS THAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED IN THE GLOBAL CONTENT MARKET.”**

*—JENN KUZMYK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BANFF WORLD MEDIA FESTIVAL*

With additional funding, this program could be enhanced, intensified and made more affordable for participants. For instance, being able to support more travel costs would assist participants who are required to pay their own transportation to Banff. As well, the Festival would be able to grow the depth and breadth of the program, ensuring all participants have even greater access to individually designed training and one-on-one interaction with media leaders. There is also great potential to expand the program’s mentorship and professional development opportunities year-round, giving participants even more all-important opportunities to introduce their ideas and projects to buyers from around the globe.

We believe strongly in the wide-ranging values of this initiative and appreciate the support of the federal government in making this public-private initiative a success. To launch the program in 2018, we received valuable support from the Canada Media Fund, the Indigenous Screen Office, la Société de développement des entreprises culturelles and Netflix.

We believe the Diversity of Voices Initiative has successfully proven that it can provide strong, immediate impact that gives practical, hands-on experience and business opportunities of unmatched value to the participants, thus amplifying the federal government’s aims to support artistic and cultural activity by Francophone, Indigenous and women creators and producers. It also gives them important support in acquiring the connections and experience needed to break into the export market, a goal that also meshes with federal policy.

For all these reasons, we would recommend the federal government consider raising its funding participation to increase the scope of the program and the number of people who could benefit from it annually.



**Recommendation 3: Expand its partnership with BANFF with an investment of \$1 million per year for three years for our new Diversity of Voices Market Initiative, a proven, up-and-running support program for both emerging and mid-career Canadian creators with a specific focus on Indigenous, Francophone and women professionals.**

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in the 2019 pre-budget consultations. We at BANFF are striving to ensure that our on-going media development programs and annual Festival maximize the ability of Canadian television and digital media producers to expand their reach and overseas sales potential. We are demonstrating that this can be accomplished by tapping into export opportunities right here in Canada with as much, or possibly even more, success than doing so abroad. Bringing the world to Canada pays dividends for all involved.