

# **Review of Creative Saskatchewan**

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## **Consultations with Stakeholders**

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## Introduction

Creative Saskatchewan was established in 2013 to provide support to the creative industries in Saskatchewan. In its strategic plan, Creative Saskatchewan states its purpose is to raise the profiles of creative industries and assist them in becoming a more dynamic creative force locally, nationally and internationally and to make a significant contribution to the Saskatchewan economy through the commercialization of their products. After nearly twenty months in operation, government decided it was time to conduct a review to determine if Creative Saskatchewan was fulfilling its mandate.

The creative industries referred to in this report represent the creative disciplines supported by Creative Saskatchewan through legislation. These include: music and sound recording, film and television, interactive digital media, visual arts and craft, writing and book publishing and live performing arts.<sup>1</sup> They are represented by provincial creative industry associations including: SaskBooks, SaskGalleries, Saskatchewan Craft Council, SaskMusic, Saskatchewan Interactive Media Association (SIMA) and the Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association (SMPIA). Each has been recognized by government and its agencies to receive operations funding to support their roles as representatives of professional creative industry sectors.

This review was coordinated by the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport (PCS). The review involved two streams of inquiry: background research and consultation. In the first stream, government officials conducted summaries of previous studies related to Creative Saskatchewan, the agency's legislation, strategic plan, annual report and Creative Saskatchewan's achievements so far, including grant dispersals. In the second stream, to reduce the possibility of bias, facilitators were hired to conduct consultations with Creative Saskatchewan's board and staff, creative industry associations, applicants, non-applicants, trade contacts and event clients. Facilitators conducted one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions to maintain confidentiality and objectivity in data collection; the data summaries were also reviewed by the facilitators for accuracy.

This report is a summary of the above-mentioned historical studies and consultations.

It is intended to illuminate Creative Saskatchewan's strengths and areas for development going forward.

# 1 A Spectrum of Support for Creative Industry

Every cultural product, whether a piece of art or fine craft, a film, a book, a sound recording, a video game, a live performance or a community activity, follows a cultural product value chain (see Diagram 1). In Saskatchewan, key players have roles:

- SaskCulture fosters cultural activity in communities to create awareness, participation, multicultural perspectives and social development;
- The Saskatchewan Arts Board promotes arts creation, arts education, arts experience and professionalism in the arts to build audiences and fuel cultural product development;
- Creative Saskatchewan stewards sector development through planning, professional development and funding for operations, production, marketing, sales and distribution; while
- Creative industry associations champion the creative professionals in their sectors throughout the value chain, by providing member services such as promotion, marketing, market export, industry-specific professional development and more.

The cultural product value chain is a continuum of supports that fosters a creative product from its inception to distribution, building audiences and consumers along the way, as seen in Diagram 1. This spectrum of activity is part of the ecology of the creative sector with linkages between each player and layer of activity that creates a whole. While supports for cultural product development are supposed to flow smoothly along this value chain, there have been challenges, mainly related to coordination of funding and a need for clarity of roles and responsibilities, as discussed later in this report in the section on consultations.

## Support for Creative Industries in Saskatchewan

While SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board have historically provided support for the creative industries, it is only in recent years that an emphasis on creative economy and the potential contributions via creative industry associations has come to the fore. Having said that, there has long been support in Saskatchewan for an entity like Creative Saskatchewan, to provide stewardship to help the creative industries grow, as part of the culture sector. This aligns with the provincial cultural policy, *Pride of Saskatchewan*, published in 2010. As part of policy implementation, government intended the provincial cultural funding partners to work together to create a spectrum of support for culture and the creative industries, as depicted in Diagram 1.

This work would be guided by goals one and five in the provincial policy related directly to the support of the creative industries:

*Goal 1. Foster artistic excellence and promote creative expression by providing support to artists and cultural workers, from emerging to established.*

Relevant outcomes:

- Artists and cultural workers achieve artistic and creative excellence;
- The culture sector provides viable career opportunities; and
  - The intellectual property rights of artists are protected.

**Diagram 1 - The Cultural Product Value Chain**



*Goal 5. Increase economic potential of the culture sector by facilitating commercial opportunities.*

Relevant outcomes:

- Creative industries, organizations, artists and cultural workers achieve their commercial goals;
- High quality cultural products have brand recognition, sales and market opportunities provincially, nationally and internationally;
- A symbiotic relationship exists between tourism and culture in which the vibrancy of one sector strengthens the other;
- Where appropriate, Saskatchewan's First Nations and Métis cultural products are accessible to a growing audience; and
- There are partnerships between culture, business, technology and educational institutions which allow for and encourage creative activity and innovation that fuels our economy.<sup>2</sup>

Other cultural policy goals related to the mandate of Creative Saskatchewan include:

- *Goal 3. Build access to culture, to increase cultural participation and ensure the contribution culture makes to the province, is understood and valued – i.e. vital to cultural identity and the economy.*
- *Goal 4. Build strong organizations by enhancing their capacity to support cultural activity and development – i.e. to facilitate a business environment, grow jobs and economic capacity.*

Pursuing these goals requires careful coordination between the three provincial cultural funding partners and the creative industry associations who support the creative industry. The funding provided by SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board, to programs, initiatives and organizations, fuels cultural and creative activity by the citizens of Saskatchewan. This in turn, influences the development of audiences that will consume cultural products and the growth of creative professionals in our province, who look for support from Creative Saskatchewan.

## 2 Creative Industry Associations in Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan’s cultural policy, *Pride of Saskatchewan*, describes our provincial creative industries as “the business and people involved in the production, distribution and marketing of cultural goods and services that have aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional appeal to the consumer and value in the marketplace.”<sup>3</sup> The creative industry associations in Saskatchewan “play a vital role in the continued strength and growth of their respective industries.”<sup>4</sup>

They accomplish this through support programs, professional development, marketing initiatives and championing their industries, which provides them with various levels of influence over industry development. Some are more mature than others and are funded at different levels.

Each of the creative industry associations is a not-for-profit organization governed by a board of directors and serves a membership. They also belong to national and international organizations that represent creative industries.

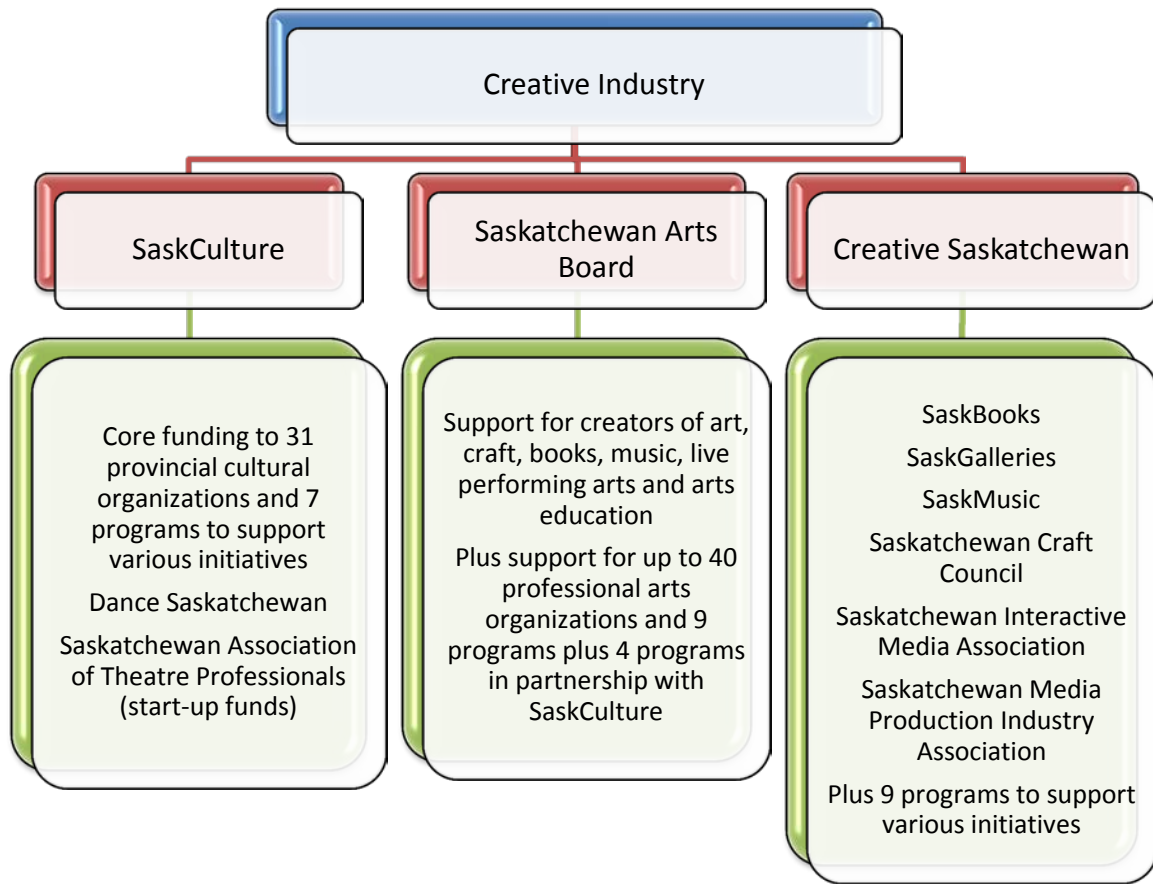
### Funding for Creative Industry Associations

Not all of Saskatchewan’s creative industry associations are currently funded by Creative Saskatchewan; Dance Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Association of Theatre Professionals have not yet been funded by Creative Saskatchewan for either operations or projects. Creative Saskatchewan provides core funding to SaskBooks, SaskGalleries, SaskMusic, the Saskatchewan Craft Council, Saskatchewan Interactive Media Association (SIMA) and

Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association (SMPIA) and to their members for the back-end of the value chain for marketing and export.

SaskCulture provides core funding to Dance Saskatchewan. Last year they also provided start-up funds to the Saskatchewan Association of Theatre Professionals, which is now in discussion with Creative Saskatchewan for core funding. The Saskatchewan Arts Board provides funding to artists and creators of various genres at the front end of the cultural product value chain (see Diagram 1). The current funding structure for creative industry associations is depicted in Diagram 2.

**Diagram 2 – Saskatchewan Creative Industry Funding Structure**



**SaskBooks - Saskatchewan Publishers Group**

Saskatchewan Publishers Group (SaskBooks), established in 1989, is an umbrella organization promoting Saskatchewan books and the book publishing industry. Saskatchewan publishers produce award-winning, professionally-designed and printed products by Saskatchewan, Canadian and International writers. Each year, more than 100 books are published, promoted and marketed. SaskBooks serves its members through ongoing communication, supporting a variety of publishing business models, researching, planning and implementing joint projects such as marketing reports, databases, and sales presentations at industry events, publisher catalogues and book displays.<sup>5</sup>

### **SaskGalleries - Saskatchewan Professional Art Galleries Association**

The Saskatchewan Professional Art Galleries Association (SaskGalleries) was established in 1999, to work collectively to promote their industry, artists and cultural product, selling the art of Saskatchewan, national and international artists. The mandate is to promote, develop and encourage the growth of Saskatchewan professional commercial art galleries who exhibit and sell original works of Saskatchewan art and craft. This is achieved through marketing initiatives, showcases, exhibits, networking and workshops.<sup>6</sup>

### **SaskMusic - Saskatchewan Recording Industry Association**

The Saskatchewan Recording Industry Association (SaskMusic), established in 1987, stimulates the growth and development of the Saskatchewan music industry through leadership, promotion, training and partnership. SaskMusic is a member-based, non-profit corporation representing the four components of the music and sound recording industries of Saskatchewan: creation, interpretation, technical and administration.<sup>7</sup>

### **SCC - Saskatchewan Craft Council**

The Saskatchewan Craft Council (SCC), established in 1975, is a non-profit organization representing professional craft artists, craft organizations and patrons of fine craft in the Province of Saskatchewan. Its mandate is to facilitate professional development and the growth of craft excellence; promote an active and interactive craft community; and increase awareness and appreciation of handmade objects to the general public by exhibiting and selling fine craft. By developing world-class artists and artisans, many of whom have been nominated or have won major national prizes, Saskatchewan is now firmly established in the global craft market.<sup>8</sup>

### **SIMA - Saskatchewan Interactive Media Association**

Saskatchewan Interactive Media Association (SIMA) first emerged on the Internet in 2001 and acts as the professional voice of interactive media development in Saskatchewan. It represents the creative professionals in Saskatchewan who work in all aspects of the web industry, including mobile devices, video games and software. Members include web designers, developers, programmers, writers, filmmakers, advertisers and other web-related professionals. Its primary objectives include creating economic opportunities and jobs, creating networking and partnership opportunities, showcasing developers and enabling product marketing and exporting.<sup>9</sup>



## **SMPIA - Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association**

Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association (SMPIA) was established in 1985 and supports the making and exhibiting of screen-based media production projects. SMPIA's job is to build a favourable economic and creative climate for the media and screen-based production industry, to cultivate a positive image of the industry in Saskatchewan and an appreciation of its creative accomplishments and to provide leadership and foster co-operation through discussion forums, decision-making and policy development in the interests of its community.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the six groups already funded by Creative Saskatchewan, there are now two provincial associations representing dance and theatre engaged with Creative Saskatchewan to better represent the performing arts sector.

### **Dance Saskatchewan**

Dance Saskatchewan was established in 1979 as a non-profit to advance dance in Saskatchewan. The organization supports and enhances the development of all dance forms. It preserves, promotes and represents dance in Saskatchewan by educating about dance, integrating dance with related art forms and providing a multidisciplinary centre focusing on dance. Dance Saskatchewan provides resources and services to its members, including programs, funding grants and facility rental. It coordinates a robust calendar of dance events throughout the year.<sup>11</sup>

### **Saskatchewan Association of Theatre Professionals**

The Saskatchewan Association of Theatre Professionals (SATP) was established in 2014 to support the development, creative practices and productions of professional theatre. The organization represents and enhances theatre arts and business practices and supports its members through training, retention, promotion and outreach. Its goal is to raise awareness of the theatre industry; to build positive and meaningful relationships with government to effectively champion its members; to support members' best interests; and to raise the visibility of Saskatchewan-made theatre across the province, nationally and internationally.<sup>12</sup>

In summary, Saskatchewan has eight professional creative industry associations under the purview of Creative Saskatchewan, which play important roles in promoting industry and supporting membership, and work in conjunction with the legislation guiding Creative Saskatchewan.

# 3 Overview of Creative Saskatchewan

## Legislated Mandate

*The Creative Saskatchewan Act (2013)*, section 4, identifies eight statements of purpose providing direction and guiding the actions of Creative Saskatchewan. These are to:

- *Facilitate the expansion of a business environment advantageous to the growth of the creative industry and to the growth of new employment, investment and production opportunities in Saskatchewan within the creative industry;*
- *Encourage and support innovation, invention and excellence in the creative industry by stimulating creative production, format innovation and new models of collaboration among sectors of the creative industry;*
- *Assist in the promotion and marketing of Saskatchewan’s creative industry and its respective products;*
- *Administer financial assistance, other programs and initiatives assigned to it by an Act or by the Lieutenant Governor in Council;*
- *Facilitate the gathering and analysis of information, research and technological development in the creative industry;*
- *Increase recognition of the creative industry as a vital element of Saskatchewan’s economy and cultural identity;*
- *Enable cooperation among persons and entities within the creative industry and between the public and private sectors to encourage development in the creative industry; and,*
- *Undertake any other activities or functions assigned by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.*

Section 6 of the Act also identified Creative Saskatchewan as a Crown agent, as follows:

- *The agency is for all its purposes an agent of the Crown, and the powers of the agency pursuant to this Act may be exercised only as an agent of the Crown; and,*
- *All property of the agency, all moneys acquired, administered, possessed or received from any source and all profits earned by the agency are the property of the Crown and are deemed, for all purposes, including taxation of whatever nature and description, to be the property of the Crown.*

An agent of the Crown is defined by the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada as follows:

*The Crown is ultimately fully liable and financially exposed for all actions and decisions by its agent corporation while the corporation is operating within its mandate. In other words, the corporation’s assets and liabilities are the assets and liabilities of the government.*

## Vision, Mission, Goals Developed by Creative Saskatchewan

**VISION:** Creative industries are better positioned to contribute to Saskatchewan's plan for economic growth by being commercially stronger, market and export ready and increasingly appreciated locally, nationally and internationally.

**MISSION:** Provide the leadership and resources necessary to facilitate the commercial development of creative industry producers, entrepreneurs, businesses and associations in realizing their economic potential within and outside the province through business product development and market access.

**VALUES:** The Board of Creative Saskatchewan values quality and excellence, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship and the development of product both accessible and relevant. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Board intends to be respectful, inclusive and transparent and to act with integrity in the best interest of the creative community.

*Goal 1. Excellence in Governance, Management and Stewardship - To provide visionary leadership, efficient and effective management and sound financial practices.*

*Goal 2. Build Industry Capacity: Programs, Support and Services - To provide external core funding to the creative industry associations, program support to eligible applicants and internal support services that assist creative producers to achieve their maximum commercial potential.*

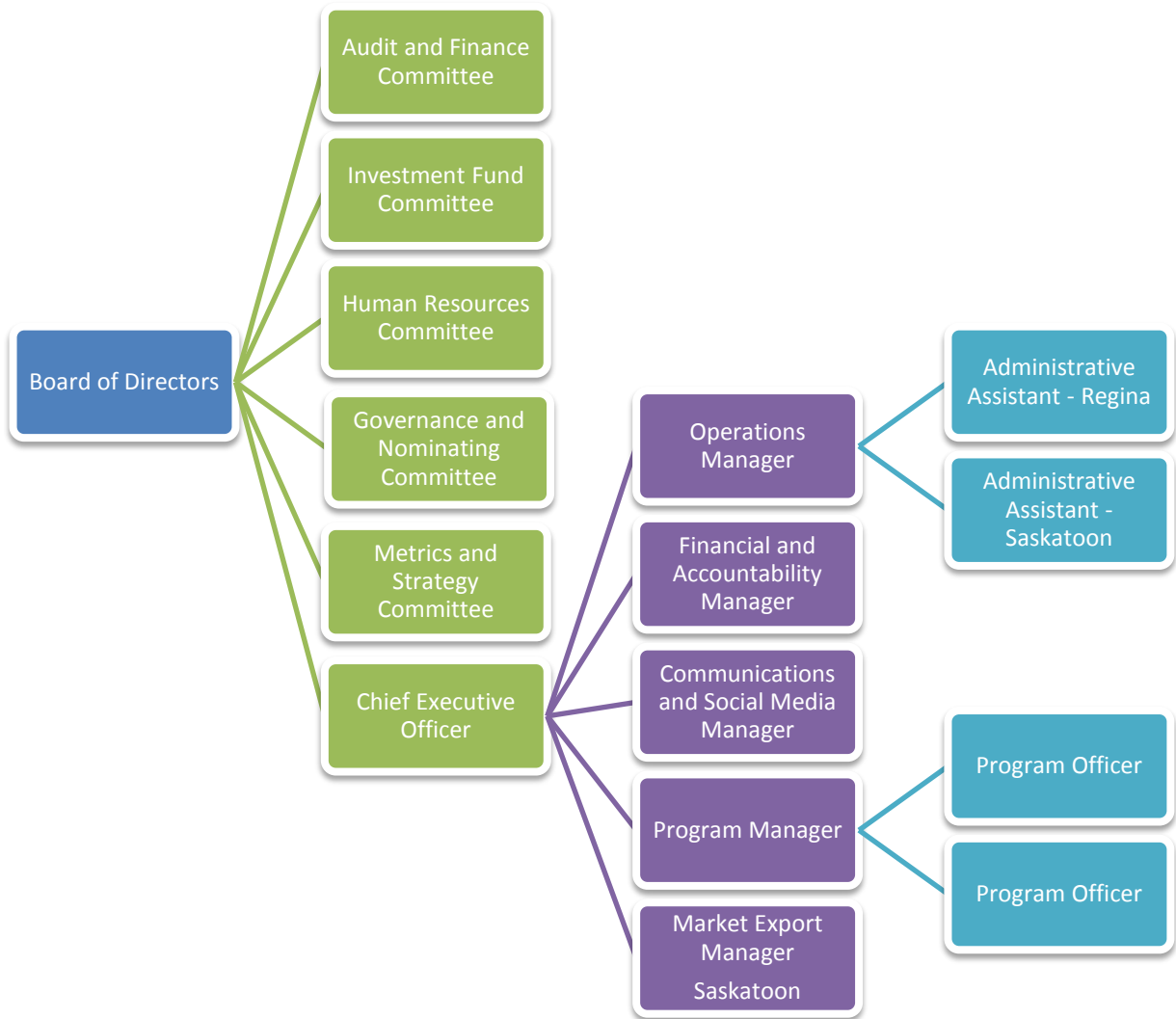
*Goal 3. Marketing and Communication - To develop a marketing and communication program that celebrates success, informs stakeholders and elevates the status of the creative industries within and outside of Saskatchewan. To assist the creative industries in the promotion and marketing of their products and identification of new markets.*

*Goal 4. Relationship Building: Develop Partnerships, Strategic Alliances and Business Engagement - To work closely with industry stakeholders and expand Creative Saskatchewan's sphere of influence by engaging new partners in government, business and the voluntary sector who complement the vision and goals of Creative Saskatchewan.*

## Governance Structure

Creative Saskatchewan has an eleven-person policy Board of Directors, all of whom are appointed by the Government through Order in Council. Its role is to establish and implement policies which govern the affairs and business of the organization, including fiduciary matters. The Board has adopted a board policy and procedures manual (September 13, 2014) and appointed five committees (Diagram 3).

**Diagram 3 – Governance and Organizational Structure**



**Government Direction**

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport (PCS) has been working closely with Creative Saskatchewan to provide stewardship regarding required approvals, compliance with legislation and adherence to government policy. PCS has emphasized:

- Government’s vision for Creative Saskatchewan remains unchanged from what was developed through the extensive consultation process that took place prior to the establishment of the agency;
- Creative Saskatchewan was established to support the creative industries as defined by the legislation;
- Creative Saskatchewan is a sector development agency, in addition to being a funding and marketing agency;

- Until all planning is in place and the agency begins to mature, Creative Saskatchewan has been asked to submit all agency plans for approval, including strategic, operation, marketing and market export, as well as sector development plans; and,
- Creative Saskatchewan is expected to manage taxpayer dollars in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Working with government and the creative industry, Creative Saskatchewan has had many successes.

### Agency Milestones to Date

Creative Saskatchewan has achieved many milestones. These include:

- *The Creative Saskatchewan Act* was proclaimed and *The Creative Saskatchewan Regulations* created in July 2013;
- First Board of Directors appointed, with Chair Mike MacNaughton and Vice-Chair Susan Whitney;
- Creative Saskatchewan moved into the College Avenue Soundstage building in October 2013;
- Some former SaskFilm employees were hired by Creative Saskatchewan to help establish and administer programs under the direction of the Board;
- Established working relations with creative industry associations in fall 2013;
- CEO JP Ellson was hired in February 2014;
- Creative Saskatchewan developed a high-level strategic plan in April 2014;
- Additional key staff hired in May 2014;
- Saskatoon office opened in June, 2014;
- Creative Saskatchewan tabled its first annual report in July 2014;
- \$6.3M in creative industry investment grants was disbursed from 2013 to December 2014; and
- An updated strategic plan is being developed by the Board.

As Creative Saskatchewan matures and develops strong relationships within and outside the creative industry sector, there will be many more achievements to celebrate.

## 4 Agency Programs and Funding

Among its achievements in 2013-14, Creative Saskatchewan successfully launched nine grant funding programs to support the following:

1. Business Capacity - develop professional capacity and skills;
2. Research - industry-based projects and market intelligence;
3. Creative Industries Production - production and product refinement;
4. Market and Export Development - for individuals/businesses and sector organizations;
5. Market Travel - financial support toward awards, showcases, presentations, etc.;
6. Sound Recording - production of commercially-viable music products;

7. Screen-based Media Content Development - early phase projects;
8. Screen-based Media Production - requiring a 30 per cent Saskatchewan spend; and
9. Performing Arts Tour Support - must demonstrate commercial viability and have already lined up at least six performance dates.

Creative Saskatchewan is accountable to ensure program funds and association supports are dispersed equitably and effectively. To that end, grant applications for most programs are vetted through a peer review jury system. Juries are comprised of respected individuals from industry sectors suggested by the creative industry associations.

The Screen-Based Media Content Development Grant, Screen-Based Media Production Grant and the Market Travel Grant, as well as the SaskTel Max Equity Investment Fund and the Rogers Digital Media Fund, are reviewed and evaluated by Creative Saskatchewan based on a set criteria established by the Board.

### **Funding and Grants**

In 2013-14, Creative Saskatchewan received \$6.5M through agreement with PCS to establish programs (\$5M investment fund) and, with the transfer of the \$1.5M Creative Industries Growth and Sustainability Program (CIGS) from the Saskatchewan Arts Board to Creative Saskatchewan, assumed funding responsibility for creative industry associations. In addition, Creative Saskatchewan received \$600,000 to support the Culture on the Go Touring and Market Access program.

In fiscal 2014-15, government allocated a total of \$8.3M in public investment to Creative Saskatchewan. Of this, Creative Saskatchewan received \$7.699M in budget appropriation for programming and investment in creative industry initiatives and associations and received an additional \$600,000 for the Culture on the Go program.

The success of Creative Saskatchewan public investment on behalf of government can be demonstrated through financial records, yet there is no better gauge than an agency review and consultation with stakeholders.

# 5 Consultations

## The Consultation Process

In spring 2015, consultations were held with key stakeholders to ascertain their opinions on the management, operations and client services of Creative Saskatchewan. These sessions were conducted by external facilitators to ensure confidentiality and objectivity in data collection and summaries were reviewed by the facilitators for accuracy. Internal stakeholders included Creative Saskatchewan's Board of Directors and staff. External stakeholders included members of the Board and executive from the Saskatchewan Arts Board and SaskCulture, specifically to address questions around partnership and sector building, in addition to creative industry associations' Board members and executive staff. Each expressed their thanks to government to have the opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a confidential and open forum. Then, creative industry clients from the eligible applicant pool were recruited to help gauge successes and services. Finally, conversations were had with a few of the agency's trade partners to get an impression of perceptions of Creative Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan cultural product from outside the creative sector.

A total of 126 people were invited to share their opinions and 67 people participated. Of those, 18 were from Creative Saskatchewan and 49 were external stakeholders. In addition to open-ended questions, each participant was asked for their feedback on client service, application experience and to assess the effectiveness of Creative Saskatchewan to deliver on its main purpose "to facilitate the expansion of a business environment advantageous to the growth of the creative industry and to the growth of new employment, investment and production opportunities in Saskatchewan within the creative industry" (*Creative Saskatchewan Act 2013, Section 4*).

## Support for Creative Saskatchewan

Everyone interviewed believes the concept of Creative Saskatchewan has merit. It was reported there has long been a need for an entity like Creative Saskatchewan that could boost the potential of the province's creative industries toward growth. Participants were thankful the Government of Saskatchewan took the initiative to launch Creative Saskatchewan and invest public funds in sector development.

There is understanding in the community that Creative Saskatchewan is a new agency and will have some growing pains. There is empathy for the staff, acknowledgement of their steep learning curve and an understanding that they hit the ground running and have not stopped.

Yet, there is also knowledge in the sector that more planning and development would help creative industries and Creative Saskatchewan to achieve their mandates.

The consultation process was vigorous and the feedback open and frank. The topics described below were explored with all participants and a summary of each topic area was shared with the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors of Creative Saskatchewan are proud of the agency and its achievements in a short period of time with a small staff complement, and the staff is very loyal and committed to Creative Saskatchewan. Both SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board are pleased that Creative Saskatchewan was initiated to help the sector with economic development and that dollars are flowing to creative professionals. The industry associations are happy creative industries are recognized as a professional sector of the economy with great potential. Creative professionals are pleased there is a variety of programs available to support a range of their activities.

To illuminate Creative Saskatchewan work so far, throughout these consultations, feedback was collected from participants and grouped to highlight strengths and suggestions. The key themes include sector development, communications and marketing, client services and the Creative Saskatchewan team, as below.

### **Sector Development**

Creative Saskatchewan has made efforts to address the funding needs of the sector by establishing programs, meeting with creative industry associations to see how programs are working and undertaking market export activities. They have also begun work on initiatives to identify a digital strategy and develop a more robust agency website. Creative Saskatchewan has been able to disburse approximately eight million dollars in program investments over its first 21 months of operation and initiate many trade events and missions.

The creative industry associations and provincial partners - SaskCulture, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Tourism Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP), report that their preference would be for an increased emphasis on client-centred approaches and would like to work directly with Creative Saskatchewan to formalize detailed sector development plans that flesh out roles and responsibilities and identify gaps in sector support. In addition, they suggested the varied business models for all creative sectors should be considered in Creative Saskatchewan's programs and application criteria.



Discussions with STEP reveal there is potential for more engagement between the agencies. STEP provides core services essential to international marketing such as trade development, market intelligence, logistics consulting and industry specific funding to develop export sales in the global marketplace. While STEP has not been included by Creative Saskatchewan in its export initiatives, such as the recent trade missions to Chicago or overseas, STEP is hopeful for opportunities in the future and is keen to collaborate on trade events and missions to find leverage in the creative industry sector. They look forward to more communication from Creative Saskatchewan on upcoming events and an invitation to partner.

Participants see key roles in sector development for Creative Saskatchewan to raise the profile of creative industries in Saskatchewan, to fill gaps in the cultural product value chain, to ensure their funding coordinates with other provincial funders and to clarify roles and responsibilities with creative industries. They must also develop a business environment and foster collaborative opportunities, to develop multi-disciplinary market export activities and fund industry-specific initiatives spearheaded by the creative industry associations and to measure activities and successes to demonstrate good public investment.

### **Creative Industry is Vital to the Saskatchewan Economy**

In these consultations, creative industry associations and funding applicants expressed a need for support to develop audiences and markets in Saskatchewan prior to exporting to other markets. It was remarked that the success of Saskatchewan's creative professionals has generally progressed from regional to national and international. When asked how well Creative Saskatchewan has increased the recognition of the creative industry as a vital element of Saskatchewan's economy and cultural identity at home and abroad, participants had concerns. One of the main reasons is, Creative Saskatchewan's focus on international market export did not allow adequate support for projects and initiatives in Saskatchewan. There is a general perception among participants that creative industries should be promoted at home first to increase their value domestically and then marketed internationally. While this progression is true for some sectors within the creative industries, it does not hold true for all.

Participants further suggested Creative Saskatchewan has a role in communicating to Saskatchewan residents the successes of creative professionals and industry associations, as well as to demonstrate their value to taxpayers and government, especially in relation to quality of life and the economy. These promotions may be facilitated by a sector development plan showing how Saskatchewan-made cultural product moves along the value chain.

### **Cultural Product Value Chain**

The cultural product value chain is a continuum of supports that fosters a creative product from its inception to distribution, building audiences and consumers along the way. While supports for cultural product development are supposed to flow smoothly along the value chain, there have been some challenges. Participants saw that potential opportunities for progress could be bolstered by career development supports, clear roles and responsibilities for all players and coordinated funding among provincial funding partners.

## Coordination Among Provincial Agencies

Participants from within and outside Creative Saskatchewan assessed Creative Saskatchewan's efforts to coordinate funding between the three provincial funding agencies. While Creative Saskatchewan's main role in the cultural product value chain applies after artists and producers have created a product, Creative Saskatchewan has established a policy preventing anyone who receives funding from SaskCulture or the Saskatchewan Arts Board from acquiring funds from Creative Saskatchewan. Respondents believe the opportunity for many to move from creation to marketing is lost with this approach.

The intention of this policy was to prevent double-dipping; to prevent organizations and projects from receiving funding from more than one provincial funding source for the same project phase. The unintended consequence has been ineligibility for marketing support to large numbers of artists, creators and live performing arts groups who receive funding from SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board for creation, production and operations. It was understood by government this policy would be reviewed as Creative Saskatchewan matures.

Again, this could be alleviated with improved sector development planning and clear roles and responsibilities for players along the cultural product value chain.

## Roles and Responsibilities

With regards to the clarity of roles and responsibilities between Creative Saskatchewan and other provincial funders and creative industry associations, all respondents acknowledged that increased communications and planning would improve clarity across the sector.

SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board have a clear understanding of how they differ from one another and what role each plays. They see much less clarity on the role Creative Saskatchewan is designed to play. SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board believe Creative Saskatchewan might consider accessing the expertise and experience they have in the creative sector to help establish policies, guidelines, programs and client services and they are willing to help with sector planning, which would help to coordinate roles and identify gaps.

While they remain committed to building good relations with Creative Saskatchewan, creative industry associations report they need clarity and trust between themselves and Creative Saskatchewan. In relation to clarity, creative industry participants report they would like support from Creative Saskatchewan to determine how to take advantage of programs and how to clarify roles and responsibilities, as some seem to be in flux and Creative Saskatchewan is seen to be attempting to take over several industry-specific activities. In relation to trust, there is a perception that some creative industries receive greater support than others, especially the music industry. It was stated that greater transparency and accountability could alleviate some of these concerns and clarity of roles and responsibilities might be found through collaborative sector planning, which would help to build a better business environment.

## **Developing a Business Environment**

An objective of Creative Saskatchewan is to assist with expanding a business environment in Saskatchewan to grow our creative industries through jobs, investment and production.

While all respondents recognized that each of them has a role to play in developing their creative business, a number of factors are seen as needed to promote business development: strategic planning; a professional development program; performance measures; clear understanding of all creative industry models; and transparent and accountable communication. Participants would like proactive collaboration, led by Creative Saskatchewan, to develop a business environment for growth.

Since the consultations took place, Creative Saskatchewan has undertaken the development of sector development plans which will highlight priority areas for attention as well as provide clarification as to the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder.

Participants expressed knowledge that Creative Saskatchewan was designed to support the growth and development of the creative sector and noted, since its inception, Creative Saskatchewan has focused its efforts on funding and marketing and has positioned itself to address only commercial activity.

As Creative Saskatchewan matures, new funding programs and supports will be developed and implemented.

Participants suggested that Creative Saskatchewan applies the same assessment to all projects, despite the fact, different disciplines of art have different models of business and there is variability when it comes to what is commercially viable from one creative industry to the next. It is believed that increased understanding at Creative Saskatchewan of creative industry business models could influence sector planning, partnerships, marketing initiatives, client services, and program guidelines and application forms. The sector development plans currently being developed will assist in expanding this understanding of the critical issues and differences between one sector and another.

## **Fostering New Models and Partnerships**

Creative Saskatchewan has, among its purposes, a role to foster co-operation, co-production and collaboration to support innovative new models and partnerships between persons and entities, and public and private sectors. Everyone agreed there are opportunities to brand Saskatchewan and to create multi-disciplinary projects, but doing so would require brainstorming, co-operation and partnerships.

Similarly, participants felt it was a responsibility of Creative Saskatchewan to enable cooperation within creative industries in Saskatchewan. There was general agreement that communicating partnership successes would help to generate more cooperative opportunities.

When the discussion turned to Creative Saskatchewan's purpose to enable cooperation between public and private sectors to encourage creative industry development, participants were unclear how this ought to be interpreted. Participants suggested Creative Saskatchewan and the government need to determine what the intention of this purpose is and what constitutes public-private cooperation.

Creative industry associations highlighted part of their role is to innovate. Creators innovate by nature and it is the job of Creative Saskatchewan to support innovative work through funding and coordination.

Participants were optimistic there will be increasing opportunities to co-operate, co-produce and collaborate, and they expect when the creative industry associations are co-located at the Soundstage, new initiatives and partnership opportunities will be born. Among those opportunities, they are excited about multi-disciplinary market export initiatives coordinated by Creative Saskatchewan.

### Market Export Initiatives

Market export initiatives are intended to sell value-added creative products to well-researched and targeted markets. Over the last year and a half, Saskatchewan artists have appreciated opportunities to present at showcases and trade events through Creative Saskatchewan market export initiatives, and creative industry associations appreciated opportunities to revisit established markets and explore new ones. Initiatives funded by Creative Saskatchewan to gain exposure for artists and creative sectors include some events in North America and trade missions overseas built by a market export firm.

While there was some success, participants suggested the effectiveness of these initiatives could be strengthened by:

- Market research to determine the best markets for each creative sector;
- Strategic market export planning;
- Identifying the best representatives for each event;
- Effective follow-up with contacts;
- Measuring impacts;
- Determining how to identify direct links between a market export event and future returns; and
- Identifying what time frames are reasonable for those returns, depending on the creative industry model and product.

Both STEP and the creative industry associations want to help Creative Saskatchewan shape market export initiatives, and note trade missions at strategic locations need to be attended year after year to be effective. These participants further suggested Creative Saskatchewan may have a role in multi-disciplinary settings, but that creative industry associations are better

positioned to plan their target markets and trade events, represent their industry and members at those events, and do follow-up and track outcomes, which has historically been their role.

Creative industry associations noted provincial and national initiatives are more important for building market share at home, for building relationships with stakeholders and emerging professionals, to raise the profile and value of creative industries to the public, to share success stories and to create champions in Saskatchewan who can be promoted nationally and internationally.

A number of participants expressed their view that artists must be branded first at home in order to develop a global brand. Participants also noted branding at home helps to develop local support for public investment in market export initiatives. While it is true that local understanding of the preeminence of a successful artist increases the public's willingness to support the creative industry sector through public investment, branding is complex and is not the same for all artists.

### **Public Investment**

Creative Saskatchewan, as an agent of government, supports creative industries' growth and development and, in so doing, is a steward of public funds. Participants in the consultation process were asked how effectively Creative Saskatchewan can demonstrate a return on public investment. It is recognized that Creative Saskatchewan can use its annual report, promotions and advertising for this purpose, but participants believe more public communication is needed to promote successes and the value of creative professionals and products to the province. One participant commented, "(Creative Saskatchewan) need(s) to share with the public why the creative industries are so important to Saskatchewan."

When asked how artists and creative professionals can demonstrate good public investment, the artists themselves stated: by making a good income and paying their taxes, staying in the province and spending their money here and building a successful business in Saskatchewan. They believe Creative Saskatchewan has a role in supporting an environment in which they can develop their creative businesses.

All participants believe Creative Saskatchewan has a role in demonstrating how its investments benefit Saskatchewan and that to do so the agency must measure outcomes.

### **Measuring Success**

Participants were asked about the effectiveness of Creative Saskatchewan's data gathering, informational analysis and technological development to support creative industry sector development. Participants suggested Creative Saskatchewan should work with award recipients on the results of funded projects, with creative industry associations on outcomes from marketing and export initiatives, and with STEP to facilitate market intelligence. In that way, the agency will not only be able to collect and share information, but also to analyze information to adjust marketing plans and

initiatives in the future. It is believed measuring success is a key element in communicating and promoting the work of Creative Saskatchewan.

### **Communications and Promotions**

Within Creative Saskatchewan, communication is generally good and the staff believes it has the information needed to perform jobs well. Board members also believe they have good communication among themselves, with the executive leader and the staff. However, participants suggested communication between Creative Saskatchewan and PCS, other provincial funders (SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board) and agencies (STEP and Tourism Saskatchewan), the creative industry associations, applicants and the public could be strengthened. They believe communications ought to be strategic, tied to other plans and celebrate the work of artists, their projects, the activities of creative industry associations and the coordinated efforts of sector players, including Creative Saskatchewan itself. In this way, participants suggested Creative Saskatchewan could improve its relationships with government, the sector and other stakeholders and positively influence promotions and marketing for the agency.

### **Relationship with Government**

Creative Saskatchewan was established as an agent of the Crown. It was recognized, as a new agency in its first year of operation, Creative Saskatchewan would have a strong relationship with government. Now, the agency is transitioning from an operations board to a governance board with less government involvement but more reporting required. Participants from Creative Saskatchewan stated a need to clarify roles and responsibilities between Creative Saskatchewan and PCS and define the expectations inherent in the legislation to improve relations. Participants generally believed clarity between Creative Saskatchewan and government will improve relationships in the sector.

### **Relationship with Sector**

When asked about relations with Creative Saskatchewan, provincial funders and creative industry associations noted there have been some strides made, however, participants believe relationship building could be reinforced. It is assumed strength and unity across the creative industry sector will create opportunities to work with other stakeholders.

## Relationship with Others

While partner agencies and stakeholders understand that a start-up takes time and energy, they all agree that to build a strong agency and sector Creative Saskatchewan should dedicate resources to consultation. Participants suggest that Creative Saskatchewan would benefit by building relationships with SaskCulture, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Tourism Saskatchewan, STEP, universities, industry associations, sector organizations, philanthropists, public and private industries, traditional and non-traditional partners to promote and build value in the creative economy.

Participants believe that to grow the sector, Creative Saskatchewan must grow as an agency by taking advantage of opportunities to coordinate and collaborate with the experts among sector and partner organizations.

Participants believe by building strong relationships with government, the sector and other stakeholders, Creative Saskatchewan will be able to mount highly effective promotions and marketing campaigns.

## Promotions and Marketing

Promotions tell audiences and consumers what you have to offer; marketing tells audiences and consumers why they should value your product. Participants were asked how effective Creative Saskatchewan has been at promoting and marketing Saskatchewan's creative industries and products provincially, nationally and internationally. Both board and staff members at Creative Saskatchewan stated that they have embraced the lessons learned over the last year that will inform future marketing efforts, showcasing and relationship building.

The Board is aware they will need to demonstrate the benefits of the investment of public funds and that promotions and communication will help. They would like to be more proactive than reactive and seek multi-sector opportunities, including wholesale and web-based markets.

Creative industry associations and the applicant pool would like to see Creative Saskatchewan identifying target markets with real Saskatchewan potential and celebrating sector successes through public relations, media relations, success stories, social media, a robust website and provincial events. They suggested there may be a role for STEP.

Generally, participants saw a link between strong promotions and marketing initiatives and the ability of Creative Saskatchewan to represent client needs.

## Client Services

Since its inception, to support clients, Creative Saskatchewan has not only undertaken major market export initiatives to help grow the creative sector, but also launched nine grant-funding programs and adopted responsibility for operations funding to provincial-level creative industry associations. It has developed a client base ranging from creative industry associations to a program applicant pool comprised of individual artists, theatre companies and film producers, to name a few. When asked to comment on the effectiveness of Creative Saskatchewan's client service operations, agency board and staff members believe they are effective, yet can always improve. Creative Saskatchewan's client services are mainly centred on funding program delivery.

## Financial assistance

With regards to administering financial assistance, Creative Saskatchewan has been responsive to the concerns of applicants by improving guidelines and processes "now that we have gone through a few intakes." A demonstration of Creative Saskatchewan's program success is a growing number of grant applications and awards. There is a belief administration will improve further when comprehensive program information and application processes are implemented online in its third year of operations.

When asked about funding gaps, respondents from all participant groups identified areas that could benefit from funding and may need consideration in sector development plans:

- Dance, theatre, digital media, interactive media, fashion and jewelry arts, and writing;
- Increased research and development funding;
- Professional development to attend workshops and conferences in and out of province; and
- Educational program sponsorship or partnership with educational institutions to foster creative industry careers and succession.

These funding gaps could be discussion points in sector development planning and may impact program design.

## Program Design and Eligibility

Funding programs are of two types: scheduled intake and continuous intake. In the former, applicants submit to meet a deadline; in the latter, applicants may submit at any time for consideration. Some program applications are reviewed by peers and then approved by the Board, while others are assessed by Creative Saskatchewan staff and approved by the executive leader.



Creative Saskatchewan's programs are designed to support commercially-oriented projects for creative entrepreneurs. When asked to comment on Creative Saskatchewan's programs, participants expressed puzzlement regarding program criteria and eligibility. For example:

- Programs designed for entrepreneurs, yet assistance is needed across the creative industry sector to ensure artists understand and can meet entrepreneurial criteria;
- Many have been told they are not eligible, but do not know why or how to qualify;
- Guidelines and application forms need to be flexible to address different industry models;
- Projects/industries with short-term profits tend to be eligible, while those with longer term or small margin profits are not.

Creative Saskatchewan has attempted to adjust programs to address emerging concerns and to provide feedback to applicants whenever possible. However, due to privacy considerations, feedback to one applicant cannot be shared with others at any level of detail. That said, each application is reviewed against very specific criteria which is public. This continuous improvement process to better meet the needs of applicants in each application period has resulted in what is perceived by clients to be ever-changing criteria. Yet, staff continues to listen to clients with an ear to meeting their needs, both in the design of programs and in the application process.

### **Application and Award Process**

To support the application process, Creative Saskatchewan undertook an outreach tour of Saskatchewan communities in fall 2014. Staff delivered information presentations to interested parties to highlight the program opportunities available. The result was an increased number of applications.

Participants reported a variety of experiences when pursuing queries with Creative Saskatchewan and indicated client service could be improved with timely and constructive information to help complete applications, consistent answers, confirmation of application submission, transparency regarding the adjudication process, an expected notification date and constructive feedback to improve application submissions in future.

All agree the staff is helpful, and could benefit from more expertise in areas outside of film and music to provide advice for applications from other industries. A concentration of knowledge among Creative Saskatchewan executive and staff has given many an impression there is favouritism to film and music.

It was suggested two education programs are needed: one to educate Creative Saskatchewan about all the creative industries and their business models, the other to educate applicants how to achieve success in the application process. Participants are hopeful the outcome of these efforts will be equitable funding across creative industries in a communicative and cooperative environment.

## Professional Development

In addition to training applicants to be successful in Creative Saskatchewan's programs, participants emphasized the need for a professional development plan to help artists become creative entrepreneurs and build skills at every phase along the cultural product value chain.

Various forms of professional development were suggested to help raise the sector to professional and export-ready status, for example: grant writing, budgeting, business training, governance, touring, trade missions, mentoring, networking, report writing, jury training and marketing.

It was suggested a plan for professional development to foster sector growth and market-readiness is needed. While it was expected Creative Saskatchewan would provide funding support to this program, it was not assumed Creative Saskatchewan would deliver the program itself. In fact, creative industry associations would like responsibility for industry-specific professional development program delivery, while Creative Saskatchewan could deliver multi-disciplinary courses, such as Marketing 101.

Maintaining and improving client services is a major focus of Creative Saskatchewan activity and relies on the agency team to be successful.

## Governance

Respondents recognize the Board of Directors has been going through a transition from operations to governance; policies are now in place and the skills of the directors are complementary to the operations oversight needed for Creative Saskatchewan; members are representative of the breadth of creative industries in the sector, the Chair and Vice-chair are engaged in the business of Creative Saskatchewan and the Board is directing management of the agency. Creative Saskatchewan reports that strategic planning is underway and committees are functioning well. Board of Directors members suggested the Board could be strengthened by clarifying its role as a Crown agency, continuing to build its relationships with government, and ensuring it steps cleanly away from its previous involvement in operations.

## Staff

The general consensus is that staff are very enthusiastic and positive about their work and loyal to their leader. They are doing their best to serve clients, although they have been understaffed to deal with program management and application processes, market export initiatives, performance measures, reporting requirements to government and Soundstage events. While they are knowledgeable professionals, their ability to respond to clients with robust information in a timely fashion has been challenged by their limited number. Participants, inside and outside the agency, suggested that Creative Saskatchewan is understaffed and there is concern about burn-out.

In summary, the Board of Directors and staff at Creative Saskatchewan are working to achieve success in fulfilling the mandate of the agency.

## 6 Recommendations

Creative Saskatchewan has a broad mandate to steward creative industry sector development. This includes expanding the business environment to increase employment and investment, stimulating innovation, technology and new models of creative production, assisting in promotion and marketing, administering financial assistance and facilitating research.

It is also mandated to forge relationships and enable cooperation between the creative industries and both the public and private sectors and to increase awareness that the creative industries are a vital element of Saskatchewan's creative economy and cultural identity. In so doing, Creative Saskatchewan is to support the work of all creative industries under its purview, and build the foundation for a strong creative industry sector.

Since the consultations process started, Creative Saskatchewan has initiated the development of a number of plans, including a review of policies and procedures and a policy on Public Consultations.

### Recommendations for Communications and Promotions

Participants in the consultations suggested communications and promotions from Creative Saskatchewan could be stronger and clearer. Recommendations include:

1. Develop communications and promotions plans for the agency, and link strategically with those of creative industry associations and partners.
2. Improve understanding of the relationship between government and Creative Saskatchewan, and Creative Saskatchewan's role and responsibilities as an agent of the Crown.
3. Work with government to identify ways to communicate how creative professionals travel along the cultural product value chain.
4. Develop relationships and partnerships with key stakeholders, other funders and agencies, and improve communication with stakeholders and the public to increase understanding of the role, funding opportunities and processes Creative Saskatchewan offers.
5. Promote success stories for clients, creative industry associations and the agency.

## Recommendations for Sector Development

6. Advance a sector development plan:
  - a. Take greater advantage of existing industry expertise; meet with SaskCulture, the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the creative industry associations to explore existing services, overlaps and gaps, clarify roles and responsibilities, understand industry business models for each of the creative sub-sectors and jointly plan long-term sector development now and in the future;
  - b. Build relationships with SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board to coordinate strategic efforts on an annual basis;
  - c. Build relationships with creative industry associations to promote their industries and enhance support to their members and associated creative professionals;
  - d. Build relationships with Tourism Saskatchewan and STEP to identify sector development partnerships and initiatives;
  - e. Deliver support to creative industry associations and clients in a seamless manner by reducing the division between Creative Saskatchewan, SaskCulture and the Saskatchewan Arts Board to help creative professionals and products travel along the creative value chain; refer clients to one another to find the best fit;
  - f. Demonstrate Accountability and Transparency. Introduce procedures and promotions to inform stakeholders and the public regarding funding programs, application and jury processes, as well as benefits and measures from marketing initiatives. Partners, stakeholders and applicants benefit from a better understanding of what supports are available, how to gain access, how decisions are made and who won awards.
  - g. Ensure equity of support for creative industries: Demonstrate how all industry sub-sectors are supported to develop and grow to international market export standards.
7. Amend the MOU with Government: meet to clarify roles, authorities, decision-making levels, reporting and information requirements.
8. Develop a Creative Saskatchewan Strategic Plan, tied to budget for fiscal 2015-16 and the next two or three years, to give Creative Saskatchewan targets for its activity and lay out high-level performance measures to be assessed to celebrate achievements.
9. Develop plans that would fit into and link with the sector development plan, such as:
  - a. Creative Saskatchewan Operations. Include plans for marketing, professional development and training, partnerships and collaborations, private investment, digital technology, copyright and intellectual property, etc.
  - b. Sub-Sector and Agency Marketing. This strategic planning ought to:
    - Distinguish between multi-disciplinary and industry-specific initiatives;
    - Distinguish marketing from promotional activities;
    - Outline criteria for target markets best suited to Saskatchewan's creative products;
    - Clarify who holds responsibility for different marketing activities and who is best positioned to fund these activities;

- Ensure adequate core business funding is provided to associations to meet market export opportunities; and
  - Work with STEP to learn from their expertise and collaborate on sector plans and branding, as well as coordinate on possible joint initiatives.
- c. Strategic Planning ought to align metrics and performance measures.

### Recommendations for Client Services

10. Approach sector development, operations funding, program funding and other services from a client perspective. Services ought to be client-centred rather than agency-centred.
11. Revise Creative Saskatchewan Programs and Guidelines to:
  - a. Develop business models specific to each creative industry;
  - b. Ensure flexible criteria to support various profit margins depending on the project;
  - c. Consider providing development funds for marketing projects to increase commercial viability, or start-up funds for creative development companies, through consultations with stakeholders;
  - d. Provide more support for research and product development;
  - e. Support dance, theatre, digital media, interactive media, fashion and jewelry arts and writing;
  - f. Review the policy stating those eligible for funding through SaskCulture or the Saskatchewan Arts Board are deemed ineligible for Creative Saskatchewan funding;
  - g. Improve the grant application process, by ensuring application forms and processes are clear, simple and efficient, and providing constructive feedback to applicants in a timely fashion; and
  - h. Maintain transparency for all program processes and decisions by communicating them to stakeholders.
12. Develop a plan for sector professional development:
  - a. Foster training, incubation and mentorship for sector growth and market-readiness;
  - b. Create partnerships with post-secondary institutions for educational programs to grow the creative industries in Saskatchewan; and
  - c. Promote skills development opportunities in and out of province.
13. Amend reporting processes to ensure financial information delivered to PCS is consistent and accurate, distinguish allocated versus disbursed funds and demonstrate accountability for public funds.

### Recommendations for the Creative Saskatchewan Team

Participants in the consultations suggested that to strengthen the agency and, in the process, the sector, Creative Saskatchewan could consider the following:

14. Board should maintain a governance role apart from operations.
15. Develop a plan to manage staff workloads and increase opportunities for internal communications and planning.

In summary, there are recommended actions to improve communications, in part by clarifying roles, expectations and promotions; to foster sector development by conducting the foundational work and plans necessary to build relationships, taking advantage of partnerships and collaborations, growing private investment, and ultimately, fulfilling the agency mandate and measuring its successes to continuously improve client services.

Since the start of the consultation process, Creative Saskatchewan has taken a number of steps to address recommendations contained in the report, they include:

1. The development of a communications plan/strategy;
2. Initiating the development of sector development plans;
3. The development of a strategic plan;
4. The development of an operation plan;
5. A review of Creative Saskatchewan policies and procedures;
6. A review of board governance;
7. The implementation of a new web-site; and,
8. The development of an on line application system.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Saskatchewan, “*The Creative Saskatchewan Act*”, Section 2(c)(i), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, *Pride of Saskatchewan: A Policy Where Culture, Community and Commerce Meet*, 2010, pp. 17-25.

<sup>3</sup> Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport, *Pride of Saskatchewan: A Policy Where Culture, Community and Commerce Meet*, 2010, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> McNair, *Establishment of Creative Saskatchewan*, June 7, 2013, p.32

<sup>5</sup> SaskBooks, [www.skbooks.com](http://www.skbooks.com), accessed April 15, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> SaskGalleries, [www.saskgalleries.ca](http://www.saskgalleries.ca), accessed April 15, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> SaskMusic, [www.saskmusic.org](http://www.saskmusic.org), accessed April 15, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Saskatchewan Craft Council, [www.saskcraftcouncil.org](http://www.saskcraftcouncil.org), accessed April 16, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> SIMA, [www.saskinteractive.com](http://www.saskinteractive.com), accessed April 15, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> SMPiA, [www.smpia.sk.ca](http://www.smpia.sk.ca), accessed April 16, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Dance Saskatchewan, [www.dancesask.com](http://www.dancesask.com), accessed April 16, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> SATP, email communication with President and Secretary, April 29 & 30, 2015.