



Greater **investment**  
would reap social,  
democratic and  
economic rewards...



## **The Big Picture**

The Regional Screen Agencies building  
community, identity and enterprise

John Holden

May 2006



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DEMOS



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# Introduction and summary

In 2002 the audio-visual sector had a turnover of £20 billion. Between 1997 and 2000, the audiovisual industries grew more than three times as fast as the UK economy as a whole and, in 2000, generated £4.1 billion of exports.

New technology, getting cheaper by the day - and easier to use - provides unparalleled economic and social potential. Being here, now, is like being in Hollywood in 1900 – entry costs are low, entrepreneurial energy abounds, and the full possibilities are only dimly in view. The policy question is how to make the most of this – because we are at a point where smart public-sector intervention can still make a big difference.

The Regional Screen Agencies came into being in 2002/04 to address that question. In a short space of time they have developed a unique way of working that adds economic and public value. Their approach, which matches the Cox Review's recommendation of sector-specificity, could act as a model for others.

But they face major challenges that in many ways parallel the sector that they engage with: uncertain future funding, issues of coherence and co-ordination, and the problem of making their significance apparent within larger structures of government. There are opportunities for success and growth here that must be seized. RSAs themselves need to make changes, but government must also play a part. RSAs will be in position to make the most of the moving image sector only if they have settled and consistent funding.

RSAs operate in each of the nine English regions, and the Regional Development Agencies are among their major supporters and funders. RSAs are involved in all aspects of the moving image – production, training, locations, business development, archives, education, festivals, cinemas. Their main national sponsor is the UK Film Council, yet they operate beyond the bounds of film into computer gaming and other digital platforms. Because they are regional they have developed regional distinctiveness, reflecting and shaping the context of moving image according to local need and opportunity. For example, London – which is almost a case apart as a global player – has a sectoral ecology that is significantly different from other RSAs. But, although circumstances dictate different cultural emphases and operational approaches, the RSAs have achieved a common vision and a shared approach. They are, significantly, Agencies - not Councils or Commissions. The way that they function is entrepreneurial, active, light on bureaucracy, and energetic: they don't just respond to need, they make things happen.

The RSAs add both economic and public value. Moving image production and consumption is the fastest growing part of the creative industries: the sector is already large and its potential is immense. This provides opportunities for individual, corporate and societal wealth creation. One of the RSAs' most significant activities is nurturing talent and developing sustainable infrastructures and networks to underpin that economic development. Another is accessing investment flows from the public and private sectors, from venture capital to EU funding programmes.

But the moving image is also culturally important. It is ubiquitous and familiar; one of the main ways that we explain ourselves to each other and find out who we are both individually and as a society. As such the moving image is a profoundly democratic medium – both in its consumption, and, increasingly, in its production. That is why the RSAs have to be approachable by the public as well as by industry: they must be sympathetic as well as savvy.

Interestingly for government, both the economic and the social aspects of the moving image demonstrate very high leverage: in other words, small amounts of money, used in the right way, can generate big returns. Just as attracting a major TV series to a rural area (like Herriot Country) can have significant short and long-term economic impacts, so a film like *Bullet Boy* raises social issues in a way that touches the lives of those most affected by them.

Leverage, risk, and aggregation are key terms for RSAs. Their investment (of time as well as money) can yield high returns, but they have to embrace risk to achieve that. They also have to ensure that the aggregate effect of their efforts adds up, at a national level, to more than the sum of the parts. There are many areas of untapped potential – such as developing media literacy, community film-making, and exploiting new locations - where there is much work to be done. But that work will only happen if the RSAs are resourced to do it.

The characteristics of the RSAs thus parallel both the strengths and the weaknesses of the sector that they engage with. They are small-scale operations with modest budgets (a total of £21 million of public money in 2004/05). They are fleet-of-foot, quick to act and to take decisions. They are young organisations with flair. But their very energy and busy-ness makes it difficult to integrate what they do into a narrative that is easily understood. They are involved in so many areas – from talking to big-budget Hollywood to helping pensioners access archives – that they lack coherence at a national level.

There are four major categories which the RSAs could address in order to create greater efficiency and coherence in their approach to policy. If all of these are dealt with, then a conversation of benefit to the RSAs, their constituencies and the relevant areas of government will result.

### **Advocacy**

Communicating the value of the work of the RSAs

### **Coordination**

Sharing knowledge and practice amongst the RSAs

### **Collaboration**

Opportunities for RSAs to partner other bodies to support the moving image sector.

### **Leadership**

Identifying the value of different areas of their work.

## The Big Picture

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The RSAs provide one point of contact for their sector in the regions – but they themselves do not have one point of contact within government. Nor do they necessarily need one -what they do is of interest across many departments – DCMS, the successors to the ODPM, DTI, DFES and beyond. But they do need to find a mechanism to present a coherent face to government, and at the moment they are not sufficiently co-ordinated to do that. In aggregate their activity is nationally significant, but too often it falls below the line of sight of central government departments. The RSAs thus have a job to do in organizing themselves to make their voice heard.

The challenge for government is to listen to the voice of a dynamic, successful and vitally important sector that, in its individual manifestations, can seem hard to engage with. Crucially, the platform from which the RSAs' are able to invest is time-limited and thus insecure. The RSAs need not only a firm base on which to build, but sufficient resources to maximize their potential. Demand for what they do is high and growing – they handled over 250,000 inquiries last year. The staff and Boards of the RSAs contain a significant pool of networked expertise that could achieve even more. It is still early days, but their record inspires confidence that such greater investment would be well-used and would reap rewards that are social and democratic as well as economic.

# Structure

This report:

- Describes what the RSAs are, and the context of their work;
- Provides an overarching narrative of the unique role and core function of RSAs;
- Explains how RSAs are able to address key government policy concerns that relate to the moving image sector; and
- Demonstrates the value they create and identifies areas and opportunities for future investment.

The report is structured as follows:

## **Part I. The Regional Screen Agencies: their purpose, their development and the regions they serve.**

This introductory section describes the context in which the RSAs have developed and operate. It outlines the nature of the regions in which they operate and the sector in which they work, and explains how the role and function of each RSA is shaped by that region's economic and social conditions. To meet these needs, RSAs have developed a common approach.

## **Part II. How the work of the RSAs relates to current government policy objectives**

The report identifies the key areas where the activities of the RSAs meet the Government's social, economic and educational policy agenda, and shows how the common methodology developed by the RSAs provides a flexible means to address the issues of:

- Encouraging a sense of community and identity
- Developing individual business enterprise and a sustainable industry
- Encouraging the growth of skills and learning

Illustrated by case studies, the report analyses the impact of the RSA's methodology, which is defined as:

- Taking regional initiative
- Supplying regional expertise
- Making local, national and international connections
- Encouraging sustainable development

Because the RSA methodology operates holistically across all three government policy objectives, Part II concludes with two overview case studies illustrating the combined operation of the RSA approach to generating and sustaining a healthy screen and moving image culture.

## **Part III. The Regional Screen Agencies as generators of public value**

The report demonstrates the public value created by the RSAs, and suggests that the methodology they have developed is a model for other cultural agencies

## **Part IV. Challenges, opportunities and recommendations**

The report concludes by outlining future policy and organisational challenges for the RSAs, and identifies opportunities for further investment in the moving image sector.

# Part I: The regional screen agencies: their purpose, their context and the regions they serve

*Part I of the report describes the creation of the Regional Screen Agencies (RSAs) and the technological, economic and social context in which they operate.*

## **I.1 The UK Film Council, Screen England and the Regional Screen Agencies**

Screen England is a partnership of the nine English RSAs. It exists to develop the culture and industry of film and the moving image – incorporating production, exhibition, training, locations, business development, education and archiving. The RSAs were developed in response to specific policy needs articulated by the UK Film Council. Since 2001 they have grown individually in ways that are best suited to meeting the needs of their respective regions. Each has developed a separate identity, but shares a common approach to its responsibilities.

During the summer of 2000, the newly established UK Film Council published *Film in England: A Development Strategy for Film and the Moving Image in the English Regions*. This document reviewed the infrastructure and activity of the nation's moving image industry. It concluded that “film and moving images are the single most important source of education, information and culture in the world today”<sup>1</sup>, but went on to reflect that “the existing fragmentation of film interests across scores of small competing and under-resourced bodies is impeding the overall development of film in the regions.”<sup>2</sup>

*Film in England* appeared at a time when both regionalism and the creative economy had moved up the political agenda with the creation of the Regional Development Agencies and Regional Cultural Consortia. Reflecting these two areas of concern, the review recommended that the UK Film Council should establish a Regional Investment Fund for England (RIFE) to support the development of a sustainable film industry and a vibrant film and moving image culture:

*The UK Film Council should establish a new Regional Investment Fund to ensure integrated planning for film in each of the nine English regions ... This should facilitate the rapid establishment of an integrated regional film agency ... in each region with the capacity to determine its own industrial and cultural priorities for film and to express those priorities through a three-year 'business plan' for the region which is supported by the UK Film Council.*<sup>3</sup>

With a Regional Investment Fund for England worth £7.8 million as a platform, existing regional stakeholders in the moving image sector merged to create the RSAs. The former Regional Screen Commissions, Regional Arts Boards, Media investment funds, Regional media organisations and Local City Film Offices were the basis for this amalgamation. Between 2001 and 2003, the formation of the nine RSAs provided a new means to meet the concerns of the moving image sector.

Figure 1 Map of the Regional Screen Agencies



Each RSA is headed by a CEO, who heads a team dedicated to fulfilling specific roles within the region's screen sector. The RSAs also have boards, chaired by leading lights and established media players, who can both represent the region's interest at national and international levels and provide expert guidance and leadership to the RSA and its team. Within the RSAs, the organisational structure typically divides between sector-specific experts, such as production and audience development departments, which support the screen activity of the region, location departments which work to attract and assist filming in the region and finance and business departments, who work both to advise screen professionals in commercial terms, and maintain the business of the RSA itself.

On average, the number of staff in each RSA is about 15, and varies according to the size of the screen sector, region to which the agency caters and resources available. Personnel have been recruited from the moving image sector, and offer both expertise and established connections and contacts across the areas of operation that include screen-related activities such as locations work, production support and education. Such a base of expertise has proved valuable because, in responding to their different investment partners, they have been able to adapt to meet different needs. Figure 2 shows how these different needs play out across different policy areas.

Figure 2 The relationship of the RSAs to different policy interests

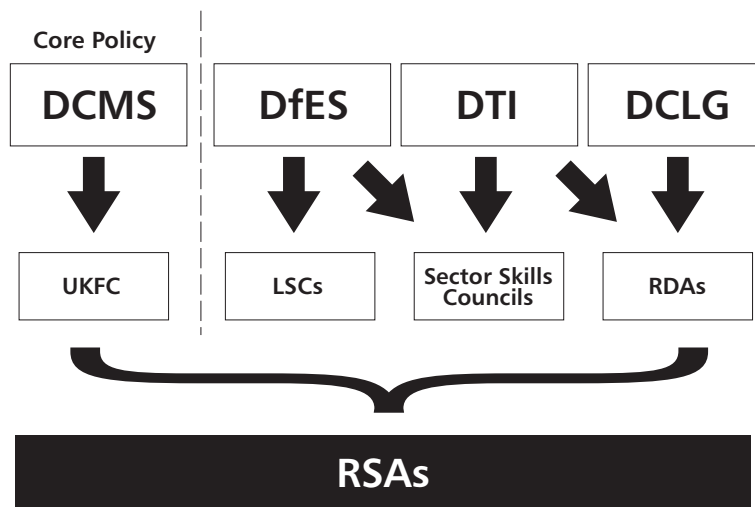
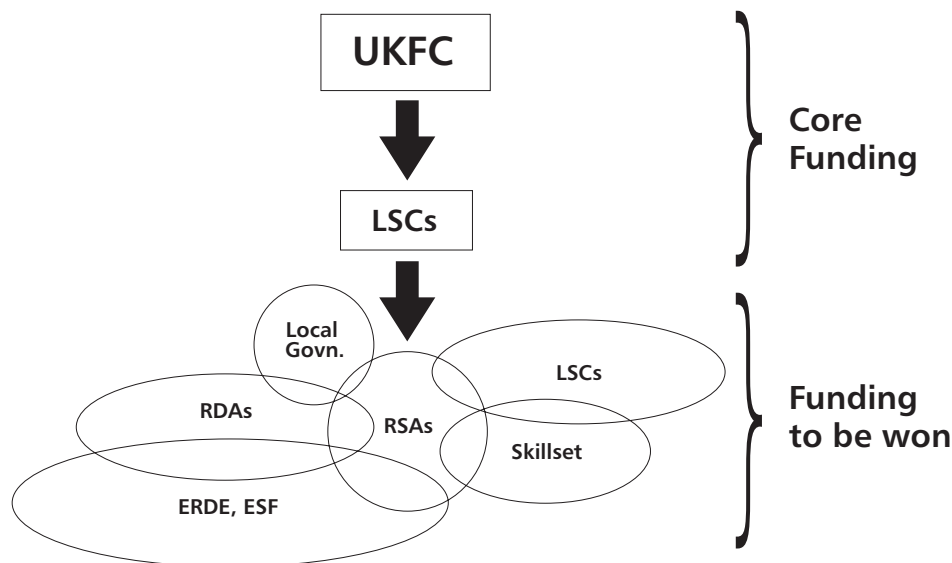


Figure 3 Core funding and funding to be won



As regional bodies set up to take advantage of regional opportunities, the RSAs have worked in partnership with Regional Development Agencies, Local Authorities, Skillset (The Sector Skills Council for the Audio Visual Industries) and Regional Cultural Consortia. The sources of income for RSAs between 2004 and 2005 (Figure 2) illustrates the breadth of each RSA's work.

Figure 4 Income breakdown for the RSAs, 2004-2005<sup>4</sup>

	Lottery Awards	Lottery Overheads	Grant-in-Aid	Total RIFE	Other income	Total
EM-Media	£252,549	£69,451	£590,000	£912,000	£2,807,240	£3,719,240
London	£233,000	£122,000	£800,000	£1,155,000	£1,542,538	£2,697,538
Northern Film & Media Office	£311,116	£78,884	£400,000	£790,000	£759,000	£1,549,000
North West Vision	£218,116	£86,884	£525,000	£830,000	£491,975	£1,321,975
Screen East	£284,000	£106,000	£530,000	£920,000	£382,370	£1,302,370
Screen South	£205,000	£100,000	£432,000	£737,000	£299,500	£1,036,500
Screen West Midlands	£313,000	£100,000	£400,000	£813,000	£3,187,500	£4,000,500
South West Screen	£290,271	£129,729	£451,000	£871,000	£2,099,289	£2,970,289
Yorkshire	£225,000	£75,000	£472,000	£772,000	£1,935,210	£2,707,210
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,332,052</b>	<b>£867,948</b>	<b>£4,600,000</b>	<b>£7,800,000</b>	<b>£13,504,622</b>	<b>£21,304,622</b>

As the single common funding stream for all RSAs, the RIFE is a shared thread throughout activities. (Figure 3 illustrates its relative importance to the RSAs as a whole). The key purposes of the RIFE are:

*To contribute towards the development of a sustainable UK film industry by: developing a pool of creative skills and talent; developing entrepreneurial acumen and business clusters; and developing an industrial infrastructure.*

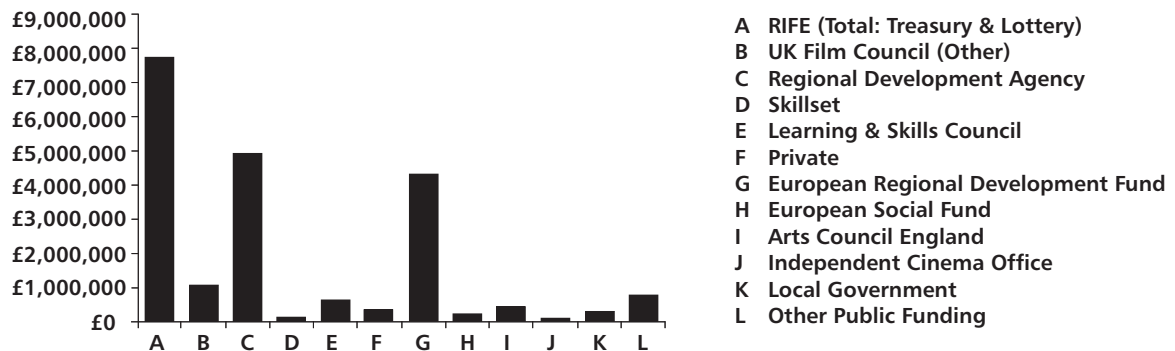
*To contribute towards the development of film culture in the UK by improving access to, and education about, film and the moving image by ensuring that the public has access to: a broader range of British and world cinema; opportunities for learning about film; access to the UK's film heritage; and opportunities to participate in film production.*

*To promote cultural and ethnic diversity in film industry and culture.*

*To maximise inclusion for all disadvantaged groups to film and the moving image.<sup>5</sup>*



Figure 5 Distribution of RSAs income



At the end of 2003, the UK Film Council published a review of progress made by the RSAs: *A Regional Picture: An Evaluation of the Regional Investment Fund for England*. It reported:

*A Regional Investment Fund managed by nine independent integrated RSAs is now in full operation. The UK film Council has led the achievement of a highly complex and fundamental shift in the way film and associated media are developed in England.*<sup>6</sup>

Although they have long-term roots in their regions through the organisations from which they were formed, the development of the RSAs since the establishment of RIFE has been speedy and dramatic.

Five years after they were initially conceived, and after a period of rapid growth, the RSAs are at a moment where they can consider the implications of their development and plot their future trajectory. This report addresses their transition from a set of organisations reacting to external demands, to the position they now occupy as shapers of policy through their innovative approach. In order to appreciate their contribution, it is first necessary to describe the rapidly changing technological and cultural context in which they operate.

## 1.2 Screen and moving image: the new shape and context of the sector

*“For most young people, technology is part of their daily lives. It has been suggested that by the age of 21 the average person will have spent 15, 000 hours in formal education, 20,000 hours in front of the TV and 50,000 hours in front of a computer screen.”*<sup>7</sup>

The last fifty years have witnessed an exponential increase in the role of different kinds of visual media. Much of this is mediated through screens. In the last ten years the twin forces of the digitisation of moving images and the growth of mobile communications technologies have driven this expansion. The term “screen” might once have been restricted to television or cinema, but it now includes a multitude of different platforms including mobile phones, computers, video game consoles, iPods and advertising hoardings.

The ends to which these moving images are put have also multiplied. Rather than being principally associated with entertainment, the uses of the moving image now range from finding out what your new nephew looks like in a video message, enjoying international sport on an outdoor screen, to watching

the debate for the leadership of a political party on television. In ever more ingenious forms, screens have become indispensable to how we live and communicate.

The RSAs play a key role in this broadly defined screen and moving image sector. Throughout the interviews carried out for this project, interviewees went to lengths to reiterate that the RSAs are not simply about film: *film may imply a screen, but screen no longer just implies film*. There is no formal definition of the sector<sup>8</sup>, but the following areas are regularly highlighted as being a part of it:

- film and video
- television and radio
- interactive leisure software
- electronic publishing
- corporate video and advertising<sup>9</sup>

The fluid definition of the sector creates difficulties for researchers who, when conducting evaluations and measuring impacts, tend to draw slightly different boundaries around it. For example the Cambridge Econometrics report, *The Economic Impact of the UK Screen Industries* (2005), which is the prime source for economic data relative to the RSAs' areas of activity, highlights "the four screen industries" as *film, TV, corporate video and advertising*, while it describes the screen sector as "the four screen industry activities" of *pre-production, production, post-production and distribution*.<sup>10</sup>

In this report the term "screen and moving image sector" is used to refer to any screen-based activity in which the moving image industries engage. This includes TV and film production, exhibition, corporate film-making, animation, games and software production, screen-based learning for young people, film-tourism, script-writing, multi-platform innovation, screen archives and location work.

This sector is currently shaped by several key issues that create the context for the work that the RSAs are undertaking. Many of these are related to the proliferation of communications technologies and digital technologies. These have created new ways of creating and consuming moving images, as well as an increase in the popularity of moving images in "traditional" form.

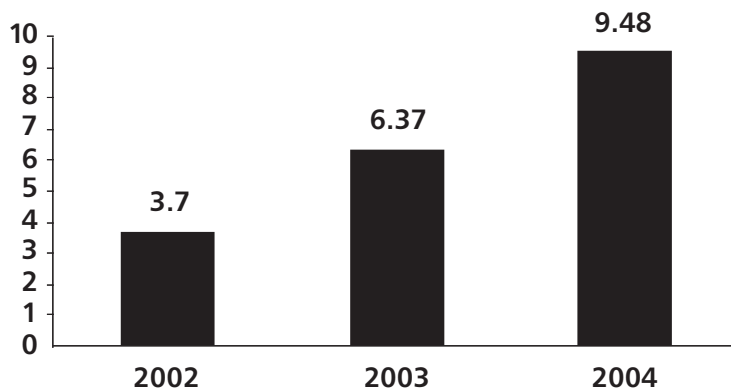
### **1.2.1. New ways of creating and exchanging moving images**

People are increasingly likely to be both consumers and producers of moving images. The internet, the falling price of computers, affordable digital technology and video cameras have opened the door to a whole generation of "amateur" producers of creative moving image content. Websites such as B3TA<sup>11</sup>, HolyLemon<sup>12</sup> and You Tube<sup>13</sup> provide a host of online opportunities to animators and film-makers to create, exhibit and watch different kinds of moving image content. Offline, community film-making projects with professional film-makers are springing up across the country. This is not simply about a new generation of amateur moving image makers, but about an expanding visual literacy and comfort with moving images. The images that defined the July 7th terrorist attacks in London were not the work of professional news gatherers, but that captured on the mobile phones of people actually experiencing the tragedy. Moving images are no longer the creative preserve of artists, film-makers and journalists: they have become a language we all use.

### 1.2.2 *New ways of consuming moving images*

There has been a step change in the amount of screen-based technology consumed in Britain, which has been driving growth in the sector since the mid 1990s. In the last ten years, boosted by the advent of DVD technology (See Figure 6) and increasing consumer spending, sales of home movies have more than trebled from 73 million in 1995, to 234 million in 2004. The success of new “preference-sensitive” forms of DVD rental service such as lovefilm.com are similarly fuelling the rental market. 7 million homes now have broadband, 99% are theoretically connectable<sup>14</sup>. The era of digital TV suggests that we will have ever-increasing choice over what we watch, and when we choose to watch it. Confirmation of the significance of new forms of consuming screen-based technology has arrived in 2006, with “multi-platform” releases. Steven Soderbergh’s *Bubble* was released simultaneously on DVD, cable and in cinemas, while Michael Winterbottom’s *The Road to Guantanamo* was simultaneously shown on the web, at cinemas and released on DVD<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, video game consoles have become a mainstay in British households, with 11 million homes boasting at least one<sup>16</sup>.

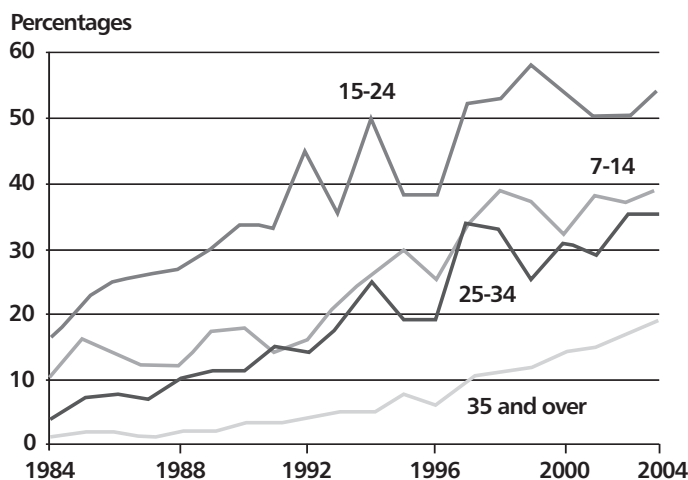
Figure 6: Sales of DVD players 2002 - 2004



### 1.2.3 *The increase in popularity of “traditional” moving images*

Counter-intuitively, the consumption of moving images in the “traditional” forms of film and television has not suffered from the growth of new visual technologies. Attendance at cinemas in Britain is enduringly popular: since the early 1990s and the multiplex revolution, attendance at cinemas has been climbing sharply (See Figure 7). In 1990, 97.37 million people attended a cinema; by 2004, this had risen to 171 million – the highest cinema attendance for 30 years. Moreover, box office receipts more than doubled in the same period to £770 million. Likewise the production of films in the United Kingdom has also rapidly increased. Between 1990 and 2003, the number of feature films produced in the UK increased from 60 to 109.

Figure 7: Growth in cinema visits<sup>17</sup>



Number of people attending a cinema at least twice a month, by age groups

#### I.2.4 A dispersed sector of independent practitioners

Most of those working in the sector operate within small organisations, or as independent agents. For example, 91% of film businesses employ 10 or fewer people<sup>18</sup>. In 2002 the screen industries in the UK purchased 3.8 million days of freelance services<sup>19</sup>. The effect is to create an increasingly fractured and dispersed sector where the ability to grow business and capacity is dependent upon connections and networks. These levels of flexibility have created a less defined sense of hierarchy within the sector, leading to different modes and approaches to work. Rather than progressing from working on making short films or music videos, to producing a TV programme and then progressing to the pinnacle of the hierarchy by directing a film, operators in the sector are increasingly able to respond to opportunities as and when they are presented.

#### I.3. The contribution of the screen and moving image sector to the national economy

Despite general inconsistencies in data, and a lack of a consistent definition of the screen and moving image sector, we know that the RSAs make interventions in areas that play a significant role in the UK's economy and the creative industries. In 2002 the sector had a turnover approaching £20 billion, purchased approximately £11 billion of services and kept 108,000 people in permanent employment.<sup>20</sup> Historically, the screen industry is concentrated in London: the capital is home to 71,500 permanent jobs, almost two thirds of those employed in the sector in the UK, and the South East, home to 8,100 is the next largest regional employment base.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 8: Breakdown of turnover of the screen sector

Sub-Sector	Turnover
TV	£13.4bn
Film	£3.5bn
Commercials and Corporate Video	£2.8bn
<b>Total</b>	<b>£19.7bn<sup>22</sup></b>
Production	£10.5bn
Exhibition and Distribution	£5.4bn
Post-Production	£2.1bn
Pre-Production	£1.7bn
<b>Total</b>	<b>£19.7bn<sup>23</sup></b>

## The Big Picture

We know that between 1997 and 2000, the audiovisual industries grew more than three times faster than the UK economy as a whole and in 2000 generated £4.1 billion of exports<sup>24</sup>. The latest statistics published by the DCMS estimate that employment in the two sub-sectors of the creative industries, of most relevance to the RSAs stands at 164,500<sup>25</sup>. Elsewhere Skillset (The Sector Skills Council For the Audio Visual Industries) estimate that the audio visual Industries employ approximately 400,000 people, in around 23,000 businesses and contribute up to 3% of Gross Value Added<sup>26</sup>. This represents approximately 31% of current employment in the creative industries and is forecast to increase to 450,000 by 2010<sup>27</sup>.

In addition to the figures outlined above, the computer games sector (in which the RSAs make considerable interventions) was estimated in 1999 to have a turnover of £36.4 billion: this represents the third largest gaming market in the world after the US and Japan.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.4 The relationship between the RSAs and the English regions

Within the overall screen and moving image economy, the RSAs have been created with their specific regional contexts in mind. The catchment area of each region is illustrated in Figure 1. Film in England identified the rural hinterlands of the West Midlands, the South Asian populations of Leicester, the expanding population of the South Eastern region, and the South West's communication difficulties as examples of specific regional characteristics<sup>29</sup>. The list is growing: five years on, we must consider the expansion of the Thames Gateway to the East, the selection of Liverpool as 2008's Capital of Culture in the North West, while London is looking forward to the Olympics in 2012.

While, as the major employment base, London and the South East act as powerful magnets and their appeal can work to drive the industry, much of the talent that coalesces there is from the regions. During the research carried out for this project, interviewees emphasised the differing demographics, cultures and economies of their regions that create the unique environment in which each RSA operates. Amongst various differences in regional conditions, RSA chief executives thought it particularly important to highlight the different distribution of BME communities around the UK (Figure 9), the different economic performances of their regions (Figure 10), and the uneven distribution of screen and moving image employment (Figure 11).

Figure 9: Percentage of people locating themselves in largest minority ethnic groups across the regions<sup>30</sup>

Minority Ethnic Group	Percentage of people locating themselves in Minority Ethnic Group								
	SW	SE	L	E	WM	EM	NW	NE	Y&H
Bengali	0.1	0.19	2.15	0.34	0.6	0.17	0.39	0.25	0.25
Black Caribbean	0.04	0.64	4.79	0.49	1.56	0.64	0.30	0.04	0.43
Black African	0.13	0.22	5.28	0.31	0.23	0.22	0.24	0.10	0.19
Chinese	0.26	0.41	1.12	0.38	0.31	0.31	0.40	0.24	0.25
Indian	0.33	1.12	6.09	0.95	3.39	2.93	1.07	0.40	1.04
Pakistani	0.14	0.73	1.99	0.72	2.93	0.67	1.74	0.56	2.95
<b>All Groups</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>4.90</b>	<b>28.9</b>	<b>4.88</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>6.51</b>	<b>5.56</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>6.52</b>

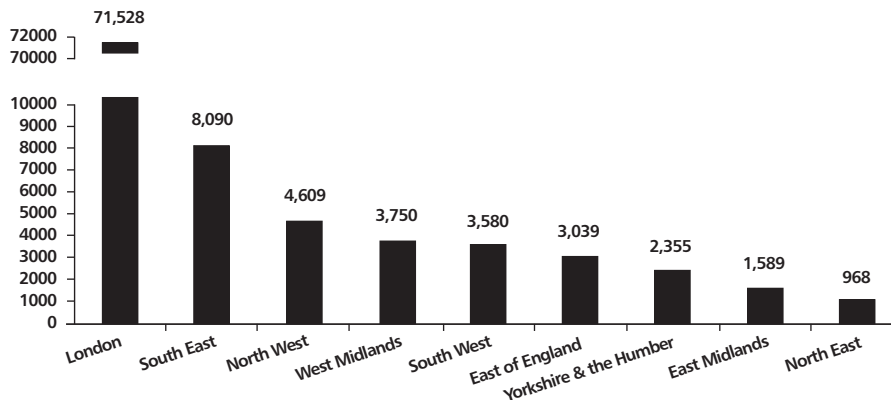
A second key aspect of regional differences is the differing rate of economic performance in each of the regions:

Figure 10: Differing regional economic performance <sup>31</sup>

Region	GVA, £/head (2003)	Unemployment rate (%) (Spring 2004)	Registered business (End-year stock for 2003, thousands)	R&D Expenditure (£ million 2003)
North East	12,736	5.6	45.4	293
North West	14,346	4.6	172.1	2,082
Yorkshire and the Humber	14,222	4.5	129.6	759
East Midlands	14,505	4.5	124.0	1,362
West Midlands	14,538	5.7	151.5	966
East	15,201	4.1	182.9	3,429
London	23,579	4.1	286.9	2,244
South East	17,565	3.9	285.8	4,335
South West	15,038	3.4	169.1	1,693
United Kingdom	15,980	4.9	1,810.5	19,275

The uneven distribution of different elements of the screen and moving image sector around the country is graphically illustrated by the differing regional distribution of employment.

Figure 11: Permanent employment in the screen and moving image sector<sup>32</sup>



### I.5. The Regional Screen Agencies: different local conditions but a common approach

As the preceding section shows, each RSA has to operate within a very different local economic and social context, where the presence of the screen and moving image sector will be manifested in locally specific ways. The approach of each RSA is determined by the overlap between the unique conditions of its region and the ever-changing world of the sector as a whole. For these reasons, each RSA has its own, unique identity.

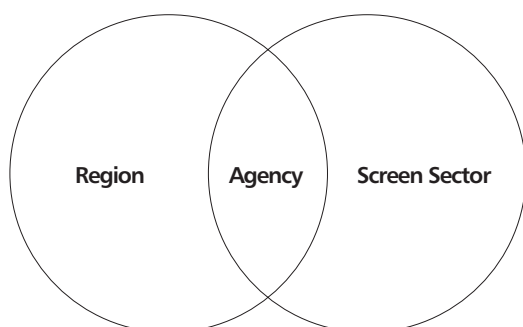
They do, however, have a common approach to their work. Put simply, the role that the RSAs play can be understood by thinking about how they relate to their geographical context (their region), the sector with which they work (screen) and their role in creating value in these two areas (agency).

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As illustrated in figure 12 they work on a very simple and distinctive principle: the RSAs exercise their agency to support different kinds of growth in the two areas: the region, and the screen sector.

Figure 12: The agency function of the RSAs



The kinds of growth stimulated by the RSAs, and the common methodology they have developed to enhance the development of the screen and moving image sector, are the subject of Part II.

# Part II: How the work of the Regional Screen Agencies relates to current government policy objectives

As publicly-funded bodies, the RSAs meet the government's social, economic and educational agenda in distinctive ways, applying their techniques as development agencies to the particular policy needs of each region. This introduction identifies the RSA's contribution to the Government's over-arching agenda, and describes the methodology used by the RSAs to achieve their goals.

## II.1 Introduction: The Government's agenda

In relation to the RSAs, the Government's policy objectives can be briefly characterised as:

1. **Social:** to encourage the growth of a sense of community and identity, to identify and empower under-represented and marginalised voices, give support for different forms of distribution, and ensure diversity of access and participation.
2. **Economic:** to develop individual business enterprise and a sustainable industry, encourage inward investment, support business development and provide links to resources available in wider networks.
3. **Educational:** to encourage the growth of skills and learning, provide expert knowledge and understanding of the needs of the sector, make links to mentors and exemplars of success, support different learning networks and communicate the needs of the sector to a wider constituency of interest.

## II.2 The RSAs' methodology

The RSAs work in differing regional circumstances within an unevenly distributed and constantly evolving sector. Nevertheless, our research shows that they share a similar heritage and ethos and have developed a methodology that makes a regionally differentiated approach possible. They express their common agency through a series of practices that can be broadly categorised as: taking **Initiative**, supplying **Expertise**, making **Connections**, and encouraging **Development**. Importantly, though, they do so in different ways, at different times, and each has developed a range of approaches that are suited to the region in which they work.



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### *II.2.1 Taking regional initiative*

The RSAs use their local networks and connections to act as a “regional positioning system” for opportunities to develop the screen sector and their region, identifying the need for business advice. This might relate to finding a nascent local enterprise, a socially excluded group, a content creator with exceptional talent or assisting a production company with an interest in filming in the region.

### *II.2.2 Supplying regional expertise*

The RSAs have expert knowledge of their regions, the moving image sector and the people working in it. They understand governance and funding, are familiar with sector specific business support, and can achieve the recognition of potential investors. Once they have created a relationship, they are able to use this knowledge to provide expert advice and know-how to individuals, businesses and public bodies.

### *II.2.3 Making local, national and international connections*

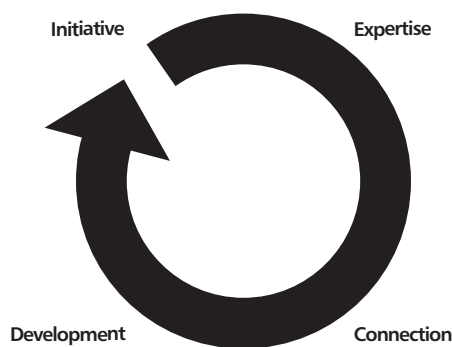
This ranges from bringing sector-specific business support to established and infant enterprises in the sector, to making connections beyond the region and attracting the investment of major international production companies, in terms of production or the use of locations. It emphasises the role of the RSA as a conduit between the aspirations of moving image enterprises and the best routes to the market.

### *II.2.4 Encouraging sustainable development*

Once the RSAs have identified opportunities, provided expert knowledge and made connections, they are committed to the generation of a self-supporting sector by attracting long-term investors. Across all their activities, the RSAs have avoided creating a dependency relationship between themselves and their partners and in doing so have developed support networks, business clusters and other institutions that can support the regional screen ecology.

When these activities are viewed sequentially they reveal a process that describes the steps that an RSA goes through when supporting an individual, a project or institution, in each case creating a virtuous cycle of sustainable development.

Figure 13: RSA model of sustainable development



The extent of an RSA’s contribution within the cycle will vary from case to case, but this cycle expresses how an RSA creates growth in the regions, whether dealing with an individual, a group or a particular enterprise. The same methodology is applied to the three areas of government policy identified above.

The sector-specificity of the RSAs’ activity has anticipated and now reflects the recommendations of the Treasury’s recent *Cox Review of Creativity*.

# Part II: Section 1

## Policy objective 1: Encouraging a sense of community and identity

This section outlines the relationship between screen culture and the expression of identity, documenting this theme as a key area for government policy. It then outlines how the approach of the RSAs makes contributions to the creation of community and identity within their regional context

### S1.1 Introduction: The relationship between screen and identity

*“In a globalised world with access to multiple, diverse and interwoven cultures, answers to the questions “Who am I?” and “Who are we?” are found in people’s cultural consumption (and increasingly in their cultural production).”<sup>33</sup>*

In the last hundred years, the moving image has grown from being an object of curiosity to being part of our daily lives. Migrating from the cinema, to the sitting room, to the palm of our hands, moving images have come to symbolise progress and improvement. In all its forms, the moving image is central to how we perceive and understand the world and how we place ourselves and other people in it.

Moving images provide a potent platform for cross-cultural communication; they are a vivid way of bringing other ideas, ways of behaving and cultures into clearer focus: a way of starting public debate about how we live. From *Cathy Come Home* in 1966 to *Jamie’s School Dinners* in 2003, moving images have changed the way that Britain thinks about itself.

Growing cultural diversity, coupled with the wider fragmentation of our lifestyles are pushing questions of citizenship, identity and social cohesion up the public agenda. Films continue to play this role – *Kids* by Larry Clarke began the conversation about teenage identity currently revived by *Kidulthood*, *Pretty Dirty Things* raised questions about our relationship to immigration and the BAFTA nomination of *Devdas* signalled the beginning of the mainstreaming of Asian identities in the media. This was given particular urgency in July 2005 after the London tube bombings by British nationals, and the banlieue riots across France four months later. In the aftermath, commentators and leaders probed deeper into the contribution of the cultural sector to building national stability, cohesion and identity.

Government and UK Film Council policies have reflected these sentiments for some time. It is a strategic objective of the Regional Investment Fund for England (RIFE):

*To support the development of opportunities for access to cinema history and heritage and the use of film history in understanding identity, representation, culture and creativity . . . . To support the development of opportunities for all UK citizens to understand and appreciate film through the generation and dissemination of knowledge about film.* <sup>34</sup>

The Government and the UK Film Council look to the RSAs to help capture the many facets of British communities. The regional focus that they bring and the communities that they reach leave them well positioned to do this.

### **S1.2 The RSA methodology applied to building community and identity**

Operating at the regional level, embedded and trusted within local networks and communities of practice, the RSAs are uniquely positioned to maximise the potential of moving images to create cross-cultural understanding and communication both within their regions, and throughout Britain and overseas.

#### *Case study 1: Bullet Boy*

Saul Dibb's first feature film, *Bullet Boy*, raised several contentious and potentially inflammatory issues. It also spoke directly of some of the challenges facing the London community of Hackney. It is not only a film about being young and black, but it also brings to the big screen some of the issues current on Britain's front pages: these range from gun crime and gang culture to respect, drugs and other social issues. Providing a counterpoint to the stereotype of urban and criminal youth, it illustrates personal and family struggles as the hero fights to free himself from the world in which he has grown up.

Filming was difficult, because the story brought many topics that the gangs of the area would rather keep silent to public attention. Film London was instrumental in enabling the film to be shot. As the experts on location-shooting in the capital, they used their knowledge of both local networks and the industry to build up trust and broker discussions between the production company and the police. This helped the crew to shoot on sensitive estates by smoothing relations with local authorities who were initially very reluctant to permit production.

Importantly, the film did not simply give a voice to grievances and air social ills. Its very production went a long way towards binding communities and the people who might otherwise have been re-resented as authorities figures. By way of thanking the communities involved, *Bullet Boy* was given one of its first screenings in The Rio cinema in Hackney. Building on the work and goodwill that the film produced, four further educational films were made about the issues raised by *Bullet Boy* and these were shown both in the borough's cinemas and its schools.

Case study 1, *Bullet Boy*, is a practical demonstration of an RSA's ability to build local trust.

### **S.1.3 Taking regional initiative**

Central to the process of building community and identity through the screen and the moving image is ensuring that access to the creation and experience of moving images is more widely available. RSAs are committed to the initiation of relationships with specific groups who require help to access opportunities to make and experience moving images.

*The screen industries of film television and digital media are the most popular forms of entertainment and information. But we recognise that for many individuals and communities, the opportunities to contribute to, or to appreciate and enjoy the screen industries are limited ... Talent companies and audiences in the region are encouraged to reach their full potential regardless of their gender, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, age disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or political affiliation.* <sup>35</sup>

Like other creative industries, employment in the screen industries has been traditionally dominated by a demographic that tends towards being white, middle class, male and - in the main - middle aged. As the UK Film Council and Skillset found in 2003:

*Nepotism in film recruitment practices is agreed to be widespread in production, and most practitioners consulted see no persuasive reason to recruit on any other basis but familiarity or personal recommendation.* <sup>36</sup>

Central to the mission of all the RSAs is the creation of a moving image sector that is experienced and is contributed to by a wider range of people. This means initiating relationships with people who are often experiencing deprivation or exclusion from mainstream society, and who have little prior experience of making moving images.

This is far more than simply a drive for figures and statistics: such strategies support job creation and employment, but for people working in the sector and living in the regions in which the RSAs operate the value lies in the voice that they gain through expressing themselves through moving images.

Local knowledge and the RSA's identification with its particular region is the key. Working close to the ground, they are able to apply specific approaches to specific areas of deprivation. Yorkshire, for instance, has a large black and minority ethnic community, specifically in Bradford. The RSA, Screen Yorkshire, recognises that while film and new media production in the area has been growing, the media is not a traditional route to employment for many black or minority ethnic families. The screen agency, however, has identified an opportunity to open up routes and, initiated "The Foundation Placement Scheme". After a study into the barriers to black and minority ethnic entry into the industry, a pilot scheme was rolled out in 2003 that offered 20 black or other minority ethnic individuals a pre-entry level vocational training programme in TV production in support roles at ITV Yorkshire in Leeds. The placement was repeated in 2004, with the provision of a year's training for a further 18 candidates. While the scheme gives training to aspirant black and minority ethnic professionals, it also helps raise awareness in the region's industry of the communities to which it caters and the diverse issues that they can bring to the screen.

The RSAs also work to engage communities through participation as audiences. All RSAs support a range of film festivals: in 2004/2005, they supported 159 different cinemas, touring programmes and festivals, opening a wider range of films to a wider range of audiences.<sup>37</sup> Overall, in 2003/2004, these festivals attracted 60,046 viewers; in 2004/2005, they increased this number to 93,209. In a particular example, in 2002, Screen West Midlands supported the 7th annual Deaf Film and Television festival at the Light House Cinema, Wolverhampton with a grant of £16,772.<sup>38</sup> Several RSAs are involved in similar enterprises. In Newcastle, for instance, Northern Film and Media worked in association with Tyneside Cinema and associations for the deaf to stage Deaf Day, an event designed to broaden access to a community that might otherwise be excluded by mainstream events.

Such regionally specific approaches to community building through the moving image are common to all of the RSAs. EM Media (the RSA for the East Midlands), for example, has taken similar initiative. Its guideline – Distinctive, Diverse Digital – drives its activities. One of these relates specifically to “raising levels of citizenship, inclusion and diversity”. Responding to one of the challenges that the region faces, EM Media has committed RIFE funding to rural access programmes in Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire and skills and business development activities focussed on deprived wards of the East Midlands.<sup>39</sup> Up and down the country, the RSAs have supported programmes that have brought film to rural areas. With grants to provide equipment and training, they have helped to develop an infrastructure, including a digital infrastructure, which has been vital in overcoming barriers created by such issues as class differentials and lack of transport. Screen Yorkshire is working with Rural Arts North Yorkshire to promote exhibition in the region, using 45 community venues and 80 local promoters. South West Screen has initiated a mini-digital screen network to bring more diverse content to the region’s audiences. The RSAs also work to cross conceptual as well as geographic boundaries:

### Case study 2 *The Road to Guantanamo*

*The Road to Guantanamo* won a coveted Silver Bear at the Berlin International Film festival. Financially supported by Screen West Midlands the film tells the story of the “Tipton Three” - three Bengali youths from Tipton in Birmingham who were wrongly held in the Guantanamo Bay internment camp as terrorist suspects for three years. Set in the context of big issues of the war on terror, human rights abuses and neo-conservative foreign policy, the film tells the story of four Muslim youths (one has disappeared) caught in the middle of the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. The film was not only an investment in an internationally acclaimed director, it was a clear investment in ideas and creative content of specific relevance to people throughout the UK, and specifically in the West Midlands. To underline the significance of the message of the film, and the desire of its creators for it to reach as wide an audience as possible, it has been simultaneously released at the cinema, shown on TV and made available for download.

Of crucial importance to the RSAs ability to initiate relationships with a range of different groups is their capacity to communicate with people in terms that are applicable and sensitive to given local needs and concerns: they meet people on their own terms. They use their grass-roots connections to find people who would benefit from their programmes. They also partner organisations that can facilitate further access to new and potential moving image consumers and producers: Screen East, for example, work with gateway organisations such as the East of England Black and Minority Ethnic Network (MENTER) to access isolated communities.<sup>40</sup>

By enabling, supporting and funding local producers, the RSAs are able to initiate relationships with voices that might otherwise go unheard. Opinions such as that of the Asian youths in Bradford play a significant role in the creation of a diverse but cohesive society. Through their roles in encouraging new audiences, and nurturing producers, the RSAs contribute to this agenda not only by helping to grow the numbers that can receive and listen to opinion, but also the numbers producing and articulating their attitudes through the moving image.

### S.1.4 Supplying regional and sector expertise

The people working within the RSAs bring expert knowledge and understanding of their region and, with it, a personal investment in the communities that moving images are able to access and touch. For instance, in March 2005 Screen Yorkshire seconded their Production Liaison Manager to coordinate Have Faith, an arts education project, running acting workshops with people from local communities. The project was designed to support a major production in the region, the BBC's Faith, a film marking the 20th anniversary of the Miners' Strike. Screen Yorkshire therefore worked to engage the local community in the production of a story close to their hearts, Yorkshire's mining heritage and the pride for which it stands.

Without exception the staff to whom we spoke during the research for this project felt they had a deep personal commitment to making their regions better places, not simply in terms of economic growth, but also with a view to developing and supporting a better quality of life. They were keen to support the creation of films that not only reflected the images and locations of their regions, but were also relevant to the lives of people living there.

#### Case study 3: *Aakhir Kab Tak*

Screen South supported the first British TV drama to be produced in Hindi and aimed at a Hindi-speaking audience.<sup>41</sup> Krishan Tandon's *Aakhir Kab Tak* is a tale of romance that dramatises Indian cultural values in the relationship between family friends, one of whom is a young woman without speech. As well as playing to the British Hindi audience, the film has also been sold to Indian TV and a version with English subtitles has been produced for screening on other worldwide mainstream channels.

### S.1.5 Making local, national and international connections

The RSAs help to connect moving image content with audiences at local, national and international levels. As the chief executive of one RSA reasoned:

*It's all very well creating all this content, but what does it mean if it doesn't have an audience? If we can't create audiences we're at risk of saying, "you can have a voice – but nobody's going to listen to you".*

#### Encouraging local audiences

Amongst the 113 cinemas and exhibition centres that the RSAs funded and supported in 2004/2005, a range of major media centres have been vital in encouraging more people to participate in a wider range of screen activities. In 2004/2005, the total sum allocated by the RSAs to cinema and media venues such as Watershed in Bristol, Broadway Media Centre in Nottingham, Tyneside in Newcastle, Cinema City in Norwich, and the Cornerhouse in Manchester exceeded £600,000. In total, the exhibition centres that they supported attracted 505,405 people.

Support like that given by EM Media to the Broadway Media Centre in Nottingham is essential to maintaining organisations that exhibit diverse and niche productions: in 2004, Broadway Media Centre grew its audience by some 5.5%, hosting film festivals that gave representation to the Jewish, and the lesbian and gay communities, as well as screen time to varied formats such as short and silent films. A new four screen, fully digital facility, due to open in Autumn 2006 will further widen the choice available. EM Media has actively encouraged the growth and development of both Broadway Media Centre and its business model, broadening its potential and sustainability. On top of a revenue investment of £127,000 which in the new financial year will be subject to a service level agreement, EM Me-



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dia has also invested in the feasibility study for a capital build project that will enable it to attract and accommodate greater audience numbers and house two new digital cinema screens on which further and more diverse offers can be shown, as well as key, new business modelling work to ensure the new operation can be sustainable.<sup>42</sup>

The RSAs either invest directly in activities that build the role of screen and moving images in local communities, or invest in organisations that support them.

### Case study 4 *The Flower Chamber*

Candella Films, based in Manchester combine independent short film production, community education workshops and festival programming with a global network of filmmakers, festivals programmers and distributors. They have had a long-standing interest in working with excluded communities both in Brazil and the UK. When North West Vision were approached by a Chinese Community Arts Organisation, China Here and There that was interested in developing work around film, it was a logical step for Tom Gabbutt, North West Vision's talent executive, to put them in touch with one another.

Tom Gabbutt encouraged Candella to meet with China Here and There, and this became the basis for a project between the two organisations. North West Vision invested £5,000 in a film called *The Flower Chamber* combining the film-making experience of Candella films with the enthusiasm of China Here and There.

The film was shot over three months and providing an opportunity for people from the Chinese community to gain their first experience of making a film and developing a series of new skills. The film has subsequently been shown at several local festivals and arts centres including the Exposures Film Festival, the Cromwell Film Festival and the Cornerhouse Arts centre.

All of the RSAs support local film festivals and arts institutions as a way of creating local audiences. Summerscreen, for instance, is a film festival run by Screen South specifically for young people and their families: since its launch in 2003, 5,000 young people have participated in the workshops and screenings that it provides. Screen West Midlands, Northern Film and Media, EM Media, Screen East and South West Screen all invest in rural touring programmes – taking cinema to those parts of their regions which have limited access to cinema generally and world cinema specifically. Many of these programmes are targeted at specific communities – such as older people or places where public transport is limited. Screen West Midlands, for instance, allocated an £11,800 grant to Flicks in the Sticks, an education project that uses digital film technology to bring more diverse film to the rural communities of Herefordshire and Shropshire. Films shown have ranged from the classic *Lawrence of Arabia*, through to the foreign language, *Y tu Mama Tambien*.<sup>43</sup> Elsewhere, Northern Film and Media supports the Animex animation festival in Middlesbrough, bringing animators from the world over to the town for discussion and workshops with the animation students from Teesside University. At the same time, it takes a wide range of animation out onto the streets, screening professional and community animation in shops, bars and even at half-time, to the 30,000 at Middlesbrough's football stadium.

The RSAs have also assisted the UK Film Council in the expansion of the Digital Screen Network, supporting and encouraging applications from venues in their regions.<sup>44</sup> By doing so, they create local micro-markets in film distribution for films with a particular local interest, or films created by local film-makers. For example, several RSAs, such as North West Vision and EM Media will connect the UK Film Council sponsored digital shorts competition with the Digital Screen Network to provide a cost-effective local method of distribution for digital shorts.

#### Case study 5 The Suffolk Digital Cinema Network

Following a feasibility study commissioned by Screen East and Forest Heath District Council 59 Suffolk-based organisations have joined the Suffolk Digital Cinema Network, with over 25 groups now showing films. Over 250 films have been shown since September 2004, with over 8,500 adults and 1,700 children attending at a subsidy per ticket of less than one pound. Films screened include *Jean de Florette*, *A Very Long Engagement* and *Il Postino*. The model for developing community based rural film screenings builds on an existing network of village halls, schools and community centres and engages members of the community as volunteers. Members are now investing in future development by buying their own digital projection equipment. Additional small investments to purchase equipment have been awarded to film societies in Cambridgeshire, Horham and Athelington Community Council and Leigh Film Society. In addition a new Village Screen Network for North Norfolk has been developed by Creative Arts East adding 16 voluntary screening groups and training 36 people as volunteer projectionists.<sup>45</sup>

#### *Connecting to national audiences*

The RSAs develop the identity of their region by connecting it with national audiences. This is most apparent in the support they provide to the sector through facilitating shooting on location. 55 Degrees North, for instance, brought images of Newcastle to a primetime audience on BBC1: Northern Film and Media was instrumental in organising and negotiating much of the location work, including scenes filmed in Newcastle's Crown Court.<sup>46</sup> Building on the rich screen heritage provided by such favourites as *Heartbeat*, *Emmerdale* and *Last of the Summer Wine*, Screen Yorkshire is currently providing location work for the Channel 4 productions of *No Angels* and *Ghost Squad*.

RSAs also bring local issues into national focus more directly, providing a conduit between policy circles, the region and its industry. South West Screen, for instance, is one of the RSAs that works closely with its local MPs to gain representation for the region's moving image industry and its producers on a national footing. In October 2004, a reception was organised at Westminster, involving thirty local MPs and over a hundred representatives of the RSA's partners and stakeholders, as well as representatives of the region's media industry. From this platform, South West Screen has been instrumental in raising issues of concern to the region's screen industry at governmental levels, and also in fostering relationships between its client-base and Westminster.<sup>47</sup>

They also support production that will reach key national audiences and speak beyond geographical boundaries. As we have seen, in supporting *Aakhir Kab Tak*, Screen South were instrumental in the production of the first British TV drama to be produced in Hindi and aimed at a Hindi-speaking audience.<sup>48</sup>

#### *Connecting to international audiences*

Globalisation has made it important for regions and cities to encourage a sense of geographical distinctiveness: today's film viewers may be tomorrow's tourists, investors or economic migrants. The pop-culture of moving images defines places; be it Guernsey in *Bergerac*, Dorset in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* or the streets of Gateshead in *Get Carter*. The national campaign currently led by some Gateshead residents and enthusiasts to save the multi-storey car park featured in the film is a testament to the power of the moving image to define places and create local pride.

RSAs have a clear understanding of how they can assist this process of building regional identities in a global context. Film London, for example, has a close relationship with Visit London. For major cinema releases that feature imagery of the capital, Film London produces movie maps of locations used in the films, so that visitors to the capital can visit the places they have seen at the cinema, thus keeping London's brand fresh for new visitors.<sup>50</sup>



All RSAs have location departments, which can signpost films, commercials, TV dramas being made in their region. In 2004 North West Vision's four film offices facilitated over 2000 days of location filming in the Northwest. In the same year, support provided to Southwark Film Office by Film increased, the number of filming days in the Borough from 537 to 822 in 2005. This can lead to the growth in tourism activity. The 2005 production of *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, was supported by EM Media, particularly in relation to location work. Building on this success, EM Media has partnered with East Midlands Tourism and Destination Management Partnerships (DMPs) to build tourist activity. One such event involved a regional premiere of the film at Chatsworth co-hosted by EM Media and two of the DMPs.

This process can also work the other way round. Where RSAs can draw production to their region and ensure that images of the region are projected around the world, they can also launch regional initiatives leading to more far-reaching success.

### Case study 6 *A Century in Stone*

Northern Film and Media supported *A Century in Stone*, an archive film about the history of the iron ore mining industry in Middlesbrough. Made by local film maker, Craig Hornby, the film toured forty working men's clubs in Teesside and sold out every time. It then went on to a two-week run at the local multiplex and outsold the mainstream films. It has since gone on to sell over 1000 copies on DVD. Craig Hornby attributes the success of the film to the huge appetite of the local people to understand and experience their heritage. Craig has since toured the film to Sydney, Australia because the steel for the Harbour Bridge came from Teesside, and has found a connection with the desire of the residents there to explore their heritage.

### S.1.6 Encouraging sustainable development

Moving images have an unrivalled capacity to create collective experiences both in public and private. By developing organisations capable of stimulating the creation and display of moving images, they seek to create the long-term sustainability of the sector. Alongside the investments that RSAs make in key organisations that support the creation and experience of moving images in their regions (such as the Cornerhouse in Manchester, the Showroom in Sheffield or the Watershed in Bristol) the RSAs also play a key role in investing in film archives, creating a historical base that will support future activity.

Film archives make moving images accessible for cultural consumption and commercial use. They also provide a long-term resource for the development of the local screen sector: without their services, we would have no footage of many of the major events that have shaped our history, from the Blitz, to the archive footage of the HMS Windrush arriving in Britain in 1948.

*The RSAs contribute an aggregate figure of £256,000 per annum to the regional film archives. This equates to 3.3% of the £7.8m that the RSAs receive from UKFC's RIFE. This provides 18% of the total funding for film archives.<sup>51</sup>*

### Case study 7: East Anglian Film Archive

Screen East supports the East Anglian Film Archive which has an annual programme of screenings by staff and volunteers to both local audiences, organisations, and in cinemas. During 2003-04, the film archive made 250 public presentations reaching an audience of approximately 12,500 people. The archive works with Screen East's network of moving image education consortia, as well as museums, schools and colleges, libraries, social services organisations, including supplying material for exhibitions and displays. The archive, which occupies part of the brand new £7m Archive Centre at County

Hall, Norwich plans to develop a digitisation programme which is designed to enable far wider access by the people of the East of England. Two members of the archive teach the MA in Film Archiving at the University of East Anglia, and material is provided for the students' research and viewing for this and other courses. Long-term projects with Anglia Television have included the series *The Way We Were* which has subsequently been developed by ITV across the UK.

By taking the initiative, applying local knowledge and making connections, the RSAs make a significant contribution to encouraging a region's sense of community and identity. As the Regional Archive Forum argues:

*In terms of national and regional identity, the use of the moving image is probably one of the most resonant and powerful contributors to an understanding of how people's identities develop. It is no accident that the Regional Film Archives find that their regional audiences value their work: people have an almost universal desire to see their lives – more accurately the lives of their parents and grandparents – captured through moving images. Seeing their towns and villages fifty or eighty years ago, their workplaces, their homes, their cars, their sports, weddings, holidays – there simply is no more powerful medium than the moving image to convey collective and individual memories.* <sup>52</sup>

Local pride, however, is not enough in itself to sustain a screen and moving image culture. There has to be a secure economic infrastructure, as the following section shows.

# Part II: Section 2

## **Policy objective 2: to develop individual business enterprise and a sustainable industry**

This section focuses on the relationship between the screen and moving image sector and the wider economy, and again shows how the practices developed by the RSAs serve to meet government objectives.

### **S.2.1 Introduction: The RSAs' contribution to economic growth**

As we showed in Part I.3, the RSAs have responsibility for industries that account for over half of the Gross Value Added of one of the country's most rapidly growing sectors. If, as the then Minister for the Creative Industries affirmed in July 2005, the government is to establish Britain as the "world's creative hub", then the screen sector, and hence the RSAs, have a key role to play.<sup>53</sup> This role was formally inscribed in the UK Film Council's objectives for the Regional Investment Fund for England,<sup>54</sup> and is implicit in the £4,973,019 investment that the RSAs were successful in securing from Regional Development Agencies during 2005.

### **S.2.2 The RSA methodology applied to developing individual business enterprise and a sustainable industry**

The RSAs do not see themselves as funders of screen culture, but prefer to see themselves as investors in it. They do this by developing the competitiveness of businesses, assisting to build critical mass, addressing skills shortages, developing talent and innovation and offering sector-specific advice and expertise. Rather than "owning" the culture of the screen and moving image, and using funding as a way of dictating what type of products are made, they seek ways of facilitating its continued development. They invest in enterprise that is richly connected to other organisations in their sector and the public. As operators at the regional level embedded in local networks the RSAs are well positioned to make local interventions, and so encourage economic growth in their regions.

### **S.2.3 Taking regional initiative**

Economic growth begins with the creation of relationships with organisations and individuals with ideas that have commercial potential. RSAs help to develop an individual's interest in screen production into a career of economic value. As the production of moving images becomes increasingly popu-

lar with enthusiasts around the country (holylemon.com receives 150,000 hits a day<sup>55</sup>) and the pool of potential talent correspondingly expands, the RSAs have the increasingly important and challenging role of recognising and initiating relationships with organisations and individuals who display talent with commercial potential. They also have to help individuals and companies to develop economic capacity: from the start-up practitioner to the established professional, enthusiasm does not necessarily mean economic success, or even survival. In this respect, the role that the RSAs play in growing a commercially viable sector is separate from the craft skills that they also help nurture.

Success in the screen and moving image sector is born of creative talent and effort; its commercial enterprises have to survive in some of the most unforgiving marketplaces, but their survival is important to the nation's economy as a whole. In the South East, alone, the Interactive Media and Computer Games sectors have grown dramatically in recent years, becoming one of the largest sub-sectors in the region, making up 60% of all audio-visual employment in the area, and playing a significant role in the South East's economy.<sup>56</sup> The RSAs' role in being able to locate appropriate talent and then connect it to effective systems of support is crucial to sustaining this kind of growth. Screen South, for example, have partnered SEEDA's South East Media Network to launch Brighton's two-day D Media Conference, a chance for the region's freelance and SME digital practitioners to meet 200 practitioners, forging new partnerships and creating significant business opportunities.

Support is essential, especially in an area where entry routes are often hard to access and rates of attrition are high. By 2003, Codemasters, the Leamington-based producer of successful sports games from Brian Lara Cricket and Colin McCrae Rally had an annual turnover of £123 million: its origins lie back in 1986 with two brothers and games enthusiasts, David and Richard Darling, who are a reminder that the most successful in the sector often have very humble starts.<sup>57</sup> Against the odds, David and Richard managed to grow their company before the RSAs existed. Now, with the RSAs in place, there is a logical organisation in place to draw similar initiatives in from the fringes to become commercial successes.

### Case study 8 *Confetti*

*Confetti* is a good example of how an RSA can nurture new talent. When Screen West Midlands met Debbie Issitt, her film, *Confetti* had neither funding, nor a script: it would be improvised by the cast along guideline themes – not always a safe bet. The risk taken by Screen West Midlands in this project arguably led to major production investment by BBC Films. The film was sold for \$4.5m at Cannes and has given Debbie international exposure. The subsequent repayment of the grant to the RSA has not only fed money back into the organisation, but has also given it renewed confidence.

### S.2.4 Supplying regional and sector expertise

The industries within the moving image sector are principally culturally and creatively driven. The results of this are twofold. First, standard business models do not necessarily fit, and so sources of advice must be more specialised and sector-specific; and, second, that advice is most likely to prove effective if it comes from trusted sources, respected for their success in the self-same industry. In order to operate efficiently within the sector, individual producers must be able to access sector specific advice, and learn from experts.

The RSA itself will contain some of those experts; it is also the place where producers are most likely to find access to wider expertise. But the RSAs are aware that a significant barrier to overcome is awareness: it is one thing for practitioners to need commercial and sector-specific advice, and another for them to know that they need it. In order to be effective, the RSAs face the task not only of providing advice, but also finding the people who require it and how best to give it.

### *Sector specific business expertise*

It would be impractical – and unreasonable – to expect generic business advisors, such as Business Link, to provide detailed advice on how to develop and market a script, or build and grow an animation company. There are perceptual barriers to overcome, too. Some on the cultural side of the equation question the suitability of such organisations as Business Link in relation to the screen and moving image sector. Suspicions, such as that of a member of one cultural consortium, that “they are driven by numbers” are far from isolated. Such comments are, of course, one-sided, but they do indicate a feeling within the moving image sector that there is a need for business advice that is tailored more specifically to their needs.

The RSAs use their proximity to local networks and contacts to provide this. In the North East, Northern Film and Media do work with Business Link Tyne and Wear. At the time of writing, other RSAs have either already developed, or are planning, similar links. South West Screen, for instance, has partnered Culture South West and Business Link in developing a Creative Enterprise Gateway, providing access to existing business information that is both generic and sector-specific. This sits alongside South West Screen’s existing partnership with Skillset, through which six companies from the South West have been given the opportunity of taking part in a Skills Business Growth Opportunity Scheme: it is planned that another four companies will be given a similar opportunity.<sup>58</sup> Screen West Midlands, for their part, partner Birmingham City Council’s Business Support for Creative Industries Initiative. Amongst other schemes, they support the Management Action Programme, assisting 35 companies through an 11 month business development programme building the business skills necessary to run successful creative companies.

By working with conventional providers of advice to identify people with specific needs in this way, RSAs broaden their catchment areas and develop the potential of the region simply by ensuring that more people get the advice that they need.

### Case Study 9: South West Screen Cluster Groups

South West Screen identified the need for screen businesses in the region to operate more as a network, building the critical mass that would enable them to attract major players to the area.

Between 2003 and 2005 South West Screen established 5 media business clusters, aiming to ensure the stimulation of business growth across the entire region. The RSA invested £210,000 in the five Clusters – Bristol Media, Cornwall Media Focus, Gloucestershire Media Group, Plymouth Media Partnership and Wessex Media Group with a view to building a stronger infrastructure for the screen sector in the region. The Clusters encourage organisations to come together to network, establish partnership projects and share best practice: so far, they have attracted over 2,000 members, and continue to grow.

Cluster members are able to access visiting commissioning editors from large broadcasters, who are much more enthusiastic about talking to a large group of potential partners than a small company in isolation. Members have also benefited from forming consortiums and bidding for business together, having been introduced through the Cluster network.

Gloucestershire Media Group is fairly typical of the five Cluster groups in its offer: monthly networking events, an updated website, a weekly e-bulletin and media training and development for its 280 members. GMG receives approximately £40,000 from SWS and this has levered further support: the group has just received a £400,000 award from the LSC to run The GMG Train, which will allow all training for members to be either free or heavily subsidised.

Running a sustainable company requires more than basic business knowledge: entrepreneurs must also be versed in the commercial reality of their specific area of business. In the screen and moving image sector, for example, there is the crucial need to be able to balance employment of contract and staff workers, where the norm is to employ freelancers (in 2002, some 3.8 million days of freelancers' time were purchased by the screen industries).<sup>59</sup> There is equally the need to understand and manage the dynamics of simultaneous production, ensuring the transition between one project or film and the next. In supplying advice that only those with experience in the sector can provide, the RSAs fill a gap by giving guidance that can build for the future, rather than dealing with purely economic and financial concerns that by their nature are often short-term.

#### **S.2.4 Making local, national and international connections**

The RSA uses its professional knowledge of the sector to help practitioners and companies identify and seize opportunities. They work “horizontally” rather than “vertically” to connect differing sector-specific interests with resources in the region, the country or on the other side of the globe. Furthermore, this works reciprocally: the RSA connects people outside the sector to the right practitioners, and so connects them back to the talent and inspiration that translates fresh ideas into commercial and economic success.

##### *Connecting practitioners within the region*

By supporting networks of practitioners, the RSAs develop economic capacity within the regions: the more links there are between local enterprise, the tighter the mesh between them, and so fewer opportunities for development and productivity will slip through. Screen Yorkshire, for instance, pay half the salary of the coordinator of Game Republic, who shares their office space. Game Republic's mission is “to support, encourage and promote video game development in the Yorkshire and Humber region”<sup>60</sup> As well as facilitating a programme of expert speakers from whom regional practitioners can learn, Game Republic is also a network that has produced effective collaborations and partnerships within the sector that lead to tangible economic and sectoral success. One of these, the collaboration of Sumo Digital and Revolution Software is currently working to produce a video game, *Broken Sword IV*.

By supporting these networks, the RSAs also nurture local economies. The success of a given enterprise will depend upon using local competence and talent. All RSAs do this, an instance being the cluster groups in the South West. Furthermore, the RSAs also play a crucial role in creating economic potential through the training that they provide.

##### *Creating connections throughout the country*

An important part of the economic success of a region's screen industry is its capacity to work beyond local boundaries, for the moving image industries do not follow administrative and regional demarcations. The RSAs play a key role in making the connections between where people are – the local – and the opportunities within the moving image sector as a whole – the global.

If the best opportunity for a talented young animator is, say, with Aardman or Bolex in the South West, then it is reasonable that they should look to the RSA in their particular region to use its capacity to make that connection. This is not “losing” local creative talent, but making long-term connections between the regions. The film-maker Richard Fenwick cut his teeth in London, and after establishing a very successful production company chose to relocate to Newcastle, which is both where he finds his roots, and an area where he considers he can maintain his success. Funding is often regional, but enterprise often operates across boundaries that are not geographic, and so regionally-focused funding sources can hamper enterprise, the connections brokered by the RSAs are vital in preventing insularity.



### Case study 10: Warp X

Warp Films, the film division of indie music label, Warp Records have been awarded a total of £4.5m over three years to create Warp X. This is a new start-up company that will deliver an innovative, low-budget film scheme designed to develop the next cohort of British film-makers, moving them from short to longer format film-making. It exploits the gap at this low-budget end of the market to push forward emerging film talent. EM Media, Screen Yorkshire, HD Net in New York and UK distributor, Optimum Releasing are investing in this initiative alongside the UKFC and Film Four. The two RSAs, acting as venture capitalists will each invest £750,000 over three years; the UKFC and Film Four have each committed over £1.5m over the same period. Warp X intends to develop 8-10 movies over three years, matching new with experienced talent across the East Midlands and Yorkshire – at least one film project will enter production each year. In the East Midlands alone, EM Media expect Warp X to contribute close to £5.5m to the region's economy, in return for the £750,000 invested; at the same time, the investment will link regional talent with the national and international marketplace.

#### *Bringing enterprise to the region from across the world*

By linking enterprise and individuals within a nationwide (and global) screen ecology, the RSAs help to attract production to their regions. Richard Fenwick relocated to the North East because he knew that there was sufficient industry support, from potential employees and the RSA itself, to make it a commercially viable move, as much as he was drawn to the region by a feeling of homecoming. The team behind Rockhammer Productions in the East Midlands has followed a similar path. The RSAs are able to promote the companies and crews that they have successfully nurtured as valuable attractions to major screen enterprises in the region.

They also open economic collaboration overseas. In 2004/5, for instance, Northern Film and Media was able to send over forty people from the region's screen industry to festivals worldwide. The RSAs also attract representatives of the industry to the region in order that they might see the talent that it has to offer. South West Screen, for instance, support Wildscreen, the largest natural history film festival in the world. Every two years, it attracts 650 delegates from 45 countries to Bristol, and is a forum where deals are made and talent scouted. One production company, Tigress, estimates that it has made contacts worth £20m over the last 7 years at the festival, and at the last Wildscreen, ICON films won business worth £1m at a lunch hosted by South West Screen. Another enterprise supported by South West Screen, Brief Encounters, brings representatives from 35 countries to Bristol in an annual celebration of short film-making. Elsewhere Film London co-operates with the UK Film Council and FEUK to organise the London UK Film, an annual three day event Focus where distributors from all over the world are invited to London to watch and buy British films. In 2005, 8 titles were sold as a direct result of the event totalling a sales value of US\$ 2.1m.

The process of connecting the region to business opportunities is internally-directed too, with the RSAs helping the region to attract production to the area through location work. This contributes to the development of the regional skills base and generates significant economic interaction. In this area, international connections have greater importance in the screen sector than in many other cultural areas because it is here that the big money lies. By virtue of its location, a significant part of Film London's work lies in attracting major production. In 2003, there were 10,000 "shooting days" in London, which averages out at 27 crews on the capital's streets each day. Between them, the RSAs handled over 13,000 location enquiries in 2004-2005. Northern Film and Media's location service helped to generate an almost £8.5 million spend on productions coming into the region in 2004. Screen East earned £21,000 from national television as a fee for marketing Balls Park in Hertfordshire for the filming of *Bleak House* and other productions. Alongside the spend on hiring crew, and other direct employment, such enterprise also brings significant short-term commerce to the region, such as catering and

accommodation, and valuable communication capital through the finished product (see S.1.4).<sup>61</sup>

The contribution to local economies is significant. Northern Film and Media, for instance, calculated that in 2003 “film companies spent £4.15 million, creating 22,522 days of work and spending more than £1.5 million on local hotels, equipment, catering and post production”. In 2005, three productions alone - *55 Degrees North*, *Distant Shores* and *Wire in the Blood* – contributed almost £8.5 million to the region’s economy, doubling the figure for 2003 of £4.14 million. It is also estimated that companies working in the region in 2004, spent an average of £23,000 every day.<sup>62</sup> Screen South’s support for the *Da Vinci Code* brought in £18.5m to the South East’s economy when their locations department managed to find locations in the region which replicated France, enabling the production company to stay in the UK and thereby save time and money. Screen South calculate that the assistance they have provided to the 57 feature films and 47 TV productions that have contacted them during 2003-05 has secured a spend of £366.5m for the region. The economic effects of attracting such production can be lasting. Alnwick Castle was the setting of the first *Harry Potter* film. By 2002, the year after the film’s release, visitor numbers were up 119%. 26% of those surveyed in 2004 gave *Harry Potter* as the reason for their visit.

Elsewhere, North West Vision’s four film offices facilitated over 2000 days of location filming. In 2005, the 935 production enquiries that North West Vision received and acted upon, and the 554 film & TV productions shot on location in the region, contributed £50m to the local economy. In London, where the cost of filming can be prohibitive, Film London provides a range of services that can lessen the financial burden. These range from offering a ‘hot desk’ to visiting location managers, to paying for the services of a local location manager and a script breakdown at the early stages of a project. Film London have also developed relationships with car hire companies so that film companies can travel to locations easily and, when crews have come from abroad, the RSA can obtain discounted rates at hotels and provide free mobile phones for the duration of their stay.

### Case study 11 *Batman Begins*

The RSAs combine their practical knowledge of the industry and their local expertise to attract production. For the filming of *Batman Begins*, Warner Bros required a vast space in which to construct Gotham City. Screen East, which had already sourced many locations for Warners’ Hertfordshire based *Harry Potter* franchise were able to promote Cardington, near Bedford. In a deal brokered by the UK Film Council with the Hollywood executives, an airship shed, similar in size to those in Mobile, Alabama, in which *Close Encounters of a Third Kind* was filmed, was the ideal space in which to construct the entire Gotham cityscape; it is secure, secret, and relatively close to London’s airports, production base and facilities. Screen East arranged the change of use with the Borough County planning authorities, which helped Warner Bros keep the location confidential. The spend generated in Bedfordshire by this production was in excess of £4.7 million. Furthermore, following work by Screen East, the owners and the local authorities, Warner Bros renewed the lease on the shed for an intermediate, but indeterminate period.

The RSAs work to foster successful individual practitioners and support the economic infrastructure within which they operate; at the same time they provide the links by which those individuals combine to generate that infrastructure. They provide for sustainability – without the spread of ideas and encouragement of success, ecology and infrastructure would wither. By nurturing the connections as well as the players within this network, connecting them to each other and those outside the region, the RSA plays a central role in providing for future economic development, on the individual, the regional, the national, and the international scales.



### S.2.5 Encouraging sustainable development

While balancing the individual economic needs of specific producers, the RSAs also nurture the environment within which they exist. They do this by encouraging the more successful enterprises to invest in those around them, and developing others to the point of being marketable forces outside the regional ecology.

This process involves nurturing the growth of intellectual property creation in the region, with consequent economic impact. It also involves sustaining companies that can invest in future talent and produce a viable screen economy. As we have seen, in the West Midlands, *Confetti*, a film supported by equity from Screen West Midlands was sold for \$4.5 million at Cannes. As well as providing local film-maker, Debbie Issitt, with international exposure, the subsequent repayment of the grant to the RSA has fed money back into the organisation, and has given it the confidence to take future risks in supporting enterprise using equity stakes. Thus, the RSAs work to balance the individual economic needs of specific producers with the need to nurture the environment within which they can exist.

Encouraging sustainable development requires a balanced approach. In some instances this may involve nurturing the smaller and less experienced enterprises but it can also involve taking a harder, more commercial line with the more established ones. There is a need to take a riskier, equity-based approach with start-ups, but also to ensure the repayment of investments from the commercial successes. Much of this activity involves “backing the right horses” and offering the right kind of grooming. It will also involve being ready to say no.

#### Case study 12 Regional Attraction Fund

North West Vision's Regional Attraction Fund went live on 6th December 2004 with its initial £1 million of funding. It is fully funded by the Northwest Development Agency and managed by North West Vision, and was set up to significantly grow the region's independent TV sector (initially) in the North West, in order to take advantage of the regional quotas granted by the communications act. It is also intended to prepare the sector for the BBC's move North. It is two pronged and invests in local companies and also in companies who wish to open an office in the Northwest.

The Regional Attraction Fund has proved popular: 17 full applications (3 from incoming, and 14 from indigenous companies) were received and internally/externally assessed. 14 of these were taken to panel and, finally, 12 awards totalling £363,000 were made. These companies then committed match funds of £798,500.

Using the companies' own financial estimates, these awards will increase turnover by up to £30,000,000 over the next two years. Of this, £20,000,000 is forecast to contribute directly to the regional economy – a return of some 5000% on the NWDA/NWV's investment. Over the same two year period, these companies are forecast to create a total of 35 permanent full time positions, 250 short term (3 month – 1 year) contracts, and 30,000 freelance days.

#### *Developing employment hubs*

The RSAs also work to attract enterprise to their regions. South West Screen and the Bristol Film Office, for instance, were instrumental in encouraging Endemol UK to establish a new office in Bristol - trouble-shooting many of the potential problems companies relocating face. With its roots in the City Council, the Film Office was able to assist with concerns around premises and planning issues and South West Screen assisted Endemol to address its recruitment and training issues, encouraging them to establish a base in the region. At the launch event of his company's new centre, Peter Bazalgette, chairman of Endemol UK explained that he was won over by Bristol's “can do” attitude, communicated

in no small part by South West Screen.<sup>63</sup> In terms of direct economic impact, Endemol brought about £20 million investment; it also created 300 jobs.<sup>64</sup> The impact of Endemol West has been to increase the critical mass of the sector within the city, heighten Bristol's profile as a media city and build and diversify the freelance skills base. All of these factors make the city a more attractive proposition to indigenous companies and those looking to relocate.

### Case study 13 Screen East's Media Development Fund

Established in 2003, and co-funded by the East of England Development Agency, Screen East's Media Development Fund supports growth in the screen industries by nurturing and investing in small and medium sized enterprises within the sector. Between its foundation and 2005, the fund made a total investment of £530,000 in eighteen companies and has combined the risks and investment rationales of a traditional venture capital fund with the best features of a 'patient-capital' social investment vehicle. The effect has been to lever a total of £1,958,180 into their business plans.

The fund has helped to build the 'capacity' of the companies to acquire essential equipment, appoint key staff and invest in the commercialisation of their ideas through research and development. It has contributed to the development of infrastructure, the consolidation of a regional production-base and the retention of the indigenous talent, helping individual companies to grow. Ultimately, the Screen East fund aims to help redefine the region as a centre of media production within the wider UK and world media industry. On a day-to-day level, it provides much-needed support for small enterprises; owner/managers speak of "breathing space" – the time and space needed to develop new creative ideas.

In its first two years of operation the fund created 30 jobs and safeguarded 66. It created eight business start-ups, and drew another seven to the region. The businesses were evenly distributed between the six counties of the Eastern region in clusters. 40% of the companies supported had been new-start up companies. Currently, all the investee companies are trading successfully.

Overall, the fund has generated a sense of belief and loyalty on the part of the recipient companies. They are confident that their region has an on-going commitment to them, and that Screen East will support their enterprise where it is viable. It is more than an investment fund – it is also a sector development vehicle, strengthening regional identity, providing a gateway to appropriate training initiatives for the sector, and driving skills acquisition and company growth, through improved management and business development skills.

As case study 13 shows, the RSAs help to create a sustainable business environment for the screen and moving image sector. In the following section, we examine ways in which the sustainability of the sector brings dividends in terms of spreading skills and learning.

# Part II: Section 3

## **Policy objective 3: To encourage the growth of skills and learning**

This section outlines the role that the RSAs play in developing skills and learning in and through the screen and moving image sector. They work across many different levels of the industry, and so contribute to the skills and learning of practitioners and the more general skills and learning of children. The work of the RSAs in this sphere has relevance to a range of national agendas that span from economic regeneration to education.

### **S.3.1 Introduction: The RSAs' contribution to skills and learning**

Employment in the moving image industry has been increasing over the last eight years; recent employment estimates published by the DCMS suggest that there has been significant growth in areas relating to the work of the RSAs. Employment in “Software, Computer games and Electronic Publishing” is estimated to have increased from 285, 900 in 1996 to 593, 900 in 2004. In the same period, employment in “film, video and photography” increased from 47, 500 to 53, 900 while employment in “TV and radio” from 96, 800 to 110, 600.<sup>65</sup>

The future of the screen and moving image sector looks bright: the growth of commercial radio, digitisation in television, the further expansion of interactive media and an anticipated revival in film production suggest that growth in the sector will continue.<sup>66</sup> In combination with the growth of the moving image as one of the key media through which we connect with our communities and those around us, this places an onus on organisations supporting the long term development of the screen and moving image sector to develop people with the skills that enable them to make positive contribution in the future.

With this responsibility as a background, the fifth objective of the UK Film Council's Regional Investment Fund for England commits the RSAs to:

*Develop film culture in the UK by improving access to, and education about, film and the moving image by ensuring that the public has access to a broader range of British and world cinema; opportunities for learning about film; access to the UK's film heritage; and opportunities to participate in film production.*<sup>67</sup>

In doing so, the RSAs help create the skills base for a society to express itself through the moving image. Skillset's strategy document for the future of UK Film Skills acknowledges that:

*The RSAs will have a vital role to play in implementing this strategy with the funding allocated to them by the UK Film Council through the Regional Investment Fund for England (RIFE) ... The key role that the RSAs play when supporting local initiatives that find and nurture talent for the benefit of the industry also helps to increase diversity in the workforce and it is therefore essential that this strategy works to assist individuals who are trying to enter the industry through workshop or community routes.<sup>68</sup>*

### **S.3.2 The RSAs' methodology applied to developing skills and learning**

The development of individual skills and learning helps to create the types of economic and community growth outlined in previous sections. The business plan of Screen West Midlands, for instance, recognises "an economic driver, which says that if we are to develop talent, and an educated and knowledgeable workforce for the sector in the future, we have to engage with young people now, particularly in screen media education".<sup>69</sup>

To develop these abilities, the RSAs work to develop skills and literacy in the moving image in the regions. They use specific sectoral knowledge to create connections with employers and provide work experience and opportunities. They also invest to support the development of learning in self-sustaining networks and clusters. To do this, they follow a similar pattern of operation to other areas to which they contribute. Working with practitioners from the raw-talented beginner to the Oscar®-winning director, they spot, nurture, connect and develop individuals and organisations according to their specific needs.

### **S.3.3 Taking regional initiative**

A career in the screen and moving image sector can start at a very early age: earlier, even, than the first forays into software programming or film direction. The RSAs encourage the recognition of talent early by supporting education work with young people, providing a springboard for screen activity within the region and creating a space in which young talent and interest in the sector can flourish and be noticed.

Screen-related education is seen as a prerequisite to the development of talent. With this in mind, collaboration between different RSAs and organisations with close links to schools are many and varied. Working with Creative Partnerships, South West Screen's Fresh Five Film Festival is led and programmed by young people to provide tailored programmes for a variety of ages from 11-21; it also include an exchange scheme with a screen agency from the South West of Sweden. The young people then took their work from Fresh Five to a Cornwall Film festival, and so successful was their visit that it inspired an equivalent programme led by young people there. Within the sector itself, the First Light initiative has been a beacon in leading the sector's increased engagement with young people.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, First Light is far from isolated as an example of how the moving image industry engages with young people. Other RSAs have also partnered Creative Partnerships to provide opportunities for young people in their region: On the Edge Docs, for instance, was a Creative Partnerships and Screen South collaboration in which young people from 22 schools and youth clubs produced 21 short documentary films, to date 18 of which have gone on to be screened.

### Case study 14 London Children's Film Festival

Film London realised that, of the 70 or more film festivals in London, not one was dedicated to children and young people. With 1.6 million under 18s in the capital, Film London felt that this needed to be addressed. In spring 2004, they advertised for a team to develop and deliver the London Children's Film Festival initiative. Thanks to lottery funding, Film London was able to design an innovative festival bringing together commercial and independent cinema venues from across London, underpinned by a film education programme to ensure the widest benefit to London's children. Funding of £100,000 over 3-years was offered to a project that could raise 50% match funding.

A London-wide multi-venue partnership led by the Barbican and the Independent Cinema Office was successful. The inaugural festival was held in November 2005, and was hosted by 12 independent venues, and a further 4 CineWorld Cinemas, cementing aspirations for independent and commercial venues to collaborate on this initiative. In its first year, the Festival has already exceeded agreed KPI targets, more than doubling predicted audience numbers, and added a family educational programme to the Festival. It has led to the development of additional activity by the Barbican/ICO partnership, and linked activity with other organizations and partnerships. These include a network of After School Film Clubs - being developed by UKFC and three RSAs (London, South West, North East) - a year-round cinema education programme - being developed by the Barbican- and training and development supported by Film London to ensure that education activity at London cinemas takes root and flourishes.

The RSAs also initiate producers at professional levels. Screen Yorkshire, for example, offers a wide range of training initiatives to develop the skills base in the region, such as the New Entrants Scheme for newcomers to the broadcasting industry, which provides training and development support to grow a community of freelancers within the region.

### 5.3.4 Supplying regional and sector expertise

Talent rarely arrives "screen ready", capable of producing the next *Lara Croft* or *Shaun of the Dead*. The RSAs work to detect and pick up people and ideas that have the potential for further growth, and it is through their expertise that practitioners can be given the skills development required to develop that potential.

The RSAs support practitioners from the start-up producer to award-winners and other established professionals. At the time of writing, for instance, Screen South are continuing to support Oscar®-winning Andrea Arnold in her next project: earlier in her career, it was through work with Screen East and Screen South that she found her first break. Likewise, Kara Miller, who first came to Film London's attention in 2002 via the Waltham Forest Borough Film Fund, was funded in 2003 to attend a PAL TV writer's lab and has also received a Pulse 2003 award and training to make *Elephant Palm Tree*. This has toured around the world, and was shown at the Sundance film festivals. In 2004 and 2005 she successfully applied to Film London for further training and master classes and shot the feature *Nobody the Great with Working Title 2*: Film London will support the project through the distribution event London UK Film Focus.

Such support is important in all reaches of the sector. Northern Film and Media, for example, helped Geoff Scott, an electrician working in lighting rental, gain skills training that enabled him to develop his business. "The Light Goods Vehicle training helped me secure longer and better jobs. It meant I could drive bigger trucks and heavier generators and meant companies didn't have to employ someone from outside the region. Northern Film and Media were very good and gave a lot of advice", said Geoff.<sup>71</sup>

Stories like this illustrate the different ways in which the RSAs put their knowledge of the sector to use. For Geoff, the advantages are obvious: he was able to extend the capacity of his business, and therefore access new markets. For those screen companies employing him, a crucial service is made available closer to home, and is therefore less expensive in terms of both time and cost. For the region, it encourages reciprocal exchange between businesses. In this way, the help that the RSA gave to Scott has benefits that play out across several different areas – and therefore the concerns of several different parties, from Geoff to the government – at once.

While the RSA's expertise gives people the skills that help them produce better content, they also can help develop the skills of enterprise. This is demonstrated by the story of one film-maker who sought advice from Screen South. Coming from a background in advertising, he had general commercial acumen but needed to learn how to apply it to the screen sector. It was through communication with the RSA that he was first able to develop the skills necessary to market his idea to producers and, second, to join their trade mission to Los Angeles. He has now delivered his initial script and developed a second that, at the time of writing, is in the process of being sold. The RSA helped him develop the script from being a just good idea, through to being economically viable in Hollywood.

Developing a sector in this way requires an infrastructure, and the RSAs use their expertise to meet the needs of the moving image sector within the region. Just as they are aware of the kudos an Oscar winner can bring to the region, so they are equally mindful of the tiny interventions that can make such success possible.

### Case study 15, *Dominator and the Cradle of Death*

Tony Luke is a Brighton-based animator who found success by making the first full-length computer generated feature film: *Dominator*. Funded by the Sci-fi Channel, Luke and his team worked against the odds to produce the film for a total cost of £25,000: “it should have cost half a million – and was produced entirely on Apple Mac G4s and laptops”, he says. Following this success, Luke needed further to establish a company and fund the trailer for his next film, *Dominator and the Cradle of Death*. He turned to Screen South for help and funding. Screen South supported Tony, with a bursary for company development and to assist with the production of a trailer for his sequel *Dominator 2*. He was consequently awarded a place on Good Foundations 2 with a view to making his films available to a wider audience and structuring a cohesive marketing & finance plan which would encourage a higher profile partner to join him by bolstering his established skills in animation by developing his skills as a producer. Screen South introduced Tony to finance opportunities and in turn this led to a new partnership with Simon Moorhead, award winning animated feature producer, who teamed up with Tony during 2005. Tony's Brighton based animation company, Renga Media, is now in production with the feature, *Dominator and the Cradle of Death*, due to be completed end of 2006. As Luke's and Moorhead's companies grow, so they will need more junior staff, and a greater number of young practitioners will gain exposure to the industry.

### **5.3.5. Making regional, national and international connections**

In keeping with the rest of the creative industries the moving image sector is characterised by the large number of small organisations and freelancers working within it. There are few established or well-trodden paths into this world. Success, while dependent on technical expertise and creative verve, is also heavily dependent on the capacities of entrants to the sector to make enterprising connections. The RSAs are well positioned to help those entering the sector to learn how to make those connections. Screen West Midlands runs two programmes, Moving Up and Screen, Plan and Select, to support established and emergent freelancers in developing new skills. Through these schemes, the RSA



has provided a sector of the workforce with the sector-specific skills and more general skills such, as CV writing and health and safety, to which it might not otherwise have access.

### *Plugging into national programmes*

To maximise the numbers they can reach, the RSAs collaborate with nationwide vocational initiatives. Just as they do in relation to economic development, the RSAs work with other organisations to access budding screen practitioners who might otherwise pass them by. Screen East, for instance, have applied for funding from the European Social Fund co-ordinated by a development partnership led by Skillset and the UK Film Council. The Screen East New Entrepreneurs Scheme aims to support ten participants and the establishment of five new businesses by black and minority ethnic practitioners in the East of England. Recruiting from early 2006, the intention of the scheme is to match applicants to short courses relative to their chosen areas of business supported by industry mentors. In this way, the RSAs take a general and nationwide model of professional development and give it relevance to the screen sector.<sup>72</sup>

They are also working with the Higher Education sector in specific and targeted ways. Screen Yorkshire, for instance, is working with Hull University to pilot a placement scheme for graduates from its MSc in Games Programming. In a context in which conditions at the junior levels of the screen industry, in particular, are coming under increased ethical scrutiny, official and nurturing graduate schemes are essential.<sup>73</sup> Routes into the industry are difficult, and often unforgiving; the RSAs provide advice for those interested in a career in the screen industries, and can also support the opportunities for them to progress.

### Case study 16 Graduate training scheme

Last year EM Media ran a graduate trainee scheme for forty trainees, with three intakes, for a thirteen-week training course. It was designed to give a starting point for careers in the moving image sector by helping to develop practical and transferable skills. After completion, twenty achieved placements in the industry and, in total, 86% went on to get jobs or set up their own businesses in the sector. Working with graduates from within the region, the RSAs work in this area began with the practicality of connecting them to established players. It contributed to the region's development in terms of both skills and learning and the economy. By helping to establish the graduates as moving image practitioners in the East Midlands, it also lays the foundations for the development of the region's identity, both on screen and as a production base within the sector in economic terms.

### *Connecting practitioners within networks*

A networked approach to enterprise is essential to those working in the screen and moving image industry. 91% of film businesses have ten or fewer employees.<sup>74</sup> They rely on their external connections to learn and create opportunities. The RSAs work to facilitate networks of practitioners, an example being the Producers' Forum supported and part-financed by Screen West Midlands. By connecting practitioners with one another within and around the region, the RSAs help projects and ideas come to fruition.

### Case study 17 Suzanne Porter

In 2003, Screen South offered first-time documentary maker Suzanne Porter the opportunity to participate in a networking event organised by the Centre Régional des Ressources Audio Visuelles (CRRAV) in Lille. This initiative is run by Screen South to encourage film-makers in East Sussex and Kent to work with French partners to build cross-channel film-making communities and develop valuable and international professional contacts. "It was great to meet up with other Screen Southerners

and talk about our projects, offering and receiving advice in a friendly and non-competitive way. Since returning to the UK, I have been contacted by these two production companies Zorn and Nord Ouest who are both very keen to take things further along”, said Porter. Her project, *To the Beat of the Desert*, a film about a group of Touareg musicians, included living with the tribe for a period of eight months and went on into production with award-winning Director of Photography, Abraham Haile Biru

The RSAs connect practitioners to help them learn from one another. South West Screen’s award of £57,600 over 2 years to Submerge – a showcase for Digital Media Graduates - has supported a network of over 700 graduates: investment has been levered from a range of sources and over 40 jobs for graduates have been created. Another example is Northern Film and Media’s brokering of a mentoring relationship between *Bob the Builder* creator, Curtis Jobling, and the Tees Valley animation company, Seed Animation.<sup>75</sup> Northern Film and Media has also established a relationship with the University of Teesside to co-produce the Animex animation festival.<sup>76</sup> Screen East meanwhile are working on behalf of their Creative Industries Improvement Partnership to organise a series of different events to broker links between the East of England’s higher education institutions and its creative businesses. They enable HEIs to showcase and promote available and potential products, projects and services relevant to the needs of creative businesses in the screen sector. By using their position and credibility within the industry, the RSAs are vital in creating opportunities that would otherwise be very difficult for young and aspirant practitioners to access.

### **S.3.6 Encouraging sustainable development**

The more established moving image related organisations and businesses there are, the more opportunities there are in place for young practitioners to develop the skills that they need, and so become a skills-base for the region. Likewise, the more talent and human capital there is available in the region, the more attractive it will be to the larger companies that are so valuable to the region’s economy. This is a long game to play, but it is one that the RSAs undertake to ensure that the industry develops at the regional level. South West Screen, for example, worked with the Arts Institute of Bournemouth Media School on the development of a screen academy for the region. Launched in February and 2006 by Anthony Minghella, this has developed into the first successful English screen academy to exist outside London.

Meanwhile North West Vision invests in education initiatives in The Cornerhouse, a long established hub for moving image activity in Manchester. The Projector, Live Wire and Eat The Pips initiatives provide learning opportunities for people across Manchester. The acclaimed British director, Danny Boyle, recently said of The Cornerhouse:

*It’s wonderful to see how The Cornerhouse has been transformed. It’s become a vibrant social place as well. That’s all part of the whole cinema experience: somewhere to meet and talk about films as well as watch them. It’s crucial to have these kinds of places really. I always think the only good thing you can ever do, as a filmmaker, is to hope that there is someone sitting out there in the audience who actually ends up becoming a filmmaker. The new generation of young filmmakers are out there waiting to take over and a place like Cornerhouse allows that person to sit there and dream.*

Working across platforms is also a key stimulus to innovation. Screen Yorkshire is one of the partners for Melt, a project offering research and development awards to individuals and companies in South Yorkshire to explore the potential of innovative ideas for creative content for new and emerging media platforms. Melt provides the investment necessary to take selected proposals from concept, through to pilot and prototype stages.



### Case study 18 Mobile phone content workshop

In association with Digital Studio at the University of Cambridge and two major technology companies, Nokia and Symbian, Screen East has developed a five-day workshop for mobile phone content working.

This will bring regional TV and film production companies alongside PhD research students and industry professionals to help develop and innovate new content. Such integration is vital to the development of the moving image sector in the region. In the short term, it brings about collaboration between leading technology developers. However, for that technology to be effective in market terms, content must be of a comparable quality.

Screen East's initiative in bringing the major platform developers together to work on content provides a very advantageous platform for the future development of the regional industry. While providing immediate opportunity, it also paves the way for subsequent skills development and effective partnership.

# Conclusion: A holistic approach

In order to demonstrate how and where the RSAs meet their own and the government's social, economic and educational policy objectives, it has been necessary to focus on each objective in turn. We wish to stress, however, that the methodology developed by the RSAs works holistically, across all three policy areas at the same time. In order to demonstrate this, we end this section with two overview case studies that demonstrate that there is creative synergy between the different aspects of policy delivery that are brought into play. We have shown how the RSA methodology works across three separate areas. Put together, the individual parts make a greater whole.

## **Overview study 1: Tyneside Cinema**

The help and support given by Northern Film and Media to Tyneside Cinema's successful £4 million bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) reveals the many ways in which one intervention can be seen. Specifically, the RSA provided support in developing the cinema's bid to fund its redevelopment and conservation. As one of the sole surviving, and finest, purpose-built newsreel cinemas in the UK, supporting its preservation and maintenance was essential the heritage of both the North East and the UK as a whole.

The Tyneside Cinema was a successful applicant to Northern Film & Media's Creating Success scheme. This initiative took 13 local companies through a staged business development process, providing funding and expert support at each stage. Initially, NFM contributed £1,125 to create a business plan, which identified the HLF as a potential source of funding for the project. On one level, this, and the second stage grant of £28,600 to implement a business plan, are examples of direct capital support. On another, they reveal Northern Film and Media's understanding and expertise of what was necessary to achieve the longer-term aspirations and potential of Tyneside Cinema, and how an organisation from the screen and moving image sector could work with external agencies by finding common ends.

Northern Film and Media also provided personnel support in writing the HLF bid, which required specific advice with regard to training needs that the proposed developments would require. In so doing, the RSA provided specific expertise and advice in relation to the film sector.

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As well as the restoration of original features, the project also involved the development of office spaces, and a new creative suite for the region's producers. The RSA's intervention therefore contributes to the development of Tyneside as an economically profitable organisation, and as a centre that can support the growth of skills and learning in the region. From the point of view of the producers using the suite, Northern Film and Media's intervention is valuable on a personal and individual level.

In these ways, the RSA's work with Tyneside Cinema plays out across different levels and in different ways. Speaking to Tyneside's Director, Mark Dobson, it is clear that the community role of the cinema is crucial: some of the restaurant's most frequent and loyal visitors have been coming for well nigh fifty years. At the same time, he points to the development of the media lounge as having provided a space in which producers and public can take a digital film from idea through to production. In this, and as outlined above, Northern Film and Media's role in supporting Tyneside Cinema has impacts upon both the moving image sector and community and society in the region.

Figure 14: Methodological matrix overview case study one

		RSAs methodology			
		1. Taking the regional initiative	2. Supplying regional expertise	3. Making local, national and international connections	4. Encouraging sustainable development
Areas of growth	Encouraging a sense of community and identity	Tyneside Cinema is a destination for many in the North East. As an aspirational venue, it has taken a central role in projects involving children from the area: Exodus 20, for example, was premiered at the cinema and the children who had worked on the project were able to see their film on the big screen.	The Cinema itself is of great historical and architectural importance as one of the few surviving newsreel cinemas in the UK – NFM's support in its conservation has been essential in maintaining both this heritage and a site of regional and social importance.	NFM recognised that HLF-funding was a potential source of support for the project. The cinema is also distinctive as a venue in which different generations can mingle: while the cinema and the Digital Media Lounge can attract younger generations, some visitors to the cafeteria have been regulars for nearly half a century.	As well as preserving a heritage site, the redevelopment of Tyneside Cinema has ensured the future of a regional icon. The projects that are now run by Tyneside, especially with young people, are also an essential means by which the region's communities and identities can be sustained, especially in the emergent digital world.

	<p>Developing individual business enterprise and a sustainable industry</p>	<p>The Digital Media Lounge developed at Tyneside Cinema is essential in providing equipment and opportunity to producers and public for whom expensive equipment is often inaccessible. Their investment in funding the HLF proposal was also essential in triggering the process of developing the cinema.</p>	<p>NFM provided essential support in recommending a business plan, and in assisting in its development. In particular, it offered sector-specific advice with regard to the training needs it identified relative to the cinema's development plans.</p>	<p>The core function of the RSA in the redevelopment project was to connect Tyneside Cinema to one of its main funders: the HLF.</p>	<p>Providing for the growth of skills and learning in the region's moving image sector is intimately linked to ensuring a sound economic future. In institutional terms, the RSA's support was also important in providing for the economic advantage and development of Tyneside Cinema.</p>
	<p>Encouraging skills and learning</p>	<p>NFM's support of the Digital Media Lounge had been instrumental in providing a venue in which young and aspirant producers in the region can learn skills. As well as supporting its development, the Lounge is also a destination to which NFM can point aspirant producers in the future.</p>	<p>As well as supporting Tyneside's bid directly, and through its personnel working within the cinema, the RSA was also able to provide learning for Tyneside's staff around developing fundraising and working with organisations outside the sector.</p>	<p>As an organisation outside the education sector, Tyneside Cinema is crucial in connecting children with professionals from the moving image sector. By supporting the cinema, and its projects (like Exodus 20), the RSA has been central in facilitating such connections.</p>	<p>The Digital Media Lounge is a fertile ground for nurturing new talent: in supporting its development, NFM have ensured a space in which the region's talent can develop. Importantly, the technology made available at Tyneside Cinema is crucial in encouraging literacy in the moving image.</p>

### Overview study 2: 4 South West

4 South West is an example of an RSA – in this case, South West Screen – working on national, regional and individual levels simultaneously. A partnership between South West Screen, Channel 4 and the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA), the project saw an investment of £360,000 in two lead companies and a host of smaller SMEs. The scheme invests development finance into “lead companies” who in turn use these additional resources to develop the capacity of smaller companies within the region raising the sustainability and capacity of the broadcast television sector in the region as a whole. In its pilot year, the two lead companies were TwoFour and Touch Productions.<sup>77</sup>

The larger investing companies gain access to new talent and a widened production base; the smaller companies gain access to expertise and a foothold on the ladder of the commissioning process. The broadcaster gets access to new talent under the “safe pair of hands” of the established lead company. In its first generation, in 2004, the project saw the employment of three senior television executives, supported by two researchers and led to the production of fifteen pilots for Channel 4 and other programme commissioners. Six commissions were won as a result of 4SW, including C4’s coverage of the Daily Mail Ski Show, Five’s *The Hotel Inspector*, the pilot of a factual entertainment show for BBC2, C4’s *Competitive Eating*, BBC3’s *Water for Life* and *Anatomy of a Coup*. In terms of lasting development, thirty-nine joint initiatives were signed between the lead companies and South West producers, with ninety ideas being developed to the stage at which they were pitched to producers. A second wave of the project has followed in 2005/2006.

The scheme is a prime example of how the RSAs can operate on different levels at the same time, and communicate value added in different ways to different interest groups. Working with the RDA and national broadcasters, South West Screen was able to combine interests within and outside the sector, at the same time working with individual companies to develop the capacity of companies within the sector in the South West to operate at a national level.

In so doing, it simultaneously represented the interests of:

- individual companies, in developmental and financial terms
- the RDA and its economic agenda
- skills providers and Higher Education institutions by providing graduate opportunities
- the Government, in terms of economic, community and social concerns
- the region, in terms of pride and developing a prolific industry
- and the screen sector in general by encouraging quality production and developing future talent

It’s estimated that the 2004 scheme was worth over £1million to the region in terms of direct impact on business and jobs. The pilot proved the model’s success, with 6 commissions, increased revenues, safeguarded employment and at least 4 additional jobs created in the lead companies. Lead company, Touch Productions, has also gone on to be nominated and elected a ‘beacon’ company within the SWRDA’s ‘Beacon SW’ forum.

The scheme also provided 11 new entrant placements, with 6 retained in employment beyond the placement periods. In addition, both ‘lead’ companies are committed to further new entrant training programmes using their own resources, which will be informed and enhanced by the experience and expertise gained from the pilot project.

Additional revenues were also generated for the smaller company joint venture partners. Around 40 micro businesses were supported/developed in the pilot with huge long term benefits from securing access to commissioners and experience.

When the effects of 4 South West are represented in the framework outlined above, the multiple values that the RSAs are able to build from a single scheme or action become clear:

Figure 15: Methodological matrix overview case study two

		RSAs methodology			
		1. Taking the regional initiative	2. Supplying regional expertise	3. Making local, national and international connections	4. Encouraging sustainable development
Areas of growth	Encouraging a sense of community and identity	The focus of 4SW is on the region, and its creative success is essential to its image. <sup>78</sup> In particular, the graduates offered placements were from the region, and so its future representation in the moving image sector is developed.	SouthWest Screen was able to use its skills and knowledge of the region's environment to relate the needs of the moving image sector to those of the region.	By connecting regional producers with national audiences, production companies and broadcasters, the RSA was able to secure a voice for the region in national production.	39 joint initiatives were signed between the lead companies and SW producers, securing a bright future for the region's industry and its associated image, as well as regional producers.
	Developing individual business enterprise and a sustainable industry	Investment is made in companies that have potential and contribute to the success of the SW's moving image industry. This investment is a starting point for their growth and development.	Managing 4SW, the RSA offered small producers access to capital otherwise beyond their reach; likewise, it offered the chance to manage large budgets that is essential to their learning.	The RSAs role is essential in communicating to the moving image sector the economic viability of the opportunities that 4SW offers.	The subsequent commissions also provided economic surety. As importantly, the initial commissions provided a capital base for participating companies, and provided the economic skills with which they can develop.

**The Big Picture**

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	<p>Encouraging skills and learning.</p>	<p>4SW offers eight graduates placements in the region's moving image companies, and gives fledgling companies the opportunities to learn skills and gain a foothold on the commissioning ladder.</p>	<p>4SW offers the smaller producers the vital chance to 'learn on the job,' developing their knowledge and understanding of the practicalities of the moving image industry.</p>	<p>4SW also offers economic advantage to the larger producers who, by being connected to the smaller producers in the region have access to talent, new ideas and a valuable and often cost-effective skills-base.</p>	<p>The smaller producers learned key skills with which they can develop, and the breadth of the region's production and skills base was therefore developed, offering further opportunity to larger producers.</p>
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# Part III: The Regional Screen Agencies as generators of public value

This section shows the value added by the RSAs that comes from their ability to work between different interests, bodies and resources. It goes on to show how this is increasingly recognised in government, providing further legitimacy for the RSAs' existing work, and outlines areas that are a springboard for further expansion.

The RSAs were established to rationalise and improve support for the screen sector at a regional level, bringing coherence to the workings of different bodies and attracting greater inward investment. The original vision – to create a diverse, creative and vibrant screen culture – is being realised through initiatives that develop a better skilled workforce, a stronger economic performance, and public value.

Success is evidenced by:

- The leverage of local and regional funds into screen industries across training, education, exhibition, production and cultural diversity. During 2004/5 the RSAs levered £13.5m worth of investment, almost double the £7.8m of investment they received from the UK Film Council.<sup>79</sup> This was secured from diverse sources including the European Union, Regional Development Agencies, Learning and Skills Councils and Local Authorities. Overall, the total budget of the RSAs in 2004/2005 was £21,304,622.
- Effective investment in the screen industries across training, education, production, exhibition and cultural diversity. During 2004/5 the RSAs put 2,200 people through training courses and supported 159 different cinemas, touring programmes and festivals.<sup>80</sup> In total in 2004/2005, the RSAs invested just over £1m in festivals and the support of exhibition venues.



## The Big Picture

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- Commercial engagement in the regional sector, working with and investing in companies and individuals with a view to creating sustainable enterprise and therefore a more viable film ecology, attractive to inward investment in the region. During 2004/2005 the RSAs worked with 3,300 companies and responded to 13,000 location enquiries.<sup>81</sup> In this time, they invested a total of £1,068,232 in business development.
- The emergence of a coherent voice for the sector, that understands and communicates its needs and aspirations in regional contexts by engaging with practitioners and organisations at grass-roots level, enabling them to deliver in terms that meet both governmental and funding requirements, and – ultimately – the needs of the publics that use them.
- Their activity in the representation of a diverse Britain. In 2004/5 46% of RIFE awards went to women, 10.5% to applicants with a declared disability, 57.5% were for an activity or subject matter related to young people, BME groups or people with disabilities and 42% of training awards went to non-white British applicants<sup>82</sup>.
- An approach that reflects the particularities of the region in which they work and a close relationship with the industry, and public sector in those regions. During 2004/5 the RSAs worked with 76 different language communities throughout the country<sup>83</sup>.

The RSAs have evolved new, innovative ways of supporting the screen sector. As outlined in this report, they have adapted to specific local environments and to the specific needs of the screen sectors of the regions in which they work.

And, in doing so, they have adopted an approach that is common to them all. This is born of the knowledge and expertise that they have in relation both to the screen sector and their regions.

- They work at grass roots level with practitioners and organisations of all sizes to secure the future of the industry in the region, and the potential for it to grow.
- They initiate the development of new talent and production, using their expertise to advise clients how best they might develop.
- They provide links between the regional screen industry, and national and international opportunities.
- They encourage the growth of the regional screen sector by maintaining its skills-base and presenting its case to the wider world, providing for sustainability.

This approach sets the RSAs apart from other publicly funded bodies operating within the publicly funded cultural sector. The RSAs work with the grain of the way that people are making and experiencing culture in the 21st century. When the Minister for Culture speaks of building a “culture of participation”, and “ensuring that the framework for our investment supports bottom-up innovation rather than top-down dictation”, there are few better examples than the RSAs.<sup>84</sup>

The Minister has also identified the need to build ‘opportunities to encounter those from a background different from your own so we don’t end up living parallel lives.’<sup>85</sup> The RSAs’ role in this is vital. The technology of the screen is a key means of expressing our identities. Daily, we encounter the screen in our workplaces, in our homes and even on our buses and escalators. We use moving images to communicate as well as to find out about the world and are confident in doing so on a range of existing and emerging platforms. The moving image brings things that are distant into close proximity. More than that, screen and the moving image give us the opportunity to create and personalise content.

Websites give us the chance to share our creation with others, and we can use our mobile phones and other portable technologies to engage with this new, digital world any time, any place, and with anyone. Overall, we:

- Are less likely to draw a line between culture and commerce.
- Are increasingly able to sort, search for and produce our own creative products and those of others, sharing in a new digital commonwealth.
- Absorb influence from a global gallery of cultural and digital engagement.
- Participate in an ever-changing world in which technological innovation goes hand in hand with our collective will to create, share and participate.

Working in these conditions, the RSAs do not claim to own or control cultural products in the moving image: rather, they help to bring them into being, and provide a point of mediation with government, policy-makers and the world beyond the screen sector. In this environment, they have adopted a logic of intervention that defies the simplicity of linear input-output, funder-funded, hierarchical relationships. The cumulative value of the RSAs cannot be adequately described at the bottom of a balance sheet.

Responsible for the care of one of the fastest growing and emergent creative industries, the work the RSAs undertake to support businesses and attract inward investment is central to providing a more secure economic base for the creative industries in the regions. The outputs of these creative industries are often based on concepts of identity and their expression. As a result, the work that the RSAs do to grow the creative industries is entwined with the role that they play in fostering community and identity.

In generating economic and public value, the RSAs link to a broad range of government concerns across many government departments:

### **The Department of Communities and Local Government: community cohesion**

In February 2006, the then Minister of Communities and Local Government, David Miliband, addressed the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. He outlined what he saw as “the great challenge we face in this country”: “giving people more power over their lives, as individuals, and together in communities”.<sup>86</sup> The RSAs are making a powerful contribution to this agenda, strengthening and providing opportunities for expression to communities and particular interests.

As defined by the then ODPM, communities are sustainable if they:

- Balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental components of their community.
- Meet the needs of existing and future generations.
- Respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally.<sup>87</sup>

The RSAs have developed their activities to encompass just this. They provide opportunity and support to the multiple voices that they serve, building audiences and understanding in a variety of ways and using the new opportunities represented by digitisation to build inclusion. Events like film-festivals, sponsored and supported by the RSAs, bring the moving image to new and more diverse groups. They enable those same groups to platform and showcase their opinions and attitudes, engaging with the world around them. The RSAs have a significant opportunity to link practitioners to policy opportunities and funding, connecting directly to the new DCLG’s agenda.

### **The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the UK Film Council**

Such activity would sit comfortably alongside their existing relationship with the UK Film Council. Whether locating areas ripe for potential growth, applying expertise, making global connections or ensuring sustainability, the RSAs work at all times to build relationships between different bodies or

interests. The interventions they make vary from connecting people to the screen industry, to providing screen operators with the chance to learn from others and representing the interests of the regional screen sectors to government.

They have also been successful in achieving growth across a range of areas that are becoming increasingly central to the agendas of the DCMS and the UKFC. In this area, over and above responding to their initial remits, they have identified and developed areas of opportunity that have only recently been reflected in policy at a national level. The Minister for the Creative Industries has established working groups for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Creative Economy Programme: strikingly, the RSAs are active across all seven. The contributions that they have made key directly into emerging government policy:

- *They provide practitioners and organisations with **access to finance and business support***

In the Cox Review, published by HM Treasury in 2005, one of the key recommendations is that 'the profile of creativity and design in business-support activities should be raised'.<sup>88</sup> The RSAs have established themselves as essential points of contact for those working in the screen sector and have done so on a number of levels. One of their key roles is to use their expertise to advise and counsel practitioners and organisations within the regions. Second, by working in association with organisations like Business Link, they can also provide commercial advice. They also use their expertise to help organisations identify business opportunities and to assess the viability of a given enterprise as a focus of investment.

- *They contribute to **education and skills***

The RSAs work with schools, organisations like Creative Partnerships and Higher Education to provide multiple opportunities in media training and media literacy. In 2004/5 the RSAs put over 2,200 people through training courses.<sup>89</sup> They also connect practitioners to learning opportunities in ways that range from the brokering of mentoring schemes for novice practitioners, through to funding experienced practitioners to go on specific training schemes.

- *They deal directly with competition and **intellectual property***

The RSAs have developed an approach to Intellectual Property that encourages sustainability in the organisations and individuals that they support. As they grow, they see their investment more and more as risk capital, rather than conventional grants. Although they provide the financial, commercial and sector-specific support to innovative young enterprise, they do not ask to own the intellectual property that is created. Instead, they encourage the practitioners to secure Intellectual Property themselves, making them viable in regional, national and international industry - the harshest of marketplaces.

- *They enable and grow the **infrastructure** within their regions*

The RSAs consciously develop a sustainable industry and screen ecology within the regions. Through the unique approach that they adopt, they make interventions at all levels of the sector and so provide for a network of development and growth. In itself, this creates a critical mass of screen activity that attracts talent and investment. They also invest for sustainability and work to raise companies and organisations to levels at which they are independent and capable of employing and subcontracting within the regional sector in their own right. Their investment, however, is not only in production: by supporting the practical infrastructure of the screen sector, they help to ensure that the region represents a viable prospect for inward investment.

- *They contribute to **diversity***

The RSAs identify particular groups and communities with a story to tell and talent to be developed. Above and beyond responding to governmental and social agendas in relation to ethnicities, disability and social groups, they identify particular local needs. They have encouraged more diverse groups to take advantage of the opportunities for expression that digital media offer, directly linking to the emerging agenda of identity and community cohesion.

- *They promote **technological innovation***

From the outset, the RSAs have nurtured and developed technological innovation: they cater to industries that are both at the cutting edge of advances in platforms and content, and comprise the fastest growing sectors of the creative industries.

- *They provide **evidence and analysis** of the success of the screen sector*

The RSAs play a central role in transacting between the needs of the regional industry and those of funders, government and policy-makers. They present a case that is compelling and shows that they do far more than just respond to target setting. They are able to present the value of the screen in terms that speak to the government, industry and the media and others. They also present the case for their regions on wider national and international stages.

### **Conclusion**

In these ways – and in sum – the RSAs fulfil what the Minister for the Creative Industries has identified as one of the Government’s core missions: making Britain the world’s “Creative Hub”. The activities and the structures that they have already put in place make them the vital link between policy and sectoral growth.

The challenge that the RSAs face and have identified is not to respond to government agendas, but rather to continue the work that has enabled them to respond quickly and directly to the developments of our times. Fundamentally, they respond to public and industry needs and give people opportunities that they value. Given the fast-changing nature of the moving image sector and the RSAs’ proximity to practice, this means that they tend to be acting ahead of policy development. At the same time, the RSAs are able to relate these needs to the key agenda of our time. The capacity to deliver across both of these areas at one and the same time makes them creators of public value. As defined by the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit, “the concept of public value is an attempt to measure the total benefits which flow from government action. Like private value, it incorporates the benefits derived from personal consumption of public services”.<sup>90</sup> The UKFC has spelled out the component parts of its public value offer as being to:

- Provide more audience choice
- Develop and support creativity and skills
- Encourage public participation and increase opportunities for learning
- Promote the UK to the wider world

In supporting, promoting and engaging with enterprise that people in the regions want to use, and at the same time meeting public needs, this is exactly what the RSAs do.

Operating where the region and the screen sector meet, and using their distinctive approach, they can act in a manner that is both centralised and decentralised as the context demands. The result is that there is now an effective settlement whereby the UKFC acts as a national body, caring for the screen sector, and the RSAs are the regional agents, building wider sectoral growth. This exists as a non-hier-

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archical structure: as the RSAs grow and are able to meet wider agendas, funding does not have to flow through the UKFC because the RSAs are able to work with multiple sources to meet local priorities.

This is an entrepreneurial model, which as the above demonstrates, has resulted in considerable successes. However, it sits alongside the realities of their status as a public body and the associated conditions of operation. These are the same conditions of operation that all other publicly funded organisations in the cultural and creative sector have to operate with. Their entrepreneurial model does not mean these conditions can be side-stepped. This presents the RSAs with a number of pressing challenges.

- The RSAs lack a coherent national voice. There are several government departments whose agendas the RSAs are fulfilling, but they have hitherto been unable to communicate this potential in a manner that will help secure further investment.
- The RSAs rarely coordinate effectively as Screen England or collaborate as partners on individual projects. Without these “galvanising moments” the RSAs can appear to be operating as independent actors, without critical policy mass.
- The RSAs rarely express a compelling story. This report has shown the many different types of value that the RSAs create. At the moment, they must articulate their leadership in locating future opportunities for the screen sector, in particular media literacy.

These issues have combined to create a potentially destructive cycle for the RSAs. The lack of coordination between RSAs reduces the chance of a coherent national voice, which in turn inhibits the chance to tell a compelling story. This ultimately reduces the chances of encouraging investment in their work.

The need to act on these challenges is sharpened by the inevitable expiry of European Regional Development Funding that will have substantially decreased by 2008.

# Part IV: Challenges, opportunities and recommendations

This section first describes the areas of potential growth for RSAs, and concludes with specific recommendations

Our recommendations fit into four areas:

## **Advocacy**

Communicating the value of the work of the RSAs

## **Coordination**

Sharing knowledge and practice amongst the RSAs

## **Collaboration**

Opportunities for RSAs to partner other bodies to support the moving image sector.

## **Leadership**

Identifying the value of different areas of their work.

## **Advocacy**

- The RSAs are essential in realising key cross-cutting policy agendas, not least in their ability to lever in funding from other sources. To ensure that they continue to do so they must have a secure resource commitment from the DCMS, the DTI and the DCLG, especially in the context of diminished European funding.
- The RSAs should work together to develop a more coherent approach to advocacy. Together, they

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should make their case to key partners who can articulate the contribution that they make to different government departments. They should collaborate in addressing the UKFC in relation to DCMS, and they should establish a coherent approach to the RDAs in relation to DTI and DCLG funding. This should be developed – and measured – in terms of effectiveness, rather than new structures.

- The calibre of the RSAs' Board members is such that they can carry weight at the highest government and industry levels. The RSAs should make better use of them in advocating the value of their work in the UKFC and beyond.
- The RSAs are immersed in one of the fastest growing areas of the creative industries, which grew more than three times as fast as the UK economy between 1997-2000. They must be recognised by the DCMS and DTI, and included in discussions about the future development of the creative industries, such as the Creative Economy Programme.

### **Coordination**

- The Cox Review highlighted the need for highly sector specific business advice. The RSAs are one of the very few instances where this happens. Business Link, LSCs, UKTI and RDAs often operate at generic, rather than sector specific levels. The RSAs are well-positioned to review and articulate the sector's needs and coordinate these bodies to respond to them.
- Regions are characteristically different, but opportunities in the screen sector occur irrespective of regional and administrative boundaries. The RSAs must cooperate, building on collaborative models like London Plus, to grow an inter-regional network of production, exhibition and distribution in the screen sector and so provide the national ecology in which production and consumption of the moving image can thrive.
- Screen England should examine and share practice on how they can work further on the community-building aspects of their work, building on the 76 language communities worked with in 2004/2005. They should focus in particular on festivals, conferences, emergent platforms and the opportunities furnished by new technology: again, these cross regional boundaries.

### **Collaboration**

- The Digital Screen Network (DSN) is a national UKFC initiative that is already bringing the moving image to a wide range of people. Its success depends on sensitivity to local and regional contexts. The RSAs' capacity to operate at the micro-scale, can help locate the best places for the Digital Screen Network to function, thus assisting the development of local audiences, and creating places for cultural and creative interaction that are at the heart of addressing community and identity.
- Media literacy is key to navigating the modern world. As such, it is an area in which the RSAs are already very active, spending nearly £900,000 on education projects in 2004/2005, but it is only just coming to the attention of government departments. The RSAs must work together to cohere existing activity to deliver nationwide programme for working with schools (and with young people and others in informal learning contexts). One way in which this could be done is through school media clubs and Creative Partnerships; another is through greater collaboration with public libraries. It is up to RSAs to identify the best practise, and for national government and other cultural agencies to respond.



- Media literacy involves more than understanding the moving image. It also means giving people a visual language to use, the means to use it and the means to interpret it. Literacy must therefore extend to the more widespread production and distribution of people's work, developing their experience of using the moving image as a means of expression, creating a wider and more diverse mix of content available and improving access to a wider range of screen product. In 2004/5 46% of RIFE awards went to women, 10.5% to applicants with a declared disability, 57.5% were for an activity or subject matter related to young people, BME groups or people with disabilities and 42% of training awards went to non-white British applicants. Options should be interrogated as to how best to allocate resources to develop on this basis of community media literacy, and should be developed to invest across common policy areas within government.

### **Leadership**

- The RSAs should synthesise and systematise the market knowledge and metrics that they already have to create a compelling statement of overall value on a national and governmental scale
- The RSA's entrepreneurial operations play much more than a traditional support role. They offer a model for other public policy interventions in mixed economies.

Government should listen to the voice of a dynamic, successful and vitally important sector that, in its individual manifestations, may seem hard to engage with, but offers an entrepreneurial way of delivering public value. Crucially, the RSAs' core funding is time-limited to 2008, and thus insecure. The RSAs need both a firm base on which to build and sufficient resources to maximize their potential. As this report has demonstrated, the RSAs' have effectively delivered benefits that are social, economic and democratic. The challenge is for government and others to use and develop screen culture to fulfil the key government agenda of building community and identity, developing enterprise and sustainable business and encouraging the growth of skills and learning.



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- 12 <http://www.holylemon.com/> A site amassing and indexing clips of moving image from around the world that anyone can access and submit to.
- 13 <http://www.youtube.com/index> A site where anyone can post and share their own videos. Similar to the flickr ([www.flickr.co.uk](http://www.flickr.co.uk))
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- 20 Cambridge Econometrics (2005) Economic Impact of the UK Screen Industries, p.vii-viii
- 21 Ibid, p.viii
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