

F. Cultural Industries

Business Environment

The continued rapid growth of China's economy has accelerated the development of a consumer culture with both an interest in and the financial means to purchase cultural products, including compact discs, films and books. China has shown itself more receptive to foreign cultural offerings in areas such as television, live performances, radio, film and music.

Although concrete figures are difficult to obtain, evidence "on the street" suggests that demand is high and will continue to grow. The rapid proliferation of cable television networks is creating opportunities, while raising familiarity with foreign cultural products such as music and film.

The principal government authorities for the cultural industries are:

- the China Film Import-Export Corporation, the only government agency authorized to import foreign films into China;
- the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television; and
- the Ministry of Culture, under which the Chinese Cultural Performance Agency serves as an impresario for major live events.

In addition to the national television network, China Central Television, each province in China has its own television network, which purchases and produces its own programming.

Hong Kong provides a significant opportunity for the promotion of English-language and Canadian cultural goods, given that most of Hong Kong's population understands English and that a large proportion of the Hong Kong population has lived in, studied in, or visited Canada.

Market Opportunities

Immediate and future opportunities exist in film, television and radio in China. Strong demand for foreign content, capital and expertise will mean opportunities for Canadian film and television producers to co-operate with their Chinese counterparts. Co-productions are exempt from many restrictive regulations.

Chinese television and radio stations have shown interest in Canadian documentaries and animation, and in programs dealing with Canadian people, cities, landscapes and nature, culture, industry, science and technology (currently very popular) and business.

Other opportunities exist for Canadian companies specializing in computer-generated effects and other technologies, such as IMAX.

Live performances usually require sponsorship from a foreign government and/or commercial enterprise, but Chinese openness to a greater variety of entertainment will create more opportunities in this field. Rapid economic development is expected to increase prices and make marketing and sales of cultural products viable.