



Strategic Plan - 2019-2023

Setting the stage

The Edmonton metro region (“Edmonton Metro”) has a lot going for it. Great communities. Great places to live and work. A vibrant city-region with a rich blend of arts, tradition, energy and new ideas. A growing and changing economy. A place where people believe they can get things done.

What is not as well known is that Edmonton Metro is a hive of talented and creative entrepreneurs in what we broadly call screen industries – film development and production, television, digital media, gaming, educational technology, augmented and virtual reality. While the sector is diverse, the common thread is that all participants work at a unique intersection where creativity, art, design, imagination, talent and technology converge to create amazing products and business opportunities.

The potential for this sector is significant and growing. Across Canada, film, television and digital media production generates over \$12.7 billion a year in GDP impact¹ and gaming represents another \$3.7 billion in economic activity². New products and opportunities are emerging within the screen industries as local, national, and international technology companies rapidly expand and change the landscape. For example, the augmented and virtual reality industry, while small today, is growing exponentially and by 2022 is expected to be nearly as large as the more traditional screen industries.

Edmonton Metro is poised to become an even more important player across the full spectrum of screen industries, to capitalize on this burgeoning industry, and to add an exciting dimension to Edmonton Metro’s and Alberta’s economy.

Seizing the opportunity

In May 2017, the City of Edmonton took the bold step of establishing the Edmonton Screen Industries Office (“ESIO”) to lead community efforts to take advantage of the opportunities and technology

¹ Profile 2018 – Economic Report on the Screen-based Media Production Industry in Canada (2018) Canadian Media Producers Association. Web: <https://telefilm.ca/en/studies/profile-2018-economic-report-on-the-screen-based-media-production-industry-in-canada>

² Essential Facts about the Canadian Video Game Industry (2017) Entertainment Association of Canada. Web: http://theesa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ESAC2017_Booklet_13_Digital.pdf

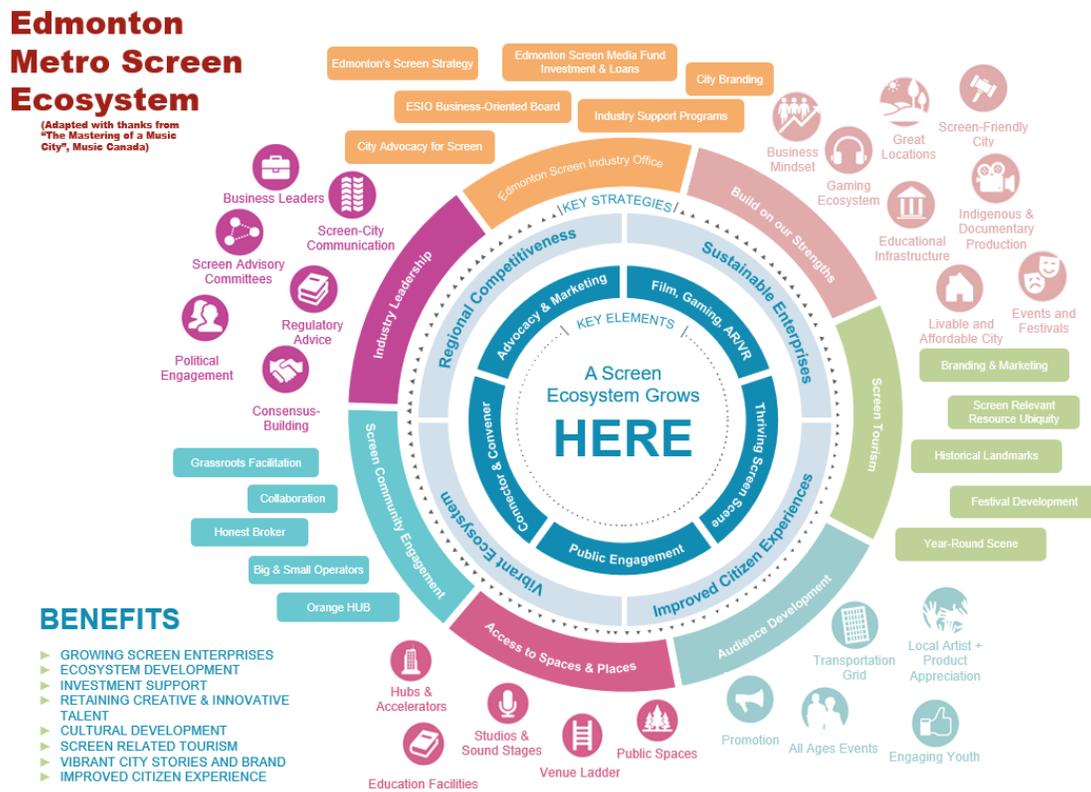
changes impacting the sector. With early support from the Edmonton Arts Council and Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, and seed financial support from the City of Edmonton, the ESIO set to work to re-establish and expand leadership roles once assigned to the Edmonton Film Commission into an expanded vision for the growth and sustainability of all of Edmonton Metro’s creative screen enterprises and industries.

Initial steps involved establishing an independent board of directors, selecting an accomplished CEO, building a small but energetic team, and most importantly, engaging directly with leaders across the screen industry spectrum – owners, producers and developers, artists and coders, union members, and community supporters.

With that foundation in place, the next step is to move ahead with this ambitious strategic plan to achieve tangible results over the next four years.

Understanding the ecosystem

ESIO’s strategy considers and addresses the challenge of a wide diversity of interests, history and business approaches by approaching the sector with an entrepreneurial mindset, building on and leveraging Edmonton Metro’s existing strengths in support of more sustainable enterprises and new sector opportunities. Our strategy requires listening to the various players in the industry, appreciating their diverse needs, and understanding and responding to the full range of the ecosystem surrounding this sector.



Within this diverse industry ecosystem, the ESIO's strategy starts with a clear understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses within both the structure of the industry and the interaction and support from one aspect to another. With that understanding, we have developed a clear vision of what is possible to remove barriers to success and to open up further opportunities, and identified effective and efficient actions that, taken together, build a deliberate and intentional plan for moving forward.

Purpose and Mission

The ESIO will act as a catalyst, a cultivator, a stimulator for the screen industries sector. Many of the right ingredients are already in place – anchor companies, creative entrepreneurs, a talented workforce, physical infrastructure and facilities supporting the sector, a growing track record of successful ventures, and a strong desire to see this industry grow and thrive. Our job is to cultivate the seeds that already have been planted ... to activate the entire ecosystem, remove barriers to growth, find the right enablers, connect investable enterprises with motivated investors, and help create the right conditions for the industry to grow.

With that perspective in mind, the **ESIO's purpose** is to:

Cultivate, activate and strengthen the screen industries sector in Edmonton Metro and support opportunities for creative enterprises to develop, grow and succeed.

With that purpose, the **ESIO's mission** is to:

Support the development, growth and sustainability of enterprises, entrepreneurs, professionals and talent in the Edmonton Metro screen industries.

We'll strive to make sure Edmonton Metro becomes known nationally and internationally as a great place to start, develop and commercialize creative content in the screen industries.

Priorities and Action

The ESIO has three strategic priorities for moving forward in the next four years:

- Sustainable enterprises
- Regional competitiveness
- Vibrant ecosystem

Priority 1: Sustainable enterprises

Objective: The ESIO will focus on supporting sustainable enterprises, recognizing that the competitiveness of enterprises will drive better opportunities, projects and the strength of our ecosystem. We will do this both directly and through partnerships, with programs that encourage, support and invest in the growth and sustainability of local enterprises, including supporting them in commercializing intellectual property and other sources of competitive advantage.

Initiatives:

- **Establish the Edmonton Screen Media Fund**
To increase funding available to screen industries, the ESIO will operationalize the Edmonton

Screen Industries Fund. The model for the Fund is unique, involving a number of different investment vehicles and risk/return approaches with the objective of developing local enterprises and projects based on their capacity to acquire and develop intellectual property (IP). The ESIO will seek additional investment and leverage private and public sector funding opportunities.

Actions:

- Launch the Edmonton Screen Media Fund
 - Establish and promote criteria and process for accessing funds through the Edmonton Screen Media Fund
 - Secure additional private sector and other investment opportunities
- **Establish Key Operating programs**

The ESIO will establish a number of operating programs to support the development of screen industry enterprises and projects. These range from community events and a dynamic web site to conferences, selected programs and screen-friendly city policies. We will build on existing strengths including the gaming sector ecosystem, the Orange Hub, educational infrastructure, events and festivals and assets in Indigenous and documentary production. And we will develop new inter-disciplinary resources over time to reflect the specific needs identified by Edmonton Metro screen industries stakeholders.

Actions:

- Launch initial operating programs based on existing strengths and needs in the industry
- Identify and establish priorities for future initiatives based on their potential impact on achieving ESIO objectives

Priority 2: Regional Competitiveness

Objective: ESIO will market and advocate for Edmonton Metro and build on opportunities to maintain a competitive playing field for film & television and interactive digital media.

Initiative:

- **Establish competitive positioning**

The screen industries sector is a highly competitive marketplace with major players in Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, New York, Vancouver and Toronto plus growing markets in Montreal, Calgary, Winnipeg and Nova Scotia. For Edmonton Metro to compete in that marketplace, we will capitalize on our existing strengths which offer residents a high quality of life combined with a low-cost business environment. Our strengths within the sector include a high-skilled and talented workforce, a production-friendly jurisdiction, accessible and unique filming locations, rich Indigenous culture, four distinct seasons, the largest urban green space in North America, and rural locations within the studio zone.

Actions:

- Establish and promote the long-term competitive advantage of Edmonton Metro screen industry enterprises through business development, direct investment and inter-disciplinary collaborations

- Support a competitive playing field to attract external projects and grow the base of the industry in Edmonton Metro
- Create and maintain an inventory of locations and resources for both existing screen industry players and to attract potential projects to the Edmonton region
- Develop and launch a branding strategy to promote the unique competitive advantages of Edmonton Metro
- Develop and implement tactics to market Edmonton Metro in order to attract investment and talent
- Encourage supportive government programs and policies to maintain and expand the screen industries sector in Edmonton Metro and in Alberta as a whole

Priority 3: Vibrant Ecosystem

Objective: The ESIO will energize the screen media industries and enhance the creative communities across the entire ecosystem.

Initiative:

- **Energize the Ecosystem**

The ESIO will act as a catalyst and “hub” for building and cultivating inter-disciplinary relationships and networks among Edmonton Metro screen industry players, organizations and beyond. The ESIO will foster organizational excellence and leadership by encouraging a business culture and by acting as an honest broker and convenor for Edmonton Metro screen industries.

Actions:

- Create and implement an active calendar of events and opportunities for industry players to engage, connect and share ideas
- Establish and maintain opportunities for screen industries partners to be engaged, identify opportunities and actions, and shape the future of the sector in Edmonton Metro

Measuring progress and results

Setting the overall strategy and priorities, having good plans and intentions, are all essential ingredients ... but showing results is critical to demonstrate the return on the City of Edmonton’s investment while also measuring the effectiveness of various strategies and actions as we proceed with this strategic plan.

A comprehensive set of performance indicators was developed in partnership with the City of Edmonton. Those indicators fall into three general categories:

- Investments in local screen industries
- Financial sustainability of screen industry companies
- Development of local IP

On an annual basis, the ESIO will track and report on the following key set of indicators.

Investments in local screen industries (YEG leveraged dollars, projects attracted)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual number of non-local screen industry projects attracted to Edmonton ● Average annual investment in the Edmonton screen industry; Total amount invested from ESMF ● Amount (\$) and rate at which funds are leveraged with contributions from outside organizations into ESMF ● Percent of average annual revenue from outside of Canada of Edmonton-based screen industry companies ● Annual number of screen industry projects assisted by or partnered with ESIO: type of assistance (equity vs. debt), types of returns expected (equity, royalties, dividends, repayment, interest)
Financial sustainability of screen industry companies (growth, ROI, diversity, jobs created)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Average annual revenue of Edmonton-based screen industry companies ● Percent of average annual revenue from new lines of business or innovations by Edmonton-based screen industry companies ● Average annual expenditure of Edmonton-based screen industry companies (broken down by labour and non-labour) ● Average annual value of deals by Edmonton-based screen industry companies ● Return on investment (equity participation, royalties, dividends, repayment on loans and interest, number of Edmontonians in full time employment in the screen industry) ● Edmonton's screen industries ownership and employment base demographic diversity compared to the demographic diversity of the City
Development of local IP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual number of Edmonton stories told using screen media ● Average annual revenue from owned intellectual property of Edmonton-based screen industry companies

Getting engaged

The effectiveness of this strategy depends on the active engagement of Edmonton Metro screen industries players, stakeholders, community and business leaders. As we listen, learn and engage with the sector, this strategy will evolve, adapt and change to reflect changing needs and priorities over the next four years.

Here's how you can get engaged:

- Regularly check out the ESIO's website (www.edmontonscreen.com) for information and events
- join ESIO's Facebook page and follow ESIO on Twitter
- Attend events organized or sponsored by the ESIO
- Let us know about your interest in the Edmonton Screen Media Fund (ESMF) by telling us about your enterprise and projects us at funding@edmontonscreen.com
- Let us know your questions, concerns or ideas by e-mailing the ESIO at info@edmontonscreen.com