

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

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Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

I think the government is doing a good job right now. However, I encourage the government to keep in mind the entrepreneurial side of cultural businesses of all sizes across the country. They make significant contributions to Canada's economy, in a variety of ways. Consideration solely on the basis of tangible results and measurable economic performance could be detrimental. Their value is measured in far more than just figures, given that the sector allows Canadians to take part in a variety of activities and that cultural investments have a tremendous spinoff. It is a fact that every dollar invested in culture generates a much greater return, be it for the cultural business or surrounding businesses.

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

Establish more initiatives that make it easier for the middle class to find jobs, especially by strengthening the structure of small businesses such as cultural undertakings, which currently rely on few employees but need the resources to better assume their role as entrepreneurs. In numerous cases across the country, cultural undertakings are unable to fulfill that function because they have so few staff, so much so that their leadership is less than optimal. Furthermore, these undertakings are often responsible for the infrastructure that serves not only them but also others, as regards rental property. If these undertakings truly had the capacity to hire more staff, who could then manage the rental component, their own revenue would increase significantly, as would their rental income, thus improving their contribution to the economy. This is a win-win situation.

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

In the cultural sector, ensure the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation by promoting initiatives that create executive assistant positions in cultural businesses. Through mentorship and other means, this measure would enable the younger generation to learn the job while gaining experience and satisfying the great need for staff in cultural businesses. The fact that cultural businesses cannot afford to hire many staff keeps them in a vulnerable position. When an employee or executive leaves, the organization's entire structure is weakened if it does not have the resources to plan for turnover and protect itself accordingly. With junior positions in place, a person who is already familiar with the job can step in and take over when a senior employee or executive leaves the organization. It is also important to note that such measures go hand in hand with leadership succession planning; cultural organizations try hard to plan for succession but unfortunately fall short because of a lack of resources.

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

In the cultural sector, ensure the transfer of knowledge from generation to generation by promoting initiatives that create executive assistant positions in cultural businesses. Through mentorship and other means, this measure would enable the younger generation to learn the job while gaining experience and satisfying the great need for staff in cultural businesses. The fact that cultural businesses cannot afford to hire many staff keeps them in a vulnerable position. When an employee or executive leaves, the organization's entire structure is weakened if it does not have the resources to plan for turnover and protect itself accordingly. With junior positions in place, a person who is already familiar with the job can step in and take over when a senior employee or executive leaves the organization. It is also important to note that such measures go hand in hand with leadership succession planning; cultural organizations try hard to plan for succession but unfortunately fall short because of a lack of resources.

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

See above response. Small cultural-based businesses bring people together, rallying Canadians through countless activities and making us reflect on our sense of identity, and should therefore be treasured. However, it is necessary to help them strengthen their structures (more staff) so they can be more efficient and better fulfill their role as entrepreneurs and economic leaders.