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IDRC's Guide to Video Production

Information on Video Production for IDRC Program Staff

Également disponible en français

February, 1998

This IDRC video production guide has been designed especially for use by the Centre's program initiatives and secretariats.

More and more, the Centre's program staff are faced with requests from private producers to participate in co-productions, or fund documentaries dealing with development and related topics. As well, sometimes a program initiative or a secretariat will want to produce its own video for a project or some particular event.

For all these reasons, Public Affairs has put together this guide, which attempts to answer the many questions that arise when it comes to producing a video: How do we go about making a video? How will it be used? What is its purpose? What is the target audience? Do we really need a video? What questions should we be asking the producer? How should we handle the negotiations? What about copyright provisions? How are we to cope with all this jargon? And above all, how much is it going to cost?

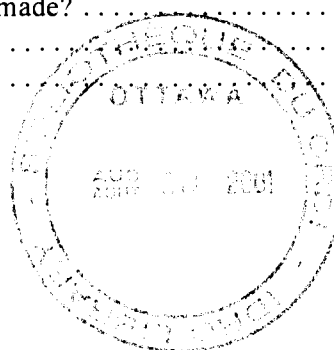
We have tried to be extremely thorough in this guide and trust that it will be useful and informative. We may also have left out some details and would be grateful for your comments and suggestions on how it can be improved. Thanks in advance, and happy reading!

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1

Introduction

Let's Make a Video!

It's communications planning time. The group is gathered around the conference table discussing products that will be useful to meet perceived communications needs. Sometime during the meeting someone inevitably will say, "Let's make a video!" Others around the table will say "Yes, that's a great idea." Before you know it, you are driving "hell-bent for leather" down the pothole strewn highway of video production.

Video is everywhere in our lives. Most Canadians now have cable access to fifty channels and the number is rising. In developing countries access to television and video is becoming more and more common. A video made for the right reasons can be an extremely powerful tool. It can raise awareness, help educate, elicit sympathy or anger, and move people to action. It can also do none of these things.

Knowing when video is the right solution, knowing when a proposal for a video makes sense and when it does not and knowing the right kinds of questions to ask about a video are what this guide is all about.

It is for managers at IDRC who may, from time to time, have to deal with video, even though it is not their area of specialization.

The guide has 8 chapters that take you through many of the kinds of video-related issues you might face. It answers basic questions but does not go into great detail. At the end of the guide is a glossary of terms that often appear in video proposals or contracts.

Kinds of video at the IDRC program level

Currently IDRC's Public Affairs unit does not fund major co-productions. But video may still be part of a communications strategy within a specific program or division. The subject of video is usually raised in one of the following contexts:

VIDEO THAT FILLS AN INTERNAL REQUIREMENT

- A video idea is generated internally, for promotional/educational use. For example, a program initiative may feel a video would enhance the prospects for additional funding. In this case the program hires an outside producer or production company to make the video.

- A video idea is generated internally, for collection of stock footage. The unedited footage from a project may be useful for future videos, or for the media to use in news features or stories. In such cases, an outside producer/crew would be hired to acquire the video footage. For example stock footage about information technology use in developing countries could be of use to a broadcaster doing a story about the potential benefits of a new communications satellite.
- A video idea is generated internally or comes from a funded research partner as a tool integral to a research project itself. For example, a video could be used in training farmer participants in a project. In this case the project would hire a producer, usually from the country where the work is being done.

VIDEO THAT FILLS AN EXTERNAL REQUIREMENT

- A video or TV program idea is generated externally. This occurs when IDRC or one of its program initiatives is asked to be a partner or funder in outside production. While budget constraints have prevented IDRC from participating in co-productions, that doesn't stop producers from asking. Typically a producer approaches an IDRC Program Officer, hoping to raise money for a specific, outside video project. Sometimes the video may be directly related to an IDRC project or there may simply be a shared interest in the subject matter of the video and the sense that it would be "good public relations" to be seen to be a part of the good cause.

In the rest of this guide we will address questions surrounding video in all these categories.

Using the Guide

Television and video production have evolved their own language, terminology and special jargon. We have not shied away from that language in this guide. After all, it is the language that video producers understand the best. Often we have provided explanations of the terms within the text, the first time they are used. We have also prepared a glossary. Terms defined in the glossary are italicised and marked with an asterisk. For example: *dubbing master**

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Why Video?

While verbal and written communication has been the dominant form we have used to record and transmit ideas and even memories among people and across generations, that is not the way we usually remember those things ourselves. Even the great novels – written, linear communications in themselves – rely on creating images in the mind’s eye for their appeal. The visual memory is potent.

There can be no doubt then that the development and widespread availability of the visual media (photography, film and video) over the past 100 years has had a profound impact on our mass visual memory. And of these media, the moving images of film and video seem to be most potent. That is why it is so tempting to turn to video as a medium (it is less expensive than film) with which to try to solve many of our current communications problems.

What video is for

Video is about images not words. Video is not very good for facts. Video is much more about feelings than it is about numbers. It is about texture not statistics and it is most of all about people. Video cannot be made in a vacuum. Consideration of the viewing audience is where all video should begin and end. There is a place for video as an art form, but for our purposes, the experimental and the avant-garde are best explored elsewhere.

Video is for telling stories. The power of video was most potently illustrated during the Vietnam war in the late 1960's and early 1970's. It wasn't just that television news carried images of dead soldiers. It was that it told the stories of who those soldiers were and what they were doing. It also made the Vietnamese into real people; people much harder to dismiss with race-stereotype labels. It was visual story-telling that brought the war home to the people of the United States and to the rest of the world. Even the great documentaries – the ones that say they are about important issues – always tell stories. That is the way we communicate most effectively.

Another example, closer to our memories, is the famine in Ethiopia in 1984. Who can remember from a TV report how many people actually starved, how many tonnes of food aid were delivered, how many lives were saved? Who can forget the face of one starving child in her mother's arms?

What video is not for

There are many areas where video is not the best communication medium.

Video is bad at numbers and detail. It is better at overview and impression. Including detailed statistics, graphs or text that explains the facts is usually a waste of time in a video. People remember the images rather than the numbers. The visual memory may be in overdrive during the video, the linear, verbal memory will at best be on cruise control. Also, since the actual playing of the video is a linear event, with little opportunity to go back and replay segments to understand them better, video must be clear and straight-forward. The viewer has but a single chance to get the message. Too many messages, or too many facts will lose the audience completely. If the purpose was to turn them on to a particular cause, a fact-bloated video may do just the opposite.

Set Objectives for the Video Project

With some knowledge about what video can and cannot do well, it is possible to determine whether or not a video will meet the objectives that must be set for it. For example, a video might be part of a strategy designed to raise awareness in a specific target group. It could be a tool to help raise funds or it could be part of a kit used in training and education. The idea is to set the objectives first, determine exactly what you want to achieve, and then look at whether or not video should play any part in meeting the objectives. Remember, it is possible that posters, or a publication, or an innovative use of the Internet, or a special exhibit at a conference will do the job better.

Video is not a magical solution to a problem... it has a precise function that is part of a broader strategy and it compliments, rather than replaces direct contact with people.

Target Audiences

Before making any video the producer or the responsible people at the Centre must know to whom the video is designed to appeal. The more specific the intended or target audience, the easier it is to evaluate whether video is the correct vehicle to reach the group, determine what kind of video is best suited for the group and optimize the distribution channels. The most important thing to remember is that ***the video must be sensitive to its audience in both content and form.***

GENERAL-ADULT

This is the most common target audience for a broadcast documentary. For producers, a broadcast on mainstream television to a potentially large viewing audience brings prestige and a better chance at reaching its objectives (ie. raising money, awareness, promoting action...). The group is usually defined as “adults” over 18 years of age. It is the audience that watches popular television programs and to some extent, the nightly news.

Documentaries rarely air in prime time and usually draw small audiences.

You, however, may want to target within the general TV audience, a specific age group or education level. In such cases you would look for broadcasts on appropriate channels.

YOUTH (9-18)

Many development organizations want to reach a young audience. Their hope is that young people will be more receptive to the messages in the video and will hold on to the values they see in the video, later in life. This is an audience that will have power and influence in the future. To reach this audience a video program would either go to a specific youth-oriented program series on a broadcast television channel (eg. a segment on TV Ontario's "TVO Kids" or CBC's "Street Cents") or be targeted to a youth-specific channel such as YTV (or even the Discovery Channel).

The other important route for reaching young people with video is via the education system. This tends to be much more hit and miss and usually requires accompanying, printed material in order to get penetration in the classroom. Note that an hour-long documentary will rarely be used in schools (at least not in North America). For a video to be useful in the classroom, it must be short enough to allow class discussion at the end. Classes are typically 35-40 minutes in duration. Twenty minutes of video is more than sufficient. This may mean that a documentary will have to be re-edited before it is useful in a school setting.

DONOR - SPECIFIC

Sometimes a video is designed to reach a very small, elite audience. We often call this a "decision-maker" audience. It could be key people in donor agencies, government departments, or elected bodies. In such cases the video is usually part of a larger package or proposal. It can be used at the beginning of a presentation with a "captive" audience. If the video is produced with these people specifically in mind, it could have an impact. Such videos are usually quite short, five to ten minutes in duration.

NORTH / SOUTH DISTINCTIONS

As we pointed out at the opening of this section, the video must be sensitive to its audience *in both content and form*. Audiences in the South have a very different set of expectations from video than do audiences in the North. Longer formats with more detail may work better with many audiences in developing countries than they will with viewers in the North. The tone and pacing may be different for different parts of the world.

Of course making North-South generalizations vastly over-simplifies the way video is perceived and received around the world. But if producers are sensitive to such matters, the video will usually be much more successful. For this reason, it is often a good idea to hire a producer or production team from the region where the target audience lives and views.

How many versions do you need?

Often overlooked in planning a video project are the additional resources required to make separate versions of the project. For example you may need to have versions with narrations in separate languages. This costs in editing, writing and talent fees. Also, you may need what is called a re-cut or *alternate cut* to suit special needs. An hour-long documentary which will be fine for broadcast is of little use in schools. Teachers would prefer shorter videos, segmented so that they can be shown in class and discussed. Making a 55 minute documentary into four equal minute segments is not as simple as taking a pair of scissors and cutting the tape. You need to re-edit, add titles and credits to each segment, re-write continuity to make sense in the shorter episodes and so on. (ie. It will cost more)

A note about Technical Video standards

In general if a video / television program will have its primary audience in a country that uses the *NTSC** standard, you will want the video to be shot and edited in NTSC. Similarly, if the first audience will be in a *PAL** (or *SECAM**) country, then the original material should be in PAL (it is rare to shoot in SECAM outside of France and Russia and *BetacamSP** tapes recorded in PAL or SECAM are the same).

Please see the glossary at the end of this guide for more information about video standards and recording formats and the section below about video basics. Also in Chapter 7 we have catalogued the video standards currently in use in most countries.

Program formats and lengths

Documentary makers always seem to want to make an hour-long program. While there are some hour-long documentary television slots they are few and far between, and as mentioned above, rarely reach a large broadcast television audience. Also an hour-long documentary is not much use if you want to place your video in schools. In that situation smaller segments — say 15-20 minutes that allow for class discussion — work much better. If your video is promotional, say to raise the awareness of potential donors then 10 minutes is about your limit. A video news release or feature pack, designed for broadcast in a magazine format television program may be best at 3-4 minutes. Public service announcements and commercial spots are usually 30 seconds. The documentary - a mix of interviews with relevant people, narration and visual sequences is the most common form of video sponsored by agencies like CIDA. Unfortunately it is not the form that many people actually watch on television.

Documentary

Typically 30-60 minutes in duration (individual program - could be one episode in a series)

Feature

Typically 4-8 minutes in duration. Usually included as a segment in a magazine-style program

News item/release

Typically 2-4 minutes designed as an actual news report or as a longer video piece that could be used by a reporter to edit into a news report.

(Public Affairs has produced video news releases that are available for viewing. These releases also contain *B-roll footage* which refers to an additional selection of footage, provided at the end of the tape, that can be used by a newscast to produce their own story).

Commercial or Public Service Announcement (PSA)

This is the shortest of “television programs” - in North America, usually just 30 seconds in duration. These short spots have high production values and should have high impact.

Drama

Many lengths from 15 to 90 minutes - can range from “movie” quality with full production values to “stage” quality - like videotaping a stage play.

Series

More than one documentary or drama with a continuing theme or related series of themes

Music video

Often targeted to youth, a music video — a song with a message with pictures edited to reinforce the message — can be a potent video tool.

Talking Heads

A video or tv program in which the main characters appear in an interview situation with little or no supporting visual material. This is a relatively inexpensive way to make video, but suffers when the guests are not compelling in and of themselves.

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Dealing with Producers

Producers, and production companies are the people/organizations that make video and film. In the context of work at IDRC, producers enter your picture in one of two ways:

- A. They have a video project and want to make a deal with you, or
- B. You have a video need and want to find a producer to do the job.

A: Producers who want to make a deal

When a producer comes to you looking for funds for a pet project, he or she should be armed with some kind of proposal. This is not a great deal different than any project proposal you have to look at, except that the outputs and what is done with them will be very different. There are some obvious questions that the proposal should answer. If it doesn't, you should ask the questions and get the answers directly from the producer yourself.

The questions to ask

Answers to the questions that follows will help you understand the true nature of the proposal.

WHAT IS THE PRODUCT?

Surprising as it may seem, some proposals do not make exactly clear the nature of the final product. This is sometimes an oversight because the production team is so close to the project, they assume everyone knows what they are talking about. **Sometimes though, the obfuscation is on purpose. Leaving the expected outputs vague allows the producers some flexibility.** If, for example, the expected output is a 30 minute broadcast television documentary, the document should say so. This is true even if the proposal is only for money to fund the research and development stages of the project, though through the research the producer may find that instead of a single half hour, five short features would do the job better.

WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?

A well defined target audience is absolutely essential if the video product is to be successful. If the producers don't know exactly who should watch their video it is likely that in the end, no one will ever see it.

HOW WILL THEY REACH THAT AUDIENCE?

One of the most important parts of any proposal is the distribution plan. The plan should be specific, with firm commitments from the key players. For example *it is not usually good enough for a proposal to say* “we will approach the following distributors with ...” or even “we have approached the following distributors/broadcasters... and they have expressed interest in our project.” **The producer should have researched the market, have the contacts and “letters of interest” (see definition on page 11) in hand. Furthermore, the producer should indicate how much money will be spent on marketing the product and just what that marketing will entail.**

CAN THEY MEASURE IT?

Just as with a proposal for some kind of development research funding, some kind of evaluation should be included in the proposal. For a video, the producers should state how they intend to keep track of viewership and viewing demographics. They should also tell you how they intend to report. In some other agencies and programs, such as the CIDA Development Information Program, regular reporting and follow-up are usually mandatory.

IS THE BUDGET REASONABLE?

In Chapter 5, we go into more detail about video production budgets. There are some rough guidelines you can follow when assessing the cost of a broadcast documentary. In Canada a top-of-the-line documentary, shot in BetacamSP format, usually costs between \$3500 and \$6000 per edited minute. For material that is shot in *Hi-8** or *DV** you may expect to pay \$2000 - \$3000 per edited minute. Of course, all video can be made cheaper than this if a lot of corners are cut.

WHAT DEALS HAVE THE PRODUCERS ALREADY MADE?

It is important for you to know who the other players are in the game. For example, the producers may also be approaching CIDA’s Development Information Program. You need to know what is already committed. This will help you decide whether or not the project has a real likelihood of being completed. If there is a firm broadcast deal, undoubtedly the producer will be anxious to tell you. Part of the proposal should outline how they intend to fund the entire project and what fraction of that cost your unit is expected to pay.

WHO ARE THE OTHER POTENTIAL PLAYERS?

In addition to broadcasters or distributors, who may commit to a deal but may not put any money up front, there may be other partners. They could be charitable foundations, NGOs, government departments or international organizations, or they could be federal or provincial production funds (Telefilm, Ontario Film Development Corporation etc). Be sure you know their level of commitment. Is their money conditional on getting your money first? What rights have they negotiated? Are there rights - such as distribution rights - that you should have but can’t because they are part of a deal with someone else? Do any of the other partners exercise any kind of editorial control or approval control that you don’t have and think you should have? Are you happy to be listed in the credits with all the partners named. For example before 1994 it would have been embarrassing for IDRC to have its name on a video that was also funded in part by the government of South Africa.

HOW FIRM ARE THE DEALS?

When a proposal talks about broadcast or distributor interest, **be sure that interest is substantiated in writing.** It is one thing for a producer to say “TVO says they are interested in our project.” and another to actually see the correspondence between the producer and TVO. This is important because these days broadcasters are reluctant to commit to a deal in writing unless they are really sure it is something they want. If it isn’t in writing, or **if the language of the letter of interest is vague then beware.**

At the research stage, this might be alright. Letters from broadcasters or distributors expressing even mild interest at least show that the producer has done some homework.

WHAT IS THE PRODUCTION TEAM’S EXPERIENCE?

In particular, you should be interested in the track record the team has with the kind of project being proposed. For example, if there is a lot of shooting in developing countries, you want to be sure the videographer has had experience in developing countries. Also, if broadcast is part of the distribution plan, the producer should have a broadcast track record. Look at the résumés of the proposed team and find out what they have done and what their reputation is. You should ask to see samples of relevant work. Most producers are proud to show off their work.

WHAT TECHNOLOGIES / FORMATS WILL THEY SHOOT IN?

Sometimes the proposal is not concrete on this point. But you should know if you are paying BetacamSP prices — anywhere from \$800-1500/day — are actually getting BetacamSP original shooting. It was not uncommon in past years for less than scrupulous producers to submit final *master tapes* on BetacamSP but to have shot the original material in Hi-8 video. You have to be sure the proposed shooting format suits technical quality needs that match the eventual use that will be made of the completed program. But be aware, that different formats have different costs associated with them.

WHAT TECHNOLOGIES / FORMATS WILL THEY EDIT IN?

It is important to be sure that the appropriate sort of production facility is being used for the project. For example if there is never to be any broadcast distribution, just *VHS* cassettes, and the shooting format is Hi-8, a full production house that charges \$2000/day may be overkill. This sort of knowledge will help you evaluate the thought that has been put into the proposal from the point of view of the budget.

Can you visualize the video?

Visualize what the product is from the description - eg is it a one hour documentary, a series of commercials or public services announcements, a drama, cartoon. Can you see it in your mind’s eye. For example a proposal from a respected Canadian company once said:

“Turning Thirteen: Thirteen documentaries about thirteen children in thirteen countries turning thirteen years old.”

This is so clear and so succinct, that you almost want to fund the project without answers to all the detailed questions.

How to say no

If there is one thing producers are used to it is NO for an answer. But it is always best to say no with a set of reasons that make sense. If your program initiative just doesn't fund video at all then say so. If it only funds its own videos, say so. If it only funds videos that feature funded projects, then say so. If you find weaknesses in the proposal be sure you let the producer know. There may be answers to the questions you have or the producer may choose to re-think the idea and come up with something more appealing - but only if she/he knows the reasons for rejection.

Broadcast commitments

Many video projects are sold to funders with a promise of broadcast. A proposal will often refer to "potential" broadcasters. Remember that most broadcasters will not commit to a project unless they know it will be funded. The level of commitment can range from "let's talk again" to "we like it we'll take the first window," which must be put in writing.

- **Letter of interest**

This is the mildest commitment. In fact it is no commitment at all. But it does indicate that a broadcaster will look at the project closely. Many broadcasters now refuse to write such letters because they fear being locked in to deals they don't want. They also don't want producers using the letters as if they were firm commitments.

- **Letters of intent**

This kind of letter carries a lot more weight. It may say that "*upon completion and approval the broadcaster intends to negotiate a broadcast licence...*" Note that the broadcaster has still left an "out." They can always not approve the final production because it doesn't meet their expectations or their standards.

- **Pre-sale broadcast license***

This is what every producer wants. It effectively guarantees both a broadcast and a price. Usually the licence will specify a *broadcast window** and an exclusivity period. The best pre-sale licence is for what is called First Window which is the broadcast premiere in a particular market. A national broadcast first window with a prime time slot is what every producer dreams of.

Audience measurements

One of the ways to estimate the impact of a broadcast video is by total viewership or ratings. In setting the criteria for reaching a specific target audience, producers will look at audience figures for different broadcasters in different time slots with the specific demographics (age, income, location etc.) they have in mind. After a broadcast, the actual figures for the broadcast from the ratings organizations - BBM (Bureau of Broadcast Measurement) or A.C. Nielsen Co. - can form an important part of the evaluation and report.

One of the most confusing (and possibly misleading) figures used to describe a viewing audience is *audience reach**. This is not the number of people who watch a program, but rather the number of people who may have tuned into the station for at least a quarter of an hour during the period that was measured - usually a week. This kind of figure is often used by the cable specialty channels to make their audiences look larger than they really are. With many of these channels, the audiences are so small that the ratings measurements are not sensitive enough to capture them with any accuracy. A cable broadcaster can say that it reaches 50,000 viewers, but that does not mean a documentary repeated on that channel twenty times it will be seen by a million people.

The Producer's Dilemma

Being a video producer in times of tight money is not an easy job. No one, it seems, wants to commit their money first. Getting all the parts in place — the deal — is akin to pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps. In a broadcast project there is often a chicken and egg dilemma. No one will put up money if there is no broadcast commitment and no broadcaster will commit until they know there is money to do the project. Worse than that, if there are several funding sources, each may hold back their money until someone else goes in first. But without all the money in place, the producer can't start the project. It's no wonder that sometimes not all the details are in place.

For that reason, many production proposals are handled in two stages. First there is a research stage, where the producer has an idea but needs to find out if there is any interest. Basically the research phase is designed to write a proposal that will answer satisfactorily all the questions posed above. ***Remember that if a producer requests research funding, that in no way should commit you to production funding at a later stage.***

When you say yes

Having carefully examined a proposal you may well want to fund the video project. If you do, you can expect some things in return from the producer. You have not just given the producer a blank cheque. Some things are negotiable, some are not. For example, **few producers will let you edit the script for a documentary that is intended for broadcast. This is because they have to assure the broadcaster as to their independence.** This is an especially sensitive issue if the funder is a governmental or quasi-governmental organization.

Nevertheless, you can negotiate any of the following:

- Set budget installments with milestones or deliverables such as a *shooting script*^{*}, *rushes*^{*} and/or tape logs, an editing script and a rough-edit. At each of these stages you can **(and should have the explicit right in your contract with the producer)** have corrections made in errors of fact that directly relate to IDRC.
- Set auditing and reporting procedures for the budget.
- Perhaps the most important thing to negotiate or specify is the credit that will be given to IDRC or the program initiative. This may also depend on the deals that the producer has made with other funders. Do you want the IDRC logo included somewhere in the credits? Will IDRC or your program/division be listed as a “co-producer” and so on?
- Even if IDRC or a program initiative is a minor player in a video production and does not stand to recoup its investment, it is possible to negotiate for some rights over the material. For example you might want rights to duplicate and distribute the video in developing countries or you may want to retain copies of field tapes for possible later use. There is no guarantee that any producer will assign these rights but **if you don't ask, you don't get.**
- At the very least, you must get a *dubbing master*^{*} of the completed program along with a specified number of (VHS) viewing copies.

- You can set technical standards for the final product. For example Government Services Canada has a set of standards regarding the maximum number of tape *drop outs** in a video product that they contract.

B: Producers - whom you might want to hire

Another scenario you may face is actually hiring a producer/production company to make a video product that you feel your division or program initiative needs. In this case, issues addressed in Part A still apply. There are many producers with many skills in Canada. In fact from the first days of the National Film Board (NFB) in 1939 and its first head, John Grierson, Canada has had a continuing tradition of fine documentary making. There is a lot of talent from which to choose.

A Producer Can't Work with Nothing

One of the frustrations producers face with clients is trying to understand exactly what it is the client actually wants. ***Decide on the key messages and target audience before you hire your producer.***

When spending money on video production, it is important to follow IDRC policies and procedures. Contact the Client Services Group for information on soliciting proposals and awarding contracts. No matter what the cost, you should talk to more than one producer / company to get an idea about what is possible. Still, many producers will not spend a great deal of time developing a proposal as part of a bid on a relatively small contract. They may feel it is not worth a lot of time and effort, when there are no assurance that they will get the contract.

What Should You Look For in a Producer?

Producers come in all shapes and sizes. At one end are small one-person operations. They will sub-contract with other professionals to do any of the work they can't do themselves. The other end of the scale is a full-service company, called a production house, that has its own crews, gear, and editing facilities. There is no hard and fast rule about which way to go. Sometimes a full-service house will give you a break on some prices, but many individual producers can negotiate the same kinds of deals by shopping around. ***The key is to hire someone in whom you have faith.***

EXPERIENCE

You should know how experienced the producer actually is. This is not something as simple as "twenty-years in the business." You need to know if he/she has experience with the kind of project you have in mind. Experience in video related to development or scientific research could be very important. If there is location work to be done in a developing country, does the producer have experience in such locations?

A producer may have made wonderful corporate or government videos in the past, but not have real documentary experience — or vice versa. In the same way as you want your product to fit your target audience, ***you want a producer who will fit your product.***

A SHARED VISION

It is important that the producer you hire shares your vision about issues that are important to IDRC. There is nothing more embarrassing than having a producer and crew go to a project site only to discover that they have no sensitivity to the concerns of people they are making the video about.

FORMATS

Some producers have worked only with the professional *Betacam*® formats, others have specialized in low-cost Hi-8. Some, of course, are comfortable in a range of production circumstances. If Hi-8 is all you need (for example a final product that will only be used on the Internet), or can afford, then take a good look at producers who know how to get the best quality out of Hi-8. If you want a broadcast program, be sure the producer you hire has worked in broadcast formats.

SAMPLE TAPES AND REFERENCES

Look at the work a producer has done in the past to see if it is compatible with the product you have in mind. Talk to other clients to find out what their experience has been with that producer or company. Find out what kind of track record the producer has in getting previous videos to the intended target audience.

PRICE

Video can be very expensive. Look at more than one proposal and try to see why one may have come in cheaper than another. The lowest bid is not necessarily the best, neither is the most expensive one.

The Process — Getting what you really want.

Once you have taken the plunge and decided to go ahead with a video project, you want to make sure that what you get is what you wanted. You don't want to interfere too much in the creative process, but you do want to keep an eye on what is going on. **You should have a single person who acts as liaison with the producer.** There is nothing worse for the producer than getting mixed messages from different people, all of whom have some interest in the project.

A video evolves and grows in distinct stages. You should be sure at each stage that you are getting what you are paying for; that the project is developing as you had envisioned it. Your contract with the producer should have approval and sign-off procedures.

Depending on the kind of production (corporate, documentary, educational, drama) some stages of this process will take on more importance than others.

- **Treatment**

The treatment is the outline of the project; how the producer sees it in his or her mind's eye. If you like the treatment and the producer sticks with it, you are half way there. ***You should see in the treatment how the producer intends to present the messages which you have identified as being important.***

- **Shooting Script**

This is a detailed plan for the production. It includes schedules, locations, contact information and it takes the treatment and turns it into a script, showing what the crew intends to shoot during the production. The shooting script is a guide to make sure that no important details have been forgotten. It focuses the producer, director and crew in terms of the necessary elements of the video they are making. It is not, however, cast in stone and the final script, written after the actual shooting, may be quite different. If, of course you are producing a drama, your shooting script will match the final script very closely.

Below is an example of a shooting script for the opening of a documentary video. It was written before the video taping began. IDRC helped fund this particular production and has viewing copies of the tape available. While the opening of the documentary is not exactly the same as what the producer put in the shooting script, (you can't tell people what to say in a documentary) it is definitely faithful to the spirit.

SOUND AND PICTURES	WORDS
PRE-TITLE OPENING	
<p>Visual montage on multiple layers of moving shots, showing contrasts between popular western views of Africa and scenes of the real Africa today. It will include labs, and animals ending with something like a shot of flamingoes taking off from Lake Bogoria and the music of African women. In this montage we will also see and hear from the principles of the play.</p>	<p>"I picture Africa as wild animals and jungle and the natives" (streeter)</p> <p>"I always knew that I would come back to Africa to prove that you could do science that was important not only to Africa, but to the world" (Odhiambo)</p> <p>"tribal people always fighting among themselves" (streeter)</p> <p>"I was the only girl in a class of boys, but I was the one who was good at chemistry" (Makhubu)</p> <p>"those little black children mostly starving" (streeter)</p> <p>"We had in Africa a tradition of science and that was taken away from us. Now we must put it back if we are to succeed." (Makhubu, Ndamba or Olembo)</p> <p>"corruption, where they spend foreign aid money like water" (streeter)</p> <p>"We must provide for Africans the capacity to make African Discoveries." (Odhiambo)</p>
MAIN TITLE ANIMATION	MAIN TITLE ANIMATION African Discovery
ICIPE TODAY	
<p>Open with a sound bite from Odhiambo in lab or in action.. forceful</p>	<p>sound bite clip in v/o Odhiambo: "I REMEMBER.... WHEN FIRST THOUGHT ABOUT INSECTS... TODAY WE ARE WORKING IN SO MANY AREAS, THERE ARE SO MANY NEEDS."</p>

- **Rushes and Tape Logs (Shot Lists)**

Rushes are the raw, unedited video tapes. The name comes from movie-making where film was processed each day during the shooting and the director would look at the previous day's work to see if it was alright - both technically and in terms of the performances of the actors. You do not have to see all the raw tape, but you might want to look at some rushes to get an idea of what kind of material the producer has acquired for the project. As part of the process, most producers will make catalogues of all the tape they have shot. They use them to help organize for the edit. You may wish to have copies of these logs.

Below is part of a log from a field shoot for an IDRC project.

TAPE SHOT CATALOGUE							
Project ID:	navr						
Date:	29-Sept-97						
Prep	dm						
0045 Tape 1		00:00:46	00:00:46			Bars: Saturday, Sept 27, 1997. Navrongo Health Research Centre. - unless otherwise noted, audio is LEFT ch 1 only	
	00:00:46	00:00:55	00:00:09	ms		Fred Binka and others at NHRC listening to comments from Volta Region District health officers after 1 week visit	
	00:00:55	00:01:03	00:00:08	mcu		Dr. Alex Nazzar Comments L>R	
	00:01:03	00:01:07	00:00:04	mcu		Dr. Fred Binka L>R	
	00:01:07	00:01:28	00:00:21	ls		woman participant	
	00:01:28	00:01:45	00:00:17	ws		participants sitting at table R>L	
	00:01:45	00:01:58	00:00:13	ws	p>l	pan l from one side of room to other	
	00:01:58	00:02:13	00:00:15	ws		participants on other side of room look L>R	
	00:02:13	00:02:26	00:00:13	ws		participants with Binka in foreground frame R - Binka talks	
	00:02:26	00:02:35	00:00:09	ws	p>l	across room from POV of Navrongo people	
	00:02:35	00:02:44	00:00:09	ws		from back of room towards Dr. Binka, Dr. Nazzar	
	00:02:44	00:02:48	00:00:04	ws		ditto	
	00:02:48	00:03:21	00:00:33	ms		Alex head on - comments poss bite	
	00:03:21	00:03:24	00:00:03	ms		Dr. Binka looks L>R	ng
	00:03:24	00:03:35	00:00:11	cu		participant comments R>L	
	00:03:35	00:03:54	00:00:19	cu		Dr. Binka responds L>R	
	00:03:54	00:04:13	00:00:19	ws		Participants R>L from back of room	
	00:04:13	00:04:26	00:00:13	ms		Participants L>R from back of room	
	00:04:26	00:04:41	00:00:15	cu		tight shot of 3 participants L>R	g

- **Script**

The writer will spend a great deal of time with the rushes and with the research material to shape a final script. ***This must be done and approved before editing begins.*** The script should make it easy for you to visualize the video. **A word of caution here:** While you don't have to give your approval until the script is what you want, avoid the temptation to try to write it yourself. Look for errors in fact, look for your key messages, look for a tone that matches what you had in mind.

- ***Off-line* edit***

You should always have an off-line edit made before you commit to the final product. The off-line, also called a rough cut, is usually made using an inexpensive production facility, with vhs copies of the original tapes. It is like a layout mockup for a publication done with scotch tape, photocopies and black and white pictures. It will have all the components, script, and visuals in the order that the writer and producer intend to put into the final product. It won't necessarily have very good picture or sound quality. There may be *timecode** numbers visible in the picture and no effects like dissolves or slow motion sequences. The main titles, graphics and closing credits may not be complete. Nevertheless, you should get a very good idea from the off-line, what the final product will be like.

Making changes at the off-line stage does not cost a lot of money. You should make all your major changes and suggestions at this stage. Once you have approved the rough cut, you are in what is sometimes called *picture lock** That is because in many on-line editing systems, you can't change the duration of any shot or of the video as a whole without restarting the edit from scratch. This is not so true of the new digital, *non-linear editing** setups (Avid, Media 10, D-Vision are brand names that producers may use).

- ***On-line* edit***

The final stage of the process is the on-line edit. This is where the original, high quality footage is conformed to the rough cut or mockup as you have approved it. The equipment used for doing this is quite expensive, and so production houses charge accordingly. ***At this stage, any changes you want to make will cost money.*** The situation is very similar to what you find when publishing a full-colour brochure. The further along the process you are, the more difficult and more costly it is to make changes.

Who owns the rights?

Be sure you specify in your contract with the producer/production company just who will own what rights to both the final video and to the original footage. If you are hiring a producer to do a video for your program, IDRC will certainly hold copyright and distribution rights to the video. But some writers will not easily sign away their copyright to the script. They will want compensation for other uses of their material - such as publication on the Internet or other non-traditional forms of publication/distribution.

You should also negotiate with the producer what will happen to the uncut original footage. Some producers will give you a better price if they retain rights to the footage. That footage may have future value to the producer (either through sales of shots to other producers or in other productions they may do themselves). ***It may also have future value to IDRC or its program initiatives, so who owns the footage shot for the production can be important.***

There has been a tradition with still photographers that "outs" — pictures not explicitly selected by the contractor — remain the property of the photographer. This is also common practice in video. In the past, IDRC has been financially committed to co-productions with absolutely no rights to the raw footage or the "outs." But more and more (CIDA is a current example) contracts are negotiated giving all rights to the contractor. Even the "outs" are purchased as part of the deal.

4

Video Basics

People are often confused about the various video formats and standards. They want to know if something is “Broadcast Quality” and they get muddled in a quagmire of acronyms and initials. There are two distinct areas to deal with — **video standards** and **video formats**. There is a quick way to remember the difference. It is very much like highway systems and automobiles. In some countries vehicles drive on the left, others on the right. They are the two “driving” standards — left and right. In each system there are many vehicle formats — for example trucks, vans, sedans, four-wheel drives, buses and so on.

Video formats

The video format refers to the kind of videocassette used to record the video.

- **VHS**
The most common consumer format is called VHS - the tapes you pick up at your local video rental outlet .
- **Betamax**
In some parts of the world the Sony Betamax format is still popular (eg. The Philippines, Colombia).

Both VHS and Betamax use 1.2cm wide (½ inch) video tape housed in a plastic cassette. The cassettes are different in dimensions and construction and the exact way the video signal is recorded on the tape varies between the formats, so there is absolutely zero compatibility between them. VHS and Betamax are consumer formats that will only be broadcast if the content is unique and compelling.

- **S-VHS**
A little better quality is obtained with S-VHS (super) which uses the same sized cassette as VHS but a higher quality tape. This format is often used by wedding and other “event” videographers in North America.
- **Video 8**
Video 8 uses a small 8mm cassette and gives a picture quality similar to VHS.

- **Hi-8**
Hi-8 is to Video 8 as S-VHS is to VHS. This format gives a pretty good picture for the money and short features and documentaries originally recorded in this format are sometimes broadcast.
- **Betacam and BetacamSP**
The most common “professional” format in the developed world is called Betacam and its higher quality cousin BetacamSP. This format is capable of recording very high quality pictures. The cassettes look like Betamax consumer cassettes but are much different: the tape speed is much higher and the recording process very different. The maximum recording time is 30 minutes on a standard camera tape. ***These Betacam and BetacamSP tapes cannot be played on a Betamax machine and won’t fit in the door of a VHS recorder.***
- **DV (DVCam, DVC-Pro)***
DV, or consumer *digital video** is a new format that puts high quality video making ability in the hands of consumers. It is relatively low-cost, using camcorders that look very much like Hi-8. The cassette uses 6.2mm (1/4 inch) video tape in a housing that is smaller than those used in DAT (Digital Audio Tape) audio recording.

Video standards

A colour video picture is a complex thing to record on video tape. It is also complex to broadcast. A video standard is a detailed specification for exactly how video information is stored on video tape and is transmitted and received by television stations. There are three primary video recording standards used in the world today. They go by the acronyms *NTSC**, *PAL** and *SECAM**. PAL and SECAM are similar but NTSC is completely different. Each country in the world with a broadcast TV infrastructure adheres to one (or sometimes more!) of the standards. A video program shot with equipment adhering to one standard must be edited with equipment in that standard. Without a special conversion it cannot be viewed on equipment designed for one of the other standards.

Note that IDRC does have some multi-system VCRs that can play any VHS tape, no matter what standard has been used to record it.

Broadcast quality

While many television networks and stations have “official” technical specifications as to what they will and won’t broadcast, this is usually a moot point. There is no real definition of “quality” in terms of the technical appearance of the picture. It is content that counts. Nevertheless, you always want the highest technical quality you can afford. A VHS recording can be broadcast, but it has to contain unique material that could not be obtained any other way (eg. the earthquake damage to the Oakland Bay bridge several years ago). As a rule of thumb, assume that any VHS or Video 8 tape cannot be broadcast: you need to provide Betacam or DVCam tapes

5

Typical Video Budget

One of the most important components of any proposal is the budget. It is also the part producers rarely want to show in great detail. That is partly because they don't want to overwhelm you, partly because they may have "guesstimated" many of the costs and partly because they may have inflated the real costs in order to enhance their profit margin. It is reasonable for the video budget to include marked up prices on goods as well as an overall administrative overhead fee to cover non-specific costs in the production, but knowledge of industry costs will let you decide if the prices listed are in fact reasonable.

Most video budgets are divided into sections along one of the following schemes.

People costs, Service costs

In this budget, the salaries or fees paid to production employees will be listed first. The costs of purchased or rented goods and services will be listed second.

Production Phases

A more detailed way to present the budget is to do it by production phases. This is similar in some ways to the people / service breakdown, but divides the production process into three distinct phases: Pre-production, Production and Post-production.

- **Pre-production:** This includes research and development costs, and also lists the fees that will be paid to producers, directors, writers and principal talent.
- **Production:** The production phase of the video is when the video is actually being shot. This part of the budget includes both people and service costs. For example people costs would be the salaries of production secretaries and assistants and the fees paid to camera crews. The service costs include equipment rentals, videotape stock and travel to do the shoot.
- **Post-production:** The final phase, Post-production, includes the costs of facilities for screening and editing the final product.

How much detail should you need to see?

Video production budgets are usually very detailed, as are research proposal budgets brought to IDRC every day. You may only need to see the broad category amounts to be satisfied that the producers have presented a reasonable budget — one that will provide enough cash to complete the project as described in the proposal but one that is not inflated or too rich for the project.

Sample Budget

Many production companies in Canada follow a production budget model developed by Telefilm Canada (the federal film/video funding agency). The categories and sub-categories cover everything from the price of video cassettes to the cost of dogs and cats and other animals appearing in a motion picture. The format is equally suited to documentary making and if the producer is also seeking funds from Telefilm, it is usually a good idea to cast the budget in the format they understand. It looks a little different than a typical IDRC project budget.

Below we have included the summary page from a typical budget for a short (10 min) video project. Some categories more appropriate to the production of a feature film or drama (eg. makeup, set design etc.) have been excluded so the account numbers on the list below are not fully consecutive.

ACCOUNT NUMBER	CATEGORY	BUDGET TOTAL
PRE-PRODUCTION "A"		
01	Story Rights/Acquisitions	
02	Writers (Scenario)	\$1,800
03	Development Costs (research)	
04	Producer(s)	\$7,700
05	Director(s)	\$4,083
06	Stars (talent) [eg Host]	
TOTAL PRE-PRODUCTION "A"		\$13,583
PRODUCTION "B"		
10	Cast (other talent) [eg. narrator]	\$566
11	Extras	
12	Production Staff (eg. assistants...)	\$700
21	Video Technical Crew	
22	Camera Labour	
23	Electrical Labour	
24	Grip Labour	
25	Production Sound Labour	
26	Transportation Labour	
27	Fringe Benefits	\$51
28	Production Office Exp.'s	\$585
30	Location Office Expenses	
31	Site Expenses (eg. cafeteria, medical services, insurance...)	
32	Unit Expenses	
33	Travel & Living Expenses	\$5,297
34	Transportation	

43	Video Studio Facilities	
44	Video Remote Facilities	
45	Camera Equipment	\$1,200
46	Electrical Equipment	\$50
47	Grip Equipment	
48	Sound Equipment	
50	Video Tape Stock	\$1,047
<u>TOTAL PRODUCTION "B"</u>		<u>\$9,496</u>
POST PRODUCTION "C"		
60	Editorial Labour	
61	Editorial Equipment	
62	Video Post Pdn. (Picture)	\$3,810
63	Video Post Pdn. (Sound)	\$655
66	Music	\$550
67	Stock Footage	
68	Versionizing	
<u>TOTAL POST-PRODUCTION "C"</u>		<u>\$5,015</u>
TOTAL "B" + "C"		\$14,510
OTHER		
70	Unit Publicity	\$610
71	General Expenses (eg. visas, travel insurance...)	\$257
72	Indirect Costs	\$3,208
<u>TOTAL OTHER "D"</u>		<u>\$4,075</u>
TOTAL "A" + "B" + "C" + "D"		\$32,168
80	CONTINGENCY	
SUB TOTAL		\$32,168
GRAND TOTAL		\$32,168

*** Additional Costs**

In addition to production costs, you should budget for publicity and for the cost of making and distributing copies (according to your objectives) This may include mailing free, promotional copies of the video. The following list provides an idea of some of these costs:

Price List:

Betacam Tapes - 30 minutes:	approximately \$25.00
BetacamSP Tapes - 30 minutes:	approximately \$50.00
Copying cost: Betacam to Betacam:	\$50.00 to \$60.00/hour
Digital Video Tape - 60 minutes:	approximately \$35.00
VHS tapes - 60 minutes:	approximately \$ 2.00
Copying cost: Master tape to VHS	- based on time and number of copies

Reasonable Costs

So what are some typical rates, charges and expenses that one might expect in a video proposal?

- Producers and directors: you should expect them to charge on the order of \$500/day
- Betacam camera crew, with full audio will be in the \$1000 - \$1500/day range. Note that US and European crews, who regularly freelance to the major news organizations usually charge more.
- Betacam camera operator without sound person is \$800 - \$1000/day (this includes all the video gear of course but not the cost of tape stock)
- DV or Hi-8 camera operator with gear will cost \$500 - \$700/day
- Post production video editing facilities capable of editing BetacamSP video range from \$750 - \$2000/day depending upon the sophistication of the setup and the complexity of the edit session.

In addition, there will be per diem living expenses for location shooting. You should expect to use the IDRC rates.

How big a crew for the job?

If there is a lot of overseas travel involved in the production of the video, you will want to use the smallest crew possible. But if you go too low, you may not get the quality you need - either in technical terms, or in creative terms. A production crew consisting of a location director, a camera person and a sound person is often considered a minimum requirement for **broadcast** documentary. In fact when working in developing countries it is often helpful to have a producer or at least a production assistant who can devote time to scheduling and arrangements.

Nevertheless, with the new, compact, high-quality video technologies it is possible to do a great deal of video in developing countries with a single person acting as director, camera and sound person all in one (It is still a good idea to have an assistant).

How long do things take?

One of the most important figures in any video production budget is what is known as the "shooting ratio." This is the number of minutes of raw video tape that will be shot for every minute that ends up in the final production. A well-planned production can have a lower shooting ratio — say 25 or 30 to 1. Ratios in video of 50:1 are not uncommon, but in film work, 20:1 is a more typical ratio.

A high shooting ratio adds costs at every stage of the production. For example, the initial tape stock cost is higher and any excess baggage charges during travel are higher. Also, the time on location will be longer because the crew is shooting more. On return, the costs of logging the tape will be more, the writer will take longer to go through the material to write a good script and the editor will take more time to find the right shots and so it goes. For a high-quality BetacamSP broadcast production you usually allow for a higher shooting ratio - say 50:1. Other productions may come in at 30:1. A very well-planned video could be as low as 10:1. That is the kind of ratio usually reserved for film shoots, where the cost of the initial film stock and processing is very high.

On-Location

So an hour-long production could have 50 hours of tape to deal with. Given that on average, a crew won't shoot more than 2 hours/day (unless there are countless long interviews), you might expect an hour-long documentary to take 3 - 5 weeks to shoot. Unfortunately, for shorter features the costs and times don't scale down proportionally. While it is possible to shoot a 5 minute feature in a single day, if you have taken the trouble to send a crew to an overseas location, you usually keep them there longer and have them shoot a lot more.

In Editing

As a general rule of thumb a good team (editor and director) should be able to edit 3-5 minutes of finished video/day. That works in a short feature situation but for longer, more complex productions, the figure goes down as possibilities are explored. An hour-long documentary will take between 20-40 days to edit, after the script has been written.

In Post-production

Assuming that an off-line edit is made first, the post-production should proceed quite smoothly. An hour-long program could take a week for the video edit and three days for the audio mix. Again with the increasing use of *NLE (non-linear editing)** and automated, *edit decision list (EDL)** assembly in post production, these times are being reduced.

How many people are you paying for?

As a final point, when looking at a production budget, you should consider how many people you are funding. A producer, director, camera crew, hosts, narrators, production assistants, researchers, writer are legitimate positions but not every video project requires all the positions to be filled. That depends on the complexity of the project and the eventual use to which the video will be put.

6

The Crew

How many times have you watched the credits at the end of a feature film and wondered aloud what the “best boy” did or what skills the “gaffer” was required to have? The film and video business has developed its own language and conventions and while you may never have to deal with a production that has a best boy, you should be familiar with some of the key positions in a production and know a bit about what each person does. A few key people take the largest proportion of the salary budget for your video.

Producers

A video always has at least one producer — a person who raises and manages the funds for a project and who coordinates its production through all stages. In large productions you may have an Executive Producer as well as Senior and Associate Producers. These titles are not standard. In general, producers usually hire and fire everyone else on the team.

Directors

The director is the person who, either on location with a camera crew, or during editing, supervises the work of the technical/creative people. In a drama, a director will coach the actors through the scene until it is the way she/he wants it. In a documentary, a field director will suggest to the cameraperson just how a scene is supposed to look. In editing, a director will select many of the shots and will approve/disapprove of shot selections made by the person actually doing the editing.

Writers

The writer writes the script. Even a video with no narration has “writing” because the script is a recipe for the total video. The writer is the person who often selects the interview segments that will be used and sets the basic “story-telling” for the video. The writer, of course, writes whatever words will be said by a host or narrator (in a documentary).

Other Cast and Crew

There may be others involved; a production assistant who handles the daily chores of the production including schedules and travel arrangements; the director of photography or videographer (cameraperson), the sound recordist, the editor(s) the on-camera host or narrator. While every production needs all the jobs to be done, the production does not necessarily need separate people for each job. For example, a cameraperson may also handle the sound recording chores. The production may be small enough that the producer is also the director and may be the writer.

With the advent of technically-superior, small-format digital video cameras, there is a growing trend towards minimising the size of video production crews. This has several potential advantages for work in developing countries.

- Much lower crew costs — especially for travel/accommodation/per-diem
- Easier movement across borders with less gear to show
- more intimate film/video-making is possible with fewer people to get in the way.

The disadvantages are that some compromises may have to be made in production values - for example the producer/director/interviewer may be only a competent camera person.

7

Countries and Video Systems

The following is a list by country of the video record/playback and broadcast systems. Some countries use more than one system

NTSC	PAL	SECAM
Antigua and Barbuda	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Aruba	Algeria	Armenia
Bahamas	Andorra	Azerbaijan
Barbados	Angola	Benin
Belize	Argentina	Burkina Faso
Bermuda	Australia	Bulgaria
Bolivia	Austria	Burundi
Canada	Azores	Central Afr. Rep
Chile	Bahrain	Chad
Taiwan	Bangladesh	Congo
Colombia	Belgium	Cyprus (Greek)
Costa Rica	Borneo	Czech Republic
Cuba	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Djibouti
Dominica	Botswana	Egypt
Dominican Republic	Brazil	Estonia
Ecuador	Brunei	France
El Salvador	Canary Islands	French Polynesia
Fiji	China (People's Republic)	Gabon
Grenada	Cyprus (Turkish)	Gambia
Guam	Denmark	Georgia
Guatemala	Equatorial Guinea	Greece
Haiti	Ethiopia	Guadeloupe
Honduras	Fiji	Guinea (Republic)
Jamaica	Finland	Guyana (French)
Japan	Gambia	Guyana (Republic)
Korea (People's Republic)	Germany	Hungary
Korea (Republic of)	Ghana	Iran
Mexico	Gibraltar	Iraq
Micronesia	Great Britain	Ivory Coast
Myanmar	Greenland	Jordan
Nicaragua	Iceland	Kazakhstan
Panama	India	Korea (People's Republic)
Peru	Indonesia	Kyrgystan
Philippines	Ireland	Latvia
Puerto Rico	Israel	Lebanon
St. Christopher and Nevis	Italy	Libya
St. Lucia	Kenya	Lithuania

NTSC	PAL	SECAM
St. Lucia St. Vincent & Grenadines Samoa, Eastern Surinam Tonga Trinidad and Tobago United States of America Venezuela Vietnam Virgin Islands, British Virgin Islands, US Yemen	Korea (People's Republic) Kuwait Laos Lesotho Liberia Macau Malawi Malaysia Maldives Malta Mozambique Namibia Nepal Netherlands New Zealand Nigeria Norway Oman Pakistan Papua New Guinea Paraguay Portugal Qatar Seychelles Sierra Leone Singapore Solomon Islands Somalia South Africa Spain Sri Lanka Sudan Swaziland Sweden Switzerland Tanzania Thailand Turkey Uganda UAE Uruguay Vietnam Western Sahara Yemen Yugoslavia Zambia Zimbabwe	Luxembourg Madagascar Mali Martinique Mauritania Mauritius Moldova Monaco Mongolia Morocco Niger New Caledonia Poland Reunion Romania Russia Rwanda Saudi Arabia Senegal Slovakia Society Islands Syria Tahiti Tajikistan Togo Tunisia Turkmenistan Ukraine Uzbekistan Zaire

PAL is the most universally used system and in some recording formats (eg. BetacamSP) there is no difference between PAL and SECAM. Most VCRs in North America are restricted to playing VHS tapes recorded in the NTSC system, but there is a growing number of multi-system VCRs for the VHS format. The Centre and some IDRC regional offices have multi-system VCRs and can playback any VHS tape, regardless of its country of origin.

8

Glossary of Terms Used in Video

Alternate Cut or Re-cut

You may well have heard of “the director’s cut” of a movie — a version of the film that usually has extra scenes that were not included when the film was released. In video, it is often desirable to prepare alternate cuts or re-cuts of the video. These are separate edits using the same original location tapes. For example, you may want to make a set of shorter tapes from an hour-long broadcast documentary for use in high schools. Re-cuts do not come for free. Usually the script, graphics, music, and the basic edit all have to be re-done to suit the new objective. The money saved is only on the original location shooting.

Audience Reach

The BBM Bureau of Measurement, one of Canada’s main tv ratings services, defines the term “Reach” (also called Cumulative Audience or Cume, or Circulation) as follows

- A. The number of different people who watch a station or television in general, for at least one quarter-hour during a given period of time.
- B. The number of different people who are exposed to a television commercial schedule, during a given period of time (usually one week).

In other words, Reach does not refer to viewership of a specific television program.

B-roll - see definition under the heading: **News item/release** on page 6

Betacam - video format

This is a videotape cassette format developed by Sony for professional broadcast use in the early 1980’s. It largely replaced 3/4 inch (Also called U-matic) tape in broadcasting. The format uses the same size cassette as the consumer Betamax format. But remember, a Betamax recording is very much like VHS in quality, a Betacam recording is “broadcast” quality (sometimes just called Beta).

BetacamSP - video format

This is an upgrade of the Sony Betacam system, using a more expensive tape formulation. It has become the broadcast standard for video documentary shooting and editing over the past decade (sometimes just called BetaSP).

Broadcast License

This is an agreement between a broadcaster and a producer to broadcast a particular program or series. It details the amount the broadcaster will pay the producer(s) for the right to broadcast and how many separate airings are permitted over what time period. It also details the restrictions on the broadcasts. For example, it may include a period of exclusivity during which no other broadcaster can air the same program.

Broadcast Windows

Being first always costs more. When producers sell a broadcast license to a video program, they usually do not give unlimited, exclusive rights to the broadcaster. Usually a number of broadcasts is specified. There may be a period of exclusivity. For example, for the premiere broadcast of a video, the broadcaster may pay for three transmissions over a period of one year with exclusive rights for 90 days from the first air date. That is called the first window. After the 90 days is over, the producer can sell to another broadcaster. That is the second window. A broadcaster buying second window rights can't put the video to air until after the first window has been used. ***In other words a broadcast commitment that only includes a second window is not much good at all.***

Digital Betacam - video format

This is the highest quality digital recording format available for field recording. It uses ½ inch video tapes in the traditional Betamax cassette size. Because digital video data takes a lot of tape and/or computer space and huge amounts of computer processing power during editing, the actual digital data is "compressed" to about half its original size (2:1 compression) before it is recorded on the Digital Betacam tape. That does result in some extremely minor quality loss.

Digital Video

This is a term applied to the growing trend to record video information as digital data on magnetic tape or computer disks as opposed to what has been standard, analogue recording technique. Digital formats permit exact duplication of tapes **with no quality loss** – just like copying data or programs from computer disks. Analogue formats always result in degradation of quality when they are copied. That is because surface noise inherent in the magnetic particles of all tape recording media is copied and added to the noise already on the surface of the tape which will become the copy. In addition, electronic circuits can never copy the signal perfectly. There is always a tiny amount of distortion in an analogue copy. We call each copy another generation. Original camera tape is first generation. The first copy is second generation and so on.

Drop Out

Video recording tape consists of a base, carrier material – like a flexible plastic – a recording layer of some magnetic material, typically iron or chromium oxide powder, and various coatings and lubricants. Sometimes, either during the production or use of the tape, some of the magnetic material can flake off the carrier. The result is called a drop out – a temporary loss of video that appears as a jump or "glitch" when the tape is played.

Dubbing Masters

These are copies made directly from the master tape. Dubbing masters are used as the source tapes for all subsequent copies of the video. If a dubbing master is damaged, a new one can be made from the master tape. It is also possible to generate a set of dubbing masters from a computer editing system. In this case the dubbing masters will be identical to the master tape(s).

DV and miniDV, DVCAM and DVC-PRO - video formats

These are new digital video recording formats based on videotape that is 1/4 inch wide. There are different cassette sizes and specifications, but the digital data in each format is essentially the same. This DV format is capable of very high quality recording that is nearly as good as current BetacamSP; the industry standard. It offers a relatively low-cost, high-performance solution to video acquisition.

EDL - Edit Decision List

The EDL is a list of timecodes of all the shots to be used in a video production. The list can be hand written or typed, but more often, it is a computer generated file that can be read by editing software. The list is a database of all the information necessary to create the final video from scratch from the original footage.

Hi-8 - video format

Hi-8 video is a compact video-recording format that uses 8mm wide metal tape in small cassettes. It can record video with twice the resolution of VHS. In the same way as BetacamSP is an upgrade of Betacam in broadcast circles, Hi-8 is an upgrade of the consumer Video-8 format. It comes very close to the quality of U-matic recordings and can be used as a recording format for broadcast use.

Linear Editing

This is the standard way video tape is edited. An image or sound from a source tape is copied to the master tape. Each picture or sound is added in sequence to build the program according to the approved script. This is necessary since normally there is no way to know in advance exactly where each shot will go on the tape. Once the images are laid in order, the length of the video is fixed. Any changes to the middle of the video that changes its length, require that it be completely re-edited from that point to the end.

Master Tape

This is the tape which contains the actual original edit of the video. It may be generated as the output from a computer video editing program or from a standard video-editing studio. It is used only to generate a set of dubbing masters. The master tape is usually held by the primary copyright holder and is used to generate the dubbing masters. It is not usually used to make large numbers of copies. Note that with computerized, digital, editing systems it is possible to generate multiple master tapes.

M&E Track

Often a video is prepared in two forms – the first, for broadcast in its original language, has all the sound, including narration, premixed for broadcast. Before that is done, it is often necessary to prepare another version of the program with no narration at all. Then foreign language narration can be laid in afterwards. This is the M&E version or *Music and Effects* version of the video.

NLE or Non-Linear Editing

This is a computer-based approach to editing a video. The scenes that are to be used in the final program are digitized and stored on computer hard disks. Editing software, which has access to any part of a computer disk, can manipulate the images and sounds. As long as the pictures are in the computer, the video may be easily changed in terms of shot order or length. The person editing the video does not have to edit in order from beginning to end but can work on different parts of the video at the same time. This is a sort of “word processor” approach to video editing. When the video is complete in the computer, it is copied or rendered to a video tape in a single operation.

NTSC - video standard

This acronym stands for National Television Standards Council and is the name we give to the North American system of recording and broadcasting colour television. The NTSC system records 30 individual video pictures every second. Each frame has 525 lines of video information. The NTSC colour system was designed to be compatible with existing North American black and white television. NTSC video is in use in North and Central America; the countries of western South America; and in Japan; the Philippines and a few other countries (see list pages 27-28).

Off-line Edit or Rough-cut

This is the equivalent of a mock-up in publication. It is the working copy that writers and directors use to make their video. Usually a rough-cut is made using copies (often VHS) of the original tapes (to avoid potential damage to the originals) with *timecodes** superimposed onto the picture. ***Most contracts specify that a rough-cut be made and approved before the video can be finally rendered to the master tape. Making changes to a rough-cut is always less expensive than doing it after the final cut or on-line edit.***

On-line edit

In production work this is the final phase, where all changes noted at the rough-cut stage are made and the completed video is produced on a master tape. After the on-line edit has been completed, ***it is usually very time-consuming and expensive to make further changes in the video.***

PAL - video standard

Phase Alternating Line is a colour television broadcast and recording standard introduced in Europe in the 1960's. A PAL recording consists of 25 complete video frames a second but each frame contains 625 lines of video information. PAL is used in most European countries except France; in China; Indonesia; much of South America; and in virtually all members of the Commonwealth except Canada. It is important to note that tapes recorded in PAL will not play back in VCR's designed for NTSC and vice-versa (though there are multi-system VCR's and television sets that can handle all three standards).

Picture Lock

This is the stage at the end of the rough-cut when all changes have been made and approved. Because the final edit will be on to a master tape, the length of each shot as well as the exact length of the final video is fixed. The only changes that can be made are to music and narration sound tracks – so long as they fit the existing pictures. It is still possible to substitute shots – as long as they are exactly the same length as the ones they replace and as long as they do not require new audio mixing. At this stage the production is ready for the final stage – the on-line edit.

RC Timecode (RCTC)

RC or Rewritable Consumer is a timecode format that Sony uses on some of its more expensive consumer camcorders. It is written on a track along the edge of the video tape in the same way as professional longitudinal timecode (LTC). The main difference is that not every frame gets a number. For example the frame with RCTC 00:00:00:17 may be numbered then two frames are missed and frame 00:00:00:20 is numbered. During playback and editing, the timecode of the frames in between is inferred by the editing equipment, so that even frames without direct timecodes can be found. It's like finding a house on a street even if the house doesn't actually have a number over the door.

Rushes - see definition on page 16

Shooting Script - see definition on page 14 and the example on page 15

SMPTE

The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers is the professional body that sets many of the standards for video now used in North America. SMPTE (pronounced "simply") timecode is the standard format that is used for NTSC professional recording and editing.

SECAM - video standard

Système En Couleur Avec Mémoire is a system similar to PAL that is used in France, the countries of the former Soviet Union and in many members of La Francophonie.

TC - Timecode

This is the equivalent to frame numbers on a roll of film. In professional video recording, every frame of video is given a number. In NTSC video, since there are 30 frames in every second, it is convenient to number the frames in terms of time in the format hr:min:sec:fr. That is the first one second might consist of frames 00:00:00:00 to 00:00:00:29. The first frame of the next second would be 00:00:01:00 and so on. On standard video tape, the timecode is usually written on its own magnetic track, along side the sound tracks. This is known as LTC or Longitudinal Time Code. VITC or Vertical Interval Timecode is written in the blank lines in between the frames of video on the tape. It is not used as often as LTC but is becoming more common on newer professional video camera/recorders. In DV video the timecode data is written digitally as part of the picture information.

Treatment - see definition on page 14

U-matic - video format

Also known as 3/4 inch, this was the first "portable" professional videotape cassette format. It was used in the 1970's and '80's for news gathering. In many production and broadcast operations in developing countries, it is still the format that is in use today. While not capable of recording as high quality an image as the Betacam formats, it still provides very good pictures. For example CBC Televisions' flagship program "The Journal" used U-matic format for all its documentaries in the 1980's.



Versionizing

This term is usually reserved for videos that might need to be broadcast in other languages. Versionizing in a video budget refers to the process of preparing additional language, or other special forms of the program. ***The amount listed in the budget does not include the actual cost involved in translating and re-writing the script, or the cost of narration in the other language.***

VHS - video format

This is the most popular consumer video format. It uses magnetic tape that is ½ inch wide. The picture is not usually considered "broadcast quality." VHS recorders come in both NTSC and PAL varieties and there are also some "multi-system" models that can play PAL, NTSC and SECAM. Some of these still require that you have a monitor that matches the system used for the tape recording, others do not.

Window burn/dub or Timecode burn

This is a copy (dub) of an original camera tape that takes the timecode and makes it visible in the picture (usually white numbers on a black background called a window). That way a director or writer can make a list of the timecodes of good shots, interview clips and so on, without having a special electronic box to decode the timecode. The dubs are usually made on VHS or other inexpensive formats so that they can be viewed anywhere. Off-line edits using these VHS tapes can be made easily. Then when the edit is complete, all the director needs to do is make a list of the timecodes at the beginning and end of each shot used in the edit.