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7 April 1994

Dear Steve

#### CINENOVA ASSESSMENT

Thank you for your letter of 9 March addressed to Kate and the Interim Report from our first Assessment meeting. We have now had the chance to discuss the report with our Management Committee and the feeling of that meeting was that a written response was required to put Cinenova's point of view on the report.

We realise that the report is only a provisional one but we felt the need to communicate our position in order to clear up a few points so the next meeting will be more productive.

We felt that the tone of the report was rather different to that experienced by us in the meeting. We were under the impression that Assessment procedure was to be a partnership in which Cinenova and LFVDA would discuss Cinenova's operations and decide on an appropriate level of funding for those operations. By contrast the report reads like an instructional document that merely reiterates discussions that have already taken place within Cinenova's internal organisation. For instance, the need to consult with RFTs and COMEX at the planning stage of producing a new touring package is something we are already well aware of and that we mentioned in the meeting. The same is the case with our video deal with Dangerous to Know. It was the Cinenova team who articulated the dilemma between the initial financial reward and exposure of sell-thru against inexpensive wide availability which may result in a drop in film and video bookings. What seems to be happening is that the problems and ideas that we brought forward are being repeated back to us as suggestions and recommendations. We hope that the contributions of Cinenova with regard to these issues will appear in

the final report. Maybe it would be a idea to have neutral minute-taker so you can be more involved in the discussion.

Some remarks made in the report seem rather obvious. Cinenova is well aware that the Women Make Movies visit is a great opportunity to raise our national and international profile. This is surely one of the major reasons we are organising the event. However any ideas on how to achieve maximum publicity for the event would be welcome.

There appears to be a major contradiction in some of the recommendations made in the report. On the one hand LFDVA states the need to concentrate our level of activity in key areas that are within the limits of our funding; but then on the other hand additional and, in our opinion unnecessary, extra activities are suggested such as sending out royalties on a six monthly basis.

We were surprised that you thought we produced "lots of different bits of paper". At the time we had an out-dated and inaccurate catalogue, two catalogue supplements of new acquisitions because we could not afford to produce a new catalogue and several themed programme leaflets. Without an up to date catalogue the leaflets were an extremely economic way of targeting our marketing. We have now, of course, produced our own catalogue with money that we raised from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts so making our other bits of paper redundant. The newsletter would be sent to inform a largely different constituency in order to publicise our function and services as a specialist distributor.

We would, of course, like to make use of European funding opportunities but we have looked into this and found that most of the schemes require match funding which is impossible for us without assistance. Attendance at key festivals is vital but we cannot afford the costs of travel and accommodation. We would be pleased to make links with broadcasters and sell to television. It would be advantageous for us to have a more formal procedure for promotional strategies to libraries, galleries, archives and so on but we have neither the time nor the resources at our current level of funding. I would suggest that our current practice is less "ad hoc" than selective. We would like the final report to acknowledge that we have and continue to explore all these outlets for our work. We would welcome suggestions on how this can be achieved more effectively given our level of funding and limited working hours.

Overall we were disappointed that there were few recommendations that addressed our major areas of difficulty. Most of the suggestions seemed to be of a 'fine-tuning' nature

rather than a radical appraisal of Cinenova's purpose and effectiveness. We feel the way to proceed would be for Cinenova to submit a paper on what we require as a distribution company in order to operate effectively and redress the massive cuts that we have received recently. We could then discuss how far those needs are being met and what could be done to address the deficiency. At the moment the whole Assessment procedure is taking a lot of time and we feel it is important for us to say what we would like to be achieved from it.

We realise that your Interim Report is only a draft but we thought we should put our point of view forward now in order to save time 'on the day'. We have also included the job descriptions and figures that you asked for in the last meeting.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Helen de Witt  
Acquisition and Distribution Worker

cc. Julia Knight (Cinenova Management)  
Marion Doyen (BFI Exhibition)  
Abina Manning (LVA)  
Sid Brookes (LFVDA Management)  
Judith Higginbottom (South West Arts)