Yukon First Nations
CULTURE & TOURISM
Association

2026-29

Strategic **PLAN**


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A Message from the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association

On behalf of the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association (YFNCT), we are pleased to present our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan.

This plan represents both a renewal and a recommitment. It is grounded in the voices of our members, partners, Yukon First Nations, artists, tourism operators, cultural centres, and stakeholders who shared their perspectives through surveys, interviews, and strategic planning discussions. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed their time, insights, and experiences to help shape this direction.

Over the past several years, YFNCT has faced significant challenges while navigating organizational transitions, changing sector needs, and evolving opportunities across arts, culture, and tourism. Through this process, one message remained clear: YFNCT continues to play an important role in supporting and connecting Indigenous artists, knowledge keepers, tourism operators, and communities across the Yukon.

This strategic plan reflects a practical and focused path forward. Rather than trying to do everything at once, we are committing to doing what matters most and doing it well. Over the next three years, our priorities are to strengthen organizational sustainability, rebuild member connections, increase visibility and market opportunities and foster meaningful partnerships.

At its heart, this plan reaffirms YFNCT's role as an Indigenous-led partner, advocate, and sector-builder. We believe our greatest impact comes from bringing people together, opening doors to opportunities, amplifying Indigenous voices, and helping create the conditions for community-led success.

We recognize that this work cannot be done alone. Success will depend on strong partnerships, ongoing collaboration, and meaningful engagement with Yukon First Nations, members, funders, and sector partners. We are committed to listening, learning, and adapting as we move forward together.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence in the strength, creativity, and resilience of Yukon First Nations artists, knowledge keepers, tourism operators, and communities. We are honoured to support this work and excited for what we can accomplish together over the next three years.

Mahsi' cho. Gùnàlchîsh. Thank you.

YFNCT Board of Directors and Executive Director

Peter Mather

Executive Summary

This 2026-2029 strategic plan is a focused refresh of YFNCT's longer-term direction, not a full redevelopment. It responds to a clear message from the retreat and supporting evidence: YFNCT is still needed and still valued, but it must return in a more focused, partnership-driven, and capacity-realistic form.

What this plan does

- Reaffirms YFNCT's vision and mandate while sharpening its role for the next three years.
- Pairs Year 1 organizational stabilization with visible, practical member value.
- Sets a disciplined path for a redesigned Adäka and other signature platforms.

What changes now

- YFNCT will not try to restart every past activity at once.
- Partnership and referral pathways will replace duplication wherever possible.
- Major initiatives must match real staffing, systems, and funding.

Planning foundation: retreat materials, 223 survey responses, 6 interview sessions covering 7 individuals, and key organizational documents from 2019-2025.

223 survey responses informed the retreat and this refresh

14% said YFNCT's role outside major events was very clear

99 responses came from communities outside Whitehorse

59% preferred a mixed YFNCT role rather than one narrow lane

By 2029, YFNCT will be operating as an Indigenous-led connector, convener, sector-builder, and market-access platform that is organizationally stable, visibly useful to members, and selective about what it delivers directly. This includes a clearer year-round role in supporting authentic, community-led and Nation-led arts, culture, and Indigenous tourism development by connecting artists, operators, cultural centres, First Nations, funders, and sector partners to opportunities, relationships, and practical supports.

Strategic Context and Refreshed Position

The existing 2019-2029 plan remains valuable as a statement of YFNCT's full potential. This refresh responds to what has changed since then: COVID-era disruption, stretched organizational capacity, overlap with services delivered by sector partners, leadership transition, staffing loss, Board retention & stability, missed reporting, reduced member communication, and a necessary stabilization phase in 2025/26. At the same time, the retreat confirmed that the broader case for YFNCT remains strong.

What stays

- The vision, mandate, and Indigenous-led purpose of YFNCT.
- A role in sector-building, authenticity, market access, and relationship-building.
- A commitment to artists, cultural members, tourism operators, and communities across Yukon.

What changes

- A tighter focus and fewer active priorities at any one time.
- A partner-first delivery model that reduces duplication and overload.
- A redesigned approach to Adäka and other gatherings based on sustainable capacity.

Reaffirmed vision

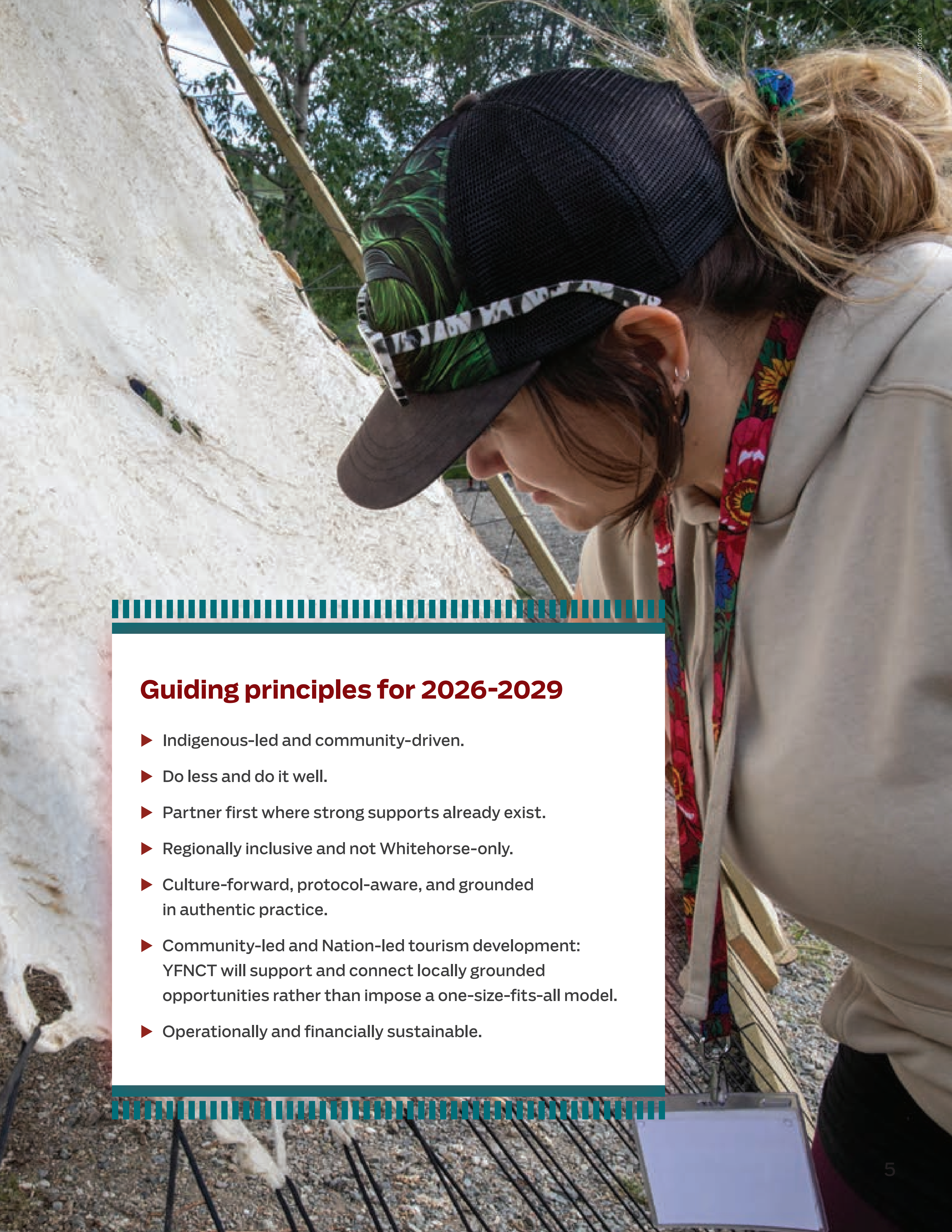
Arts and culture unify and strengthen Yukon First Nations communities, creating pride, renowned artists, and inspiring experiences that attract visitors from around the world.

Reaffirmed mandate

To foster the development of vibrant and sustainable Yukon First Nations arts, culture, and tourism sectors.

Refreshed role statement

Over the next three years, YFNCT's best-fit role is to connect, convene, champion, and open doors — strengthening member readiness, market access, authentic positioning, and partnerships across the arts, culture, and tourism ecosystem. YFNCT's role is not to design or deliver everything directly, but to work alongside First Nations, cultural centres, artists, operators, and partners to help create the conditions for authentic, community-led and Nation-led development.



Guiding principles for 2026-2029

- Indigenous-led and community-driven.
- Do less and do it well.
- Partner first where strong supports already exist.
- Regionally inclusive and not Whitehorse-only.
- Culture-forward, protocol-aware, and grounded in authentic practice.
- Community-led and Nation-led tourism development: YFNCT will support and connect locally grounded opportunities rather than impose a one-size-fits-all model.
- Operationally and financially sustainable.

Priority 1.

Organizational Sustainability

By 2029, YFNCT is stable, accountable, appropriately staffed, and working from a realistic operating model.

Strategic objective	2026-2029 actions	Success indicators / KPIs
1.1 **Complete stabilization and maintain compliance**	▶ Complete outstanding audits, required reports, and compliance obligations; keep them current thereafter. ▶ Maintain a predictable governance rhythm with an annual calendar, timely board materials, and quarterly review of progress, risks, and budget. ▶ Create a simple organizational dashboard so the Board can monitor delivery, finances, and risk in real time.	▶ 100% of mandatory audits, reports, and AGM requirements completed on time each year. ▶ Board calendar maintained and quarterly dashboard reviewed.
1.2 **Rebuild people, systems, and governance discipline**	▶ Approve a realistic staffing and HR plan, including clear roles, hiring priorities, onboarding, performance expectations, and succession planning. ▶ Strengthen records management, financial administration, internal communications, and project decision-making. ▶ Use a workload screen for new opportunities so YFNCT does not take on unfunded or unstaffed commitments.	▶ Staffing / HR plan approved in Year 1. ▶ Core operating procedures documented and used consistently.
1.3 **Secure a realistic operating model**	▶ Build a multi-year core funding strategy and restore funder confidence through disciplined reporting and communication. ▶ Align annual work planning and budgeting to actual capacity rather than historic ambition. ▶ Review, during the plan period, whether the combined arts-culture-tourism structure remains the right fit for long-term sustainability.	▶ Multi-year funding strategy approved in Year 1. ▶ No major initiative launched without identified staffing and funding.

Year 1 emphasis

▶ **Year 1 focus:** compliance, staffing, internal systems, funder confidence, and disciplined annual planning.

Priority 2.

Member and Community Development

By 2029, members feel YFNCT is present, useful, and accessible across Yukon, with clearer pathways for artists, operators, youth, and emerging practitioners, and with stronger support for community-led development outside Whitehorse.

Strategic objective	2026-2029 actions	Success indicators / KPIs
2.1 Rebuild two-way member communications	▶ Restart regular member newsletters and opportunity alerts, with separate but connected arts and tourism content where useful. ▶ Refresh member records and establish a simple contact rhythm: check-ins, feedback loops, and annual pulse surveying. ▶ Communicate clearly about what YFNCT is prioritizing now, what is phased, and where members can get support.	▶ At least 6 regular member updates / opportunity bulletins issued per year. ▶ Annual member pulse survey completed and reported back.
2.2 Provide practical readiness supports	▶ Offer or broker mentorship, grant navigation, funding alerts, referrals, and business-readiness support for artists and tourism operators. ▶ Use partner pathways — including existing training and entrepreneurship supports — instead of duplicating strong programs. ▶ Prioritize support that helps members move from interest to readiness, sales, bookings, referrals, and sustainable participation, while also helping cultural centres and Indigenous tourism operators strengthen the foundations needed for community-led growth.	▶ At least 20 members supported annually through mentorship, readiness, grant navigation, or referral services by 2028/29. ▶ Clear referral pathway map in place by Year 1.
2.3 Strengthen community-based and rural pathways	▶ Create a regional outreach plan with visible engagement beyond Whitehorse. ▶ Support rural artists and operators through tailored outreach, peer learning, and practical connection to opportunities. ▶ Engage with youth-focused partner organizations to support awareness of and access to youth and emerging practitioner initiatives ▶ Support Indigenous tourism operators and cultural centres through readiness, mentorship, referral pathways, and community-led development support.	▶ Minimum 3 regional / community engagement touchpoints per year outside Whitehorse. ▶ Clear readiness / mentorship / referral support pathway for rural operators and cultural centres in place by Year 2. ▶ Ongoing partnerships established and maintained annually, with clear referral pathways and regular promotion of partner-led opportunities.

Year 1 emphasis

- **Year 1 focus:** communications restart, member database refresh, visible member check-ins, readiness and mentorship pilots, early referral supports for artists and operators, and a regional outreach plan that includes rural communities and cultural centres.

Priority 3.

Market Access and Visibility

By 2029, YFNCT is once again helping artists and operators reach markets, customers, and audiences through collective visibility, authentic positioning, and practical routes to market.

Strategic objective	2026-2029 actions	Success indicators / KPIs
3.1 **Restore collective marketing and opportunity sharing**	▶ Relaunch regular promotion of member opportunities, products, services, stories, and events through digital channels and partner amplification. ▶ Resume the practice of connecting members to calls, trade opportunities, tourism exposure, showcases, and media where appropriate. ▶ Use visibility work to support year-round member value — not only major event periods.	▶ At least 4-6 member spotlights / opportunity features delivered each year. ▶ Regular opportunity alert stream re-established in Year 1.
3.2 **Refresh YFN arts and authentic positioning tools**	▶ Refresh and phase back YFN Arts / authenticity collateral, storytelling assets, and basic brand support tools where they remain strategic. ▶ Support members and partners with guidance that strengthens authentic representation, protocol awareness, and artist visibility. ▶ Build practical storytelling assets that can support sales, promotion, retail, travel trade, and digital engagement.	▶ Refreshed authenticity / storytelling toolset scoped in Year 1 and launched in phases. ▶ Annual growth in member stories, assets, or profile features.
3.3 **Expand routes to market through partnerships**	▶ Use partner relationships to connect artists and operators to retail, travel trade, showcases, pop-up opportunities, and e-commerce or online sales supports. ▶ Continue market-facing opportunities only where they clearly advance member income, exposure, or readiness. ▶ Position YFNCT as a practical bridge between members and markets rather than the sole delivery body for every sales channel.	▶ At least 2 strategic market-access activations or showcase opportunities supported annually by Year 2. ▶ Partner-led route-to-market plan identified in Year 1.

Year 1 emphasis

▶ **Year 1 focus:** newsletters and alerts, refreshed digital presence, and a phased market-access support model.

Priority 4.

Partnerships, Advocacy, and Research

By 2029, YFNCT is recognized as the Indigenous-led connector and sector voice that helps align the ecosystem, reduce duplication, and advocate for well-matched support.

Strategic objective	2026-2029 actions	Success indicators / KPIs
4.1 Clarify ecosystem roles and build working partnerships	▶ Map the current ecosystem and clarify who is best placed to lead, support, or refer in different areas of arts, culture, tourism, and business readiness. ▶ Engage and coordinate with key partners on an as-needed basis, leveraging existing tables and gatherings where possible. ▶ Use simple or streamlined agreements, referral pathways, and shared planning to reduce overlap and improve coordination.	▶ Ecosystem map and partner role summary completed in Year 1. ▶ At least 4 active partnership / referral arrangements in place by end of Year 2.
4.2 Act as a unified Indigenous-led sector voice	▶ Advocate for authentic, community-led, well-matched business and government support. ▶ Advance sector issues such as core funding, fair compensation, rural inclusion, readiness support, and sustainable growth. ▶ Use YFNCT's voice to strengthen member confidence and partner understanding of the sector's needs.	▶ Annual advocacy priorities confirmed and communicated. ▶ Documented participation in key sector tables, submissions, or joint advocacy efforts each year.
4.3 Use evidence to guide decisions and tell the sector story	▶ Build a simple annual impact snapshot using available data on member supports, visibility, partnerships, and platform outcomes. ▶ Use research and member feedback to guide investment decisions, program phasing, and partner conversations. ▶ Support the development of a stronger business case and impact evidence for signature platforms, with Adäka as a collaborative initiative with partners, funders, and stakeholders.	▶ Annual impact snapshot produced starting in Year 2. ▶ Feasibility and business case work forAdäka completed in collaboration with partners, funders, and stakeholders by the end of Year 1.

Year 1 emphasis

- **Year 1 focus:** ecosystem mapping, partner engagement , annual advocacy priorities, and an evidence framework.

Priority 5.

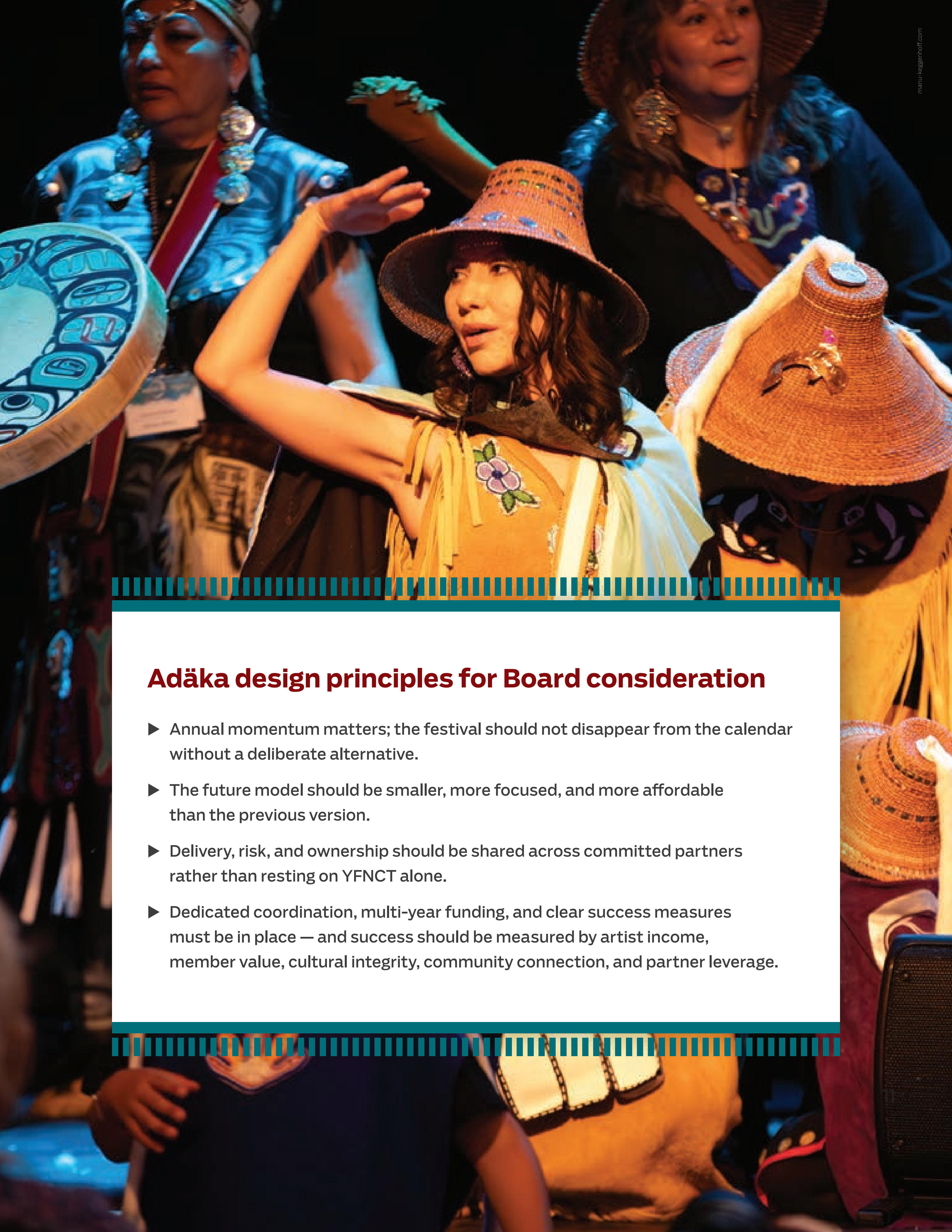
Signature Platforms and Gatherings

By 2029, YFNCT is stewarding the right platforms at the right scale - using gatherings to create income, visibility, learning, pride, and connection without overloading the organization.

Strategic objective	2026-2029 actions	Success indicators / KPIs
5.1 **Pursue a redesigned Adäka model**	▶ Advance the emerging direction identified through the retreat, subject to feasibility and Board confirmation, with a focus on maintaining annual momentum, reducing scale, and sharing delivery with partners. ▶ Strike an Adäka working group with partners, funders, and stakeholders to assess feasibility and inform governance, roles, resourcing, funding thresholds, timeline, and success measures. ▶ Explore governance and delivery models that distribute responsibility among partners, including the possibility of establishing a separate society, subject to feasibility findings, partner commitments, and Board approval.	▶ Adäka working group / feasibility table established in Year 1. ▶ Shared understanding of roles, governance approach, and resourcing for Adäka developed with partners. ▶ Board decision on future Adäka delivery model by Q4 2026/27 informed by partner input and feasibility findings.
5.2 **Retain only gatherings that clearly advance the mandate**	▶ Review Yúk'e, Bead Hide & Fur, operator gatherings, and regional/community gatherings through a capacity and impact lens. ▶ Phase or co-deliver gatherings that strengthen members, markets, learning, or cultural connection. ▶ Be explicit about which gatherings are active, deferred, or partner-led during each annual cycle.	▶ Annual platform calendar approved with clear lead / partner roles. ▶ At least 1-2 targeted gatherings or co-delivered platforms active each year once stabilized.
5.3 **Make platforms sector-building tools, not workload sinks**	▶ Design each platform around clear outcomes: artist income, operator visibility, member networking, youth pathways, community pride, and tourism positioning where appropriate. ▶ Set manageable scopes, budgets, and staffing plans before launch. ▶ Evaluate each platform after delivery and use the learning to refine the next cycle.	▶ Every active platform has a brief outcomes framework and post-event review. ▶ No signature platform proceeds without approved budget and staffing logic.

Year 1 emphasis

▶ **Year 1 focus:** Adäka feasibility, platform review, and a disciplined calendar of what YFNCT will — and will not — carry.



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Adäka design principles for Board consideration

- Annual momentum matters; the festival should not disappear from the calendar without a deliberate alternative.
- The future model should be smaller, more focused, and more affordable than the previous version.
- Delivery, risk, and ownership should be shared across committed partners rather than resting on YFNCT alone.
- Dedicated coordination, multi-year funding, and clear success measures must be in place — and success should be measured by artist income, member value, cultural integrity, community connection, and partner leverage.

Year 1 Implementation Roadmap (2026/27)

Year 1 must do two things at once: complete the stabilization work that protects the organization, and make YFNCT visibly useful again to members and partners.

Track	Q1 Apr-Jun 2026	Q2 Jul-Sep 2026	Q3 Oct-Dec 2026	Q4 Jan-Mar 2027
Foundation	▶ Approve plan and dashboard. ▶ Confirm audit / reporting schedule. ▶ Start member database and records cleanup.	▶ Approve HR and staffing plan. ▶ Document core operating procedures. ▶ Launch core funding strategy.	▶ Quarterly progress review. ▶ Refine budget and workload screen. ▶ Prepare Year 2 staffing / funding needs.	▶ Confirm 2027/28 work plan and budget. ▶ Year-end dashboard and lessons learned.
Members	▶ Restart newsletters and opportunity alerts. ▶ Begin visible member check-ins.	▶ Launch mentorship / grant-navigation pilot. ▶ Start regional outreach plan.	▶ Hold targeted member session or operator / arts gathering. ▶ Share progress update.	▶ Run annual member pulse survey. ▶ Publish 2027 opportunities and priorities.
Market Access & Visibility	▶ Restart newsletters, member spotlights, and opportunity alerts. ▶ Refresh digital presence and member-facing promotional channels. ▶ Identify priority storytelling, authenticity, and marketing assets to phase back in.	▶ Launch regular member spotlights and storytelling features. ▶ Scope refreshed YFN Arts / authenticity collateral and basic promotional tools. ▶ Confirm partner-led route-to-market, showcase, and promotional opportunities.	▶ Deliver first round of market-access activations or showcase supports. ▶ Roll out initial storytelling and authenticity tools in phases. ▶ Share progress update on visibility, promotion, and member opportunities.	▶ Review which visibility and market-access efforts were most useful. ▶ Confirm Year 2 marketing and market-access priorities. ▶ Publish 2027 visibility, showcase, and promotional opportunities.
Partners	▶ Map ecosystem and convene key partner conversations.	▶ Confirm referral pathways and co-delivery opportunities.	▶ Advance formal agreements, shared planning, and joint funding asks.	▶ Review partnership effectiveness and refresh priorities for Year 2.
Adäka	▶ Strike working group / feasibility table.	▶ Test governance, scope, staffing, funding, and partner roles.	▶ Draft business case, outcomes framework, and delivery thresholds.	▶ Board decision on future delivery model; if approved, begin partner-led launch planning.

Year 2 outlook (2027/28)

- ▶ Scale the member supports that proved most useful in Year 1.
- ▶ Confirm the redesigned Adäka delivery model and other phased platforms only where conditions are ready.
- ▶ Deepen digital storytelling, visibility, and market-access work with partners.

Year 3 outlook (2028/29)

- ▶ Expand what is working; stop what is not.
- ▶ Secure stronger multi-year operating support and refine the long-term structure.
- ▶ Prepare the next strategic refresh using evidence, member feedback, and platform results.

Governance, Accountability, and Headline Measures

This plan is intentionally selective. Delivery depends on a shared understanding of who approves, who implements, who co-delivers, and how progress is tracked.

Role	Primary responsibilities	Key decisions	Reporting rhythm
Board	Governance, policy, risk oversight, annual planning, and strategic accountability.	Approve strategic priorities, budget, Adäka model, and major partnerships.	Quarterly dashboard review.
Leadership / staff	Implementation, member communications, marketing and visibility work, market-access coordination, partner coordination, operations, and reporting.	Recommend annual work plans, staffing priorities, delivery choices, and phased marketing / market-access activities.	Monthly internal check-in; quarterly board reporting.
Partners	Co-delivery, referrals, training, venues, amplification, market-access opportunities, and specialized expertise.	Confirm joint initiatives, roles, promotional opportunities, and commitments.	As agreed through working tables / MOUs.
Members / communities	Guide priorities, participate, give feedback, and identify needs and opportunities.	Inform phasing, service needs, and community fit.	Annual pulse survey plus direct check-ins.

Headline measure	2026-2029 target
Mandatory audits, reports, AGM, and compliance milestones	On time each year
Regular member newsletters / opportunity updates	6+ per year
Regional / community engagement touchpoints outside Whitehorse	3+ per year
Members supported through readiness, referrals, grant navigation, or mentorship	20+ annually by 2028/29
Strategic market-access activations or showcase opportunities	2+ per year by Year 2
Active partnership / referral arrangements	4+ by end of Year 2
Adäka feasibility and Board direction	Completed in Year 1
Quarterly strategic dashboard reviews by the Board	4 per year

This strategic plan is designed as a living document. Annual work plans, budgets, and partner commitments should translate these directions into a realistic yearly scope.


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