

moving forward

Action Plan 2008-11



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts
du Canada



Action Plan
2008-11





In October 2007, following extensive consultations with its stakeholders, the Canada Council for the Arts published *Moving Forward - Strategic Plan 2008-11: Values and Directions*. The plan provides a clear strategic focus to guide the Council over the next three years, in pursuit of its ultimate goal – that Canada have a rich and vigorous creative life that stimulates the imagination and gives Canadians the means to share their spirit and vision with one another and the world.

The Strategic Plan Sets Out Five Broad Directions:

1. Individual Artists

Reinforce the Council's commitment to individual artists, working alone or collaboratively, as the core of artistic practice in Canada.

2. Arts Organizations

Broaden the Council's commitment to arts organizations to strengthen their capacity to underpin artistic practices in all parts of the country.

3. Equity

Enhance the Council's leadership role in promoting equity as a critical priority in fulfilling Canada's artistic aspirations.

4. Partnership

Make partnerships with other organizations a key element in the Council's approach to advancing its mandate.

5. Organizational Development

Enhance the Council's capacity to support the arts and implement change by strengthening its structure, staffing and services.

The first three directions are organizing principles for the Council's support of the arts. The last two enhance the Council's capacity to contribute to Canadian life, respond to opportunities for the arts, and engage with its stakeholders and partners across Canada.

This document describes the specific program and operational strategies the Council will pursue in the next three years, providing greatest detail for the upcoming fiscal year (2008-09). It explains the steps the Council is taking to align its budget with its priority strategies and how it will allocate new funds totalling \$31,500,000 in 2008-09.¹

For the 2009-11 years, the Council will continue to be guided by the five directions and priority strategies, assigning resources to specific strategies when its precise financial circumstances for those years are known.

¹ This includes \$30,000,000 in new ongoing funding approved by the government of Canada and an additional \$1,500,000 for project grants allocated from the Council's investment income. Unless otherwise indicated, the budget allocations discussed in this document refer to fiscal year 2008-09. The Council's annual budgets for 2009-10 and 2010-11 will be considered by its board in December 2008 and December 2009 respectively.

The Strategic Planning and Budgeting Process

The table below provides a snapshot of the overall process the Council followed in developing its strategic plan and action plan. Both will form the basis for the *Corporate Plan 2008-11* the Council will provide to government for information in the new fiscal year.

Time	January- June 07	July- October 07	October 07- February 08	February- July 08
Stage	Consultations with staff, board, and external stakeholders	Development of strategic plan values and directions	Development of strategies, budget allocation and action plan	Development of <i>Corporate Plan 2008-11</i>
Deliverables	Discussion paper, consultation paper, online survey, reports of consultations on web site	Publication of <i>Strategic Plan (Moving Forward)</i> in print and on web site	2008-09 budget approval and publication of <i>Action Plan</i> in print and on web site	<i>Corporate Plan</i> provided to government and summary posted on web site

The two reports on the external consultations available on the Council's web site (www.canadacouncil.ca) include stakeholder discussions (consultations with national arts service organizations, other arts funders at all levels of government, young artists and arts administrators, and other organizations with an interest in the Council's work) and an analysis of the 1,700 responses to the online discussion paper and survey.

Stakeholders and survey respondents agreed strongly that further investment in artists and arts organizations is important to Canadian society. All arts disciplines, their representatives and service organizations provided arguments about the importance of increased investment in their sector to enable the Canada Council to meet all of its declared objectives.

The Council's Approach

The Council recognized that, by investing \$31,500,000 in a strategic and focussed manner, it could substantially improve its support for the arts, though it could not finance all of its goals or take on major new responsibilities. To make the best use of these funds, it adopted two basic "rules of engagement":

- First, the Council decided to develop strategies based on the thematic, values-driven approach of the strategic plan, making a strategic and concentrated investment of new funds to address priorities and maximize impact rather than distributing them on a pro-rata basis or spreading them equally over all activities.
- Second, unlike its allocation of new funds in 2006-07 and 2007-08 (one-time funding where no provision was made for service and administrative costs), the Council decided to give appropriate attention to its internal capacities and organizational development as a way to better serve and support the arts.

Using the base budgets from 2007-08 (that is, without the one-time funding of \$50,000,000 announced in May 2006 and distributed as grants in 2006-07 and 2007-08), all Council sections and divisions were first given an opportunity, as part of the regular annual budgeting process, to reallocate their existing budgets, aligning them more closely with the five strategic plan directions as appropriate to their discipline and responsibilities.

Then, through an extensive participatory process, the organization used its staff's expertise to develop and prioritize strategies for each of the five directions in the strategic plan. This provided a framework for assessing budget requests from all sections and divisions, enabling the organization to reach consensus on the investment of the \$31,500,000 prior to presenting the proposed action plan and budget to the Council's Director and board for approval.

The Council's Decisions: Priority Strategies and Budget Highlights

Of the \$31,500,000 available in new funds in 2008-09, the Council is investing a minimum of 81% (\$25,500,000) in grants. The remainder of the funds (\$6,000,000) will be used to enhance the Council's capacities to support the arts through services and administration.² A table summarizing the amounts allocated to each of the five directions is provided at the end of this plan.



Direction 1 – Individual Artists

Reinforce the Council's commitment to individual artists, working alone or collaboratively, as the core of artistic practice in Canada.

New investment of \$4,953,500
(\$4,593,500 in grants and \$360,000 in services)

The Context

This direction recognizes that artists, working alone or collaboratively, play a central role in the arts and society, as innovators advancing new ideas and creative thinking. It suggests that the Council should devote substantial thought and resources to its work in supporting individual artists and increasing public awareness of their importance to Canadian society. The Council's programs for individuals should be flexible, accessible, and respectful of artists' ability to determine their professional and career interests. The Council should accord a high priority to the national and international mobility of artists, develop new means of reaching young artists, and elevate the profile of the artist in Canadian life.

² "Services" includes honoraria and fees for peer assessors, resources, tools and information provided to the arts community, research and program evaluation, partnership activities (which may take the form of grants), promotion of the arts and prize recipients, etc. "Administration" includes salaries and benefits, travel costs, communications, web site, strategic planning, internal audit, and other administrative costs.

Priorities and Allocations

The Council will:

- Strengthen its investment in individual artists by allocating \$4,593,500 of the new funds to enhancing grants to individual artists in 2008-09. Depending on the context of the discipline, this will take the form of an increase in the maximum grant, average grant, or success rate, a larger number of travel grants, increased resources for project grants, and/or increased investment in young professional artists. The total increase includes \$700,000 for payments to authors through the Public Lending Right Commission.
- Focus strategically on selected Council prizes which recognize the excellence of Canadian artists, providing increased resources in 2008-09 to enhance promotion and public awareness.
- Improve access to resources for professional development and networking through a portal on the Council's web site to serve artists, including young artists, with development beginning in 2008-09, and continue to engage with young artists by building on the work done in 2007 through the *Next Generation Dialogues*.
- Increase honoraria and reading fees for members of peer assessment and advisory committees beginning in 2008-09.
- Develop and plan to introduce in 2009-10 a flexible grant program for individual artists across the disciplines, to respond to the diversity of current practices and serve as a pilot for potential application in other Council programs.



Direction 2 – Arts Organizations **Broaden the Council’s commitment to arts organizations to strengthen their capacity to underpin artistic practices in all parts of the country.**

New investment of \$20,137,869
(\$19,326,500 in grants and \$811,369 in services)

The Context

This direction affirms the crucial role played by arts organizations of all sizes and in all disciplines across Canada. Arts organizations provide opportunities for the practice and appreciation of art, offer employment and income to artists, and contribute to their professional and career development; they connect artists with audiences, engage the public in the arts and demonstrate the value of the arts in society. The quality, stability, and resilience of arts organizations are major considerations for the Council. Related concerns are the role arts organizations, especially the larger ones, play within their disciplines and communities and the challenge of adequately funding the numerous organizations of high quality in all disciplines and practices across Canada and supporting important initiatives they are undertaking.

Priorities and Allocations

The Council will:

- Invest 76% of the new grant funds in 2008-09 in organizations that contribute to the creation, production and dissemination of the arts. This investment includes:
 - an allocation of \$14,945,650 to increase the budgets of operating grant programs (both multi-year and annual);
 - an increase of \$2,976,850 for project grant programs, to benefit emerging arts organizations and other groups not yet on operating support;
 - an increase of \$1,404,000 for international dissemination.

- Ensure equity of access to operating support for well-assessed emerging, culturally diverse and Aboriginal arts organizations.
- Undertake a new research initiative in partnership with national arts service organizations, provincial and territorial funders and cultural policy research experts. This multi-year initiative will seek to better map the arts infrastructure/arts ecosystem³ across Canada, its strengths, weaknesses and gaps. In 2008-09, the Council will allocate \$200,000 of the new funds for this purpose. The resulting findings will provide a preliminary picture of regional needs and opportunities, contribute to the Council's evaluation of its operating grant programs, and reinforce partnership strategies with stakeholders.
- Consult potential partners about how best to address the career and professional development needs of the next generation of arts administrators and artistic directors.
- Maintain the Council's programs for touring and dissemination and plan in future years to further increase budgets for international dissemination in collaboration with other federal funders.

³ The word "infrastructure" is used here in its original meaning as the underlying foundation or basic framework for an organization or system; it is not restricted to physical infrastructure. The Council's *Strategic Plan* suggested that the quality of the arts infrastructure determines the strength of the arts in any given place or discipline and noted that a successful arts infrastructure includes "excellent individual artists, excellent arts organizations that support, employ, present, exhibit, publish or provide other resources for artists, engaged audiences, a supportive public, an enlightened funding and public policy environment, and facilities for the practice of art."



Direction 3 – Equity

Enhance the Council's leadership role in promoting equity as a critical priority in fulfilling Canada's artistic aspirations.

New investment of \$1,925,000
(\$1,580,000 in grants and \$345,000
in services)

The Context

The external consultations on the strategic plan confirmed the importance of Council leadership in addressing specific issues of equity, including its current leadership on behalf of Aboriginal, culturally diverse, and official language minority community artists and arts organizations. This direction reaffirms the importance of these initiatives and asserts that equity in the broadest sense is a fundamental value of the Council that must be reinforced, further operationalized across the organization, and, as resources allow, expanded into areas the Council has not yet prioritized. It commits the Council to using its unique national perspective to identify and address access-related issues (regional, linguistic, cultural, racial, generational, gender-based and disability-based), and it incorporates equity as a horizontal principle in the Council's operations.

Priorities and Allocations

The Council will:

- Provide \$780,000 for the capacity-building program for culturally diverse and Aboriginal arts organizations and maintain the Council's commitment to the Stand Firm and Stand Tall initiatives for culturally diverse and Aboriginal arts respectively.⁴

⁴ This replaces the portion of capacity building funding previously provided as a matching initiative by the Department of Canadian Heritage, which is not renewing its specialized investment in this initiative.

- Ensure the continuation of support now provided by the Partenariat interministériel avec les communautés de langue officielle (PICLO)/Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official-Language Communities (IPOLC). The Council is now in discussions with the Department of Canadian Heritage about the department's renewal of its support in 2008-09.

- Integrate equity in its broad meaning as a guiding principle and responsibility throughout the organization.

- Allocate money in 2008-09 for consultations and research with equity groups, including disability arts, to better inform policies and programs.

- Increase the budgets of programs specifically addressing Aboriginal artists and arts organizations across the Council.



Direction 4 – Partnership

Make partnerships with other organizations a key element in the Council's approach to advancing its mandate.

New investment of \$831,077

The Context

The Council has undertaken a number of partnership initiatives, some with other arts funders (for example, the Canadian Public Arts Funders, a collaborative network of provincial and territorial arts funders and the Council), and some with other organizations in and outside the arts. This direction affirms that the Council will make partnerships a key element in its operations, and it supports arts funders working more effectively together to improve the delivery of programs and services to the arts and offer new opportunities for the public to experience the arts. By entering into partnerships, the Council can extend its reach across the country and leverage additional resources and a greater societal investment in the arts. Partnerships expand the Council's impact beyond its resources and into arts-related areas in which the Council has an interest but not a direct mandate or adequate resources to act alone.

Priorities and Allocations

The Council will:

- Increase its investment in partnership activity by \$428,000 in 2008-09 and develop a partnership framework for the Council.
- Provide \$100,000 per year toward a partnership initiative, currently in development, that will allow the Council and provincial and territorial funders to collect and share data on Canadian arts organizations through a secure web site. Allocate a further \$116,000 to enhance the Council's capacity to support the system and its use.

Direction 5 – The Council's Organizational Development

**Enhance the Council's capacity
to support the arts and implement
change by strengthening its
structure, staffing and services.**

New investment of \$3,652,554

The Context

For some years, the Council has provided capacity-building grants and services to arts organizations, recognizing that artistic quality is more likely to be sustained if the organization is healthy, well administered, and professionally staffed. This direction applies the concern for organizational effectiveness to the Council's own operations. An organizational design review, underway since January 2007, has recommended improvements to the Council's capacity for research, strategic planning, program evaluation, communications, learning and information exchange, and staff development and succession planning. This direction commits the Council to enhancing its capacities as an organization, increasing opportunities for staff to engage with the artistic community across Canada, making greater use of its knowledge base, and examining its staff structure to address long-standing workload pressures.⁵

⁵ As an indicator of the dimensions of workload issues, the staff complement approved for 2008-09 is 22% less than that of 1994-95, while grant applications have increased by more than 52.7% over the same time period (10,260 in 1994-95 compared to 15,663 in 2006-07).

Priorities and Allocations

The Council will:

- Address workload pressures, implement the findings of the Organizational Design Review, and enable Council staff to be more available and responsive to the arts community in all regions of the country by allocating \$2,000,000 for new staff positions.
- Increase the Council's budget for research by \$400,000 in 2008-09, in order to enhance the Council's knowledge of the arts and its ability to share that knowledge with the arts community and other stakeholders.
- Set up a new division that will act horizontally to provide enhanced capacity for a number of the major priorities in the strategic plan and provide greater opportunities for sharing expertise across the Council. The division will incorporate both new and existing functions, including the Equity Office, the Aboriginal Arts Secretariat, partnership and networks, research, policy analysis, program evaluation, and the Arts Services Unit.
- Allocate money for an evaluation and redesign of the Council's web services, as well as a review of the Council's communications function.
- Consider how best to put in place "green" policies and practices at the Council.

What Still Remains

Thanks to the addition of new ongoing funding as detailed above, the Council can implement an action plan that will substantially improve its support for the arts.

The number of excellent ideas and strategies that surfaced during the consultation and budgeting process, however, far exceeded the resources available. In order to keep these excellent ideas alive, the following are highlights of initiatives the Council believes are worth pursuing or expanding but which it has only a limited capacity to address at this time.

Direction 1 Individual artists

- Invest in the development of young artists by facilitating dialogues and mentorships between young and mid-career artists.
- Increase public awareness of Canadian artists through greater dissemination of information, more opportunities for Canadians across the country to interact with artists, and web showcasing.
- Disseminate the work of Canadian artists more broadly across Canada and, in consultation with other federal funders, provide increased support for international touring, dissemination, exchanges and residencies.

Direction 2 Arts organizations

- Provide more substantial increases in support for highly-assessed arts organizations, in all disciplines and regions, appropriate to their scale, needs and opportunities.
- Enhance the capacity of operating grant programs to reflect organizations' changing levels of activity, accommodate new growth, and respond to alternative structures such as flexible management models and hybrid, mobile and web-based entities.
- Provide resources and tools to help arts organizations plan for succession.
- Act on future findings from the arts infrastructure mapping, placing funds strategically and in consultation with other funders in the regions, practices and disciplines most in need of strengthening.
- Disseminate the work of Canadian arts organizations more broadly across Canada and, in consultation with other federal funders, provide increased support for international touring, dissemination, exchanges, and residencies.

Direction 3

Equity

- Provide Council information in and appropriate assessment processes for artists and arts organizations working in Aboriginal languages, sign language, and languages other than English and French.
- Act on the future findings of the consultations with equity groups.
- Expand the integration of culturally diverse, Aboriginal and official minority language organizations in the Council's operating grant programs.
- Develop a policy on equity allowance to compensate for specific expenses related to artistic activity within equity groups (for example, artists living in rural or remote areas and artists with disabilities).

Direction 4

Partnership

- Develop partnerships outside Canada to increase international opportunities for Canadian artists and arts organizations.
- Develop partnerships to strengthen the public's experience of the arts and enhance the Council's presence across the country.
- Invest in targeted initiatives in audience development and public engagement in partnership with the arts community.

Direction 5

The Council's organizational development

- Carry out further research on the arts in a number of areas identified in the planning process, in collaboration with the arts community.
- Increase investment in succession planning and leadership development at the Council.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the Canada Council for the Arts is a Canadian artistic life that is creative, diverse, resilient, and profoundly meaningful to Canadians across the country and to the world. The Council's planning process for 2008-11, which has significantly strengthened its ability to support the arts, marks a milestone in its progress toward that ideal destination.

The Council extends its sincerest appreciation to all those both inside and outside the organization who contributed to this extraordinary planning exercise, and to the government of Canada for providing new funds to translate the most strategic of these ideas into reality.

Summary of Allocation of New Investments for 2008-09

Description	Amount Allocated
Direction 1: Individual Artists	
Grants	4,593,500
Services	360,000
Total	4,953,500
Direction 2: Arts Organizations	
Grants	19,326,500
Services	811,369
Total	20,137,869
Direction 3: Equity	
Grants	\$1,580,000
Services	345,000
Total	1,925,000
Direction 4: Partnership	
Services (up to half may ultimately be awarded as grants)	\$831,077
Direction 5: The Council's Organizational Development	
Administration	\$3,652,554
Grand total	\$31,500,000



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