



Report on Canada Council Strategic Plan Consultation: Part 1 - Stakeholder Discussions

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Note: This is a companion report to *Analysis of Responses to the Canada Council's Strategic Planning Online Survey*, by Hill Strategies Research, available at www.50.canadacouncil.ca.

1. Introduction

On May 9, 2007, in its 50th anniversary year, the Canada Council for the Arts announced it would develop a strategic plan to guide the Council's programs and priorities for 2008-2011.

The strategic planning process that followed included the largest stakeholder consultation in the Council's history. The Council recognized that the strategic plan was an opportunity to reinvigorate its conversations with the arts community and to expand the dialogue to include a wider range of interested Canadians. The relationship between the Council and the arts community - artists, arts organizations, arts funders and partners – is critical to the Council's understanding of the arts and its ability to develop program and policies that will be of most benefit to the arts in Canada and to Canadians.

A staff working committee was struck to coordinate the strategic plan consultation. The objectives of the consultation were to:

- provide the Council with a better reading of how the arts community and interested Canadians view the Council;
- assess the degree to which they support its underlying values and priorities; and
- invite suggestions on how it might strengthen its performance going forward.

During the consultation, participants were asked to respond to the Council's consultation paper, *Creating our future: An invitation to contribute to the strategic plan of the Canada Council for the Arts*. The paper described and posed questions about:

- The Council's support to the arts;
- The Council's fundamental values; and
- The Council's five core priorities, based on an analysis of the organization's past 5-10 years of planning and policy development work.¹

The consultation had two components:

1. Stakeholder Discussions: In May and June, the Council organized discussions with four defined stakeholder groups within the arts community:
 - national arts service organizations;
 - arts funders at the provincial, territorial and municipal levels;
 - artists and arts administrators between the ages of 18 and 30; and
 - selected organizations with an interest in the arts and in the Council's work.Approximately 300 individuals participated in these discussions.²
2. Online component: The Council posted the consultation paper and accompanying online survey on its web site on May 14, and sent email invitations to participate

¹ The consultation paper is attached as Appendix A.

² See Appendix B for a list of organizations that participated in the discussions.

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to approximately 20,000 artists, arts organizations, and individuals with an interest in the arts. This distribution included but was not limited to every applicant to the Canada Council in the past three years. The Council encouraged organizations to circulate the invitation through their networks, web sites and newsletters and to consult with their constituents as much as possible. Approximately 1400 responses were submitted between the launch of the online survey and its closing on June 15. Of these, approximately 1200 were substantive; i.e. they contained responses to the survey questions.

The responses to the Council's consultation provided a vast number and diverse range of recommendations for the plan and for the Council's work over the long-term. The Council is grateful for the generous participation and thoughtful engagement of artists, arts organizations and interested individuals across the country, and internationally.

The tone of the stakeholder discussions was, in general, very positive and the majority of participants welcomed the consultation. Many thanked the Council for taking an open and inclusive approach.

At the beginning of the process, the Council said that it would share the results of the consultation with those who participated and with the public. It is doing so with the release of its two-part report on the strategic plan consultation. The first part is the present report, which provides an analysis, from the Council's perspective, of the major findings of the stakeholder discussions.³ This report reflects what the Council heard during the consultation, and does not necessarily reflect current or future Canada Council policy. The second part, an independent research report prepared by Hill Strategies Research, *Analysis of Responses to the Canada Council's Strategic Planning Online Survey*, analyses the responses received through the online survey. The report is available at the Canada Council's 50th anniversary web site, www.50.canadacouncil.ca.

³ Detailed notes were taken at each stakeholder discussion to document responses and ideas. The notes were shared within the Council to ensure that the level of detail in the suggestions was heard by the appropriate section or group. For example, feedback specific to programs in one art form or discipline was shared with the relevant Section Head or Coordinator.

2. Stakeholder Discussions

2.1 National Arts Service Organizations (NASOs)

2.1. i. NASO Meeting: All Artistic Disciplines

On June 18, 2007, the Council held a one-day consultation meeting in Ottawa to which it invited 46 national arts service organizations (NASOs) from all artistic disciplines and some with multidisciplinary membership. Of these, 42 participated. This group represented most, but not all, professional art practices supported by the Canada Council.

The objectives of the day were to consult the NASOs on:

- The Canada Council's key future success factors;
- The fundamental values the Council should promote;
- The Council's support for the arts; and
- The Council's priorities for the next 3 to 5 years.

The Council acknowledges the time and effort that NASOs put into preparing for and attending this meeting, including extensive consultation of their membership, and thanks all those who participated and submitted written feedback.

The consultation with NASOs involved the following stages of discussion:

- a. First, NASOs described their most positive experiences at the Council and identified the success factors that contributed to those experiences.
- b. Second, NASOs discussed the fundamental values from the consultation paper and the Council's support of the arts.
- c. Third, NASOs reflected on the five core priorities from the consultation paper and the Council's support for the arts.

The major findings from each of these three stages of discussion follow.

a. Positive experiences and success factors

The Council's Staff

Participants expressed a high degree of confidence in the Council's staff. They described the staff's openness, availability and responsiveness, and role as a "two-way advocate" for both the Canada Council and for the arts. They talked about the staff's excellent knowledge of artistic practice in Canada, and their ability to recognize excellence at all levels, from national and international to the very local. This knowledge was seen as the result of being connected to the terrain, or "having your ear to the ground."

National perspective and leadership

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Participants talked about the importance of the Council's national perspective as Canada's national, arm's-length arts funder. Two characteristics of this perspective were discussed: the Council's understanding of artistic excellence in a national, comparative context, and its sensitivity to diversity in many forms – regional, cultural, linguistic, artistic practice, etc. The Council was seen as a leader in areas such as arts promotion, equity, Aboriginal programs, and programs for artists and arts organizations working in official language minority settings. NASOs talked about the high level of support for the Council's work that exists across the arts community.

Participants encouraged the Council to build on its existing relationships within Canada, keep its national overview of the arts and make links among stakeholders. They saw an enhanced international role for the Council as the global voice on behalf of Canadian artists. This voice was seen as a way to help artists develop global partnerships.

Artistic excellence; freedom of artistic expression; peer assessment

Participants saw the principles on which the Council was founded as key success factors that must be protected and maintained: artistic excellence as assessed by peers; the integrity of the peer assessment process; and freedom of artistic expression through the maintenance of the arm's-length relationship to government.

Support to individual artists and to creation

Some participants included in their written comment references to the Council's ability to support risk and new creation and providing time for individual artists to devote to their artistic practice.

b. Values and Support of the Arts

There was a consensus among NASOs that all the values cited in the consultation paper are relevant and should be retained⁴: "It is important to keep everything that is there to ensure a philosophy of inclusion".

The following additional values were suggested:

- The value of human resources and the importance of Canada Council staff;
- Maintaining the distinctiveness of Canadian artistic practice in the face of international pressures;
- The economic sustainability of artistic practice and a "living wage" for artists;
- Increasing the audience for the arts and engaging the public;
- Open and sensitive collaboration with the artistic milieu; and

⁴ The consultation paper identified the following fundamental values: freedom of artistic expression and arm's-length relationship to government; artistic excellence in professional arts practices as assessed by peers; role of the arts in enhancing quality of life and contributing to the identities of Canadians; commitment to support the diversity of the arts in Canada – official language; region; culture; practices; generations; and national perspective and understanding of the arts across Canada.

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- Transparency of process.

The Council's sensitivity to regional context was expressed as a positive aspect of its national perspective, as was its ability to address regional disparities and ensure that art is available to everyone across Canada. NASOs encouraged the Council to enhance its presence "on the ground" through travel and other means, including, in one suggestion, by establishing regional offices outside of Ottawa.

NASOs looked to the Council to provide leadership in establishing links among arts funders at different levels of government and in the private sector. The Council was seen to have a role as a facilitator, and in building and sharing knowledge, such as findings from national research projects.

c. Priorities

When asked which priority in the consultation paper was of most or least importance, most NASOs did not want to provide a ranking.⁵ Three reasons were given: that all of the priorities are important; that they had insufficient information on the current division of resources to do so; and that making one more important than the others could result in cuts. Instead, participants said that the Council should undertake ongoing program evaluation in order to ensure that programs are as effective as possible, and should consider the values and priorities when making decisions to decrease or increase investment in a particular program or service.

Several participants said that increasing the capacity of arts organizations was the most important priority, because it can encompass other priorities, such as cultural diversity. Others suggested that public engagement could be at the top of the list, that as a publicly-funding Crown Corporation, the Council needs to engage the public regarding the rationale for public funding of the arts and for increases to the funds available.

Participants suggested the following additional priorities:

- Minority francophone communities;
- Achieving a balance of support between rural and urban regions and ensuring that peer assessment responds to regional realities; and
- Defining the responsibilities of major arts organizations that are best resourced and receive the largest Canada Council grants to the arts community.
"Community" was understood in a number of ways: for some it was the local community in which these organizations exist; for others, it was the community of an artistic discipline located across the country and internationally.

⁵ The consultation paper identified the following priorities: Aboriginal arts: strengthen Aboriginal arts practices; Capacity & adaptability: strengthen arts organizations' capacities & ability to adapt to changing conditions; Culturally diverse arts: strengthen culturally diverse arts practices; Dissemination & public engagement: bring the arts to people & enhance people's engagement with the arts; and Emerging practices: respond to new ways in which artists are making & sharing art.

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Participants were also asked to consider how the Council should allocate its resources in three scenarios: with a decrease to its budget; if its budget remained the same; and if its budget were to increase.

Again, most participants felt it was not appropriate to respond to the scenarios in which the budget decreased or remained the same. However, with an increase, the following suggestions were made:

- Increase grants to individual artists;
- Increases budgets of specific Council sections or programs (the Equity Office, Inter-Arts Office, Flying Squad program, emerging artists and organizations, and international activities were mentioned);
- Strengthen the ability of artists and arts organizations to disseminate their art within Canada and internationally;
- Increase core funding to organizations and provide operating support to more small and medium-sized organizations;
- Encourage the provision of a living wage for individual artists and arts professionals as a long-term sustainability model; and
- Raise public awareness of the value of art and artists in society, which would ultimately result in increased wages for artists.

In the final part of the discussion, NASOs were asked to reflect on what they believe should be the Council's longer-term vision. Responses to this question showed support for the Council continuing on its present course, to "keep doing what you do well," including maintaining the Council's arm's-length relationship to government and the focus on artistic excellence. NASOs encouraged the Council to take a long-term view, to be aware of changing conditions such as demographics and technology, but at the same time maintain a level of predictability within the funding system. Others encouraged the Council to integrate the arts into the public agenda, with the outcome of making art integral in the daily lives of all Canadians. Some encouraged the Council to "bust the silos" and create an atmosphere that validates the best work – including offering artists opportunities to experiment, and to fail.

2.1. ii Disciplinary Meetings

In addition to the one-day meeting on June 18, the Council invited NASOs to meet with the Section Head responsible for their artistic discipline and the Director of the Council on either June 17 and 19. At these meetings, disciplinary groupings of NASOs – in dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual arts, writing and publishing and a group of multidisciplinary NASOs – discussed future directions specific to that discipline. Forty NASOs participated in these disciplinary meetings.

The content and form of these meetings varied, but they generally included a roundtable during which each participant made a brief presentation, followed by a group discussion. Each NASO presented the perspective of its membership, which varied within the disciplines.

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Many NASOs provided detailed written submissions to the Council representing the views of their membership to complement their participation. These submissions, and the detailed notes taken by Council staff at the disciplinary meetings, have been circulated to the relevant arts sections.

The following summary highlights the additional themes from the disciplinary meetings that were not raised in the June 18 meeting.

Increase in resources to all artistic disciplines

At each meeting, the NASOs requested or made an argument for a significant increase in funds to their discipline. The rationale for these increases varied: in some cases, it was based on the fact that their discipline received a smaller proportion of the Council's budget compared to others (e.g. visual arts compared to music); in others, NASOs argued that their discipline was later to develop than others and was subject to a number of distinguishing factors relative to other disciplines that merited a significant, targeted investment (dance; media arts).

While there was little consensus on priorities for these increases, one theme that emerged in several meetings was the need to provide multi-year support to individuals and to expand operating support to include a greater number and diversity of arts organizations. In one case – dance – the three organizations made a joint presentation that emphasized that any additional investment in dance by the Canada Council should take a holistic, ecological view – that is, that investment in no one form, region or size of organization was more important than investment in others. At the same time, participants in the dance meeting asked that the Council review and “unlock” the historical funding budget at the Council and adopt a flexible disciplinary funding allocation that responds to the ebb and flow of disciplines.

As with the NASO meeting on June 18, there was no direct discussion of where the Council should invest less if it were to increase its funding to a particular discipline.

Flexible and responsive support

In every meeting, NASOs made suggestions for changes to and evaluation of programs for their discipline (e.g. review and evaluate the impact of changes made to the support to visual artists program in 2005; review support to Aboriginal media arts in light of technological and other changes since the programs were created). One strong common theme was the need for flexible support to individuals and organizations, support that is based on the changing – and emerging – reality of the conditions in which work is created. In addition to funds, some NASOs are looking to the Council to provide tools by which organizations can assess their own performance.

NASOs in many disciplines encouraged the Council to take a broad, inclusive and long-term view of the discipline in making decisions about support. In some meetings,

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participants encouraged the Council to look at the synergy between the largest organizations in a community or discipline, and the small or medium-sized; i.e. the way in which the work of larger institutions can positively affect the development of artistic disciplines or a community. Others asked the Council to clarify what its five identified priorities mean for organizations receiving operating support. Finally, in two meetings – media arts and writing and publishing – participants made references to rapid technological change and encouraged the Council to consider the impact of this change when reviewing programs.

Work with NASOs as policy partners

NASOs were clear in their expectation that the Council regard them as partners in the development of policy and programs. Some referred to a perception in the arts community that the Council has distanced itself from the community in recent years, and saw the strategic plan consultation as a positive step. However, some challenged the effectiveness of the approach used, and the timeframe allotted for responses.

Some NASOS noted that they felt that recent Council initiatives had been developed with little consultation with the arts community and that trust between the Council and their part of the arts community had been compromised.⁶ These participants expressed doubt about how genuine the Council was in asking for their opinion on the strategic plan.

A small number of NASOs did not support the use of an open approach to the consultation, in which the online survey was available to anyone who wished to participate. These expressed concern that opening the consultation to the public would generate uninformed responses. Many spoke positively about the approach the Council took in bringing together NASOs from every discipline to consult on the strategic plan. Others found the process too formulaic and not open enough for them to say what they wanted to say.

Some NASO representatives said that the timeframe of the consultation was too short to allow them to fully consult their members and to respond. Among the NASOs that participated in the meetings, some developed a tailored approach to consulting with their membership, including, in the case of one NASO, creating an online survey for its membership to provide feedback and convening a series of regional teleconferences across the country.

Develop the Council's promotion of the arts and enlarge the dialogue

Many NASOs called on the Council to enhance its efforts to promote the value artists and the arts in Canadian society. Some participants said that the Council should offer guidance to NASOs from its vantage point, to assist the arts community in understanding current policy perspectives and provide advice on how to strengthen the arts and the public's support for the arts.

⁶ The Council's Supplementary Operating Funds Initiative (SOFI), a one-time Council program that provided \$33 million in funding to more than 550 arts organizations, was cited as an example.

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Council's work on public engagement in the arts was raised in three meetings – dance, media arts and music. In both, NASOs made the point that the Council needs to consider the role of arts organizations, which are already connected to and closer to their audiences, in any public engagement activity it considers. They argued that artists and arts organizations are better suited than the Council to implement general public advocacy in communities across Canada, and saw the Council's role as providing incentives for arts organizations to undertake this activity. In one meeting, a call was made for the Council to facilitate sector-wide research, in collaboration with NASOs, specifically in order to better understand the ways in which audiences are shifting.

NASOs supported the Council's efforts to "enlarge the dialogue" among arts funders in order to improve policies and funding to the arts. Many mentioned specific programs in which the Council could seek greater complementarity with other funders; for example, better coordination of touring support from the Council with the programs of the federal Departments of Canadian Heritage and Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

2.2 Arts Funders

The Canada Council works closely with its provincial and territorial counterparts through the Canadian Public Arts Funders – Organismes publics de soutien aux arts du Canada (CPAF/OPSAC), a network that unites and serves the federal⁷, provincial and territorial public arts funders⁸. At the Council's invitation, the Executive Directors or equivalents of 11 member organizations participated in a one-day consultation on the strategic plan on May 24. The Chairs of 8 member organizations participated in a similar meeting on May 25.

In addition to these meetings, the Director and senior staff of the Canada Council met with arts funders in many provinces and territories during the consultation.⁹ The strategic plan was discussed at these meetings with municipal, provincial and private sector funding partners.

Partnership

Arts funders responded positively to the consultation paper, and generally agreed with the values and priorities. However, the issue of greatest importance to funders – and the area on which most time was spent in the discussions – was the national role of the Council and its relationship to arts funders in Canada, and internationally. The discussion acknowledged that arts funding in Canada has changed significantly since the Council was created in 1957. Over the past 50 years, the funding system has expanded to include funders at the municipal, provincial and territorial levels, in federal government departments, and other public and private sources. The Council's investment in the arts is now easily surpassed by the combined investment made by the provinces and territories.

Partnership with arts funders was therefore a major theme of the consultation with this group.

The members of CPAF/OPSAC recommended that strategic partnership with the provincial and territorial arts councils, or their equivalents, be added to the Canada Council's values in the strategic plan. They cited recent efforts made by the Canada Council, and in particular its support of the CPAF/OPSAC network, as a demonstration of the Council's ability to "positively reinforce and support partnership among arts funders."

CPAF/OPSAC outlined a vision for strategic partnership which included the following five elements:

⁷ Federal in this application refers to the Canada Council for the Arts and not to other federal bodies with mandates in the arts.

⁸ Arts Funders in this application refers to arts councils or equivalent arts funding agencies, and where they do not exist, designated government departments of culture.

⁹ Meetings took place in Whitehorse, Yellowknife, Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Montreal, Halifax, Charlottetown and St. John's.

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1. Improved communication regarding program changes or major initiatives by both the Canada Council and CPAF member organizations.
2. Strategic alliances to promote the arts, including ways to better understand what the public values about the arts, to deepen engagement with the arts, and increase the “demand” for the arts, as well as the “supply.”
3. Collaboration on program review and performance measures that help cultural organizations talk about the value of the arts and their impact.
4. Collaboration to help ensure the development of an arts-healthy environment in all regions of the country, including exploring how to better cooperate through the existing relationships in the CPAF network.
5. Development of programs and assessment practices at the Canada Council that are appropriate to the regional contexts across the country.

Leadership

The Council’s leadership role as Canada’s national, arm’s-length arts funder was discussed at the majority of the meetings with arts funders. The Council was seen as a leader in the following areas:

- The use of peers in the assessment of grant applications and in developing programs and policies, and the national, comparative context in which peers assess artistic excellence;
- Advocating on behalf of the arts and public investment in arts, and demonstrating this value through research and communications;
- Defining the set of values that the arts funding community shares;
- Providing a source of continuity in policies and programs in times of change;
- As a knowledge organization, facilitating and providing access to research, discourse, and informed debate and sharing its understanding of the arts ecosystem in Canada;
- “Setting the bar” for the country in support to Aboriginal and culturally diverse arts;
- Recognition of artistic excellence through awards and prizes;
- Facilitating dialogue among arts funders on shared issues (e.g. finding a balance between support to emerging and established arts organizations);
- Providing support to the international activities of Canada’s artists and arts organizations which project Canada’s national identity to the world; and
- Providing grants to individual artists for creation and research, including activities and forms that are risky or experimental in nature.

Outreach and regional initiatives

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Most meeting with arts funders included a discussion of the Council's understanding of and presence in the region in which the meeting took place. In almost all cases, participants encouraged the Council to improve its outreach, communications and increase staff travel to their province or territory. It was important to all funders that Council staff contact and meet with them when they visited.

Several funders said that the Canada Council should improve its communications in order to make artists in their region more aware of its programs and service, and, more broadly, to increase awareness of the arts.

Many funders said that the Council should develop programs and services that are sensitive to the different realities in which artists work in different parts of the country. Several suggested that the Council re-visit its former Explorations program, while others suggested that the Council place a program officer in their province or territory.

2.3 Next Generation of Artistic Leaders Dialogues

Between April and June, the Canada Council and provincial and territorial arts funders brought together close to 200 artists and arts administrators, aged 18 to 30, to discuss their work, challenges, and vision for the future. The main objective of the dialogues was to engage this group in helping to define future directions for arts funding programs and policies. The Council, and many of the provincial and territorial arts funders, identified the dialogues as an important element of their strategic plan consultations.

Nine dialogues were held in nine regions of the country.¹⁰ Each generated substantive discussions on emerging and evolving areas of practice, training and career development needs, the impact of the arts on communities and the role of arts funding in supporting young artists and administrators.

Toronto-based company D-Code was contracted to moderate, facilitate and report on the Dialogues. A full report will be available on the Canada Council web site in the fall of 2007. An overview of the themes and recommendations that related to questions outlined in the Council's consultation paper follows.

Role of Arts Funders

Participants said that they saw a role for arts funders in supporting artists and arts organizations to create new works, helping artists secure other forms of funding, building professional and artistic networks, and promoting the contributions that artists make to Canadian social, cultural, and economic life to the broader Canadian society. Many participants, particularly those in isolated and rural communities, felt that funders need to be more present outside of major urban areas, and should help rural artists continue to work in their own communities, rather than leaving home for larger centres.

Access

Many participants said they felt the playing field for young Canadian artists and arts organizations is not equal. Some perceived that the more established arts practices and organizations dominate the cultural landscape, making it difficult for emerging artists and arts practices to access funding streams, mentorship, and technical and social infrastructure. Participants made the following recommendations:

- Increase understanding of the artistic practices of artists and arts administrators representing Aboriginal, disabled, and culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly those that meld traditional forms with new or exploratory ones.
- Increase flexibility of the categories of artistic disciplines, practices and how young artists can apply for them.

¹⁰ Sessions were held in: Edmonton, Alberta; Halifax, N.S. (including participants from Nova Scotia/New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island); Montreal, Quebec; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador; Toronto, Ontario; Vancouver, British Columbia; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Whitehorse, Yukon (including Yukon and Northwest Territories).

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Professional and Artistic Development

While few participants were making a living solely from their artistic practice, they said they strongly identified with artistic creation and administration / curation as the focus of their career ambitions. They were almost unanimous in expressing the importance of continued professional and artistic development throughout their lives, and had a broad definition of what kinds of learning would help contribute to their long-term careers. Many participants said they saw their practices as small businesses and felt under-trained in these aspects of their work. Small business expertise was considered a key need for emerging artists and participants made the following recommendation:

- Increase training opportunities for artists who see their art practices as small businesses in areas such as accounting, bookkeeping, negotiation, tax law, marketing, export development, audience development and promotion.

Mentorship and Networking

Participants said that mentorship and networking are vital to their personal, professional and artistic development, but that costs associated with connecting with and securing time for these activities are often prohibitively expensive. Recommendations to funders included:

- Become more involved in facilitating mentorship, by, for example, creating on-line portals or devoting more funding streams to mentorship and networking activities within and beyond Canada.
- Encourage established organizations to devote a portion of their resources to mentoring emerging arts organizations, or providing them access to space.

Application and Selection

Participants had a wide variety of suggestions for improving the categorization of funding streams, the application process and fostering greater transparency about the peer assessment process. Some expressed that emerging artists' creations are not treated as seriously as those by more established artists in peer assessment. Participant recommendations included:

- Increase frequency of deadlines to better reflect programming and exhibition schedules.
- Create standard budget forms for all public arts funders in Canada for similar types of organizations and projects.

New Audiences: Dissemination and Promotion

Many participants said they believe that funders have a role to play in helping artists disseminate their work, both within their artistic disciplines and to the public in general.

2.4 Meetings with Selected Organizations

In order to broaden the scope of the consultation, the Council organized 10 meetings in May and June with targeted groups with an interest in Council's work. These organizations were selected for their national scope and perspective on issues of importance to the Council. A complete list of organizations is included in Appendix B.

The Council deliberately chose a diverse selection of organizations in order to hear a variety of perspectives and open its consultation to expert voices beyond those of the arts community. The results of these meetings were therefore not a consensus, but rather a series of ideas put forward by the organizations that participated.

Role and Mandate

- The Council's objective should be to create a culture of creativity in Canada, with a focus on the contribution of professional artists and arts organizations to that culture.
- The Council should develop its role as an effective agent for change in the arts funding environment, and as a knowledge centre.
- The Council to move from being principally a provider of funding towards enabling, or connecting, artistic activities through, for example, services and partnerships.

Public Engagement and Promoting the Arts

- The Council should work to promote the value of the arts, public investment in the arts, and public engagement.
- The Council should encourage the arts community to further engage with the business community as partners.
- The Council needs to think about the audience as a partner; the creative process should include the audience.
- The Council needs to better understand the complex issues of supply versus demand.

Support for the Arts

- The Council needs to better understand cross-sectoral work and help set artistic standards for this work.
- The Council should examine and consider funding organizational models other than the not-for-profit.
- The Council should engage in greater outreach into Aboriginal communities and increase its support to emerging Aboriginal artists.
- The Council needs to pay attention to pressing issues such as global warming and its effects Aboriginal people of the north

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- The Council should explore the idea of a ‘northern aesthetic’ and what northern artists have in common.

Partnership

These organizations expressed interest in partnering with the Council in the following areas:

- Training and development, including succession and mentorship;
- As an “intellectual” partner, providing expertise on granting and on the arts to, for example, corporate foundations interested in investing in the arts;
- Joint research on research, creation and impact, and the impact and nature of grassroots arts activity;
- Connecting the Council to existing and new communities of professional artists; and
- Cross-sectoral partnerships; for example, as an expert resource for social service agencies developing arts programs or working with professional artists (justice, health).

3. Principal Themes

The stakeholder discussions provided rich and varied feedback to the Council's consultation paper. Within this feedback, a number of common threads emerged. These are summarized below as the four principal themes of the stakeholder discussions.

The Council is a strong organization that should keep doing what it does best.

Participants strongly endorsed the values and priorities outlined in the consultation paper and affirmed their importance to the Council's work. The Council was seen as a strong organization with a national leadership role and existing strengths on which it should build in the future. Specific strengths that were mentioned repeatedly throughout the discussion include the Council's:

- Commitment to artistic excellence and peer assessment;
- Support to individual artists;
- Stable operating support to arts organizations;
- Support to culturally diverse and Aboriginal arts;
- Advocacy and public engagement;
- Support to artists and arts organizations for international activities; and
- Knowledge building and sharing.

The Council's actions should reflect an understanding of diversity – including regional diversity.

Throughout the discussions, participants valued the Council's work to support the diversity of artistic practice in a diverse Canada. Diversity was understood and expressed in many ways, including diversity of race, culture, generation, disability and economic status.

Participants affirmed the importance of the Council's use of peer assessment in a national comparative context as the best and most effective means of making granting decisions. At the same time, they expressed a need for the Council to further develop its sensitivity to the regional contexts in which art is created. In order to be aware of regional context, participants called for increased presence for Council staff "on the ground" and in their regions. They are looking to the Council to translate this sensitivity into action through its programs and services, for example, regional offices and regional partnerships, which take regional context into account in assessing artistic excellence. This theme was discussed at most of the stakeholder discussions, but no consensus was reached on how the Council might best move forward in this area.

The Council's stakeholders see themselves as partners in its work.

Participants in the discussions saw themselves as current or potential partners of the Canada Council:

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- National arts service organizations seek to be partners in the development of policies and programs to serve the artistic communities they represent.
- Arts funders look to the Council to develop strategic alliances with them to address shared issues and collectively promote the arts.
- Organizations with mandates that complement the Council's work are often eager to partner or combine resources with the Council to more effectively achieve shared objectives.

All expect and value clear and transparent communication from the Council on its policy, procedural, and program decisions.

The Council needs to keep pace with change and enlarge the dialogue.

Participants in the stakeholder discussions repeatedly called on the Council to take a greater leadership role to facilitate research and dialogue about the arts. They made reference to technological, social, economic, environmental and demographic changes to which the Council should be able to respond. Participants clearly expect the Council to be flexible and responsive in its policies and programs, from its application forms and eligibility criteria to the development of flexible models of support that acknowledge new and emerging practices, models, and needs.

Stakeholders do not expect the Council to do this alone, but rather encourage the Council to enlarge its dialogue to include others that can contribute to achievement of the Council's – and the arts community's – goals.

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4. Next Steps

The Council will continue to develop its 2008-2011 strategic plan over the summer and early fall of 2007. The plan will be reviewed by the Board of the Canada Council during its 50th anniversary meeting in Montreal in October 2007. Once approved by the board, it will be released to the public and posted on the Council's web site, and implemented beginning in the spring of 2008.

The Council thanks all of those who contributed their time and expertise to the consultation.

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Appendix A: Consultation Paper

[Download the consultation paper \(PDF\)](#)

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Appendix B: List of Organizations Consulted

1. National Arts Service Organizations (NASOs)

Note: organizations with an * attended the meeting on June 18 but were unable to attend the meeting of NASOs for their discipline on either June 17 or 19.

Dance

Canadian Dance Assembly
CanDance Network
Regroupement québécois de la danse

Media Arts

Conseil québécois des arts médiatiques
Front de réalisateurs indépendants du Canada*
Independent Media Arts Alliance
National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition

Multidisciplinary

Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts
Canadian Arts Coalition / Coalition canadienne des arts
Canadian Arts Presenting Association / l'Association canadienne des organismes artistiques (CAPACOA)
Canadian Conference of the Arts*
Fédération culturelle canadienne-française*
Regroupement des arts interdisciplinaires du Québec
Stand Firm Network

Music

Association of Canadian Choral Conductors
Canadian League of Composers
Canadian Music Centre
Opera.ca
Orchestras Canada

Theatre

Association des théâtres francophones du Canada
Conseil québécois du théâtre
Playwrights Guild of Canada
Professional Association of Canadian Theatres*

Visual Arts

Aboriginal Curatorial Collective
Artist Run Centres and Collective Conference / Conférence des collectives et des centres d'artistes autogérés

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Association des groupes en arts visuels francophones (l'AGAVF)
Canadian Art Museum Directors' Organization / Organisation des directeurs de musées
d'art du Canada (CAMDO)
Canadian Artists Representation / Le front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC)
Canadian Crafts Federation
Canadian Museums Association / Association des musées canadiens (CMA)

Writing and Publishing

Association nationale des éditeurs de livres
Association of Canadian Publishers
Book and Periodical Council
Literary Press Group of Canada
Magazines Canada
Playwrights Guild of Canada
Professional Writers Association of Canada
Public Lending Right Commission
Regroupement des éditeurs canadiens-français
Société de développement des périodiques culturels québécois
Storytellers of Canada
The League of Canadian Poets
The Writers' Union of Canada

2. Arts Funders

2010 Legacies Now, Arts Now
Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
B.C. Arts Council
B.C. Capital Regional District
Calgary Arts Development Authority
Canadian Heritage – Atlantic Region
Canadian Heritage – Prairies and Northern Region
Canadian Heritage – Strategic Policy and Research Branch
Canadian Heritage – Western Region
City of Charlottetown
City of Kelowna
City of St. John's
City of Vancouver, Cultural Services
City of Yellowknife
Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec
Edmonton Arts Council
Government of Alberta – Tourism, Parks, Recreation and Culture
Government of British Columbia – B.C. Cultural Services Branch
Government of Manitoba – Culture, Heritage and Tourism
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador – Tourism, Culture and Recreation

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Government of Nova Scotia – Tourism, Culture and Heritage
Government of Prince Edward Island – Community and Cultural Affairs
Government of the Northwest Territories – Education, Culture and Employment
Government of the Northwest Territories - Industry, Tourism and Investment
Government of Yukon - Tourism and Culture and Yukon Arts Advisory Council
Greater Vancouver Regional District
Halifax Regional Council
Halifax Regional Municipality
Manitoba Arts Council
New Brunswick Arts Board
Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council
Newfoundland and Labrador Film Development Corporation
Newfoundland and Labrador Music Industry Association
Northwest Territories Arts Council
Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council
Ontario Arts Council
Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts
Saskatchewan Arts Board
Service Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador
Vancouver Foundation
Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games
Winnipeg Arts Council
Winnipeg Foundation

3. Next Generation of Artistic Leaders Dialogues

The Next Generation of Artistic Leaders Dialogues consulted with about 200 artists and arts administrators between the ages of 18-30 at nine sessions across the country from April to June 2007. Participants were selected by the Canada Council and provincial/territorial arts funders to achieve representational balance (discipline, gender, region, diversity, language, career development stage etc.). Participants spoke from individual experience and were not asked to speak on behalf of organizations or disciplines.

4. Selected Organizations

Arts Network for Children and Youth
Assembly of First Nations
Business for the Arts
Canadian Heritage – Aboriginal Affairs Branch
Canadian Heritage – Cultural Observatory
Cultural Human Resources Council
Deloitte Foundation
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

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Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
Métis National Council
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
University of Ottawa