

National Film Board of Canada

NFB
strategic plan

2008-2009 to 2012-2013

NFB
ONF



**NATIONAL FILM BOARD
OF CANADA
OFFICE NATIONAL DU FILM
DU CANADA**

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PREAMBLE

The National Film Board of Canada is a public producer and distributor. It is an agency that creates a body of work that is unique in how it is fashioned, in the themes that it undertakes, in the ways it connects to audiences and in its creation of a long-term national legacy of creative and social endeavour. It is a vital element within the many stranded fibres that make up the tensile strength of Canadian nationhood. That is our *raison d'être* and goes to the heart of the *raison d'être* of this country.

In his great polemic, *Lament for a Nation*, George Grant argued that "the existence of a sovereign Canada served the good." It was an essay on the distinctiveness of Canada, the necessity of Canada, even as it grieved for a Canada Grant thought was already on the road to extinction. Yet despite all the temptations, despite the ever stronger pull of the globalizing vortex, Canada did not cease to exist. It reinvented itself in crucial ways and today remains a possibility of an alternative vision of a democratic state in the 21st century.

Canada is rewriting the meaning of nation and redrafting the notion of what a civil society is in a pluri-cultural world, in a world where national identity is not fixed and homogenous but multidimensional. Canada is unique in the way it asserts the role of diversity and otherness in the panoply of nations, of other models and ways of democratic being.

Canada holds out a promise of difference, of hope, of optimism, of a future where social values are part of the construct of individual values. Canada is made possible by the dynamic interplay of our indigenous institutions and processes. Central to that is the National Film Board, a distinctly Canadian and distinctly great cultural organization whose logo has come to symbolize to the world Canada at its creative best.

This is understood by Canadians who feel an immense sense of pride in this institution, who have a sense of deep affection for it, who are moved by its works, and who understand that it is part of what makes Canada Canada.

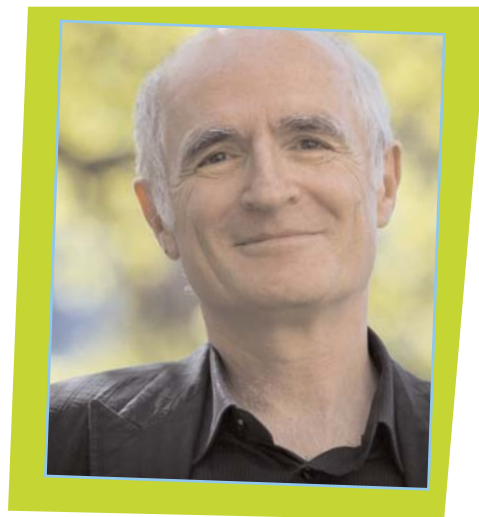
We are a public producer and distributor. To downplay that, to dismiss it, to put it to one side is to devalue what we are as Canadians, to devalue the fundamental notion of the significance of that. It is to give up the game before we start. We are a public producer and distributor and as such a necessary and constituent part of the distinctive experiment in nation building that we call Canada.

There are a series of tests we can apply to this...



Tom Perlmutter

Government Film Commissioner and
National Film Board of Canada Chairperson



Do we serve a public purpose?

Yes. We provide a range of audiovisual works that treat social issues in ways that would not otherwise be done. We have only to point to our Aboriginal programming or the work with diverse cultural communities or the disabled to see the enormous loss to Canada were the NFB not here.

Are we recognized as serving an important public purpose?

Yes. We see it when hundreds of schools and libraries across the country avidly demand our works because we are providing that which no one else does. We see it in the enthusiasm with which Francophone communities in l'Acadie, in St-Boniface, in the North turn out for screenings of rich cultural offerings in their language. We see it when many of our greatest filmmakers have emerged from the NFB. We see it when Canadians across the country from underrepresented communities say to us, thank you for giving us a voice, for making us feel part of this great country.

Do we serve to sustain the uniquely Canadian democratic process?

Yes. The very existence of a public producer and distributor is in itself a statement of difference. When that public producer and distributor is part and parcel of ongoing processes of creating community, creating common consciousness, as we self-evidently are, then we are a crucial element in the fabric of this distinctive, democratic society.

Are we recognized as part of Canada's distinctiveness?

Yes. This is true even more so internationally than nationally where the NFB model is lauded and looked upon with envy. No subsidy system, whether in Britain, France, Germany or even the U.S. can match or create an equivalent body of work.

As a public producer and distributor, at our best, we stand ahead of the curve. We are as strong as our ability to tap into the deepest dreams, desires, needs of Canadians in ways that are nowhere else so articulated. In the face of the digital revolution and a radically shifting audiovisual milieu we need even more public voices than ever before. Not for the sake of preservation. We do not need to preserve public space—we are not a preservation society, we are not maintaining ourselves in aspic, we are not constructing a museum. Quite the contrary. We need to animate public space, we need to give public space vibrancy, we need to allow it to breathe because it is the breath of our nation.

The NFB is an essential part of a process of reconfiguring, reinventing, reinvigorating the public space. We do it through the creative treatment of actuality. We do it through animated drawings that penetrate the imagination. We do it through the imaginative deployment of new technologies. We do it through community screenings that provoke passion and debate. This is what a public producer and distributor does. This is what the NFB has done. This is what the NFB continues to do.

We have a responsibility of stewardship. In the way that we have environmental responsibilities to leave the world in better shape for our children and grandchildren—we have the same kinds of cultural responsibilities. We have to ensure that the NFB remains a vibrant cultural institution for future generations of Canadians.

MISSION

For almost seventy years the National Film Board has played a vital role in Canadian society as a public producer and distributor of audiovisual materials in the public interest. It is recognized and celebrated the world over as one of the great cultural laboratories for research, development and innovation in documentaries, animation, and now, new media. It is unique in providing Canadian creators a place to develop new forms of authentic, socially relevant works that are central to creating common democratic, civil values in a rapidly changing and increasingly diverse society. By supporting emerging filmmakers, members of diverse cultural and linguistic communities, Aboriginal communities and the disabled, the NFB ensures that its audiovisual works reflect the country's diversity and explains the changing cultural and social realities of Canada. It is the most trusted provider of Canadian audiovisual content to Canada's educational system and is a significant carrier of Canadian values to Canada's youth. As a public provider, it is uniquely placed to break new ground and take the creative risks that neither the private sector nor the public broadcast sector can undertake.

In a digital era, the need for the NFB as Canada's public producer and distributor is more essential than ever to undertake the kinds of risks that an audiovisual industry in constant state of change and turmoil cannot afford to take. Again and again, the NFB has shown that it can lead initiatives, on its own or in private-public partnerships, which benefit the industry and Canadians. It is one of the hallmarks of the NFB to step into areas of market failures to create public goods that enrich the country and provide cultural leadership both domestically and internationally. The NFB's enormous international brand value, its creative work and its constant inventiveness have attracted broad interest in Canada as evidenced by the ongoing demand for NFB works by our embassies and trade missions in all parts of the world. It has also opened doors for the private sector to new markets such as Brazil and Singapore because their industries and governments have seen the NFB as their first port of call in engaging with the Canadian audiovisual industry.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME The reflection of Canadian society and Canadian perspectives on the world through the production of innovative Canadian audiovisual works that are widely in demand and widely accessible in relevant media of the day.

MISSION The National Film Board's mission is to reflect Canada, and matters of interest to Canadians, to Canada and the rest of the world through creating and distributing innovative and distinctive audiovisual works based on Canadian points of view and values.

VISION To ensure that the NFB remains a vibrant cultural institution, necessary, relevant and vital, for future generations of Canadians.

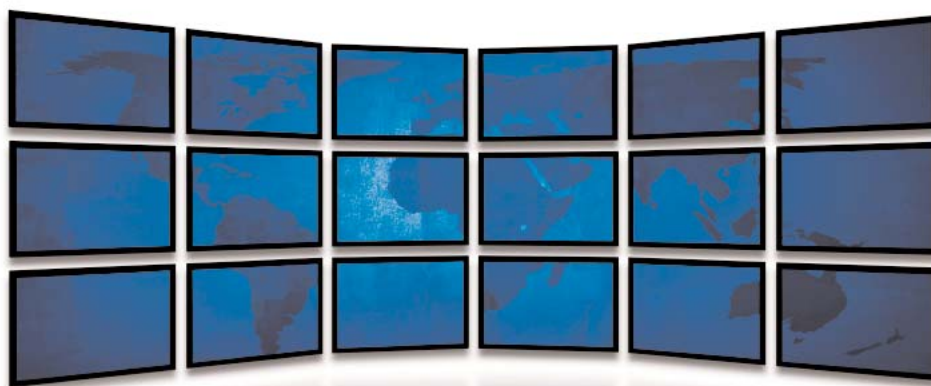
CHANGING LANDSCAPE - NEW CHALLENGES

The NFB has a unique role in providing Canadians with innovative, challenging Canadian content that would otherwise not be available. With increased competitiveness and market pressures and with the rapid and corrosive impacts of the digital revolution, the private sector in Canada is unable to take the creative, financial and technological risks that must be taken for Canada to remain at the forefront of the cultural industry. By testing the creative possibilities of new technologies, tackling tough issues of concern or enabling distribution into remote communities, the NFB provides Canadians and the Canadian industry with new opportunities and contributes to a vibrant Canadian culture and heritage.

The digital transformation is altering in fundamental ways how audiences are consuming and interacting with audiovisual media. The characteristics of the digital era are interactivity, mobility, control of time, user-generated material and a general democratization of media.

The NFB, like the industry, will face many challenges rooted in the proliferation of digital formats. HD will soon become the unchallenged standard for shooting, broadcasting and distribution in Canada and internationally. Without HD production and distribution capacity on multiplatforms, the NFB could jeopardize its distribution activities, and its revenues could drop precipitously. However, as often in the past, the NFB can provide leadership in testing and experimenting with new modes of production and new technological and business models that will benefit the industry and maintain the creative vibrancy of the NFB.

The NFB must act quickly to adjust its production chain, distribution strategies and collection management methods to meet its program objectives and maintain its leadership role among its partners and Canadians generally. The transition represents considerable challenges, particularly related to technology, rights management and financing. The high cost of this transition will have an important impact on both the independent industry and the organization.



CORE VALUES

The NFB has a strong code of ethics and values that guide its mission and frame the strategic plan. These include:

- ~ The importance of artistic voice and diversity of voices
- ~ Integrity and respect
- ~ Authenticity and creative excellence
- ~ Innovation and risk taking
- ~ Honesty and accuracy
- ~ Social relevance and the promotion of a civic, inclusive democratic culture
- ~ Environmental stewardship and sustainable modes of operation

As a public producer and distributor we are mindful that we are neither partisan nor advocates of particular positions. However, we have a public duty to be part of the great social debates of the day through creative audiovisual works. We remain convinced of the powerful, transformative effects of art and imagination for the good.

As a public producer and distributor we will operate in the realm of "market failures," creating public goods with long-term social and economic benefits for the industry, for communities, for the country. It is in these specific, non-market forms of risk taking that the NFB remakes and revitalizes itself; this is its evolutionary mechanism.

We believe we have a responsibility of stewardship for an enormously valuable and important Canadian audiovisual heritage. The 13,000 titles, the 500,000 still images, the extensive sound library are not simply an archive to be mined; they are the pulse of Canadian life and creativity across the years. We remain at all times firmly committed to serving the public good.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The NFB will deliver on its vision and mission by means of the following strategic objectives:

- 1. CREATIVE LEADERSHIP AND PROGRAMMING EXCELLENCE** that will make the NFB the key reference point globally for innovation and creation in social issue documentary, community-engaged media, alternative drama and auteur animation for and across all platforms.
- 2. WIDE ACCESSIBILITY AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT** that will make the works of the NFB readily and widely accessible to Canadian and international audiences on all relevant platforms of the day and that will promote public, socially inclusive discourse.
- 3. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION** that will serve as a foundation to enable NFB to deliver on its mandate into the future in programming, distribution, new business development, outreach and preservation of its audiovisual heritage.
- 4. ORGANIZATIONAL RENEWAL** that will make the NFB a model for the creative organization of the 21st century, an organization that is a crucible for creative innovation, that values its employees, works in a timely and transparent way with its industry and community partners, delivers value to Canadians, is environmentally responsible and is flexible, efficient and effective in its structure and work processes.
- 5. FIRM FINANCING** that will put the NFB on a sound financial basis to deliver on its mandate.

1. CREATIVE LEADERSHIP AND PROGRAMMING EXCELLENCE

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To exercise the NFB's leadership as a world reference point for innovation and creation of social issue documentary, community-engaged media, alternative drama and auteur animation, for and across all platforms.

To maintain and strengthen the NFB's ability to identify, develop and mentor the talent and creative skills of emerging filmmakers and Aboriginal, regional, linguistic and ethnocultural communities.

The NFB is at its best when it takes risks. We serve the industry and Canada when we eschew the ordinary, the formulaic and the standard; when we push boundaries; when we reinvent form and experiment with grammars for new technologies; when we search out the stories that aren't being told; when we are doing what cannot be done at all or done readily in the private sector. In the words of Quebec filmmaker Jean-Claude Labrecque, we are at our finest when we understand that we are condemned to be original.

How do we make it happen? The NFB, in the best sense of the word, is a niche player. It is not a generalist production studio that will churn out equally dramatic series, factual entertainment or lifestyle programming. It operates at the high end of production in very particular spheres. We will focus our programming strategies in five broad areas:

- I. Emerging filmmaker programs**
- II. Community-based media**
- III. Innovative programming**
- IV. Nationally significant audiovisual works**
- V. NFB heritage collections**

The guiding values for each of those areas will be talent, social relevance, authenticity, innovativeness and audacity. Diversity of voices underscores everything we do. Each project must answer the question: Why is this an NFB project? Each must demonstrate an ambition to be the best in its field. Not in a region, not in Canada. In the world! We will measure ourselves against the best work being done anywhere in the world. In everything we do.

I. Emerging filmmaker programs

The NFB will continue to extend the work it has done in the last few years in developing low-cost, highly effective programs that fill the gap between the film and training schools and first professional production experience. Short film programs like Momentum (documentary) and Hothouse (animation) have pioneered an integration of master classes and full professional production to train the next generation of artists and artisans. Such programs have allowed for innovative ways of involving underserved communities. First Stories, Second Stories, Wapikoni mobile and the Nunavut Animation Lab, for instance, have nurtured emerging filmmakers in Aboriginal communities. And they have done so in partnership with a range of other institutions, including provincial agencies, broadcasters and independent production companies. These programs are among the very best in the world. They respond to a specific need—allowing new artists to develop their voice in a professional milieu.

Over the next five years these programs will be nurtured, constantly revitalized and adapted to new technologies. We will extend their reach more broadly into all regions of the country. In particular, we will explore the use of technology to extend the reach of such programs into more physically remote areas of the country. We will create a nationwide database of this pool of emerging talent. We will put in place programs to develop career paths for the most promising of the new talent. We will solidify current partners and explore new partners, for example Telcos, for emerging filmmaker programs for mobile shorts or cross-platform content. We will brand and trademark these programs and we will look at exporting the brand into the international marketplace to enrich the experience for new Canadian creators.

II. Community-based media

The NFB is inscribed in the history books for its groundbreaking work in creating social media. The Challenge for Change program was groundbreaking in form, content and its ability to engage communities in dialogue. The NFB, like no other organization, can connect to communities at a grassroots level and create new forms of media. The Filmmaker-in-Residence (FIR) project, for example, works with St. Michael's Hospital's inner city health care unit. Wapikoni mobile, a mobile studio, gives young people on remote reserves a voice. Such programs are redefining community-engaged media for the digital era and in the process are setting the new

global standard for such work. Community-based media addresses, in an immediate and direct way, issues of relevance, social cohesion and the unique role of a public producer and distributor. This is work of enormous value but no market basis. It is a social entrepreneurship that has changed lives, improved communities and given hope.

In the coming five years we will strengthen the work we do with community-based media. We will adapt the approaches developed in FIR and Wapikoni to different communities and different situations. We will not repeat formulas but look to setting up projects that respond to the specificities of communities. We will explore how new technologies can become enabling tools.

We will break new ground by creating new forms of expression and by empowering new kinds of creators. We will extend the reach of our partners from the community to the national level. We will support and welcome academic research to verify the beneficial social impact of such work. We will look to make them sustainable within the community after we have finished our work. As with the emerging filmmaker programs, we will brand these programs and extend them into the international arena. We will be the instigator and driving force for the first international congress of community-based media.

III. Innovative programming

The NFB must distinguish itself by the originality of its work. The brand will be recognized not because of a house style that harkens back to the old stereotype of bland, boring and didactic. On the contrary, it will be recognized because of the distinctiveness of each work, work that must set the standard in whatever sphere it operates. We cannot afford to do, say, a traditional television documentary simply because of a worthy subject. Unless it stands out, it is out. While retaining the central focus on social relevance, we will be programming work that has a unique signature and an utterly fresh perspective on the world. It will be work that breaks new ground in content, form and creative use of technology. We will do so in a number of areas.

>>> Theatrical documentary

Over the last five years theatrical documentaries have become a staple of cinematic offerings. Documentaries by Michael Moore and such celebrated films as *March of the Penguins*, *What Remains of Us*, *The Corporation*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *The Invisible Nation*, *Manufactured Landscapes* and *Thieves of Innocence* have changed the documentary landscape. However, both in terms of funding and editorially, there is a gap in how the market can serve creators and the art form of the theatrical documentary. Apart from a limited pilot program, television remains the key driver for documentary financing, and the needs of the television documentary are different from those of the feature documentary. Success in this area, like any other, requires consistent and ongoing production of such films.

The NFB will remain committed to being a principal player in the world of feature docs, providing the kind of support editorially and financially from the outset that is not available in the current system. We will enter into partnerships with theatrical distributors to develop a pool of theatrical feature documentaries. We will produce or co-produce between five and ten theatrical documentaries (combined English and French) in each production cycle. In partnership with the Canadian Film Centre we will put in place advanced training for the development of theatrical documentary filmmakers. We will create a similar partnership with a Francophone partner. We will create a series of workshops on the art of the theatrical documentary to be presented in the major production centres across the country and to be made available to all producers via webcast or other technological means.

>>> **Television documentary**

Television is not going away anytime soon. Despite the erosion and fragmentation of audiences, television will, for the life of this strategic plan, remain a powerful medium of communication reaching a great number of Canadians and audiences worldwide. Television, however, is also a great consumer of product. With hundreds of channels to feed, it has a voracious appetite. Factual programming or entertainment is a staple of many of those channels. Yet, the serious documentary has limited outlets and there are even fewer for auteur animation.

The challenge for the NFB is to have a distinctive presence that will stand out in the tidal wave of product; to present unique programming that could not have been done easily in the private sector; to create an enriching experience that serves our core mandate for Canadian and international audiences.

We will do so by creating trail-blazing programming, programming that constantly redefines the very notion of what a television program is. In the way that HBO has recast television drama in the United States through creative risk taking, the NFB will do so with the television documentary. For example, a three-hour history of the Great Depression in Canada leaves the standard approach when it becomes the first such documentary series to be done completely in animation. We will continue to option and adapt non-fiction books that have broken new ground and have something important to say about the world today. We will undertake projects that are the first forays into untouched crucial social issues or bring a radical new light to such issues. We will commit to longitudinal documentary work, projects that may require a year or more in filming to tell the story.

>>> **Other documentary formats**

While theatrical, television and various new media platforms will account for the great majority of NFB's documentary output, we will remain open to other possibilities that meet the fundamental criteria of social relevance and creative excellence. Thus, for example, we will produce for DVD release *The NFB Presents: The Art of the Documentary*. This project will gather some of the world's greatest documentary filmmakers to discuss the essence of making documentaries. It will form the first in a series of DVDs to look at the art and craft of documentary filmmaking. We will also investigate doing a parallel DVD series on animation and on community-engaged filmmaking. We will create a short-form program for experienced documentary filmmakers and established creators from other media as a means of testing new approaches and new ideas in documentary filmmaking, a kind of ongoing film laboratory.

>>> **School formats**

Rebuilding the connection with Canadian youth is of enormous importance to the future of the NFB and to the future of this country. We will put in place a plan that will allow for the formatting of our work, by such means as chapterized DVDs, film excerpts, specially edited compilations and so on, to be more directly useful in the classroom.

>>> **Auteur animation**

The NFB has always been the champion and the voice for auteur animation. In the last five years alone we have had three Oscar nominations and two wins for our animation. Short-form auteur animation has no viable financial model for private sector creation. NFB's work is truly addressing a significant market failure and in the process providing Canada and Canadians with some of its greatest successes in the world of film. The NFB will remain committed to short-form auteur animation and to retaining our international leadership in this art form. We will push into new areas of exploration, in particular in stereoscopic animation. Stereoscopy in live action and animation is on the cusp of becoming prevalent as a cinematic and televisual offering. We will develop a strategy for stereoscopy that will put the NFB in a leadership position in terms of creative mastery of the technology.

>>> **Alternative feature drama**

The NFB has been instrumental in the creation of a dramatic film industry in this country. Claude Jutra, Denys Arcand, John N. Smith, Jean Beaudin, Don Owen, Cynthia Scott, Gilles Groulx and Zacharias Kunuk have, at the NFB or in co-production with the NFB, fashioned an authentic and unparalleled Quebec and Canadian cinema characterized by an, at times, breathless breaking of boundaries, a marriage of documentary form to dramatic storytelling, and a readiness to take risks by eschewing conventional Hollywood norms. Today the context has changed, with new mechanisms, that were not available in the past, in place to develop and promote a Canadian cinema.

The NFB does not have the resources to be a major player in the feature film world. However, there is a niche that remains unfilled, that is higher risk and that is predicated on discovering new forms of cinematic storytelling, i.e., the world of low budget, unscripted, improvised drama. It is a particular approach that the NFB pioneered in the 1980s—in essence *Dogma* before *Dogma*—and now is the right time to revitalize the form. It is drama that can get at roots of vital social stories impossible for ethical or other reasons to tell through normal documentary means. It integrates the best of documentary practice, community media with drama, to create a unique and powerful art form. Over the next five years we will produce between five and ten such films, a significant body of work that will define the genre.

>>> **New media content**

The world is digital. The shift away from traditional viewing experiences is happening at an ever increasing pace. Engaging with content online or through mobiles and other hand-held devices has already overtaken traditional television viewing among the younger demographic and is moving rapidly up with other age groups. Over the life of this strategic plan it is estimated that nearly 75% of Canadians will be active Internet users and that almost 95% of Canadian households will have broadband access. Currently, close to 60% of Canadians own a cellphone; that too is expected to grow significantly over the next five years. As more Canadians engage with the digital world, they will expect a full range of offerings, including audiovisual programming. Interactivity, creative control, ability to watch programs anywhere and at any time are becoming the drivers of viewer choice. Canadians want, need and have a right to expect Canadian content on these new platforms. They have a right to expect original media-rich content that responds to the determinants of those platforms. They have a right to expect it in both official languages and wherever possible in Aboriginal languages as well. Currently, the ten most visited Canadian Web sites are U.S. owned, although some have or are creating Canadian branches, e.g., YouTube.ca, Google.ca, etc. The dominant language on the Web by far is English.

There is a clear need for alternative choices. There is also a need to provide a place for experimentation, a place where artists can develop the appropriate grammars for the new technologies, a place for public presence in a context where there are only embryonic funding models for production and uncertain business models, for an ongoing new media presence for programming. The NFB can fill the gap of these market failures by staking out a space for the public voice in the digital realm. We will bring the same values of social relevance, artistic integrity, innovation and risk taking to our work here. We have already pioneered socially engaged networking with sites like CITIZEN*Shift* and Parole citoyenne. We will look at how to position these efforts to become world leaders of their kind.

We were the first in Canada, with our partner Bravo!Fact and independent production companies Foundry Films and Marblemedia, to develop original programming for mobiles. We will continue to develop and produce new, original content for mobile platforms. We will develop new international partnerships for the development of mobile and other new media content.

The NFB has also pioneered cross-platform approaches to programming with a focus on our hallmarks of social engagement and creative innovation. We launched successful international competitions at MIP, the Sheffield Documentary Festival and the Singapore Factual Forum, making Canada a recognized and valued international leader in the digital domain. We will continue to innovate in this regard. We will bring a multiplatform, digital focus to our overall programming process. We will look at each project as potentially a "media universe." This does not mean that each project suddenly has mobile, Web, hand-held applications. It means that we will think clearly and creatively about what are the appropriate ways a project can be multiplatform. Some may have many such extensions; others may best serve as stand-alone, traditional film.

IV. Nationally significant audiovisual works

Among the most important work in the NFB catalogue have been projects created for important national or international events. Labyrinth, NFB's contribution to Expo 67, remains a highlight of the creative effervescence that marked Canada's centenary. At the Osaka World Fair at the Canadian pavilion the NFB unveiled the first Imax film. NFB's support was instrumental in developing 250 films for the first international gathering under UN auspices on human settlement. In 1976, Jean-Claude Labrecque led a team of 168 people to create a stunning new look at the Olympic Games. *Rights from the Heart* gave animated life to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The NFB intends to continue and revitalize this tradition for the 21st century. We will approach these projects as a way of showcasing the best in Canadian creative work. These projects will often be a joint effort of the English and French programs.

The NFB will enter into a partnership with the Vancouver Olympic Committee to create a project using new digital media to engage Canadians across the country in the Olympic spirit. The NFB will undertake a number of projects to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Quebec City, including a groundbreaking stereoscopic installation. The NFB will consider other such projects on their merits and with the understanding that NFB's values will be determining criteria.

V. NFB heritage collections

The NFB is the steward of one of the world's great audiovisual collections; it is an invaluable heritage for Canadians and for the world. Over the past few years a number of important collections were released most notably the collected works of Norman McLaren. This work involved major re-mastering as well as production of enriching added-value material. The release of the works of the great documentarist and cinematic poet Pierre Perrault was accompanied by a retrospective of his works at the Toronto International Film Festival.

There have been important releases of the works of Michel Brault and the documentaries of Denys Arcand. We will continue this work by developing a strategic plan for the release of added-value NFB classics. Among the first will be the collected works of the great First Nations filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin.

2. Wide Accessibility and Democratic Engagement

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To make the works of the NFB and its partners readily and widely accessible to Canadian and international audiences on all relevant platforms.

To reflect Canada (and matters of interest to Canadians) to Canadians and encourage discourse, social debate and the democratic engagement of Canadians.

To ensure that this unique collection of works remains accessible by renewing lapsed rights.

From its founding the NFB has been concerned about its relation to its audience, which meant two things: making the films accessible and making the screenings a starting point for social interaction and change. Through the '40s and early '50s, travelling projectionists and partnerships with community groups ensured a large grassroots audience for films that reflected Canada to Canadians—Canadian subject matter that was unavailable from any other source. The travelling projectionists were also social facilitators, leading discussions on the critical issues depicted in the films. By the mid-'50s, audiences had shifted to a new technology...television. The NFB shifted its main distribution focus to the new medium without ever losing sight of its commitment to communities and to the educational sector. The budget cuts of the mid-'90s led to the weakening of those community links. Consequently, the NFB has struggled to find its rightful place in front of Canadians. Increasingly, Canadians have been saying, "We love the work you're doing, but where can we see your films?"

Over the last five years the NFB has put in a number of mechanisms to respond to that question. Together, the CineRobotheque in Montreal and the Mediatheque in Toronto welcome over 200,000 Canadians annually. In addition, we have made films available to universities and colleges across the country through the Canarie fibre-optic link and strengthened our links with the classroom. We are currently delivering up to six million views of NFB works in Canadian schools. An online store is supplemented with a 1-800 line for orders. A proprietary DVD-on-demand capacity has increased individual DVD sales. We have made a renewed commitment to community screenings. And most of the recent NFB films have been available on television, but in the flood of TV product over hundreds of channels the specificity of the NFB work and the aspect of social interaction have tended to be lost.

Today, we have the opportunity to reach all Canadians in ways that have not been available to the NFB since its founding. It is a cornerstone of this strategic plan to make NFB films, this unique collection of works that truly serve the national interest, available on a daily basis to the majority of Canadians. Furthermore, we will work to provide Canadians an enriched media experience that is interactive, dynamic and socially engaged. We will do so by taking full advantage of new digital technologies for distributing, marketing and interacting with Canadians. We will also use new digital technologies to extend NFB's reach in the international arena.

These will be the principal features of an accessibility strategy:

- I. Online distribution mechanisms**
- II. E-cinema**
- III. Other digital platforms (cellphones, iPods, etc.)**
- IV. Traditional platforms (cinema, video outlets, television)**
- V. Community screenings**
- VI. Renewed and revitalized education outreach**

Central to this is a refocused marketing strategy. There are enormous demands on our marketing. At any given time there are over 200 projects demanding marketing support. We will refashion how we deliver marketing and communications support to be more targeted and more effective with limited resources. We will adapt our marketing structures and be more creative in using the evolving digital channels and tools available, such as viral marketing campaigns. We will also be more focused on the marketing intentions and expectations for any given production or project from the outset.

Equally important will be a carefully structured plan to finance the renewal of lapsed rights. We have enormous technological capacity to save these heritage works from physical degradation. However, every year we are in danger of losing works because the rights lapse and the business model is inadequate to justify rights renewal. It is vital that we put in place a financing plan to ensure that these works remain available to future generations of Canadians.

I. Online distribution

The last few years have seen a growing movement of audiences, particularly young audiences, to the Internet. Services such as YouTube and Google Video have proved spectacularly successful in building large international audiences for their offerings. The BBC launched its successful iPlayer, making its broadcast offerings available to viewers free for seven days after broadcast and thereafter available for purchase. American broadcasters are increasingly making their programming available online. Hollywood is under increasing pressure to do so and is experimenting with various partnerships such as with iTunes. New services like Jarman, Joost and Babelgum are coming on stream with rich video programming.

The NFB has been quick to make a range of offerings available online through such programs as Parole citoyenne, CITIZEN*Shift* and the Memory Fund projects. However, there has never been a systematized, focused NFB brand offering. We will now do so through the streaming project, our online store and through exploring the possibility of delivering NFB branded channels on other services such as Joost.

II. E-cinema

In January of 2008 the NFB launched one of Canada's first e-cinema networks, a pilot project that linked five Francophone communities in Acadie. The NFB provided them with high-end HD digital projectors and servers. Weekly NFB programming was delivered overnight via high-speed Internet. For the first time underserved communities were able to experience a range of rich, alternative cinematic cultural offerings in their own language. The first results have been highly positive with a high rate of attendance and audience appreciation. We propose to put in place a plan to finance and roll out a national e-cinema network that can deliver NFB and other cultural offerings to poorly served communities across the country.

III. Other digital platforms

The release of the iPhone in 2007 was a North American breakthrough in delivering video content to mobile platforms. Although already proving to be increasingly popular in Europe and Asia, video on mobile has been a harder sell in North America, particularly Canada. However, it is likely a matter of time before that changes. The auctioning of an additional mobile spectrum in 2008 will increase mobile competition and thus opportunities for video content. As new devices like the iPhone become more widely available, there will be increased consumer pressure for additional video content. The NFB has to be ready to deliver its content wherever its audiences are. The NFB has already pioneered in this area in creating groundbreaking original content for such platforms. We will continue to do so, as well as ensuring that NFB branded channels are available on mobile platforms.

IV. Traditional platforms

Traditional media will not disappear any time soon. It will continue to play a crucial role, if not dominant role, in the audiovisual landscape for some time to come. We will ensure that we maintain our presence on such platforms. However, we will strive to distinguish NFB's work more aggressively, through branded strands, for example, on the Documentary Channel and TV5, through focused promotional campaigns for our cinema releases and NFB carousels in video outlets.

V. Community screenings

From its earliest days community screenings have been a hallmark of NFB's engagement with Canadians. *Bacon, the film* was seen by hundreds of communities across Quebec, many with the filmmaker in attendance. *Discordia* was taken to university campuses across the country. *Inuuvunga*, created by young Inuit, was shown to many communities across the North. *Community Mediation* was a bold experiment providing communities with means to solve community problems in innovative ways. *The Peacekeepers*, with the help of the Department of Foreign Affairs, went on a cross-Canada tour. Such community screenings may be seen by several thousands, as opposed to the hundreds of thousands on television, yet may have a more profound and lasting impact. A screening in a remote Aboriginal reserve of a Wapikoni film can change lives. Such events help to knit together the Canadian social fabric. They will continue to be a crucial part of NFB's community strategy, but by aligning the screenings with other distribution and promotional activities, the impact will be maximized. In most cases we will undertake such screenings with community partners who have deep roots into their communities and who are eager to work with the NFB. We will also reinvigorate our relationship with local libraries.

VI. Educational outreach

Our young people are our future. The Canadian perspectives that the NFB can deliver are ever more crucial in the globalized YouTube world. Young people will become an even more crucial audience for the NFB. Over the last few years the NFB has increased sales to the educational sector. We have also seen growth in our educational activities at the CineRobotheque and the Mediatheque. The Memory Fund projects have made their own valuable connections with the educational system. It is now time to create a more focused educational strategy linking all our educational efforts into a cohesive whole to ensure that we are delivering recognizable and appreciated NFB experiences to all Canadian schoolchildren.

3. Digital Transformation

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To enable the NFB to deliver on its mandate into the future in programming, distribution, accessibility, business development and conservation of its audiovisual heritage by creating a financing, technological and rights renewal plan for the digitization of the NFB collection.

The digitization of NFB's audiovisual works is essential for the future of the NFB and for its ability to deliver programming and value to Canadians. Digitization is also essential for the preservation of NFB's rich Canadian heritage collection for future generations. Over the last five years the NFB has undertaken a range of projects to digitize parts of its collection. A significant part of that effort depended on funding from the Canada Culture Online Memory Fund. In that period close to 36% of the collection was digitized in one form or another. However, the time has come for a comprehensive digitization plan. Within the next year we will put in place a digital strategy that will:

- ~ Provide an environmental scan of best practices domestically and internationally
- ~ Prepare a comprehensive audit of NFB's digital catalogue
- ~ Establish a time frame and budget for the digitization of the complete NFB collection
- ~ Establish priority criteria for the digitization work
- ~ Establish technical standards and procedures for digitization
- ~ Establish processes for rights management and rights renewal
- ~ Establish a financing strategy for the digitization effort
- ~ Establish a process to ensure that all new productions will deliver a digital master

4. Organizational Renewal

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To make the NFB a model for the creative organization of the 21st century, an organization that is a crucible for creative innovation, that values its employees, respects the environment, works in a timely and transparent manner with its stakeholders, delivers value to Canadians and is flexible, efficient and effective in its structure and work processes.

The organization will continue to be guided by the principles of good governance and accountability to help forge a bond of confidence with Canadians.

To make the NFB an industry leader in implementing environmentally sustainable practices.

Media organizations today have to respond to very different environments, tasks and outputs. The linear, hierarchical, centralized organization is not able to respond efficiently and quickly enough to those challenges. Employees have a wealth of knowledge, talent and skills that may not be fully utilized in hierarchical structures.

The NFB is in the process of both creative and organizational renewal: the year 2008-2009 will mark the implementation of an updated Program Activity Architecture, as well as the Strategic Planning repositioning for the next five years. Throughout this process, the organization will be guided by the principles of good governance and accountability to help forge a bond of confidence with Canadians.

An important component of this strategic objective is the relocation of our Montreal headquarters to a more central location and to a building that is more reflective of the creative and innovative nature of the NFB.

The NFB subscribes to the Government of Canada's principles of good governance. In the *Federal Accountability Act*, the Government puts forward specific measures to increase accountability, transparency and oversight of government activities. At the NFB, analysis and compliance with the government's sound management requirements are ongoing processes as well as organizational priorities. The NFB is currently undergoing round V of the Management Accountability Framework assessment. The MAF assessment results will be used to evaluate the state of management practices within the organization and on priorities for management improvement.

Institutional norms on accountability, performance measurement, efficiency, effectiveness and long-term continuity remain absolutely vital. The NFB will develop an integrated audit and evaluation plan based on its risk assessment, providing full coverage of all our programs as well as evaluating the organizational reforms. We will also develop and publish performance indicators and integrate the management of information technology and performance measurement functions.

The NFB is increasingly shifting to work that demands cross-disciplinary, cross-departmental collaborative work groups and processes. The basis for a fully functioning creative organization includes:

- ~ Clearly articulated goals and priorities
- ~ Transparency and a free flow of information
- ~ Decentralized and delegated decision making
- ~ Clear expectations and performance measures
- ~ Defining and valuing risk taking and innovation in the workplace

- ~ Inclusiveness and engagement of all staff
- ~ Training

The NFB will work with leading experts in the area of environmental sustainability, developing an action plan to reduce or own environmental impact and also to develop, in collaboration with our industry partners, an environmental practices tool kit for the industry.

5. Firm Financing

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To anchor the NFB on a sound fiscal footing for the future.

In order to deliver on its mandate and responsibilities, the NFB needs to be anchored on a sound financial footing. The constant erosion of the organization's purchase power results in a constant reduction of its capacity to deliver value to Canadians. The NFB faces pressing capital needs to meet the additional challenges of digitization and transformation of production technology.

Over the planning period, the NFB will implement better financial planning and control mechanisms, to maximize internal efficiencies. The NFB will also focus on new areas of revenue generation, leverage partnerships in areas such as marketing to reduce costs and increase reach, and become more aggressive in our traditional distribution activities.

We will also seek out and develop private and public-sector partnerships in order to finance key strategic initiatives. We will prepare business cases to obtain additional funding for strategic initiatives, such as digitization, e-cinema, relocations.

However, all those efforts, no matter how successful, will not be enough to assure the long-term viability of the institution. Government has a fundamental responsibility to its citizens to ensure that one of the country's best-known, cherished and valuable cultural organizations is given the means to thrive in the years to come and remain a vibrant cultural legacy for our children and grandchildren. We will work with government to assess the needs of the NFB and put together a plan to ensure that its operating budgets are sufficient and indexed to deliver on its nation-building and nation-consolidating mandate.