

Library and Archives Canada

Three-year plan 2019 → 2022



Foreword

The exercise leading to the development of a three-year plan essentially includes some futurology. What will be our users' needs over the next three years, what will be the intellectual context and the technological innovations that will inform these needs, and what will be the milestones that a flagship institution such as Library and Archives Canada will need to set, to maintain its relevance beyond this very short 36-month period?

It seemed to us that the best way to conduct the foresight exercise was to consult as many players as possible: the Library and Archives Canada staff and our clients in the National Capital Region, of course, but also our Stakeholders' Forum, our university partners, our newly formed Youth Advisory Council, our employees and partners in the Halifax, Winnipeg and Vancouver regional offices, and, finally, to ensure that we have covered our vast country as widely as possible, the entire public, through an online survey.

The results of this consultation are reflected in the following pages. I take the main message to be that the relationship between our institution and its users is being radically redefined. The digital revolution has led to the rise of a culture of citizen participation: our users now see themselves more as partners than as consumers of services. This posture change is exactly what Library and Archives Canada's guardian figure,

the theorist Marshall McLuhan, predicted more than 50 years ago when he wrote, "There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew."

Indeed, under the influence of models developed by Amazon, Google and Wikipedia, our users are now ready to transcribe, translate, tag and describe our documents.¹ Moreover, the Canadians we consulted told us how the relocation, in 2024, of our public services to a joint facility shared with the Ottawa Public Library will also transform our relationship with the public; beyond the geography of the transition, the unprecedented marriage of a public library with a national library and archives has captured imaginations across the country.

The coming years will be crucial for Library and Archives Canada, and the very existence of the formidable network that participated in the development of this plan is, it seems to me, the best guarantee of our ability to meet—together—the challenges ahead.

Dr. Guy Berthiaume
Librarian and Archivist of Canada
April 2019

¹ *The Leading in the Digital World* report by the Council of Canadian Academies (Ottawa, February 2015) described this phenomenon well and highlighted its consequences.



Library and Archives Canada
Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

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Three-year plan **2019→2022**

Canada



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Également disponible en français sous le titre :
Plan triennal 2019-2022 de Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Electronic version of the plan is also available on our website:
bac-lac.gc.ca

For more information, contact
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The Marshall McLuhan Collection was included in UNESCO's Memory of the World Register. A joint project of Library and Archives Canada and the University of Toronto, this collection demonstrates the global significance of Canada's documentary heritage and the successes that can be achieved through cooperation and collaboration.

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Library and Archives Canada/John Reeves fonds/e008295857
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Our raison d'être: proud guardians of our story

The *Library and Archives of Canada Act*, which legislated the creation of Library and Archives Canada (LAC), was given Royal Assent on April 22, 2004. The Preamble to the Act explains the Parliament of Canada's rationale for the creation of our organization and encapsulates the significance and consequence of our role as the curators and keepers of Canada's story:



WHEREAS it is necessary that

a

the documentary heritage of Canada be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations;

b

Canada be served by an institution that is a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada as a free and democratic society;

c

that institution facilitate in Canada cooperation among the communities involved in the acquisition, preservation and diffusion of knowledge; and

d

that institution serve as the continuing memory of the government of Canada and its institutions.

This strategic plan lays out the foundation for our work for the next three years, but it also serves as an important reminder to our stakeholders, our employees and to all Canadians of the significant impact our organization has as “a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all.”

We are tasked with preserving and sharing the cultural, social and economic contributions of all Canadians to enrich our collective fount of knowledge. We are responsible for securing the records of the Government of Canada, supporting and safeguarding our free and democratic society by ensuring Canadians have the information they need to assure government transparency and accountability. We help to steward the acquisition, preservation and diffusion of knowledge here in Canada and abroad to drive the research and innovation that will benefit present and future generations. We support Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and contribute to the cause of social justice by serving as the continuing memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions, ensuring that the documentary records that led to our freedoms—and those that caused us to re-examine our principles—are preserved in perpetuity.

We believe our work is fundamental to the preservation of our democracy and to the success of our country.

We are Library and Archives Canada.

***“There are no
passengers on
Spaceship Earth.
We are all crew.”***

—Marshall McLuhan¹

Section 1

Our organization,
our clients,
our employees



1.1 OUR ORGANIZATION: EMBRACING CANADA'S PAST AND SUPPORTING CANADA'S FUTURE



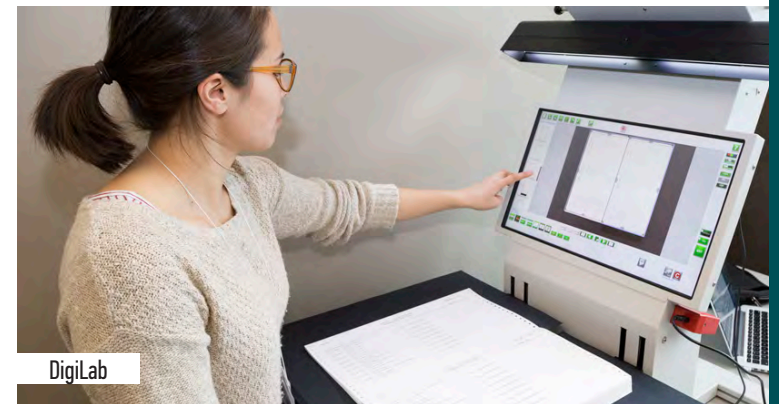
In 2022, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) will be celebrating 150 years of acquiring, processing, preserving, and providing access to Canada's documentary heritage. From the establishment of the Dominion Archives in 1872 to the creation of the National Library of Canada in 1953, through the joining of these two storied institutions into Library and Archives Canada in 2004 and on to today's "digital age,"² we have played a vital role. Our employees in the library and archives fields have been ensuring that Canadians are able to mine the treasures of their collective past to support the learning, creativity and innovation that fuels a vibrant and successful country.

Memory institutions are reimagining their place in a world where a lifetime of learning can be accessed in the palm of one's hand. The British Library notes that "we are living through a revolution in the creation, analysis and exploitation of data in all its forms, from the vast scientific and social datasets typically badged as 'big data' to the innovations already being derived from analysing digitised cultural content in the humanities."³ This data revolution has meant that improved online access to memory institutions is not only expected, it is considered a fundamental necessity.

The scope of LAC's collection underscores the significance of our role as a custodian of Canada's living history. The collection is commonly acknowledged to be the fourth largest in the world. LAC provides access to vast amounts of data and information such as censuses, genealogy and family history details, military and immigration records, and Indigenous documentary heritage. Beyond our physical assets, LAC presently holds almost 7 petabytes of information in electronic format; we are continually expanding this collection by acquiring and curating online publications and web-based data—a dizzying responsibility in a world where the creation of information is as easy as the click of a "post" button.

The realization of the commitments in the 2016–2019 Three-Year Plan resulted in more projects that expand LAC's collection through engagement and collaboration, while increasing access to Canadians. In that three-year period, 122 public events and 31 exhibitions were held across the country, significantly increasing LAC's reach and impact. DigiLab, launched in 2018, provides clients with free access to state-of-the-art digitization equipment and enables them to enhance LAC's collection. Within the first few months, more than 1,000 photographs and 24,000 pages of textual material were digitized and shared. Also in 2018, LAC completed the digitization of 622,290 First World War personnel files, which are all now available online. This was our largest mass digitization project ever, preserving for future generations one of Canada's most significant sets of historical documentary records. Through these and many other innovative projects introduced over the past three years, LAC has been successful in achieving, and even surpassing, its goals.

As we look toward 2022, we will continue to engage with our clients and partners to expand Canada's documentary heritage and increase access to our collections—even in the most remote areas of the country. We will focus on sustainability and adaptability, accelerating our efforts to digitize and preserve our collections. We will support our employees in their efforts to enhance their knowledge, skills, and



DigiLab



Public events



Team that digitized 622,290 CEF files

expertise to maximize the organization's impact. We will continue to collaborate and cooperate with the documentary heritage community in Canada and abroad to find cooperative solutions to enhance the world's documentary heritage—a critical building block of our collective future.



LAC works with publishers, producers and creators to collect material that is published in Canada each year: books, sheet music, sound recordings, documentary films, audiovisual recordings, journals, serials, and theses in analogue or digital format. In addition, the institution is constantly receiving transfers of historic records for preservation from across the 176 Government of Canada departments and agencies it serves.

1.2 OUR CLIENTS: EXPANDING CONTENT AND ACCESS TO EVERY CORNER OF THE COUNTRY

In the words of one Librarian and Archivist of Canada, “Preservation without access is simply hoarding.” Amusing, perhaps—but this reflects a fundamental truth: providing access to the collection is one of the critical elements of our mandate. As digital access is increasingly becoming the norm, ironically, visits to memory institutions and use of their physical collections is ever-increasing. Mirroring worldwide trends, Canadian institutions are experiencing increases in visits, both online and in-person. There has been a 34% increase in on-site visitors and a 52% rise in online visitors to heritage institutions between 2011 and 2015.⁴ Concurrently, on-site visits at several newly opened public libraries in Canada has dwarfed anticipated usage—an exciting consideration

for LAC and our partner, the Ottawa Public Library, as we plan the construction of an iconic new shared facility set to open in 2024.

LAC has also seen significant increases in online and on-site visits in recent years; programming to support and encourage increased awareness and usage among Canadians is a keystone of our way forward. By targeting new clients with refined services and seeking out new partners, we can use our collective expertise to expand our reach. We will look for innovative ways to connect with remote parts of Canada, to further engage Canadian youth, and to build upon our programming among Canada’s Indigenous communities. These targeted initiatives

The Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP) has provided funding for organizations across the country—from Port Edward, British Columbia to Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia to Iqaluit, Nunavut—to organize, preserve and share their collections. Groups include the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, the Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta, the Women’s College Hospital Foundation and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives. A new pillar of this successful program is the availability of additional support for communities and organizations in remote areas of Canada.

and collaborative partnerships will not only increase usage but will help us discover new parts of Canada's documentary heritage.

LAC nurtures and supports relationships with many communities across Canada. As a national library, we are both a partner and a supporter of Canada's libraries—sharing research, setting standards, delivering cataloguing services, providing forums for networking, and sharing ideas on improving collections and services. As a national archive, we preserve the collective documentary heritage of all Government of Canada institutions and ensure there is public access to government records, a critical requirement for the preservation of any free and democratic society. This requires significant planning and coordination with our fellow government partners to ensure critical documents, web content and other holdings are archived and accessible. As well, our collaborative approach to private (non-government) archives acquisitions requires constant discussions with potential donors—individuals and private organizations—and with other documentary heritage institutions.

Meanwhile, recent programming aimed at enhancing the documentary heritage of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities in Canada realized culturally significant additions to the collection.

LAC also plays important roles as both archivist and key collaborator with Canadian publishers, educational institutions, art galleries, and other memory institutions. For example, we have developed memorandums of understanding with nine Canadian universities, and we work collaboratively with many more to enable knowledge-sharing, research, and the development of our next generation of documentary heritage professionals.

LAC's mandate states that we must be "a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all." This strategic plan will help us increase the reach and impact of our organization beyond our traditional clients, and support engagement with all Canadians.

LAC supports numerous programs designed and implemented in collaboration with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation and their communities.

*The award-winning **Project Naming** initiative has digitized over **10,000 photographs** of Indigenous subjects, and over **2,500 previously unknown people and places** have been identified.*

Since 2017, an Indigenous Advisory Circle has provided guidance for new programs that help preserve Indigenous languages and documentary heritage enabling increased access to these critical assets:

Library and Archives Canada/Department of Health fonds/eo10969131





Library and Archives Canada/Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds/a185627 ↑

We Are Here: Sharing Stories is a program that digitizes LAC records containing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation related content such as treaties, photographs, and Indigenous-language dictionaries and lexicons.

Listen, Hear Our Voices offers support and services to Indigenous communities in the preservation of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation languages, with a focus on oral recordings.

1.3 OUR EMPLOYEES —OUR STRENGTH

LAC's employees acquire, process, preserve, and provide access to one of the largest documentary heritage collections in the world. This monumental undertaking would not be possible without the knowledge, experience, and expertise of our employees—the beating heart of the organization.

Our staff comprises some of the most respected librarians and archivists in Canada. Included in our ranks is a team of renowned preservationists; restoration specialists for art, books and other holdings; digitization and technology experts; communications professionals who support the public outreach that drives access; researchers; managers who oversee infrastructure projects; client services staff; employees with expertise in Indigenous culture; experts in international collaboration; corporate service professionals; and many others.

During consultations, LAC employees emphasized their desire to further our work towards the greening of our buildings and processes and to continue to foster environmental performance and management practices, a key tenant of LAC's sustainable

development goals. LAC's Preservation Centre in Gatineau, Quebec, has won numerous prestigious awards including The Outstanding Building of the Year (TOBY®) Award in the Corporate Facility category, and BOMA BEST® Gold Certification in 2018 for best practices in environmental performance and management. A key objective for LAC's new preservation centre, commonly called "Gatineau 2" among employees, is to meet strict LEED® standards.

The new preservation centre will be:

- 21,500 cubic metres (the equivalent of about 8.5 Olympic swimming pools) of collection storage capacity
- the largest preservation centre in the world equipped with an automated storage and retrieval system
- the first Net Zero Carbon archival centre in the Americas



Library and Archives Canada/Rosemary Gilliat Eaton fonds/e010973986
↓ Credit: Rosemary Gilliat Eaton



Library and Archives Canada/Rosemary Gilliat Eaton fonds/e010799962 ↑
Credit: Rosemary Gilliat Eaton



Library and Archives Canada/National Film Board of Canada fonds/a178998 ↑



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“We now live in a technologically prepared environment that blankets the earth itself.”

— Marshall McLuhan⁵

Section 2

Our strategic insights:

considering current trends
and targeting client needs



2.1 OUR CONTEXT: UNDERSTANDING THE EVOLVING ROLE AND EVER-INCREASING VALUE OF MEMORY INSTITUTIONS

Over the past decade, memory institutions from around the world have been re-examining their value and role as they consider the effects of the digital era. A remarkably consistent finding from studies of the monetary and cultural value of memory institutions' output is that libraries and archives are economically sound investments for society, and they are expected to deliver ever more services and increased access for their clients.

Here in Canada, for example, the Ottawa Public Library determined that they delivered \$5.17 in benefits for every \$1 invested in the library;⁶ similarly, the Toronto Public Library delivered \$5.63 of economic impact for every \$1 spent.⁷ The British Library delivered an economic value of £4,90 for every £1 invested and generated a net economic value of £419m annually for its users and UK society.⁸

It is not only through economics that the world measures the impact of its cultural institutions. It would indeed be a "static and sterile" world without galleries, libraries, archives and museums to fuel creativity, stimulate innovation and embolden and educate its citizens.⁹ While measuring broad societal benefits from cultural institutions may be considered abstract, there is evidence that benefits can be measured in this age of digitization and open access. While the use of big data drives sales and customer loyalty, one of the more exciting benefits may be its use in creating knowledge and supporting innovation. We are already seeing early benefits of this new environment, where information technologies allow researchers to quickly complete their tasks, some of which were previously impossible.¹⁰

As we plan for the next three years, we do so with confidence knowing that our organization offers Canadians sound return on their investment; that our commitment to the digitization of our collections will support broader access in concert with the worldwide trend toward open knowledge; that our commitment to extend our reach to new users supports the enhancement of Canada's digital

heritage; and that we are assembling the building blocks for the creation of knowledge to fuel the innovations that will support our future.

“The objective is not to do more with less; it is to do more with more —more partnerships, more collaborations.”

**Maureen Sawa,
Greater Victoria
Public Library**

2.2 OUR COLLABORATORS: UNDERSTANDING CLIENT NEEDS THROUGH CONSULTATION AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Collaboration and cooperation are essential components of LAC's efforts to build a comprehensive collection of Canada's documentary heritage. In a country as vast and diverse as Canada, it would be impossible to build a truly representative collection without insights and contributions from those Canadians who best understand the worth of their own cultural treasures.

LAC benefits from the advice of its advisory committees as it works to continually improve services and refine strategies. These committees provide our organization with ongoing support and advice on almost every aspect of our operations, including public services and programming, acquisition strategies, and tactics for successful engagement with Canadians. We also create advisory groups, when warranted, to support specific programming including one created for our Documentary Heritage Communities Program. As LAC continually revisits policy and procedures to support improvements and innovation, we are able to draw on the combined capability of Canada's most experienced and knowledgeable librarians, archivists, heritage professionals, and digitization experts to reflect the sector's best practices for acquisition, preservation and client access.

As an active member in international networks, including the International Council of Archives and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, LAC has garnered greater visibility for its collections and expertise. This has led to working collaborations with international institutions such as the British Library and Bibliothèque nationale de France, and over 30 international delegations to discuss matters such as crowdsourcing activities and archival practices for government records. LAC's collaboration with international networks and institutions supports critical collective initiatives, provides

for the sharing of best practices and creates opportunities to represent Canadian documentary heritage on the world stage.

On the national front, a significant undertaking of recent years, the National Heritage Digitization Strategy is a collaboration among Canadian libraries, archives, museums, educational institutions, government and cultural organizations, created to spearhead a transformational shift supporting the digitization and sharing of all Canada's heritage holdings. Another exciting collaborative initiative, led by LAC in partnership with the Canadian Museums Association, is a series of Canadian GLAM summits (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) to explore synergies and opportunities within the sector.

These collaborative relationships provided LAC with insight and knowledge as it considered this strategic plan. We conducted a series of consultations to gather input and feedback from the documentary community, our academic partners, and library and archival experts. Joint consultations involving LAC employees and key partners were also held in Vancouver, Winnipeg and in Halifax. Our stakeholders indicated that the relationship between LAC and its clients should continue to be redefined as one of partnership and collaboration. They told us that the organization's role as a sector leader and enabler of collaboration among memory institutions must be supported, and that LAC should continue to leverage technology through digitization initiatives, including client-focused programs such as DigiLab to increase engagement with clients. These and other key messages shared during the consultations form the foundation of this strategic plan.

OUR ADVISORS

LAC works with a number of advisory committees:

- The Stakeholders Forum advises on LAC's strategic, policy and operational directions
- The Acquisitions Advisory Committee provides advice and recommendations on acquisition policies and strategies
- The Services Consultation Committee provides guidance on the direction and priorities of LAC's public services
- The Public Programming Advisory Committee helps guide LAC's program of events and exhibitions
- The Indigenous Advisory Circle guides LAC in its actions related to Indigenous heritage
- The Youth Advisory Council provides insights into the visibility of, access to, and relevance of Canada's documentary heritage for Canadian youth



We wanted to better understand how to successfully connect with our next generation of users, so we decided to ask them directly! Our new Youth Advisory Council, formed in 2018, will play a significant role in helping us design new programming directed at Canadian youth and assisting us in pinpointing specific ways we can foster more interest in our collections among their peers. Already, the Council has increased our awareness of the interest of their generation in our contemporary holdings.

“The business of art is no longer the communication of thoughts or feelings which are to be conceptually ordered, but a direct participation in an experience.”

—Marshall McLuhan¹¹

Section 3

Our strategic priorities
2019–2022





Our strategic priorities 2019–2022

INTRODUCTION

This is a pivotal moment for LAC. We are revitalizing our institution. We are changing our relationship with Canadians. And we are positioning ourselves to be at the forefront of an extraordinary revitalization of memory institutions worldwide as public support for and interest in documentary heritage surges.

Four years ago, we implemented a series of initiatives to make our organization more visible, more approachable, and more engaged. We reached out to Canadians in a new way, and we were overwhelmed with the response. There is a thirst for documentary heritage that, rather than being eroded by the digital age, is being propelled by new technologies.

We have learned a great deal over the past four years, and we have been emboldened by Canadians' enthusiasm for our new programming. The story of Canada—the story we are tasked with preserving—is the story of Canadians themselves. The following goals and strategic priorities are the framework upon which we will build a detailed work plan for the next three years that will allow us to capture and preserve those stories—sustainably and efficiently—for generations to come.

This strategic plan lays the foundation for expanding access to our holdings to more Canadians than ever before. It supports collaboration with national and international memory institutions to expand and enhance our documentary heritage at home and abroad. And it provides the heart of our organization—our employees—with the direction they need to realize our goals.

3.1 ENGAGED CITIZENS. ACCESSIBLE HOLDINGS.

Goal

We will increase access to our collection and expand opportunities for the public to enhance LAC's holdings

We are curators of Canada's ever-evolving national story, which must reflect all Canadians to truly represent this vast, diverse, compelling and complex country. This strategic plan marks a continuing re-imagining of our role in gathering the building blocks of that story and in bringing it to as many Canadians as possible. We are committed to expanding opportunities for all Canadians to share their part of the Canadian experience with us, and we will work tirelessly to ensure our holdings are accessible to all. We will innovate, we will collaborate, and we will increase our outreach to Canadians—whether they reside in our major cities or in our smallest towns.

STRATEGIES

- 1** We will increase and enhance interactive opportunities for individuals, organizations, and communities of all types and locations to contribute information about our library and archival collections.
- 2** We will make LAC collections better known through outreach, promotion and public programming.
- 3** We will increase access to LAC collections (Government of Canada's records, published heritage, private archives and web resources) and services, both digitally and in physical locations across Canada and through increased and improved public services, exhibits, and events.
- 4** We will continually improve our outreach and services by capturing and using feedback from current and potential clients and partners.

3.2 ADAPTABLE ORGANIZATION. SUSTAINABLE COLLECTION.

Goal

We will steward responsible growth of the collection and implement safeguards to preserve it for future generations

We will build a collection that fully reflects our country's citizens, culture and achievements while ensuring that we have the resources and technology to safeguard our holdings for future generations. We will protect our democracy by safeguarding the information that assures government transparency and accountability. We will be bold and innovative, embracing both proven methods and emerging technologies to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. We will manage change proactively, including the building of and transition to our new preservation centre and our joint public space with the Ottawa Public Library. We will empower our employees by providing them with the resources and support they need to realize our goals, and to remain as leaders in our sector.

STRATEGIES

- 1** We will design our acquisition strategies in a way that ensures our collection captures an accurate record of the Government of Canada and also reflects the diversity of Canadian experience.
- 2** We will expand our relationships with the Government of Canada's Information Management community to ensure dynamic transfer of historical digital content to LAC and its long-term preservation and access.
- 3** We will embrace emerging technologies to accelerate our digital transformation, increase efficiency, enhance citizen access, and improve the sustainability of our collections.
- 4** We will cultivate a culture that thrives on change. We will embrace the transition to our new facilities, capitalizing on this unique opportunity to enhance services and public access, and realize improvements in collection management.
- 5** We will support and encourage excellence by providing our employees with opportunities to expand their knowledge, skills, and expertise through internal and external collaboration and engagement.

3.3 COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS. MAGNIFIED RESULTS.

Goal

We will seek out and support collective solutions for a more cohesive and impactful documentary heritage community at home and abroad

We will build upon the upward momentum in visits to and usage of memory institutions worldwide by supporting and expanding our collaborations both nationally and internationally. We will facilitate knowledge-sharing to advance the development of better tools, processes and standards for the sector and to stimulate and support learning opportunities. We will vigorously support expanded sharing of and access to documentary heritage holdings here in Canada and around the world. We will provide leadership where it can increase impact, and we will position ourselves at the forefront of the global documentary heritage community.

STRATEGIES

- 1** We will pursue greater coordination with our federal partners and those within the GLAM community to avoid duplication of effort and pool our collective knowledge to improve tools and products and provide increased access to heritage material of the highest quality.
- 2** We will seek out and identify new collaborators while continuing to work with established partners to build better national and international networks for sharing and access, expanding our reach and impact here at home and increasing Canada's presence on the world stage.
- 3** We will collaborate closely with Indigenous communities to better understand and preserve Indigenous heritage, and will implement the actions identified in the Indigenous Heritage Action Plan developed in collaboration with LAC's Indigenous Advisory Circle.
- 4** We will continue to nurture and expand LAC's relationships with academic, cultural, and memory institutions, to create opportunities for learning, knowledge-sharing, and skills development.

Our success: measuring results and impact

By examining past successes and challenges, studying current trends, and consulting with stakeholders, clients and employees, we have developed a strategic plan that is guided by our past and shaped to move us into the future.



Now, the real work begins.

A reporting framework with clear and measurable performance indicators will keep the plan on track. These indicators and their impact will be assessed regularly to support evidence-based decisions, identify needed adjustments, and maximize success.

LAC is committed to transparency and openness and will share performance results quarterly.

Implementing this plan is not a solitary effort! We will continue to engage with our advisory committees, our networks, our clients, and the public, while providing the leadership and direction expected from a national institution. LAC is well positioned to continue its path of excellence in acquiring, processing, preserving and providing access to a national collection that will make all Canadians proud.

Endnotes

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