

The background features a series of concentric, semi-transparent grey circles that create a ripple effect. A prominent vertical orange bar runs down the center of the page, intersecting the circles. The overall design is modern and geometric.

ASSOCIATION OF
NOVA SCOTIA
MUSEUMS

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2025



2023-2025 Strategic Plan

To be presented at June 2023 AGM
for final reporting at 2026 AGM

This project was made possible with support from the
One-time Emerging Culture and Heritage Initiatives Program



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1. Introduction

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) is a registered not-for-profit organization. Originally established in 1976 as the Federation of Museums, Heritage, and Historical Societies, the name was changed to the Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage in 1982. In 2007, to underscore the organization's refined focus on the province's museum sector, the organization assumed its current name - the Association of Nova Scotia Museums.

ANSM's 2019-2023 strategic plan was developed by two consultants, A. L. Arbic Consulting and Barbara Richman, who specialize in the planning for organizations in the heritage and cultural sector. The plan was formulated based on extensive consultations with ANSM board, staff, members, community partners, funders, and stakeholders. It also included an in-depth analysis of ANSM's finances and membership. This well-researched plan could not anticipate the challenges that ANSM would face during the 2019-2023 period - namely the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes on the museum sector. Consequently, the 2019-2023 strategic plan did not reach its full potential. This left ANSM many opportunities to build on this not-fully-realized plan for the next strategic plan.

In consultation with strategic planning experts, the 2023-2025 strategic plan was developed. This plan was shortened to 3 years to allow ANSM to be more responsive to the changing landscape - both in the museum sector and internally to ANSM. It was decided the new plan would be guided by both the previous plan and a facilitated strategic planning retreat; However, the final plan would be written internally. To facilitate this strategic planning process, ANSM worked with Mind's Eye Creative at a two-day ANSM staff and board retreat. The final plan was approved by the ANSM AGM on June 16, 2023.

2. ANSM's Foundation Statements

Land Acknowledgement and Commitment:

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory in mutual respect and gratitude.

ANSM is a members-based organization that supports museums throughout the province. Due to historical and systemic biases, museums do not currently represent the experience of all Nova Scotians. The loss of language and the colonization of cultural identity, including Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, Acadian, and Gaelic communities, has resulted in incomplete and inaccurate representations of cultural groups.

Narratives relating to Indigenous peoples, Nova Scotia as the birthplace of African presence in Canada for over 400 years, including enslavement and abolition, and the role of women, people of colour, LGBTQ2S+ people, and recent refugees and immigrants have not been adequately represented or made accessible.

We—ANSM, museums, and the greater heritage community—are actively addressing these challenges together. ANSM is using our training, resources, tools such as NovaMuse, and programs like TRACK, to work towards the inclusion of these stories in partnership with communities. We are creating spaces and collections in which all Nova Scotians will see their reflection.

Purpose:

To nurture excellence in and champion on behalf of museums in Nova Scotia.

Vision:

ANSM is a vibrant not-for-profit organization led by our members. We are a national leader in the museum community that collaborates with many and diverse partners to provide relevant and engaging services that strengthen museums. We celebrate that museums in Nova Scotia are ever-changing. They reflect and are actively engaged in their communities, are environmentally and financially sustainable, and operate according to professional standards. Our natural and cultural history becomes inspiration for a better tomorrow.

Values:

The following values underpin what ANSM does and how we work:

- **Service** - meet the needs of member museums so that together we can meet the needs of communities.
- **Advocacy** - act as a champion on behalf of and raise awareness about museums in Nova Scotia.
- **Collaboration** - engage in activities with local, provincial, national, and international partners that benefit our members and the museum sector.
- **Inclusivity** - recognize historical and systemic practices in museums, decolonize these practices, and work with museums and equity-deserving groups to find appropriate solutions.
- **Sustainability** - operate in environmentally responsible ways and work to ensure that ANSM and member museums have the resources they need to serve their communities.

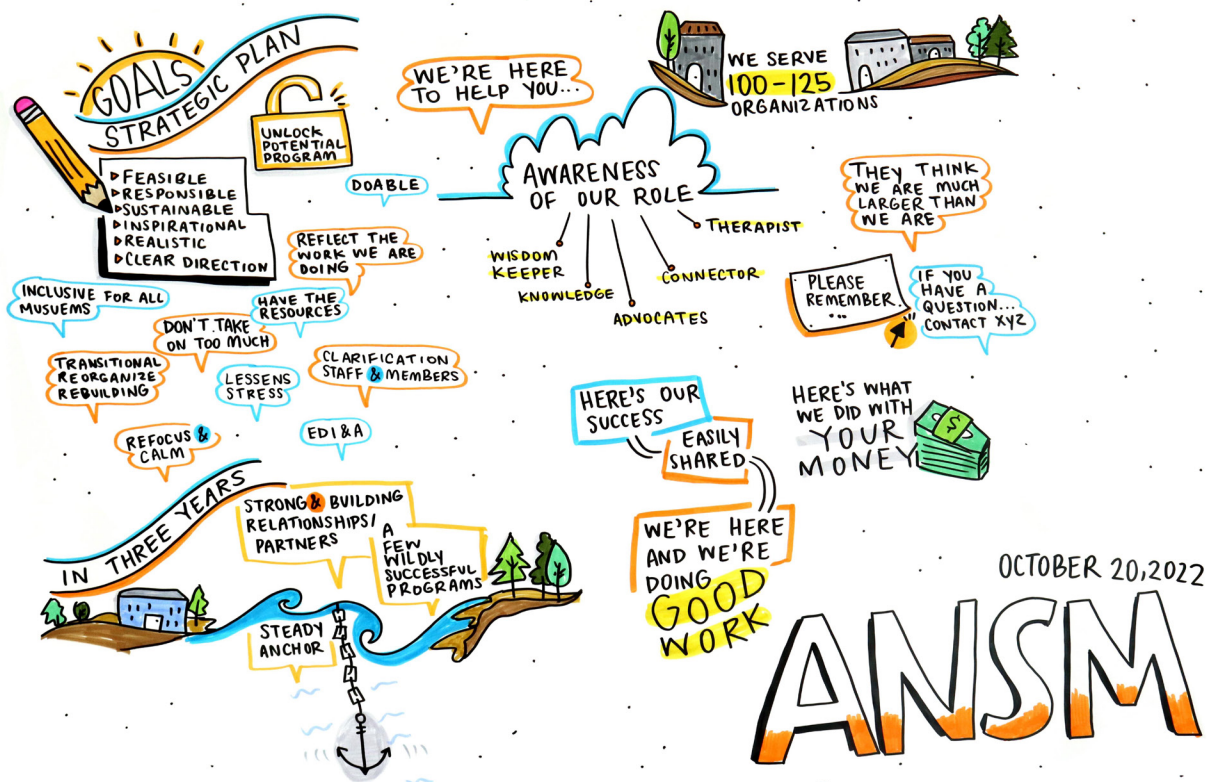
Definition of a Museum:

- **ANSM:** Museums are public institutions in the service of society and its development, with a shared responsibility to collect, preserve and communicate knowledge. They strive to be safe spaces that provide access to information and foster opportunities for critical thinking, learning, dialogue, collaboration, and social action.
- **ICOM:** A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing.

3. Key Issues for the Next Three Years

The goals and objectives of this strategic plan have been identified with the following key issues in mind:

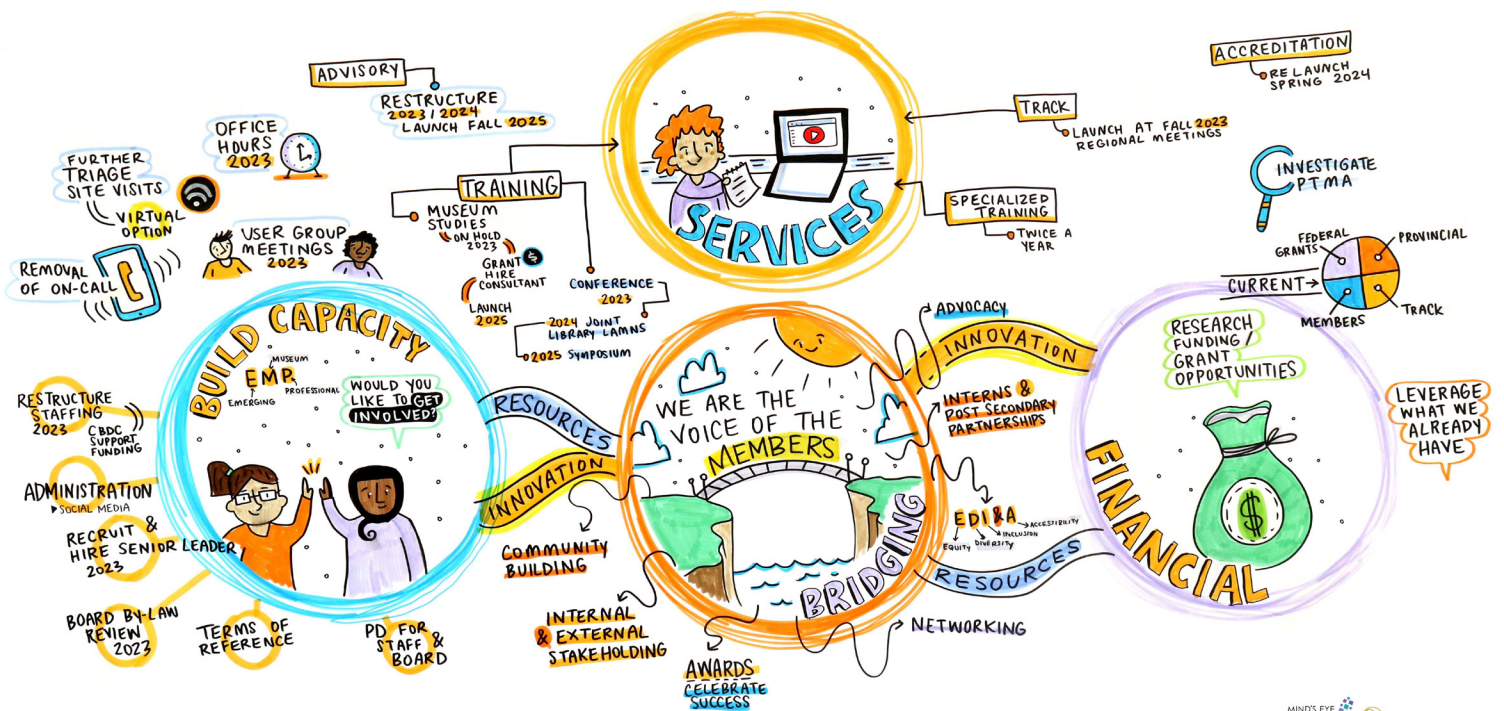
- Transition:** Between 2021 and 2024 the ANSM board and staff have and will experience several significant changes, including three Executive Directors and two Presidents during this period. Several ANSM core services are also transitioning, such as the Museum Evaluation Program becoming TRACK. This plan is developed to reflect ANSM's need to reorganize and rebuild.
- Realistic Expectations:** ANSM is a small organization that does the work of a much larger one. To reduce burnout, this plan will focus on being feasible and realistic, and focuses on the actual resources available to ANSM. The plan will also reflect the actual work being done by ANSM as well as opportunities and potential refinements. ANSM will need to improve communication with members and partners, so everyone understands the changes being made.
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA):** ANSM is prioritizing EDIA in its programs and operations, as stated in the land acknowledgement and commitment statement (see foundation statements). ANSM recognizes that its members all have different levels of readiness for EDIA and will support members on their learning journeys. As part of prioritizing EDIA, ANSM will work to incorporate the Canadian Museums Association's [Moved to Action: Activating UNDRIP in Museums](#) report. This plan will lay the groundwork for ANSM to do more EDIA in future strategic plans, including building new partnerships with equity deserving groups.



4. Strategic Goals

The 2023-2025 period will focus on four key areas.

1. **Services** - ANSM will continue to deliver key programs while refining offerings to ensure they are accessible and responsive to the current and future needs of members AND are offered within ANSM's actual human and financial resources.
2. **Build Capacity** - ANSM will ensure the staff and board are structured, skilled, supported, and resourced to effectively operate ANSM, including restructuring staffing, hiring a new executive director, and developing the board.
3. **Bridging** – ANSM will continue to act as the voice of our members. We will work to both build and maintain bridges with and between museums and communities. This will include improved communications and utilizing ANSM services for bridging opportunities.
4. **Financial** - ANSM will operate within its current financial reality and explore new funding opportunities to establish a diversified, stable base of funding that will allow ANSM to improve services, build more capacity, and strengthen bridging.

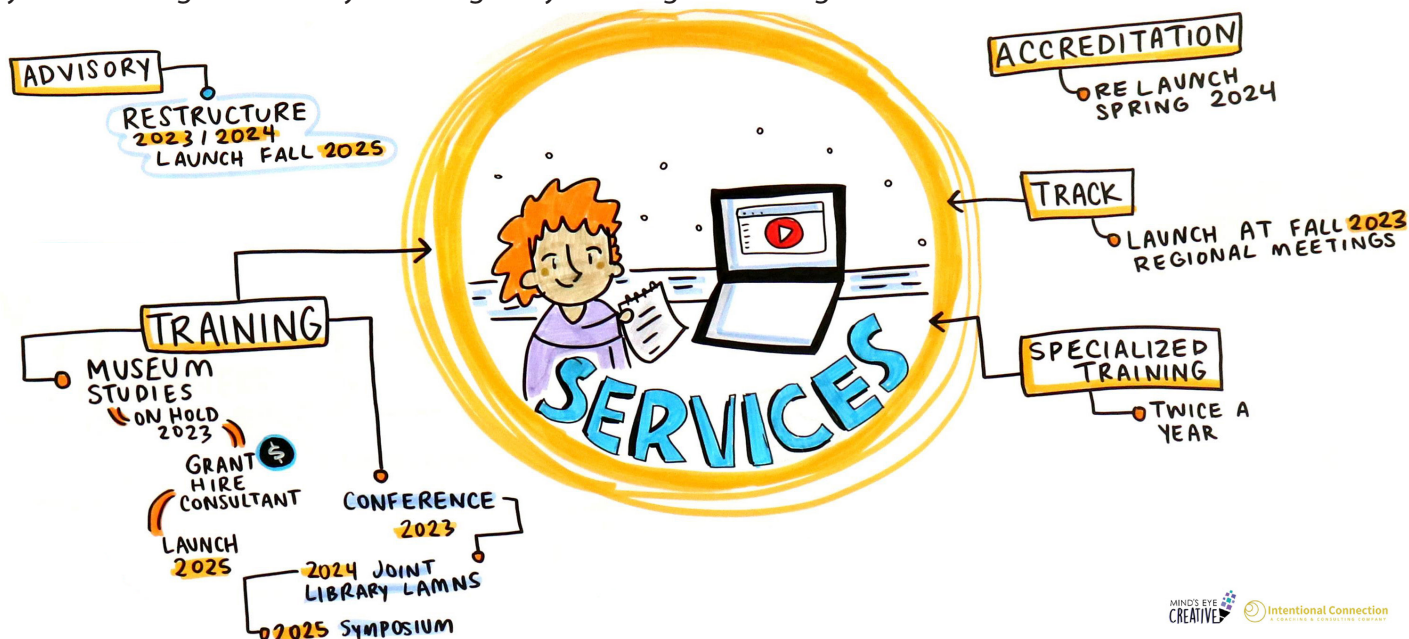


5. Objectives

5.1 Services

ANSM will continue to deliver key programs while refining offerings to ensure they are accessible to and reflect the current and future needs of members AND are offered within ANSM's actual human and financial resources.

Objectives for services are divided into the four key programs delivered by ANSM: Advisory Service, Training, TRACK, and Accreditation. Each of these programs requires its own funding source in order to be operated by ANSM. Program delivery is managed by the Program Manager.



Objectives	2023	2024	2025
5.1.1 Advisory Service (NovaMuse Co-op): Restructure service to engage members in a co-op model collections database and management service with full launch Fall 2025			
Work with Advisory Service Working Group, including updating Terms of Reference, to have the working group take a more active role in restructuring the Advisory Service to become NovaMuse Co-op.	X	X	X
Refine one-on-one services/on-call services by transitioning to more office hours, virtual visits, and user group meetings/listservs, and possible introduction of tiered services.		X	
Implement the calls to action from 2023 ReconciliAction Plan in 2023, 2024 and 2025 MAP special projects.	X	X	X
Develop funding sources beyond MAP to support service and implement 2023 ReconciliAction Plan calls to action. Funding preferably will not be based on timelines and outcomes to allow better relationship building with equity deserving groups.	X		
Ongoing internal work on maintaining NovaMuse, server, and databases, supporting member museums, and working on CollectiveAccess upgrades.	X	X	X

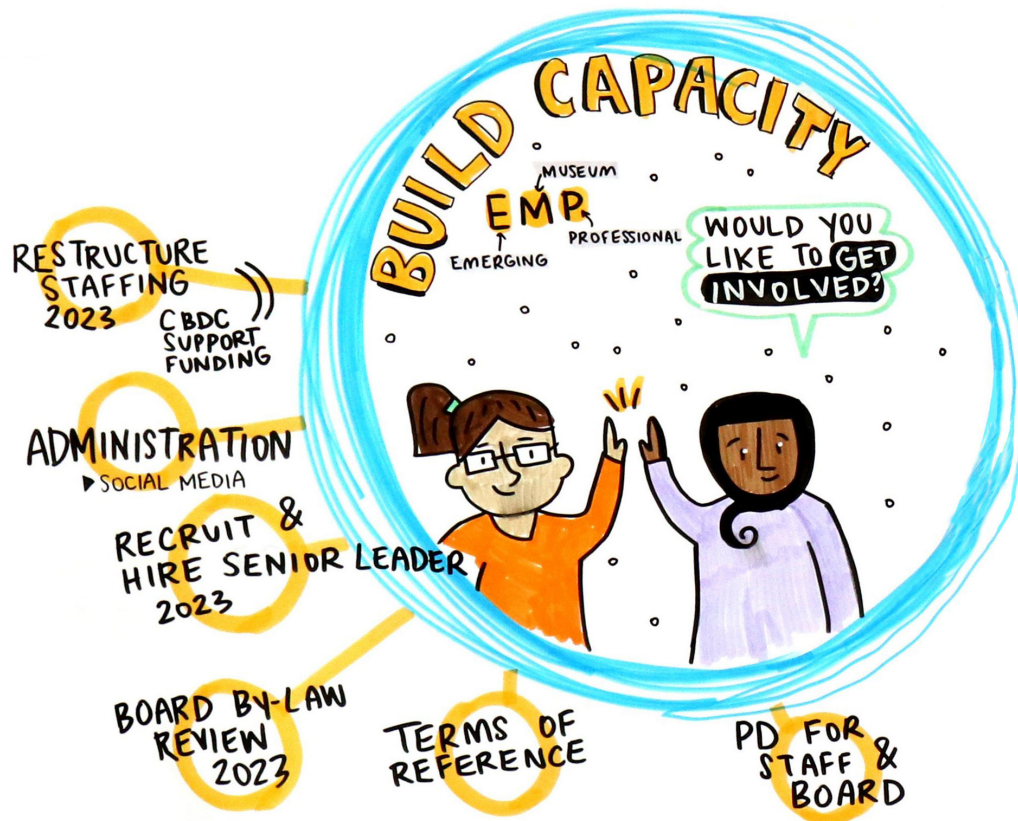
Objectives (Continued)	2023	2024	2025
5.1.2 Training: Renew ANSM's training offerings, including Museum Studies Program, Conference/Symposium, and specialized training			
Work with the Education and Training Working Group, including updating Terms of Reference, to have the working group take a more active role in refining ANSM's training offerings.	X		
Formalize and develop a communication plan for a calendar of training that is sympathetic to TRACK offerings.		X	
Pause the Museum Studies Program for 2023, seek funding to hire a consultant to renew the program for launch in 2025. Ensure renewed offering considers EDIA, making museum training accessible to equity deserving communities, remains accessible to ANSM members, and considers in-person/virtual/hybrid models.	X	X	
Offer "gap-year" Museum Studies Program offerings including Museums 101 and individual offerings for students needing three courses or less to complete their Museum Studies certificate.	X		
Offer two specialized training (e.g., CCI, Re-Org, etc.) courses a year beyond TRACK and Museum Studies Program.	X	X	X
Offer annual regional, in-person cultural training based on ReconciliAction Plan with Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, Acadian, and Gaelic communities.	X	X	X
Offer annual conference/symposium in the fall. 2023 Conference in Cape Breton. 2024 possible LAMNS. 2025 ANSM Symposium in Southwest region.	X	X	X
Ongoing work with post-secondary institutions that provide heritage-related programs, including doing single guest lectures as requested or teaching full courses, for pay	X	X	X
5.1.3 TRACK: Complete program development (2023), launch (2024) and operate TRACK program with participation of all CMAP museums, NSM sites, and other interested ANSM member museums.			
Work with TRACK working group, including updating Terms of Reference, to have the working group take more active role in development, evaluation, and delivery of TRACK.	X		
Finalize program development, including assessment documents, and offer introductory training to the eight pillars during 2023 season. Provide opportunities, including at regional meetings, for participating museums to contribute thoughts on how programs can be of most benefit to museums. Launch a new program at fall 2023 regional meetings with a calendar of activity for future years.	X		
Operate the first year of the TRACK program, starting fall 2023 to fall 2024, assessing and training on the first two pillars. Provide evaluation and feedback opportunities for participating museums and adjust programs as needed.	X	X	
Continue program operation in 2024-25, making adjustments as necessary.		X	X
Work with CCTH on program funding and requirements.	X	X	X

Objectives (Continued)	2023	2024	2025
5.1.4 Accreditation: Redevelop accreditation program based on new TRACK program, other ANSM offerings, and member museum needs.			
Pause Accreditation, after presenting last of accreditations from previous Museum Evaluation Program, for 2023 and 2024.	X		
Work with (TRACK?) Working Group to redevelop accreditation program for launch in 2025 based on 2024 TRACK results.		X	X
Source Funding for redeveloped Accreditation Program.		X	X

5.2 Building Capacity

ANSM will ensure the staff and board are structured, skilled, supported, and resourced to effectively operate ANSM, including restructuring staff, hiring a new executive director, and developing the board.

Objectives for building capacity are broken into three areas: staff, board, and senior leader/ED position. Capacity building is led by the Executive Director and ANSM Board.



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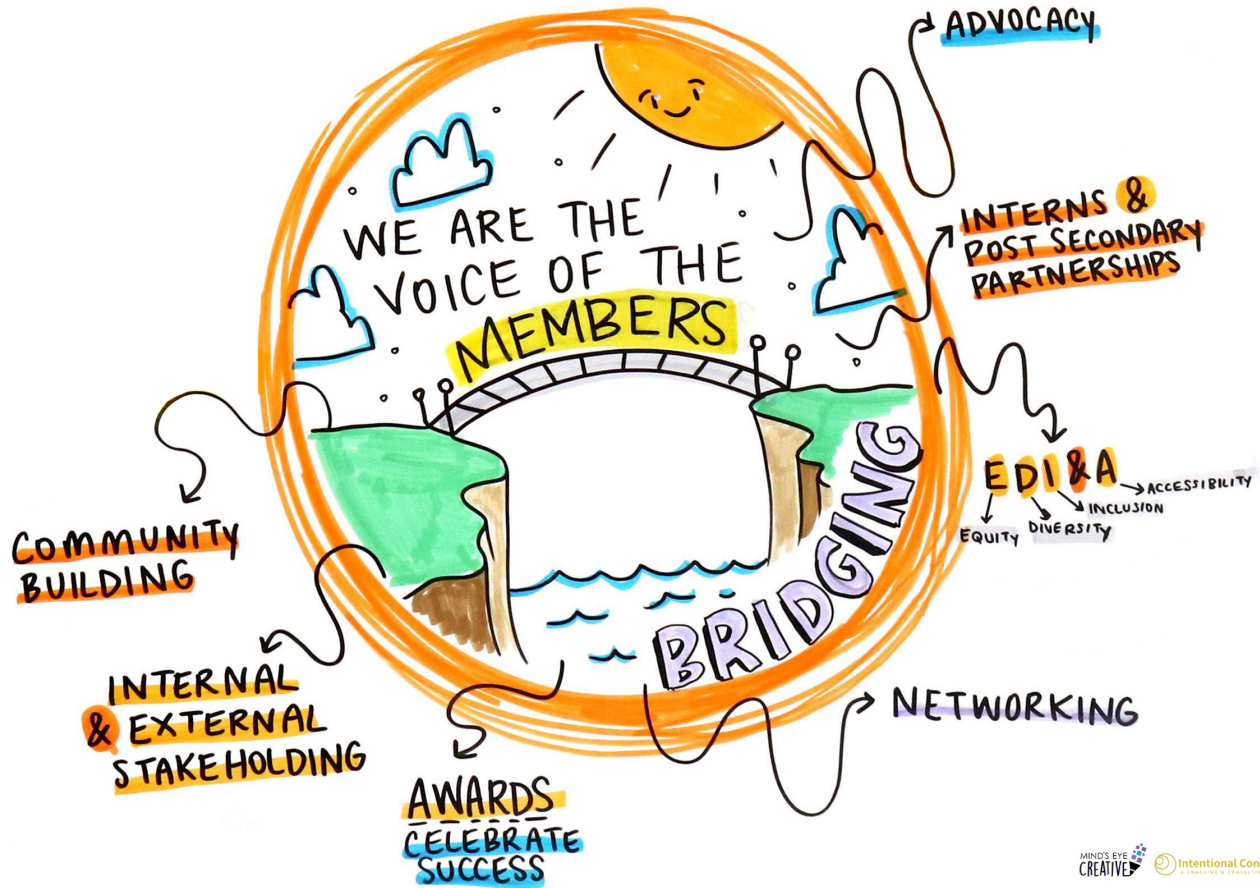
Objectives	2023	2024	2025
5.2.1 Restructure Staffing: Develop job descriptions and staffing plan to reflect the actual work done by ANSM, and ensure compensation is reflective of industry standards in 2023 and update as necessary to reflect ANSM's work.			
Rewrite all job descriptions to reflect team approach to work (removing silos).	X		
Add a 0.5 FTE Administrative Coordinator position and rebalance job descriptions to reflect the new position. Funding for this position will need to be sourced. (Eventual goal to make the position full FTE which would bring all ANSM positions to an acceptable workload.)		X	X
Improve use of interns to manage ANSM workload, including exploring internships from non-museum programs (e.g., design, communication, administration). Work towards providing financial compensation for interns in the next strategic plan (if allowed by academic programs).	X	X	X

Objectives (Continued)	2023	2024	2025
Optimize use of working group members, subject matter specialists, community leaders, and when needed consultants/short term contracts.	X	X	X
Take progressive steps to increase compensation levels and leave allotments for employees and contractors to be above and beyond the livable wage, and in alignment with the broader cultural sector.	X	X	X
Increase Professional Development opportunities for all ANSM staff in museum knowledge, EDIA, and supporting skills (e.g., technology, design), including evolving trends in the museum sector.	X		
Renew ANSM Human Resource tools and policies to ensure effective governance and management of ANSM.	X		
Research and experiment with alternative work situations that allow staff to better maintain work-life balance (e.g., Modified Work weeks, hybrid workplace, reduced work hours)	X	X	X
5.2.1 Board: Develop board to better support ANSM operations and needs of ANSM members, starting in 2023 and ongoing subsequent years.			
Complete a board by-law review in 2024, adding spots to board and updating board member requirements (to improve EDIA by including non-museum members).	X	X	
Review Terms of Reference for all ANSM working groups and have board representation on all groups, increasing work and responsibilities of work groups and their accountability to the board.	X		
Ongoing work with the nomination committee to recruit new board members, including regional representation, cultural diversity representation, and specific skills (e.g., finance, membership development, EDIA).	X	X	X
Increase Professional Development opportunities for board members including museum knowledge, EDIA, and supporting skills (e.g., fundraising, membership development, advocacy), including evolving trends in the museum sector. Identify board PD lead, which will work with ANSM staff on shared development opportunities.	X	X	X
Identify, create, and promote benefits of joining board and working groups for current and potential members, looking to the broader cultural sector for examples.	X	X	X
5.2.3 Hiring New Senior Leader: Recruit, hire, onboard, and support a new Executive Director to start September 2023.			
Rewrite job description for position to more accurately present position, expanding the position to increase EDIA, advocacy, and financial development skills. Take steps to increase compensation levels.	X		
Board to lead recruitment and hiring process with new position to start no later than September 11, 2023. (Earlier start date possible.)	X		
Onboarding resources and training to be developed and provided by the current Executive Director, including a 2.5 week overlap of positions.	X	X	
Exit review with current Executive Director.	X		
Ongoing support, including professional development and regular meetings with ANSM executive, to support retention of new Executive Director.	X	X	X

5.3 Bridging

ANSM is the voice of our members. We will continue to both build and maintain bridges with and between members and the broader community. This will include improved communications and utilizing ANSM services for bridging opportunities.

Objectives for building capacity are broken into three areas: member relations, partnerships, and advocacy. Bridging is the responsibility of all ANSM staff and ANSM Board.



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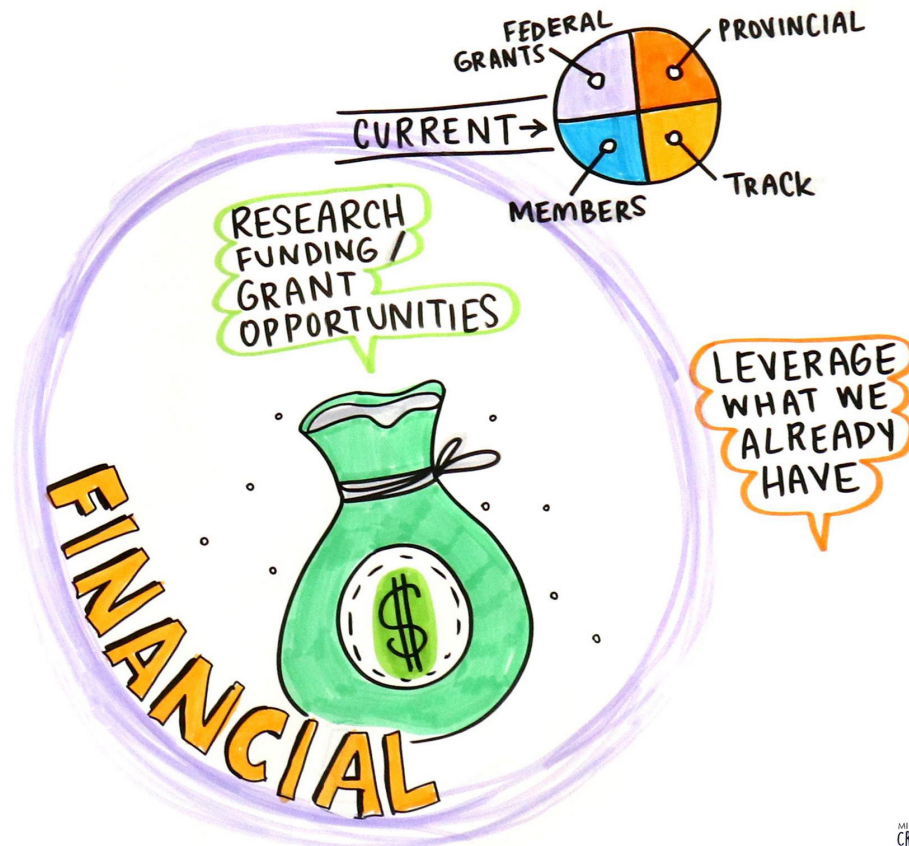
Objectives	2023	2024	2025
5.3.1 Member Relations: Increase opportunities for all ANSM members to benefit from ANSM services and opportunities to be involved with ANSM.			
Develop communications plan so that Beacon e-newsletter, social media, website, and blogs are improved and work together to ensure members get timely, accurate, and relevant information.	X		
Use regional meetings as networking events to engage in-person with and within membership, encouraging all ANSM members to attend their regional meetings.		X	X
Make opportunities to participate in ANSM initiatives and working groups more transparent and encourage broader participation from ANSM members. Use Terms of Reference to support meaningful participation in working groups.	X	X	X
Continue and further develop connections between post-secondary institutions and museums through special projects (e.g., Fleming's NovaMuse project) and internships (e.g., Saint Mary's University).	X	X	X

Objectives (Continued)	2023	2024	2025
Continue board buddies' initiative, ensuring each member museum talks to at least one board member once a year.	X	X	X
Increase celebrating member's successes including increasing prominence of ANSM Awards – including encouraging more applications and increasing communications around award recipients	X	X	X
5.3.2 Partnerships: Increase ANSM's external community by building better partnerships with stakeholders, heritage community, and equity-deserving groups.			
Have regular meetings with government stakeholders (e.g., Culture & Heritage Development, Archives, Museums & Libraries, Nova Scotia Museum) to discuss opportunities for ANSM to support their work and provide updates on ANSM initiatives.	X	X	X
Actively work with PTMAs and CMA to support national initiatives and bring the benefits of these initiatives to ANSM members (e.g., Reconsidering Museums, Moved to Action, National Museum Strategy, National Training Plan)	X	X	X
Participate in Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (CFNS) initiatives to find opportunities for the broader culture sector to work together.	X	X	X
Formalize reciprocal memberships with Council of NS Archives and Heritage Trust, including regular meetings and joint training opportunities.	X		
Seek out and develop new relationships with museum-adjacent organizations not yet ANSM members (e.g. Art Gallery of NS, Discovery Centre, exhibit developers, suppliers, consultants)		X	
Implement ReconciliAction Plan Calls to Action to continue to maintain relationships with Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, Acadian, and Gaelic communities, including offering memberships and NovaMuse services at no cost.	X	X	X
Seek out and develop relationships with equity-deserving groups with connections to museum services (e.g., New Canadians, Increasing Accessibility)		X	
5.3.3 Advocacy: Increase public and political awareness about the importance of museums and resources required for museums to continue to serve their communities.			
Create Advocacy Working Group, including Terms of Reference, to have the working group take a more active role in leading ANSM's advocacy efforts.	X		
Use Reconsidering Museums toolkits to increase public and political awareness of the role museums play, including providing community led services and supporting EDIA work.	X	X	
Advocate with all three levels of government for increased funding to museum programs, including formal advocacy campaigns which may include letter writing campaigns, direct communication with politicians, inviting politicians to museums, and meeting with key politicians and bureaucrats. Primary focus for ANSM will be provincial advocacy with special focus on CMAP museums and museums wanting to join the CMAP program and the need for operational as opposed to project funding.	X	X	X
Work with PTMAs and CMA on federal advocacy, attending Hill Days and advocating for funding to be attached to renewed National Museum Strategy Policy.	X	X	X

5.4 Financial

ANSM will operate within its current financial reality and explore new funding opportunities to establish a diversified, stable base of funding that will allow ANSM to improve services, build more capacity, and strengthen bridging.

Objectives for financial are broken into three areas: memberships, existing funding, and new funding. Financial goals are led by the Executive Director and ANSM Board.



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Objectives	2023	2024	2025
5.4.1 Membership: Maintain and expand ANSM membership, launch a drive to attract more corporate and affiliate members			
Improve membership renewal process (including reconsidering use of Sumac) and better promote membership benefits, including “new” benefits such as job board, networking at regional meetings, and access to TRACK training.		X	
Target non-ANSM members who might benefit from individual, institutional, or affiliate ANSM memberships. Send out at least 25 new invitations in each 2023, 2024 and 2025.	X	X	X
Promote corporate members through social media and networking opportunities with members and actively invite at least 10 organizations in 2023, and 8 in both 2024 and 2025 to become corporate members.	X	X	X
As part of Advisory Service (NovaMuse Co-op) renewal, examine fee structure for renewal in 2025.		X	X

Objectives (Continued)	2023	2024	2025
5.4.2 Existing Funding: Maintain, increase, and streamline applications for existing funding sources			
Examine current funding sources and processes to ensure application and reporting processes are being administered as efficiently as possible by ANSM.	X	X	X
Advocate for increase to ANSM operating grant and TRACK funding to reflect increased costs being incurred by ANSM, including increased staff and travel costs as well as increased use of EDIA consultants.	X	X	X
Reserve an administrative fee on projects funded through ANSM to cover additional administrative staff (e.g., Museums Canada Bursary)	X	X	X
5.4.3 New Funding: Develop new funding opportunities including grants, partnerships, and fundraising opportunities.			
Leverage existing funding and partnerships to apply for additional funding for specific projects (e.g., SDI, John Bragg Award, Community Services Recovery Fund)	X		
Develop a funding plan with new ED and board to support ANSM's operating, including its increased work with EDIA		X	
Revisit MuseFund and Bursary program for sponsor or fundraising opportunities.			X

