

FOLK MUSIC CANADA

**2024-
2027**



**International
Business
Development
Strategy**

**This report was written in consultation with
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Table of Contents

1 *Executive Summary*

2 *Folk Music Canada's Mission, Objective & Strategy*

3 *Sector Analysis*

- a. Folk Music and its Importance in Canada
- b. State of the Global Music Industry - Key Trends and Market Outlook

4 *Target Markets*

5 *Target Participants*

6 *Strategic Objectives and Desired Outcomes*

7 *Activities to Meet Strategic Objectives*

8 *Participation in the Northern Turtle Island Collective*

9 *Attendance at National Events*

10 *Measurement of Results*

11 *Conclusion*

Executive Summary

The Folk Music Canada International Business Development Strategy, endorsed by the organization's governing body on January 8, 2024, aims to harness the sector's diverse cultural representation and global recognition. Recognizing challenges such as limited digital infrastructure, the strategy delineates key priorities. It emphasizes expanding into new markets, including Korea, Denmark, Ireland, Colombia, and Australia, while consolidating efforts in familiar territories like the USA, UK, and Spain. Subsector priorities encompass folk festivals, online platforms, and artist collaborations, with a focus on markets demonstrating cultural resonance and growth potential.

The suggested tactics revolve around increasing live performance exposure through mission-based showcases, generating leads through business-to-business meetings in-person and online, growing our networks through gathering music industry professionals for network receptions to enhance international collaborations, collaboration with other orgs through the Northern Turtle Island Collective, and attendance at major Canadian music events. The desired outcomes encompass market growth in new territories, strengthened foothold in familiar markets, increased artist visibility leading to enhanced sales and gig opportunities, and the fostering of international partnerships, exemplified by our proven track-record of successful international events. This strategy positions Folk Music Canada for a vibrant and globally impactful future within the folk music sector.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Dennett', written in a cursive style.

ROSALYN DENNETT
Acting Executive Director,
Folk Music Canada

Sector Analysis

The organization's vision, mission statement, goals and objectives

MISSION

Folk Music Canada (FMC) is a member-driven organization that supports and promotes the Canadian folk music community, and is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance, diversity and cultural value of all types of folk music in Canada. Founded in 2000, Folk Music Canada operated for nearly a decade as 'Folk Alliance Canada', and was closely affiliated with Folk Alliance International.

In 2009, after establishing some short-term strategic priorities, the organization chose a new name, hired its first employee and began to develop its own membership, while keeping close ties with FAI. Having established a growing membership base, cemented an organizational structure and hired an Executive Director, in late 2011 Folk Music Canada established a strategic plan which helps guide its activities and directions. FMC is committed to the principles of inclusion, diversity, equity and access in the folk music sector, the arts sector overall, and throughout all of society.

FMC is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

OBJECTIVES

Develop & enhance the brand of Canadian folk music;

Grow membership base of Folk Music Canada;

Advocate for Canadian folk music where needed;

Network to increase connections;

Keep Canadian folk music vibrant and thriving.

STRATEGY

1. Develop an Online Resource Centre
2. Partner at Signature Events
3. Market Development
4. Expand Member Benefits

Description of the industry or industry sub-sector and its importance for Canada

The folk music industry in Canada thrives as a sub-sector of Canada's Music Market, contributing significantly to the country's cultural and economic growth. It contributes to cultural preservation, global recognition, economic prosperity, tourism, and community development.

Its impact extends beyond the entertainment sector, playing a crucial role in shaping the nation's identity and fostering connections both domestically and internationally.

1 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Folk music serves as a vibrant expression of Canada's cultural identity, capturing the diverse stories, traditions, and history of its people. It plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

2 GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Canadian folk artists enjoy global recognition for their unique sound and storytelling. Whether it's Balaklava Blues showcasing at WOMEX in Europe, The Slokan Ramblers performing at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Kizaba seeing huge successes in Korea, the international acclaim for Canadian folk artists contributes to Canada's positive image on the global stage, attracting cultural enthusiasts and fostering positive international relations.

3 TOURISM IMPACT

Canadian Folk music festivals and events draw tourists from around the world and have created a model that has been imitated as far reaching as Denmark and Australia. The unique experiences offered by these events contribute to the growth of Canada's tourism sector, boosting local economies.

4 ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The folk music industry generates substantial economic activity through live performances, album sales, merchandise, and licensing. This economic impact extends to various sectors, supporting jobs, businesses, and local communities.

5 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Folk music serves as a powerful tool for cultural diplomacy. It facilitates connections and exchange opportunities between Canada and other nations, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration through the universal language of music.

6 GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Folk music events create a sense of community and inclusivity. They bring people together, fostering a shared appreciation for culture, art, and a shared commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility.

7 TOURISM IMPACT

Folk music provides educational value by preserving traditional stories and transmitting cultural knowledge to younger generations. It plays a role in music education and contributes to the development of future artists.

State of the Global Music Industry – Key Trends and Market Outlook

In 2022, the Global Music Market was valued at USD 27,898.47 million, with an anticipated CAGR of 9.74% until 2028, projecting a market size of USD 48,733.85 million¹. The Music sector encompasses companies and artists engaged in creating and selling new songs, live performances, audio and video recordings, compositions, sheet music, and is supported by various organizations representing music creators.



Folk Music is experiencing notable growth in the Canadian music market, attributed to its success on streaming platforms via the popularity of folk playlists on Spotify Canada and other streaming services², and the resurgence of live events such as folk festivals and clubs³. As the national arts service association for this sector, we are dedicated to year-round advocacy, aiming to establish a sustainable industry with both national and international recognition. Our focus includes nurturing robust talent and fostering meaningful contributions to Canada's cultural economy through career development, market development, and education opportunities. As the sector continues to flourish, we expect that a focus on increased accessibility and diversity will enhance the sector's opportunities for growth.

¹ Music Market: Trends and Forecast by Top Key Players by 2030, Market Research Insights, Published Sep 15, 2023

² "Folk Rising" Spotify: Music Editorial Playlists Genres Trends, Published 2023-11-29

³ *Goldman Sachs Music in the Air EQUITY RESEARCH | June 13, 2022

2. Target Markets

The areas of focus for our three-year strategy include developing relationships with new markets such as Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mark, South Africa, and expanding our reach in markets we plan to revisit such as Spain, UK, USA.

We've chosen these markets in consultation with our membership, through our market intelligence gathered through previous export missions, and by analyzing market share and growth forecasts from key stakeholder reports.

Each market has been selected based on its capacity to:

- A. Host an international music or folk music conference.**
- B. Produce annual large-scale folk music festivals and events.**
- C. Provide presentation infrastructure to facilitate international tours.**
- D. Foster a growing recording and/or music licensing market, enabling publishing, distribution, TV and film synchronization, and recording deals.**

3. Target Participants

Our target mission participants include Canadian music companies, organizations representing Canadian music companies and artists, and individual Canadian artists. These missions will prioritize export-ready artists who showcase the diverse and rich cultural landscape of Canada’s folk music market, and demonstrate a proven candidacy for viability in the target market.

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

1. Strategic Objectives and Desired Outcomes

Target Markets

Country	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Desired Outcomes
Australia	N/A	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships. Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event in Australia.	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
Brazil	N/A	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships.	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event in Brazil. Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
Chile	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships.	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference. Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (Fluvial) in Chile.	N/A	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.

Country	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Desired Outcomes
Colombia	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships.	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (BIMÉ Bogota) in Colombia.	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
Denmark	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships. Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (Nordic Folk Alliance/Tønder) in Denmark	N/A	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
France	N/A	N/A	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships. Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
Germany	N/A	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships.	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.

Country	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Desired Outcomes
Ireland	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (Your Roots are Showing) in Ireland.	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	N/A	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
Italy	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships.	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (Linecheck) in Italy	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
Japan	N/A	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships.	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
Korea	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships.	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (Seoul Music Week) in Korea	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.

Country	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Desired Outcomes
South Africa	N/A	Send a small delegation from Folk Music Canada to develop a market research report, establish potential leads for partnerships.	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
Spain	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (e.g. BIMÉ Bilbao) in Spain	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	N/A	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
UK	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (English Folk Expo) in UK.	Bring a small delegation of buyers from the territory to Canada to participate in our National Folk Music Conference.	N/A	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.
USA	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (e.g. NERFA) in Maine	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (e.g. AmericanaFest) in Nashville	Bring a delegation of Canadian Music Companies and Artists to a recognized showcase event (e.g. Folk Alliance International) in Kansas City	Live music engagements booked for Canadians in the target market, Signing to an agency in the territory, signing to a label in the territory, signing to a publisher in the territory, signing to a distributor in the territory. Market expansion through new clients and partnerships for Canadian Music Companies.



2. Activities to meet strategic objectives

Folk Music Canada will undertake the following types of activities to meet strategic objectives:

Standard Model for Comprehensive Missions: **OUTBOUND**

The Standard Model for Comprehensive Missions aims to standardize our missions over the next three years, ensuring all participants receive the full breadth of available activities and education. Challenges may arise in executing each activity and event due to various models and limitations. By setting this standard, we strive to establish a gold standard for all export events, creating a trusted export brand in the music industry. Each export activity will consist of four components.

01. EDUCATION *Market Overview and Event Orientation*

The webinar, conducted online, serves to inform participants about what to expect before attending the event. This platform provides an opportunity for attendees to familiarize themselves with each other, fostering a sense of community within the delegation. The session aims to help participants understand the market, identify key stakeholders, and strategize for sustainable growth and development in the territory.

An illustrative instance is the pre-conference webinar held before WOMEX. This session featured experts from the region and saw a significant number of participants, as per survey results. The webinar proved instrumental in preparing individuals, offering a supportive network before the event, and providing a platform for meaningful questions that enhanced their readiness for the upcoming event.

02. SHOWCASE

Our focus is on showcasing activities during each mission. The objective is to present artists to delegates and buyers, recognizing that live performances significantly influence decision-making in the music industry. Our aim is to enhance artists' chances of securing sales and gig bookings through these valuable opportunities. In instances where a showcase is not part of the standard event program, we will proactively explore options. This may involve organizing a dedicated showcase event before the conference or incorporating it into the event itself. An example of this initiative is the successful "Prevent Showcase" held in our community, which attracted 100 attendees and featured six artists. This approach ensures that we continually provide opportunities for artists to showcase their talent to delegates and buyers.

03. TRADE SHOW *Marketing and Promotion of Activities*

At each event, we will strive to secure space in the tradeshow or exhibit hall to raise awareness of the Canadian music market and provide visibility for Canadian companies. In instances where tradeshow booths are not available or as an addition to them, we will explore alternative methods such as placing ads in program books, posters, and other promotional materials to market Canadian music products.

04. B2B *Meetings and Network Activities*

Component Four focuses on Business-to-Business (B2B) and networking meetings and receptions, which can occur both in person and online. These meetings have proven effective in generating leads, as illustrated by the success of the FMC Expert Development Program at the 2023 Folk Ontario conference. During this program, 383 meetings took place, resulting in over 700 leads for Canadian artists and companies over five days.

In addition to B2B networking, our strategy involves reaching out to the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) in Canada (Regional Offices) and abroad (Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates), as well as other government departments, provincial associations, encouraging their participation in reception activities and the overall mission event. A notable success story is the "Meet the Canadians" reception at Folk Alliance International Conference, which was co-presented by the Canadian Consulate of Chicago. Similarly, the 2023 Good Night Showcase in New York City received attendance from the Canadian Consulate in New York City.

Standard Model for Comprehensive Missions: INBOUND

Folk Music Canada has a demonstrated track record of success with inbound missions at both the 2020 Folk Alliance International conference in Canada, and the annual 2022 and 2023 Folk Music Ontario conference.

At the 2023 Folk Music Ontario conference, Folk Music Canada initiated the Folk Canada export development program, yielding impressive results for Canadian music companies. By bringing buyers and international delegates to these events, we've increased the exposure of Canadian artists and music companies, generating hundreds of leads, and contributing to an estimated \$3+ Million in revenues for Canadian artists and companies in the year 2023. Building on this success, we aim to standardize our inbound missions with three components:

1st **The first component is business-to-business networking, occurring either online prior to the event or in person, connecting international delegates with a variety of Canadian artists and music companies.**

2nd **The second component is a showcasing event where the international delegation has a mandate to attend all showcase events, facilitated by an event coordinator to ensure delegate access and attendance.**

3rd **The third component is peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, creating opportunities through panels, round tables, or peer sessions for international delegates to share experiences and market intelligence with Canadian artists and music companies.**

Participation in the Northern Turtle Island Collective:

The Northern Turtle Island Collective is an informal coalition of Canadian music support organizations sharing common objectives and mission values. Aligned in supporting folk, roots, global, and indigenous music across Canada and internationally, these organizations, including Folk Canada: Folk Music Canada + Folk Music Ontario, Small World Music, Mundial Montreal, and the International Indigenous Music Summit, unite to establish a national presence and enhance impactful experiences for Canadians attending international music gatherings.

Participation in this collective enables Folk Music Canada to connect with unique affinity groups within the folk music sector, including indigenous musicians and music companies, as well as newcomer musicians and music companies. Being part of this collective has allowed us to expand our membership and diversify the participants in our activities.

Attendance at National Events

Attendance at Canadian music conferences plays a crucial role in our international business development strategy. It serves as a means to recruit and retain Canadian members while also creating opportunities for partnerships and collaborations across both domestic and international landscapes. These conferences may include: Breakout West, East Coast Music Week, Folk Music Ontario, Global Toronto, International Indigenous Music Summit, JUNO Week, Mundial Montreal, CAPACOA, and more.



Measurement of Results

The measurement of success for the Folk Music Canada International Business Development Strategy involves a comprehensive approach. Surveys, economic impact studies, and stakeholder interviews will be pivotal in gauging the effectiveness of our initiatives. These mechanisms allow us to collect quantitative and qualitative data, providing insights into the reach, impact, and reception of our endeavours. Challenges in measuring success may include the subjectivity of qualitative data and the potential bias in member feedback.

To address these challenges, we will implement rigorous survey methodologies and ensure economic impact studies adhere to industry standards. Stakeholder interviews will offer nuanced perspectives, enhancing the reliability of our assessments. Feedback from members will be actively solicited through regular consultations, ensuring their insights contribute to the evaluative process. Successes will be shared with the industry and sub-sector through transparent reporting, disseminating key findings, and showcasing impactful outcomes through various communication channels.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Folk Music Canada International Business Development Strategy stands as a dynamic blueprint designed to significantly benefit our organization's members. By strategically expanding into new markets and consolidating efforts in familiar territories, we aim to provide enhanced opportunities for artist exposure, increased sales, and global collaborations. The sub-sector priorities, such as engaging in Northern Turtle Island Collective activities, rebranding and advocating for a more diverse Folk sector, and utilizing online platforms to open access to professionals around the globe, underscore our commitment to fostering diverse cultural representation within the industry. This strategy not only serves our members by facilitating international growth but also contributes to the broader industry and sub-sector by elevating the global presence of Canadian folk music.

The IBD strategy will be a living document, subject to periodic updates to reflect evolving market trends, member feedback, and the changing global landscape. Regular reviews and assessments will ensure the strategy remains relevant and effective. The strategy's findings and updates will be shared with our members and the industry at large through transparent communication channels, including reports, presentations, and interactive forums. This commitment to openness ensures that the broader industry and stakeholders are informed, engaged, and aligned with our collective vision for the future of Canadian folk music on the global stage.