



SHARE WELL • GROW WELL
2016 Backgrounder



Empowering burgeoning watersheds of Canada's independent arts industry via next-gen charitable ventures, shared tools and platforms

VISIONING TOMORROW, TODAY

Many artists today do not identify with the silos of the past. They cross disciplines, genres, cultures, socioeconomic and geopolitical boundaries. **ArtsPond Inc. / Étang d'Arts Inc.** is envisioned as a responsive national charitable venture platform enabling the full and wide-ranging scope of Canada's diverse arts & culture ecology, with a particular devotion to unexpected creative hybrids and fluid collaborations.



At our core, the prime directive of **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** is to strengthen the capacity of charitable governance and giving to empower Canada's growing community of independent artists and alternatively structured arts entities. The operational, fiscal, and regulatory risks of democratizing access to these benefits are not insignificant, and a tremendous amount of legwork is required up front before any entity like **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** can even begin to launch its operations.

For example, **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** must develop robust contractual agreements; responsive community and governing oversight reporting procedures; detailed IT and fiscal accounting systems; engaging public communications and outreach; and much more. These are perhaps our biggest challenges, and yet solving them -- and sharing responses and outcomes with the community -- is also our core reason for coming into being.

Tapping into the burgeoning watersheds of Canada's independent arts industry, together we see ourselves as co-conspirators in the celebration of quality Canadian artistic experiences regardless of scope, source, or inspiration, including:

- **Artistic fields**
Visual, performing, multidisciplinary/integrated, media/new media, literary, community arts, craft, cultural heritage, and other emerging forms
- **Artistic disciplines, genres and forms**
Contemporary, modern, traditional, regional, classical, culture-specific, Indigenous, culturally diverse, queer, Deaf artists, artists with disabilities, and more
- **Official and minority languages**
French, English, and many other minority tongues, such as Inuktitut
- **Geographic regions**
Urban, rural, remote and far north communities in all provinces and territories
- **Career levels**
New generation, emerging, mid-career, established artists and arts professionals
- **Practices**
Curation, education, performance, production, touring, presentation, exhibition, administration, research, promotion of arts industry excellence and commerce, resource libraries, and awards

Overall, the **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** model supports services and programming offered by curated projects of the platform in **the Four E's of artistic creativity and industry**:

- **Engaging**
Impresario, creation, production, exhibition, performance
- **Educating**
Valued-added programming, outreach, mentoring, workshops and classes, resource libraries
- **Excelling**
Awards, research, knowledge sharing, commerce and promotion of industry
- **Enterprising**
Joint ventures, shared platforms, social enterprises, and related businesses utilizing the latest in mobile and cloud technologies online

Alongside open community partnerships and collaborations, **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** is mandated to use the power of interactive, cloud-based technologies to gradually and sustainably scale the reach of our impacts over time. Over the coming decade, our path is to strengthen diverse artistic perspectives across Ontario first, and then nationally second.

While providing shared access to charitable governance and giving in support of these types of associate project services and programming lies at the core of what we propose to do, cultivating the legacy 'ripple effects' and investing in the future vitality of the sector is of equal importance. Our model also supports a full complement of virtual (i.e., "***in-the-cloud***") and bricks-and-mortar (i.e., "***on-the-ground***") services and curated programming, including:

In-the-cloud

In order for **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** to scale to size and scope sustainably, we believe a suite of custom mobile, web, and cloud-based tools are necessary to streamline administrative loads and maximize opportunities for effective artist-producer-supporter collaborations using the latest technologies online.

With a comparatively small national population of artists spread across the globe's second largest country by landmass, Canada's arts sector has lagged behind in the adoption of cloud-based tools as a creative and efficient means of collaboration and information sharing.¹ **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** proposed solutions are a direct response to this issue.

Up to five core, interconnected, bilingual, open source / SaaS (*Software as a Service*) applications will be developed over time as demands on the platform's outreach, administration and governance grows, featuring:²

- **influx / afflux**

A public (external) fundraising, marketing and e-commerce platform, including donor cultivation; donation processing, receipting, and reporting; artistic products and events ticketing and sales; featured artist profiles, e-newsletters, surveys, and other public outreach tools.

- **zip / élan**

A core (internal) project and enterprise management platform, including modules in finance, HR, purchasing and inventory, project and event management, activity tracking, trends analysis and reporting (i.e., Charities Directorate and Canadian Arts Data-migration), contracting, content collaboration tools, intranet, board administration, and more.

¹ One of the last significant investments by the Canadian arts sector was the launch of *Canadian Arts Data* between 2004-08.

² A functional needs assessment will help to identify and evaluate the timelines and costs of developing custom open source tools compared to implementing proprietary solutions. Established open source solutions like Drupal, CiviCRM, OpenERP/Odoo, Openbravo, ERPNext, xTuple, SoGo, Horde, OpenStack, Citadel, Open-Xchange, Sentrifugo, OrangeHRM, Ubercart, OpenTickets, Artful.ly Open Source, Dokeos, Moodle, eFront, MediaWiki, and others are likely to serve as a basis for ArtsPond's custom solutions.

Where necessary, proprietary services like CanadaHelps can be used to prioritize IT development needs in the short-term. In the long term, data mobility issues are likely to become a concern if the platform is to scale and replicate to scope and the linking of multiple proprietary platforms becomes the norm (*cont'd next page*).

Our preference (and business plan) is to develop a suite of custom platforms that interact innately with ease and efficiency. Entities from outside the platform will be permitted to host different elements of the software for free in their own open source solutions, or purchase a hosted subscription directly from ArtsPond. This approach serves the sector's need for new generations of robust and affordable information technology solutions, while also providing an alternate revenue source for ArtsPond. *Odoo* is a representative approach.

- **verge / bord**

A public and internal eLearning lab. Allows projects to monetize education and outreach programming through an interactive video/online learning platform for the wider public; and, for the platform to disseminate its own intensive professional development tools and training on charitable venture best practices to internal HR and publics.

- **fuse / fusée**

A professional networking, collaboration, enterprise resource planning (ERP) and constituent relationship management (CRM) platform. A secondary platform to be developed in subsequent phases as resources permit. Links all other modules together into a next-generation solution. An enterprise-level, open source platform that will allow new charitable ventures to establish their IT solutions quickly and efficiently.

Mixed

- **Open Sources / Sources ouvertes** features an array of learning resources, tools and services that combine the best of both *in-the-cloud* and *on-the-ground* platforms, including:

- ***In-the-cloud***

An open library/public wiki featuring collaborative how-to tools, templates, and archival documentation on the evolutionary milestones, research and best practices of ArtsPond, the charitable venture model overall, and other related platforms in the industry. Resources will be provided as is for free.³ More intensive, guided learning resources will also be made available for a fee. Via the wiki, members of the community may contribute their own perspectives and learnings in response to ArtsPond's resources.

- ***On-the-ground***

Building upon cloud-based sources, an array of intensive, face-to-face industry and public learning opportunities will help extend the awareness and capacity of charitable ventures overall, including: full-day learning labs; quarter and

³ As a commitment to shared learning, the first phase of *Open Sources* launched at *ArtsPond.com* in May 2015.

half-day industry and public workshops with live streaming and webinars; producer-in-training professional development internships and awards; private consulting and mentoring; conference presentations; cross-disciplinary Advisory/Task Force meetings; and, triennial Charitable Venture National Congress. A mixture of free and fee-based services, events, and activities will be offered. Artscape's suite of learning interfaces, workshops, labs and replication modules may serve as a working model.

On-the-ground

While robust *in-the-cloud* solutions, in our view, are absolutely essential to operate a national charitable venture platform at scale, art cannot, and should not, operate in a cloud-only world. And yet, it is also our contention that the more robust and interconnected the platform's information systems can be, the easier it will be, and the more time and resources that will come free, for artists from across the platform to get down to the business of growing vital art not only independently, but with *each other*.

Built on strong technology, ArtsPond's collaborative, *on-the-ground* administration, marketing, fundraising, event curation, exhibition and production services will invite artists and producers to come together, *in-situ*, to fully embrace the joys of vital artistic learning and creativity in new ways. Imagine:

- **Creative**
Cross-silo collaborations between platform artists commissioned/presented by ArtsPond
- **Producing**
Joint artistic programming, co-productions, exhibitions, festivals, collaborative marketing and fundraising, special events, value-added audience outreach programming, and more
- **Commerce & Industry**
Shared venues, awards, group insurance, employee benefits, and more.

THE WAY FORWARD

Across Canada, the emergence of charitable venture platforms is currently on hold until the Canada Revenue Agency and the Charities Directorate provide increased clarity around their intent and interpretations of charitable precedents that challenge or permit this kind of model emerging across the sector.

At present, **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** is focusing on sector-wide networking and research around the relevance of charitable venture platforms (**#AWGCan**), arts education research and elearning tools for emerging artists-producers (**#ManagingCreativity** and **#AskAnything**), and prototyping low-cost / open source cloud computing arts management tools for independent artists and small to large arts organizations in collaboration with other arts organizations and technology developers.

Federally incorporated as a non-profit in the province of Ontario on August 10, 2016, the first Annual General Meeting of the corporation will take place in late October 2016. **ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts** is currently seeking individuals with expertise in arts and culture, law, finance, marketing, fundraising, and governance to join the organization's inaugural board of directors for a two-year term. As a contributor to the evolution of one of Canada's youngest arts and culture non-profits, each board member will have the opportunity to enable the creative, strategic, and financial growth of the organization and a broad community of artists from across Canada. Reflecting a mandate to serve all regions of Canada, including urban, rural and remote communities, applicants from all regions of Canada are encouraged to apply.



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Fostering a resilient society by leading ventures that bolster the diversity and vitality of the Canadian arts public and industry