

Formative Evaluation of Radio Canada International (RCI)  
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Prepared by the Department of Canadian Heritage  
based on research conducted by Consulting and Audit Canada



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## Executive summary

Radio Canada International (RCI) is an international broadcast service, established in 1942, that is located in the Société Radio-Canada building in Montréal. Its objectives are to develop and promote awareness of Canada abroad, furthering Canada's economic, social and cultural objectives, and connecting Canadians travelling and living abroad with developments in Canadian society. Besides French and English programming, RCI broadcasts programs in Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian.

There has been a longstanding uncertainty about funding for RCI, and several times the service seemed on the verge of closing. However, annual funding of \$15.52 million from the Department of Canadian Heritage was announced in 1997, to be provided by means of a contribution agreement between the Department and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) providing input on geographic target areas and broadcast languages.

The report that follows is a formative evaluation, assessing RCI's design and delivery and the likelihood of objectives achievement. It was produced by the Department of Canadian Heritage, based on research conducted by Consulting and Audit Canada during 2001 and 2002.

It makes four recommendations, as follows:

- The rationale for the RCI service should be more clearly defined, and RCI, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation should together define expected results of RCI programming.
- If a contribution agreement continues to be the most effective mechanism to provide funding to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for RCI operations, the contribution agreement should set out clearly defined expected results, performance information that will be captured by RCI, and a plan for evaluating RCI's relevance, success and cost-effectiveness.
- Any future contribution agreement between the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation should set out RCI's reporting obligations to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as well as the information Canadian Broadcasting Corporation will provide to the Department of Canadian Heritage.
- The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has an international broadcasting policy, and RCI's role and objectives in relation to that policy should be clearly defined.

## 1. Introduction

This report is based on research conducted by Consulting and Audit Canada during 2001 and 2002. The project was originally intended to be a summative evaluation of Radio Canada International (RCI), however, because there was little in the way of results-based reporting data, and performance measures were not in place, it was decided that the project should instead be a formative evaluation, that is a study of the adequacy of RCI's design and delivery of the service and likelihood of objectives achievement.

Research included a review of documents and interviews with representatives of RCI, CBC, the Department of Canadian Heritage and National Defence, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Privy Council Office, Coopers Bassett Consulting, and Friends of Canadian Broadcasting.

## 2. RCI's history and evolution

### History

The International Service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was created during the Second World War (September 18, 1942), after it was decided that an international short-wave radio service from Canada would contribute to the country's war effort. As explained by Arthur Siegel in his 1996 history of Radio Canada International<sup>1</sup>, its broadcasts would hasten the German surrender and bolster the spirits of people in occupied countries, by telling enemies and friends about the ongoing battles, the Canadian contribution to the war, and the bright future for world peace that would be shaped under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Service was considered a separate entity from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and was funded by the federal government through the Department of External Affairs. The CBC provided the operational capability and programming.

The International Service made its first broadcasts in French and English in late 1944. In the late 1940s, it increased both the number of languages used (to 15) and the number of broadcasting hours.

The operational and management structure of the CBC International Service changed in 1968. In March 1968, by Order-in-Council, the Government formally made the international service a part of the CBC. The CBC was mandated to provide, in consultation with the Department of External Affairs, an international service using short-wave technology that would provide a continuing expression abroad of Canadian identity. The Service's assets were transferred to the CBC and the

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<sup>1</sup> Siegel, Arthur. *Radio Canada International*, Mosaic Press, Oakville, Ontario, 1996.

funding was included in CBC's parliamentary vote. Two years later, the Service's name was changed to Radio Canada International.

The two decades that followed were marked by expansion of both the number of broadcasting hours and the nature of programming presented on RCI.

In 1991, Parliament adopted the new *Broadcasting Act*, which included a provision dealing specifically with the International Service. Subsection 46(2) stated: "*The Corporation shall, within the conditional of any licence or licences issued to it by the Commission and subject to any applicable regulations of the Commission, provide an international service in accordance with such directions the Governor-in-Council may issue.*"

RCI operates from Société Radio-Canada's Montréal headquarters with a staff of some 130 journalists, producers, programmers, technicians and managers. It also has a small number of journalists posted across the country to help it reflect news from other regions.

### **RCI objectives**

The mission statement approved for RCI in 1980 by CBC was to provide a service designed to attract an international audience in order to further develop international awareness of Canada and the Canadian identity by means of short-wave and other distribution mechanisms. Its programs were to reflect Canadian life and culture, Canada's national interests and policies, and Canadian viewpoints on national and international affairs. A secondary objective is to provide more Canadian news and information to Canadians abroad in those areas already served under the primary foreign audience objective.

Its objectives were later updated to:

- Develop and promote awareness of Canada, Canadian identity, and Canadian society, by reaching an international audience with high-quality programming and information,
- Further Canada's economic, social and cultural objectives by promoting and explaining Canada's values and interests in areas of economic, social and cultural endeavours, such as business and trade, cultural expression, human rights and democratic principles; and
- Connect Canadians travelling and living abroad with developments in Canada and Canadian society.

A 1991 revision of the *Broadcasting Act* (subsection 46(2)) directed the CBC to provide an international service, "in accordance with such directions as the Governor-in-Council may issue." The context and programming style were further developed in CBC Program Policy No.18, issued in 1994, which gave more specific guidance on factors affecting objectives achievement, including the following:

- Underlying all RCI programming is the awareness that Canada is not as well-known abroad as it should be, that its image has not kept pace with realities, and that it is not represented on foreign newsstands by a Canadian daily or weekly press, nor by any but the most superficial coverage in foreign media;

- To “attract an international audience,” RCI programming must be adapted to target audience interests and knowledge. The emphasis within information programming must be on topicality in order to reach the interested audience for short-wave;
- One important function of RCI is to “reflect Canada’s national interests and policies, and the spectrum of Canadian viewpoints on national and international affairs.” This task should be carried out fairly, accurately and in accordance with the CBC’s program policies on news and current affairs, which apply to RCI as fully as to the domestic networks.

## Funding

In the early 1990s, the CBC, like many government departments and agencies, was subject to significant funding cutbacks. Various arrangements involving government departments and the CBC were made to continue CBC funding. These arrangements are summarized in Annex 1.

Following a review of the Service, the federal government decided to give responsibility for RCI to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. CBC was still mandated to administer RCI, and an annual grant was provided for a period of five years. Six of the 15 broadcast languages were dropped.

In 1995, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the CBC announced that they would discontinue RCI funding effective April 1, 1996. The Service was saved *in extremis* by a combination of funding from the CBC, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), DFAIT, and the Departments of Canadian Heritage and National Defence. The same funders, with the exception of the CBC, supported RCI the following fiscal year (1997-98).

In 1996, the CBC hired KPMG to carry out an operational review of RCI. KPMG found that RCI was an efficient operator compared to other international broadcasting organizations.

In 1997, the Ministers of Canadian Heritage and Foreign Affairs and International Trade jointly announced that the Government would provide RCI with ongoing operational funding in the amount of \$15.52 million per year. RCI would also receive \$15 million in one-time capital funding from the federal government between 1998-98 and 2000-01.

RCI funding is provided by means of a contribution agreement between the CBC and the Department of Canadian Heritage, on behalf of the Government. The agreement is administered for Canadian Heritage by the Broadcasting Policy and Innovation Branch of the Cultural Affairs Sector.

<b>Table 1: Funding to RCI</b>			
<b>Fiscal year</b>	<b>Provision of service</b>	<b>Capital funding</b>	<b>Total</b>
1998-99	\$15,552,000	\$5,000,000	\$20,552,000
1999-2000	\$15,552,000	\$5,000,000	\$20,552,000
2000-01	\$15,552,000	\$5,000,000	\$20,552,000
2001-02	\$15,552,000	\$0	\$15,552,000
2002-03	\$15,552,000	\$0	\$15,552,000

Source: RCI contribution agreement, including the March 2001 and March 2002 amendments.

**Activities covered by the Contribution Agreement**

Table 2 below outlines the two main categories of activities covered by the contribution agreement.

<b>Table 2: Activities covered by the Contribution Agreement</b>	
<b>Actual provision of service</b>	<b>Capital funding (potential)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salaries and wages</li> <li>• Services and office expenses of administrators, producers, researchers, reporters, translators, technicians, and other staff employed by the CBC for work done exclusively for RCI</li> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Rental costs</li> <li>• Transmission rights</li> <li>• Travel</li> <li>• Costs of rights (channels, satellite, etc.)</li> <li>• Supplies, printing and telephone costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To replace and upgrade short-wave transmitters and antennas</li> <li>• To replace and upgrade studio equipment and facilities</li> <li>• Up to 15% of the funds can be used for other capital-related costs (e.g. moving costs, construction, or office space and facilities)</li> </ul>

Source: 1998 Contribution Agreement



Under the Agreement, the CBC agreed to provide an international service by means of RCI (in consultation with DFAIT) that would:

- broadcast a minimum of 150 hours per week;
- prepare and broadcast programs in a minimum of five foreign languages: Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian. RCI is also expected to use English and French programming from various sources, including the CBC’s domestic service;
- fully utilize and properly maintain its transmission frequencies;
- fill the remaining broadcasting hours with English and French programming from domestic radio, RCI newscasts, etc.;
- maintain five regional RCI bureaus in Canada; and
- only change geographic targets and languages after consultation with DFAIT.

Table 3 below summarizes the number of broadcasting hours per week, for each broadcast media.

<b>Table 3: Number of Broadcasting Hours per Week by Media: January 2002</b>	
<b>Media</b>	<b>Details</b>
Short-wave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Europe: 35 hours</li> <li>• Africa: 24.5 hours</li> <li>• Asia: 45.5 hours</li> <li>• America: 75.5 hours</li> <li>• Middle East: 17.5 hours</li> </ul>
Satellite	168 hours (using 4 satellites)
Internet	168 hours
Partner radio stations (n=346)	60 hours
Source: RCI	

Table 4 below summarizes the weekly broadcasting hours per program source.

<b>Table 4: Weekly Broadcasting Hours per Program Source: January 2002</b>	
<b>Program source</b>	<b>Total hours</b>
RCI: Arabic	10.5
RCI: Chinese	7
RCI: English	14
RCI: French	21
RCI: Russian	7
RCI: Spanish	7
RCI: Ukrainian	7
<b>Sub-total for RCI original programming</b>	<b>73.5</b>
CBC rebroadcast	110
SRC rebroadcast	110
<b>Total:</b>	<b>293.5</b>
Source: RCI	

The Contribution Agreement links RCI with two federal departments, the Department of Canadian Heritage (funding) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (consultations on geographic targets and languages).

At the time of the research, a Canadian Heritage’s strategic objective was to connect Canadians to the world. Associated with this objective were key result commitments relating to the promotion of Canadian values in cultural interests around the world with a view to having international audiences recognize Canadian achievements.

DFAIT has three key objectives, namely:

- promotion of prosperity and employment by (among other things) advancing Canada's international trade and economic interests abroad, attracting foreign investment, and promoting tourism to Canada;
- protection of our security within a stable global framework; and
- promotion of Canadian values and culture abroad by celebration of Canadian culture.

**Domestic and International Public Broadcasting: CBC and RCI**

The role of a public broadcaster is the production, gathering and packaging of content to attract and retain a target audience. Distribution is important but it is not the chief business of the broadcaster, although the broadcaster may engage in distribution as a necessary activity if other cost-effective methods are not available.

The difference between RCI and most other services of the CBC is that the primary target audience of the former is abroad whereas the target audience of the latter is in Canada. The CBC also serves international audiences to some extent, for example through its Internet service, through its participation in the management and operation of TV5 (for an international Francophone audience), and through packaging of television content for distribution by a third party to the United States via direct broadcast satellite. However, the bulk of these activities consist of repackaging content produced for domestic audiences, without adding context to make the material more intelligible to foreign audiences. In contrast, RCI views adding context as an essential and central component of presenting the Canadian viewpoint to foreign audiences.

While international broadcasters may compete for audiences abroad, there is a large co-operative component to their operations. Since there is no agency to assign international frequencies, broadcasters meet to agree on the frequencies they will use and the times they will use them. They barter certain services, for example monitoring the reception quality of foreign broadcasts or supplying transmission to regions beyond the reach of other broadcasters' transmitters.

RCI has built a relationship with other broadcasters by holding the biennial conferences of international broadcasters, offering internships to foreign broadcasters, and taking a leadership role in collaborative organizations such as a conference of international broadcasters for audience research.

### **Spring 2001 redirection**

In April 2001, the president of the CBC announced a re-evaluation of the International Service and its mandate in the new multimedia environment. CBC management, in cooperation with the Government, would determine the needs and obligations with respect to audiences abroad.

The announcement was followed by a number of changes in RCI programming. Table 5 below shows RCI programming before and after the changes. Five weekly English and French theme programs were to be introduced, weekday foreign language programs were planned, and enhancements to programming for the Internet, partner stations, and different platforms were also planned.

<b>Table 5: Spring 2001</b>		
<b>Proposed RCI Production and Rebroadcast Hours</b>		
	Current	Projected
	Weekly hours	Weekly hours
Program Source	SW/Satellite	SW/Satellite
Production		
Radio Canada International		
Arabic	7.0	7.0
Chinese	7.0	7.0
English	42.0	8.0
French	31.5	8.0
Russian	7.0	7.0
Spanish	8.0	8.0
Ukrainian	7.0	7.0
Sub-total	109.5	52.0
Rebroadcast		
CBC/Radio-Canada (combined)	89.5	109.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>199.0</b>	<b>161.0</b>

Source: Consulting and Audit Canada

### **Fall 2001 revision**

In early October, 2001, further RCI programming decisions were announced as a result of the events of September 11, 2001:

- an increase in the number of weekly hours dedicated to programs broadcast in Arabic and Russian to ensure better coverage of the current international crisis; and
- the resumption of production and broadcast of original newscasts on weekends.

The CBC indicated that the reorganization of RCI would free sufficient resources to put these activities back into operation without jeopardizing other RCI activities.

The CBC Board of Directors re-confirmed that RCI is part of the CBC mandate. The Board of Directors also accepted the idea of integrating RCI into the domestic service. All support services not directly part of putting programs together were to be integrated into the domestic service as of December, 2001.

A CBC memo said that these programming decisions illustrated the importance of RCI in CBC operations and expressed a firm belief in the future of the international radio service. It stated

that the corporation was determined to continue strengthening RCI's program content because the latter was an integral part of its public service mandate.

### **3. RCI effectiveness and efficiency**

#### **Effectiveness and efficiency**

A program is effective if it achieves its objective(s). Effectiveness is most easily measured when there is a single objective and the desired result is clear and quantifiable. Assessing effectiveness becomes more difficult as the range of objectives increases and access to performance and outcome information decreases. Program alternatives can also be evaluated in terms of their efficiency measures, which relate the program outputs to their resource inputs.

The funding agreement indicates RCI's mandate was, "to attract an international audience with the purpose of developing and promoting international awareness of Canada and the Canadian identity," and that the provision of such a service was in the interests of Canada, "insofar as the service promoted and explained Canadian values and interests in business and trade, culture and values, human rights and democratic development."

An assessment of RCI's effectiveness depends upon the clarity and precision of RCI's objectives. However, program objectives (as stated in the funding agreement), audience categories and program foci are very broad. These broad foci need to be broken down into more specific desirable programmatic themes and target audience objectives. Today's environment of increased media availability demands great precision in identifying policy objectives and target audiences.

A Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) is required for RCI so that its performance can be monitored and its impact evaluated. RCI stakeholders and managers need to agree on objectives and expected results in greater detail than currently exist. Measures by which its impact can be assessed should also be decided.

Program documentation suggests that RCI audience coverage is equivalent to that of similar sized broadcasters and is produced at a lower cost. Anecdotal evidence suggests RCI is respected for its program presentation and content, however, some programming may benefit from a more youthful orientation.

#### **Contribution Agreement outputs**

Up to May 2001, RCI had fulfilled the limited objectives of the Contribution Agreement for the period and had made an effort to improve its understanding of the marketplace and develop international partnerships to obtain better placements for Canadian programming. It worked to adapt and contextualize Canadian programming for international audiences. Efforts to contextualize programming were reduced in May due to financial pressures.

With respect to its obligations under the Contribution Agreement, RCI broadcast about 200

hours per week to the regions specified therein, about a third more than the 150 hours per week required. It produced and broadcast programs in the five stipulated languages and, after consultation with DFAIT, proposed adding three additional languages (Japanese, German and Brazilian Portuguese). This proposal was contingent on availability of additional funding and was not pursued when the funds were not forthcoming.

RCI fully utilized its assigned broadcast frequencies, and used capital funding from the Contribution Agreement to replace its Sackville transmitters. It signed agreements with relay stations to extend its range in Asia. It also proposed reorientation of its Sackville antennas to give better coverage of the western hemisphere, also contingent on additional funding. Over the period of the Agreement, RCI concluded a number of partnership agreements with radio stations abroad which supplemented the short-wave service to improve its audience reach. It also continued to develop its Internet site and began providing a daily news summary by e-mail to listeners on request. These latter two activities went beyond the requirements of the Agreement.

RCI continued to maintain its regional operations as stipulated. The Agreement did not specify the amount of original RCI production, so the mix of new programming and reuse of domestic CBC production was left to the discretion of RCI/CBC management. Any future funding arrangement with RCI should be clear on expectations for original RCI programming, so the phrase “fill the remaining broadcast hours with...domestic programming” has parameters.

In summary, RCI fulfilled the terms of the Contribution Agreement and provided the required reports. Circumstances required carry-over of a portion of the capital appropriations and gave rise to operating surpluses, however RCI provided plausible reasons for these carry-overs in its annual reports.

Beyond meeting the specific requirements of the Agreement and producing programming specifically tailored to foreign audiences, RCI took several steps to improve productivity, to make its production more attractive to foreign audiences, and to cement links with broadcasters in order to better reach foreign audiences. Productivity was enhanced by moving to digital editing equipment and by using compact disks rather than magnetic tape for distribution.

Some interviewees indicated that there was an increased emphasis on business and international trade coverage in broadcasting to the eastern hemisphere. RCI increased its travel (e.g., in conjunction with Team Canada, Prime Minister Chrétien’s visit to the Middle East) and coverage of international conferences. Also, it produced a number of special series, for example:

- “Democracy in Action” broadcast in the Ukraine, prior to its election;
- “Discover your Country”, describing Canada and produced regionally outside urban centres;
- coverage of many Canadian events including cultural activities (e.g. “Folklorama” in Winnipeg, the Montréal International Jazz Festival, and the Francolies of Montréal), social issues (e.g. conferences on haemophilia and victimology in Montréal and the International Conference on War-Affected Children in Winnipeg), and political issues (e.g. the G-20 meeting of Finance Ministers and the Asia-Pacific Summit in Vancouver).

RCI introduced a marketing and audience research function, began to conduct RCI-specific research with small groups of foreign listeners and moved to a leading role in the international audience research organization, the Conference of International Broadcasters' Audience Research Services (CIBAR). It hosted several meetings of international broadcasters and continued its biennial conference series, "Challenges". It undertook a number of co-productions, including the first to be broadcast live in China with a foreign participant. Many foreign delegations visiting Montreal are given a tour of RCI facilities and RCI works, as part of staff visits abroad, to build better links with DFAIT missions and encourage them to promote RCI's service.

The evaluators were told that RCI has taken creative steps to increase financial viability. For example, RCI has set up multi-tasking team leaders for each unit to create new pilots and to react quickly to unexpected requirements, e.g., those of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

It was suggested that operating costs might be further reduced by:

- Attrition of staff;
- Program production efficiencies through bench-marking, for a savings without negative effects on the product;
- Greater reliance on the Internet as a means of finding and verifying information, thereby improving program preparation productivity;
- Improving digital editing capability, so RCI can store and edit programs more easily and shift them to different media; and
- Digital transmission to improve signal quality and reduce power requirements.

That being said, efforts to increase RCI's efficiency must take account of the organization's objective of providing programming tailored and relevant to international audiences. Domestic programming is more likely to be relevant to Canadians abroad and the U.S. than citizens of other countries.

### **RCI strengths**

RCI has a number of strengths that enable it to play a role beyond that one might expect of a broadcaster of its size and budget. It has a staff committed to international broadcasting. It has up-to-date technology to facilitate programming, and modern short-wave transmitters that can be easily upgraded for digital transmission to improve the quality of the received signal and contribute to a more efficient use of frequencies.

It also has strong links with foreign broadcasters that allow it to increase its reach at minimal cost through barter arrangements, assist in the placement of programs, and engage in co-production that results in programming that has a more natural attractiveness to foreign audiences. Moreover, as part of the CBC, it has access to domestic programming and content that can be effectively employed in its broadcast schedule.

## **4. Achieving an audience**

## **Audience research and feedback**

RCI's research included audience surveys, focus groups, and program monitoring panels abroad. In the mid-90s, audience feedback was largely from letters in response to promotional efforts, which tended to be complimentary. Some aggregate audience response data from RCI are included in Annex 2. RCI's foreign market research budget dropped in 2001-02.

RCI's quantitative research built upon BBC and American surveys of international audiences and informal exchanges of information with other international broadcasters. Results suggest that the RCI weekly audience ranges from two million plus (hard estimates) to about five million (soft estimates). Internet hit counts provided little information on audience interests. Internet pages viewed and information requests provided more useful numbers but are difficult to interpret without comparative information.

Researchers considered the type of audience of greater importance to Canada than the size of the audience, which can to some extent be inferred from partner broadcasters. They found that RCI has been effective in using such feedback to adjust and improve programming.

RCI expanded qualitative audience research using focus groups and program monitoring in target countries, although locating and reaching listeners around the world and developing common research tools challenges limited quality control. Research was rotated around regions in an attempt to cover, within budget, all geographic areas. Continuing market research will be required if RCI is to reach all targeted areas effectively.

## **RCI programming**

Audience profile and feedback are important if RCI is to focus programming and placement to achieve its policy objectives. Funding limitations in the early 1990's may have "unconsciously" directed RCI's program focus to Canadians abroad rather than to international audiences. However, Canadians abroad have access to Canadian news via the Internet. Since 1997, RCI's international focus has been to audiences in the Ukraine, Russia, China, Middle East and Latin America. Target audiences have tended to be identified by language and geography, but in today's competitive communications environment, more specific target information would be useful.

International audiences require contextual information for Canadian perspectives to be meaningful to them. Without such information, audiences may not see the relevance of Canada's domestic programming. Moreover, much of domestic Canadian news has limited interest.

There is heavy competition from BBC and other countries for international radio audiences and audiences for commercial television. Television news from many countries is available for those with satellite access. Consequently, Canada must be very adept at connecting with local interests



to attract audiences. A value added for RCI is its producers' knowledge of international audiences. RCI has tried to "hook" into local interests through local specialty programs and joint productions (for example, the post-Soviet era for Eastern Europe, or discussions on the environment for Chinese audiences), but specialty programming and joint productions are expensive.

### **Program delivery**

Direct-to-listeners broadcasting delivery options include short-wave (direct or relay), satellite to personal receiver, and Internet. Indirect delivery options include satellite program transmission to partner stations and cable radio networks or mailing of diskettes. A menu of Canadian programs can be made available to foreign broadcasters to use with the RCI tag according to local tastes/needs. Interviewees felt the challenge is not technology but making the right content accessible to the right audiences.

Short-wave broadcasting allows RCI to control the content and when and where it is available. It is not dependent upon other broadcasters for scheduling and programming cooperation, once transmission agreements have been made. However, maintaining frequencies and reception quality is difficult as short-wave is less popular to listening publics with other options. Digital short-wave has become feasible and much more accessible, but must await the spread of digital receivers at a price acceptable to price-sensitive audiences. To the extent possible, it is important to retain existing audiences until the promise of short-wave digital broadcasting is achieved. (Experience in the Caribbean indicates that once an audience is lost, it takes tremendous effort to recapture it). The Internet is valuable for developed countries and Canadians abroad. However, many do not have access to the Internet and real time voice streaming will cause Internet congestion if used by many people.

Some respondents felt that the placement of programming in local languages with local partners constitutes 80 per cent of RCI's effectiveness. Programming is transmitted to international partners by satellite or by mailed diskette. Local partner stations have a much greater ability to lead listeners to Canadian programs than is possible from Canada. They broadcast in AM and FM or through cable networks to specific audiences. Knowing the audience can help RCI to tailor programs about what programming will attract local broadcasters would be useful to RCI. For example, programming blocks might include such themes as science, the environment, agriculture and natural resources, social and gender issues, health/medicine, financial industries, communications, urban planning, culture and entertainment.

### **Marketing**

Broadcasting requires marketing, which in turn requires time and the building of local relationships with private and public audience information sources and program distributors. Partners for programming are needed and delivery technology needs to be suited to each local market. RCI has made progress developing partnerships abroad but will need to devote considerable energy and resources to maintaining and furthering these efforts. A particular focus on young audience penetration would benefit Canada.

## 5. RCI's links to CBC

The Government has provided financial support for Canadian international public broadcasting since RCI's inception.

CBC has an international broadcast mandate, and RCI is a means of achieving it. It is therefore important for government funding for RCI to continue so long as RCI's expected results, performance measurement strategy, and results reporting strategy are clearly defined and CBC's international strategy takes in account RCI.

During 1997-2001, RCI operated as a distinct unit within the CBC with its own identity and a largely autonomous operation, subject to CBC corporate policies and certain shared systems. Base programming in English and French audience as well as foreign language programming (news and current affairs—political, social, cultural) was produced for an international audience. RCI production was supplemented by relevant CBC domestic programming. Content was distributed by short-wave, satellite, and the Internet. As appropriate, RCI consulted DFAIT on changes to their broadcast schedule. The prime audience was an international one; a secondary audience was Canadians abroad within the target regions. The Government provided funding to the CBC specifically for RCI activities.

Some key informants felt that a positive feature of having RCI as part of or delivered by CBC is optimisation of its human and capital resource base. On the negative side, it was felt that RCI and its identity and mandate could be at risk in a larger organization with a primarily domestic mandate. Under these circumstances, there could be increased reliance on domestic programming that lacks relevance to foreign audiences, and if foreign audiences are not the stated target, the rationale for government support would also become questionable, as would the degree to which RCI satisfies requirements for an international service in the *Broadcasting Act*.

However, tight links with the CBC also contribute to RCI's reputation as an international broadcaster and offers greater scope for enhanced effectiveness in terms of government priorities for international broadcasting and audience research. However, increased organizational effectiveness is also contingent on other factors. Better promotion among stakeholders and the general public is also an important consideration. However, to maintain the activity level of the recent past budget, adjustments to take account of inflation might be required. To increase the number of languages broadcast, improve placement and audience research, a modest increase in the operational budget would be required. Meanwhile, a modest increase in the capital budget for antenna realignment and digital short-wave cards would maximize the advantage of recent investment.

## 6. Governance

## Direction

The Auditor General's comments concerning the CBC in its *Special Examination for 2000* are relevant to the RCI as well, that is RCI must have a reliable process for negotiating terms with stakeholders who control resources and supply authority. As a program supported by the federal government, RCI receives direction from DFAIT, funding from Canadian Heritage, and content, direction and administrative support from the CBC.

RCI is a cooperative venture with an ad hoc mechanism for ongoing strategic stakeholder involvement and horizontal consultation on policy and strategic operational issues. There is no cohesive, structured authority to represent international broadcasting interests in government policy circles. For government stakeholders, RCI is one tool among many for giving Canada profile in the world community.

The comments of the Auditor General in the source cited above regarding the CBC apply equally to RCI, viz., "It is important, therefore, that the CBC initiate a dialogue with, and seek the appropriate support of...key stakeholders about the role and funding of the CBC. There has been a perception that the CBC has tended to isolate itself to protect the arm's-length relationship, but other public broadcasters have closer relationships with their government stakeholders... consultation... will need to be done in a manner that respects the arm's-length relationship the CBC must maintain with government."

## Accountability

The division of responsibility for directing, funding and operational activity between three government organizations (Canadian Heritage, DFAIT and the CBC) means that coordination among the three stakeholders is important. Reliance on an ad hoc process of consultation has meant that the accountability process is less effective than it could be.

## Measurement for accountability

Stakeholders should identify target audiences in greater detail so that RCI has a better feel for stakeholders' broadcast objectives. Expected outcomes should be defined, even if they are difficult or impractical to measure. Intermediate results in terms of program outputs and audience reaction should be articulated and measured on a regular basis. The emphasis should be on measuring program placements, audience penetration and analysing audience feedback. The assumption would be that reaching and retaining target audiences implies effective programming and increased international profile for Canada.

Defining RCI's results in terms of a "number of hours broadcast" should be considered, as the intent of RCI's programming is to attract listeners. If it is too difficult to ascertain the number and types of listeners world-wide other criteria could be considered, for example:

- The proportion of program hours per month broadcast in short-wave by geographic area and language;

- The proportion of program hours per month broadcast abroad of total by international partners;
- The proportion of program hours per month produced of total with international partners;
- The proportion of program hours per month of total tailored for broadcast abroad;
- The proportion of program hours of total related to priority policy themes;
- The number and significance of program improvements made due to audience feedback or research;
- The trend of financial allocations by program line;
- The trend of listener sessions per month spent on RCI Web site; and
- The trend in the number of Internet file requests per week.

RCI should also engage in regular dialogue with external stakeholders on programming priorities for international audiences and what it is learning about these audiences. Such information could contribute to the formulation of CBC's international strategy.

### **Governance requirements**

It is important that RCI retain an international audience focus in its programming and production. RCI is seen as one tool among many for raising Canada's profile in the world community. It is important to guide RCI performance monitoring and future evaluation activity. The importance of ensuring RCI's journalistic integrity is maintained, but this concern does not prevent RCI from having a Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) to define its activities, performance monitoring responsibilities and evaluation plan.

There is currently not enough information to adequately measure RCI's performance. In order to provide such information, there should be clear accountabilities between the CBC and RCI including:

- Clarified expectations for overall performance and for domestic and international program mix;
- Performance measurement and risk management frameworks; and
- Mechanisms to collect performance information and to disseminate that information to all stakeholders.

The accountability frameworks and processes should be agreed to by the stakeholders.

## **7. Funding options**

There are three funding options for RCI.

The first option is a parliamentary vote for RCI which would still require parliamentary oversight.

Another option is integration of RCI funding in the CBC vote. This approach would involve a transfer of authority from the Department of Canadian Heritage to the CBC.

A third option would be funding through a contribution agreement with the Department of Canadian Heritage, which would require a clear definition of mission, expected results, risks and risk mitigation strategies, performance monitoring expectations, formal terms and conditions, and renewal every 3-5 years. The Department would be required to report on results to Parliament and Canadians.

## **8. Recommendations**

- The rationale for the RCI service should be more clearly defined, and RCI, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation should together define expected results of RCI programming.
- If a contribution agreement continues to be the most effective mechanism to provide funding to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for RCI operations, the contribution agreement should set out clearly defined expected results, performance information that will be captured by RCI, and a plan for evaluating RCI's relevance, success and cost-effectiveness.
- Any future contribution agreement between the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation should set out RCI's reporting obligations to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as well as the information Canadian Broadcasting Corporation will provide to the Department of Canadian Heritage.
- The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has an international broadcasting policy, and RCI's role and objectives in relation to that policy should be clearly defined.

## Annexes

## Annex 1: RCI Funding History

Year	Funding	Comments
1945-68	Parliamentary appropriation	International Service operated and managed by CBC and controlled by Parliament through the Department of External Affairs.
1968-90	From CBC budget	International Service integrated into CBC, consultation with External Affairs mandated. Renamed RCI in July 1970.
1990-91	\$20.5M from CBC	220 employees, programming in 16 languages: CBC announces intention of terminating RCI funding, prompting a government review. CBC international service provision requirement written into <i>Broadcasting Act</i> (February 1991).
1991-95	\$13.5M/yr operating plus some capital	Government funding (DFAIT responsibility) for RCI, commits to 5-year total \$81.49M; budget cut causes discontinuation of programming in six languages and program production except newscasts.
1995-96	CBC: \$8.4M Govt: \$6.2M	DFAIT announces intent to discontinue funding: In Dec. 1995, CBC budget reduced by \$227 million; CBC decides to stop funding RCI effective 1996-97.
1996-97	CBC: \$8M CIDA: \$4M DFAIT: \$1M PCH: \$1M DND: \$250K	Public protest stimulates co-operative funding provision; Department of National Defence amount does not include service contract (additional). In December 1996, CBC budget reductions total \$414 million; CBC again decides not to fund RCI for next year; moves to shut down service.
1997-98	CIDA: \$3M DFAIT: \$6M PCH: \$6M DND: \$360K	Government reassumes full funding responsibility for RCI: commits funds for one year and promises to examine long term funding solutions. Additional \$800K provided by DND for service contract.
1998-2001	\$15.52M/yr operating plus \$5M/yr capital	Provided via a 3-year contribution agreement with PCH A one-time capital grant for upgrading facilities.
2001-03	\$15.52M operating	Extension of contribution agreement without capital portion.

## Annex 2: Audience Feedback (year 2000 data)

RCI audience feedback provided the following aggregate data. Chart A2-1 shows the number of items received in the year 2000 by month and type of communication.

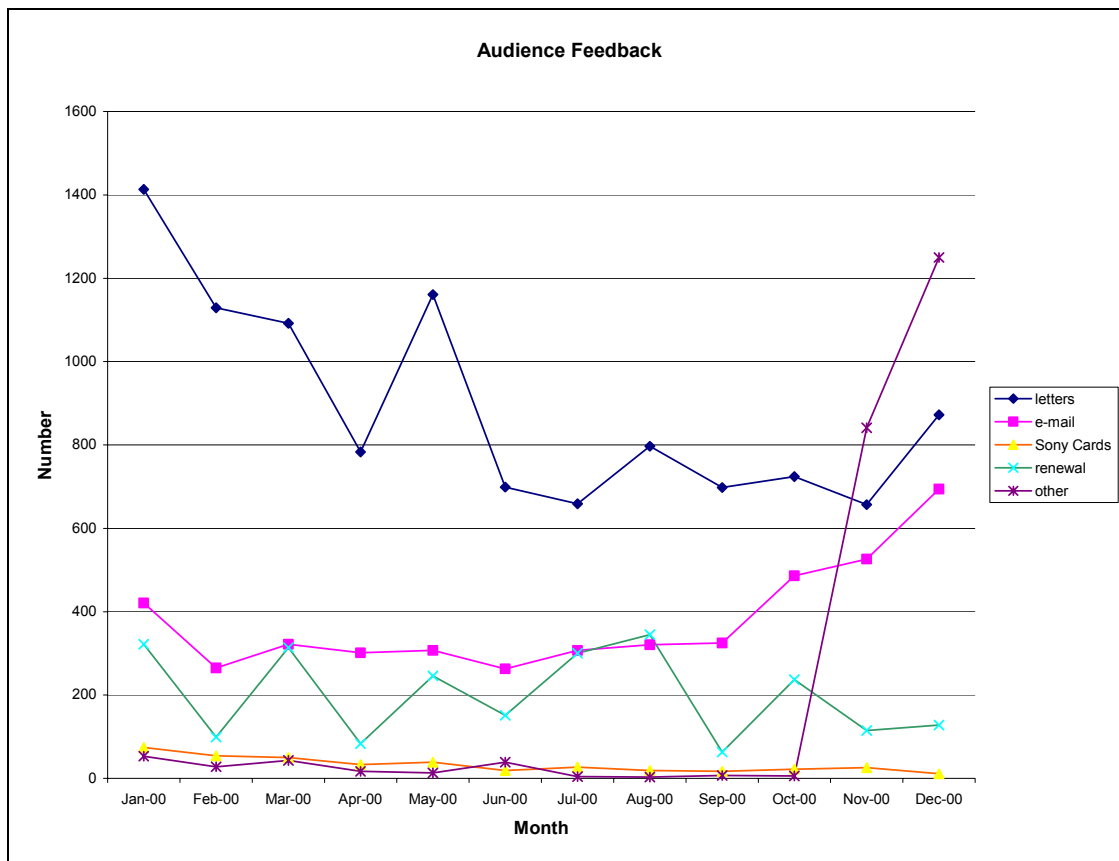


Chart A2-1: Items Received by Month and Type

Letters and e-mail were the most important types of feedback since they were the best means of receiving critical comment on the programming. The “other” category includes items such as post cards, facsimile messages and greeting cards. (Greeting cards probably account for the sharp rise in this category at the end of the year). There is a general downward trend in letters and an upward trend in e-mail over the year, suggesting that the Internet is becoming an increasingly important medium for RCI.

Chart A2-2 below shows the number of items received in the year 2000 by month and region.



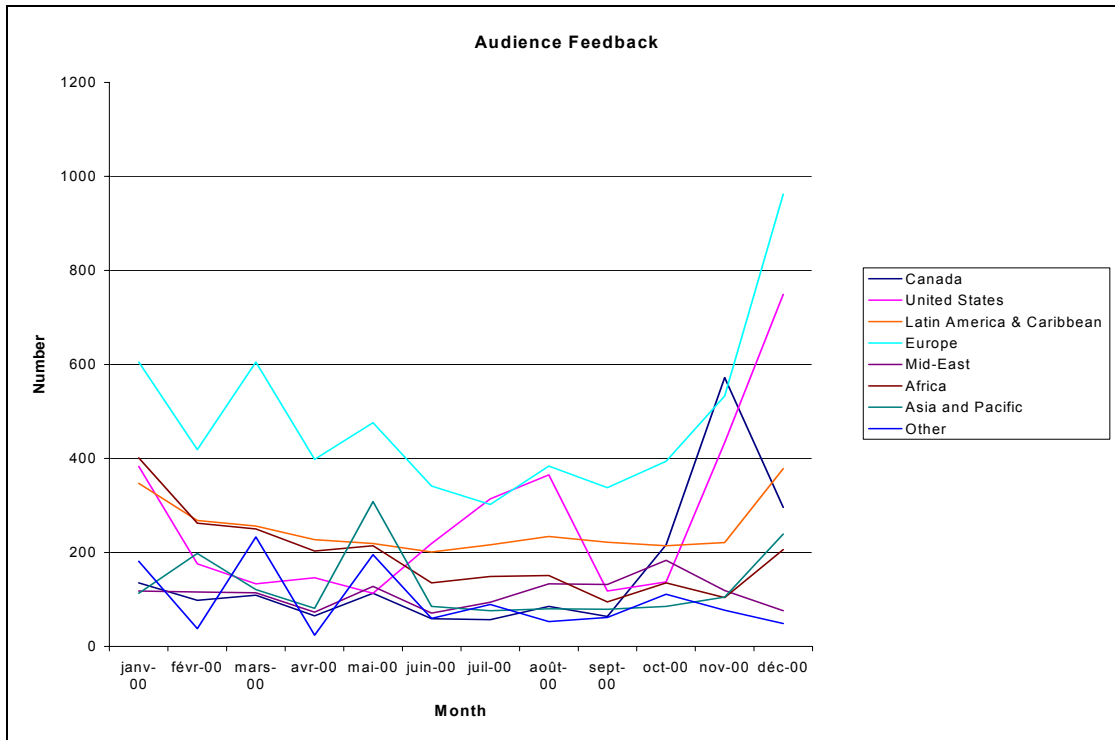


Chart A2-2: Items Received by Month and Region

In this chart, the sharp rise in items at the end of the year probably stems from greeting cards and should be ignored in analyzing where the feedback comes from. Europe is the source of the largest number of items, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean. The volume from Latin America is probably related to the large number of partner stations that broadcast a monthly program in Spanish. Apart from the end of year rise, one would have to look at the individual items to see whether particular events in the region triggered the peaks.

Charts A2-3 and A2-4 show the number of letters and e-mails received in the year 2000 by month and language. There are two sharp peaks in letters from China, otherwise the monthly volume of e-mail is higher. Particular events may have resulted in a flurry of mail.

The volume of e-mail messages is much higher in English than in other languages, however the percentage basis increase in other languages is much higher than that in English. This suggests that the Internet is playing an increasingly important role in RCI's information dissemination.

There was no extensive research on the extent to which the RCI staff explore whether there are identifiable reasons for peaks in volume, etc. It appeared that gross indicators, such as average number of items per month, can be misleading since they give QSL cards and greeting cards as much weight as letters. If resources permitted, it might be useful for RCI to see if the peaks in correspondence correlated with particular program themes with a view to inferring which proved of particular value (or irritation) to listeners.

Researchers found that comments in letters and e-mail are used to improve programming.

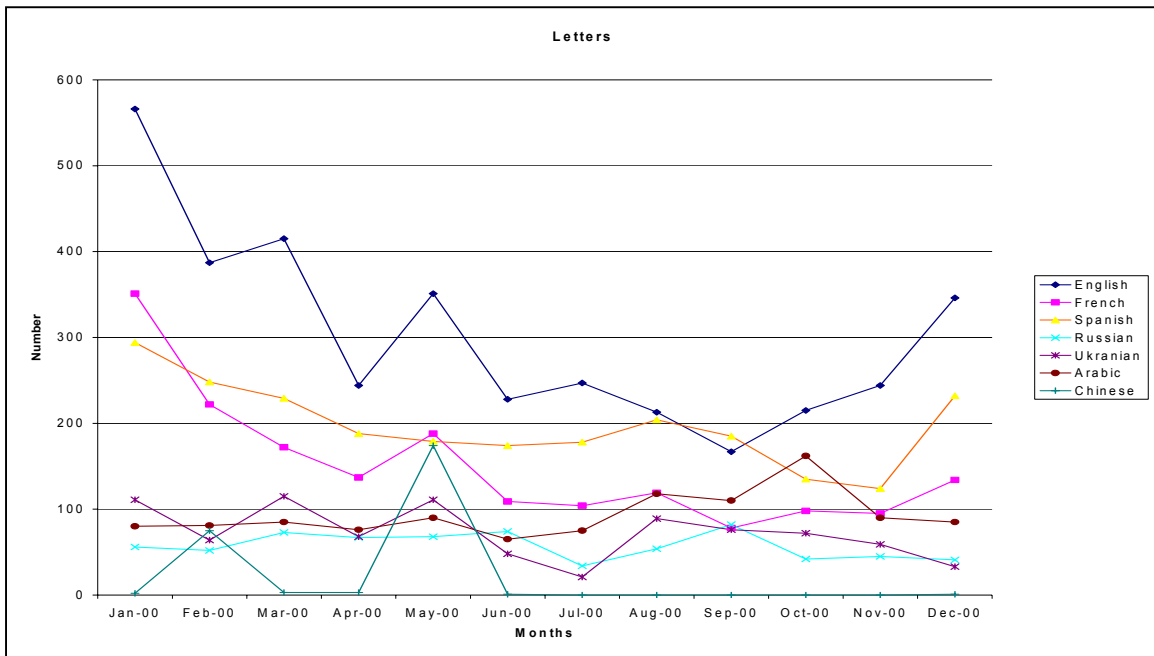


Chart A2-3: Letters Received by Month and Language

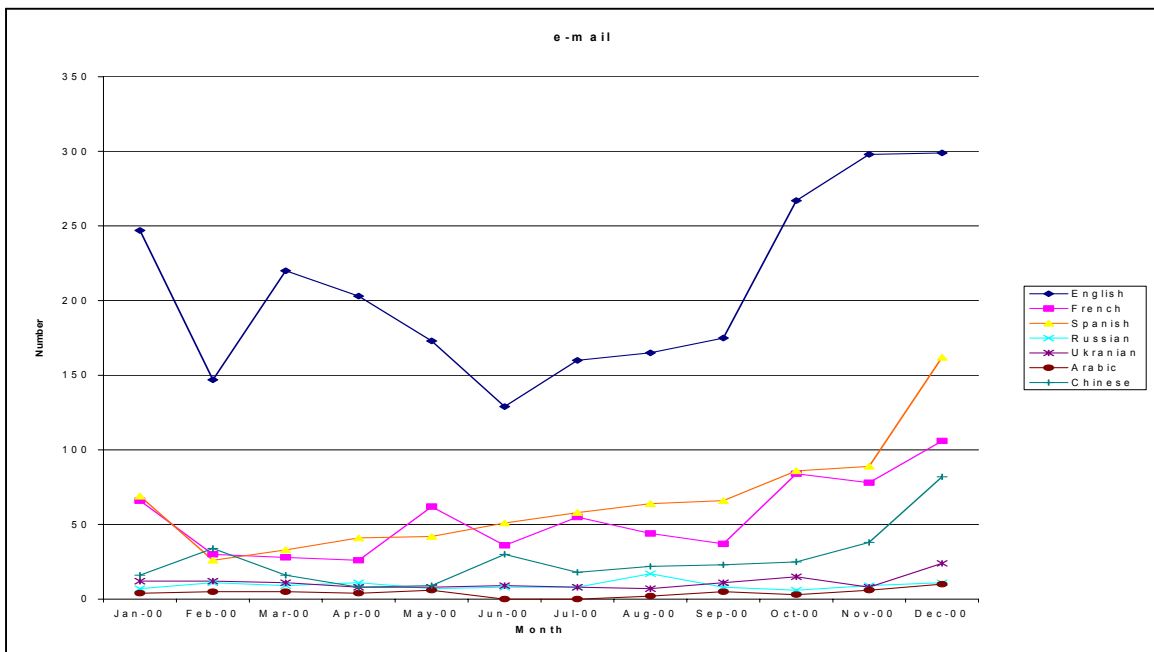


Chart A2-4: E-mail Received by Month and Language

**Management Response and Action Plan**

<b>Evaluation Recommendation</b>		
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b>                      The rationale for the Radio Canada International (RCI) service should be more clearly defined, and RCI, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) should together define expected results of RCI programming.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation accepted</b>                      The Department's desire to clarify objectives, reporting and accountability led it to explore options for a more appropriate funding mechanism than a contribution agreement.                       RCI funding has been integrated into the CBC's annual parliamentary appropriation, and the 1968 Order in Council has been replaced with a new Order that clarifies CBC's accountability and reporting requirements. In addition to the establishment of more appropriate accountability measures, we are confident that the new mechanism will protect the CBC's journalistic and operating independence, RCI's distinctiveness, and yet provide synergistic programming opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Year/Month/Date:</b>                      2003/05/02</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>If a contribution agreement continues to be the most effective mechanism to provide funding to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for RCI operations, the contribution agreement should set out clearly defined expected results, performance information that will be captured by RCI, and a plan for evaluating RCI's relevance, success and cost-effectiveness.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation accepted</b></p> <p>A new contribution agreement was not developed. RCI funding has been integrated into the CBC's annual parliamentary appropriation, and the 1968 Order in Council has been replaced with a new Order that clarifies CBC's accountability and reporting requirements.</p>	<p><b>Year/Month/Date:</b></p> <p>2003/05/02</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>Any future contribution agreement between the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation should set out RCI's reporting obligations to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as well as the information Canadian Broadcasting Corporation will provide to the Department of Canadian Heritage.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation accepted</b></p> <p>A new contribution agreement will not be developed. RCI funding has been integrated into the CBC's annual parliamentary appropriation, and the 1968 Order in Council has been replaced with a new Order that clarifies CBC's accountability and reporting requirements.</p>	<p><b>Year/Month/Date:</b></p> <p>2003/05/02</p>

<b>Recommendation 4</b>	<b>Recommendation accepted</b>	<b>Year/Month/Date:</b>
<p>The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has an international broadcasting policy, and RCI's role and objectives in relation to that policy should be clearly defined.</p>	<p>RCI funding has been integrated into the CBC's annual parliamentary appropriation, and the 1968 Order in Council has been replaced with a new Order that clarifies CBC's accountability and reporting requirements. The new Order requires the CBC to establish planned objectives for RCI and to report results in meeting those objectives in its annual report.</p>	<p>2003/05/02</p>