

THE FINNISH NATIONAL LIBRARY STRATEGY
2006-2015

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The strategy work: background and process

In the near future major changes will take place in the operational environment of the National Library of Finland, and they will affect the whole library. One of the most consequential of them is the expanding range of customers. The revision of §25 of the University Act will state that the National Library shall serve university, polytechnic, special and public libraries. This expansion calls for a new service culture, which is co-operative, interactive and crosses the boundaries between the sectors. There are expectations which are directed towards the National Library as the provider of services as well as towards the library network as a partner.

At the same time there is under construction a whole new digital library service concept, which will be a significant leap forward when completed. The digital library concept consists of both information content and software. The content itself can be in electronic form or the customer gets information about printed material via the digital library. The digital library services provide the end user various, evaluated information resources. During this strategic period the Library will give emphasis to the creation of extensive national digital resources and promote the national digitisation centre in Mikkeli. The status of the Mikkeli unit will be more prominent as a digitising centre for the Finnish libraries and as the co-ordinator of the co-operation between libraries and other memory institutions in the field of digitisation.

There are major challenges in information technology and know-how, and the changes in the operational environment put pressure also on leadership and management systems. All in all there are extensive expectations and challenges that are associated with the desired social impact of the Library and the enhancement of its services and products.

Because of these significant challenges it was important that the customers and the partners participated in the strategy work. A number of representatives of the Library's patrons and other interest groups were involved in the process. The Library Board supervised the work, and also took active part in it as well as approved of the results. To support the actual compilation process there was a Strategy Group, which consisted of the representatives of the customers and partners and the management team. The members of the Strategy Group were nominated by the Library Board, the library sectors, the University of Helsinki Information and Library Services Development Department, and the National Library itself. Moreover there was an internal task force for preparing the drafts.

The National Library Strategy is the principal tool for the Library management. The aim of the strategy process was to create a common vision of the main objectives for a longer period, i.e. the vision cycle. These objectives guide the decision making, planning, management, preferences and developments in the Library.

Executing the strategy is an essential part of the process. The staffs of all the main divisions have been consulted on different occasions. Moreover the team leaders have participated in the process. To implement the strategy score cards will be outlined for each main division to make the strategy more perceptible for the staff. For the strategic management system it is essential that also the steering and support strategies are updated to correspond to the policies of the new National Library strategy.

Special attention will be given to the follow-up and annual revision of the strategy to ensure that it has the desired effect in steering the functions.

The strategy was compiled using the Balanced Score Card method (BSC), which is widely used in public administration. The process was supervised by a leading consultant from HAUS, Finnish Institute of Public Management Ltd.

Analysis of operational environment and present state of affairs

While the scope of the National Library customers is expanding, the new digital library software also facilitates new kinds of services for all customers. It is most challenging to manage these enhancements. To establish a firm basis for the strategy it is important to define these new customers and the interest groups.

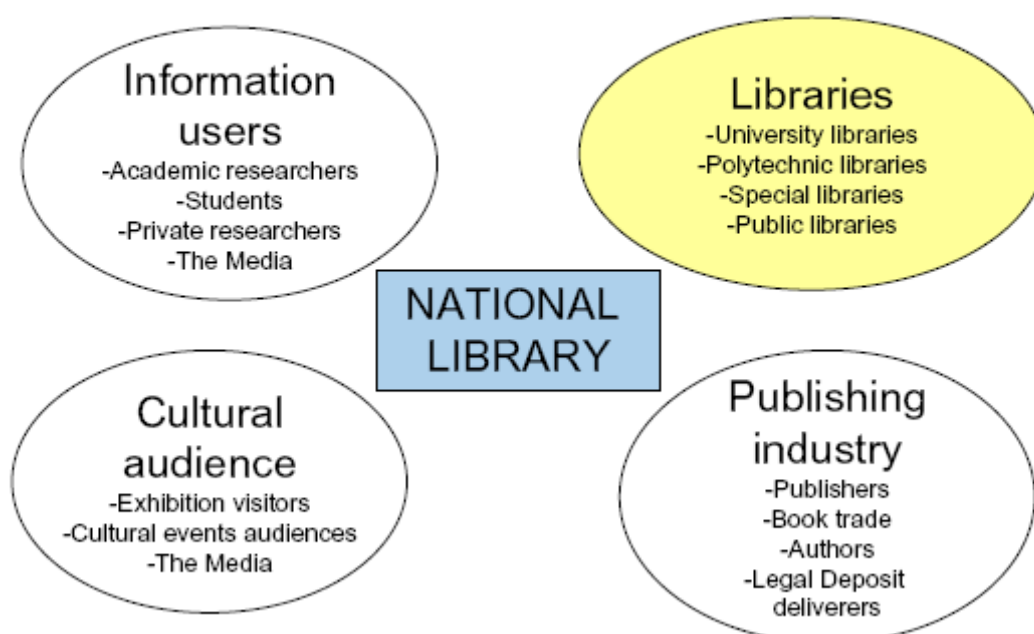
The National Library customers and interest groups

The Library has several clearly distinctive groups of customers. To be able to improve services and to ensure the quality of them it is important to recognise the needs of these different groups. Moreover, there can be different kinds of customers with different needs also within these groups. The needs of academic researchers and students, for example, can differ greatly.

The status of the National Library as the central service unit for the library network will be reinforced in 2006. After the change of status the National Library will serve not only university libraries, but also polytechnic, special, and public libraries. The library network has selected which services will be included in the first stage. The range of services will be expanded in the future. The Library will prioritise the enhancement of services to the libraries as well as the measuring of the impacts, especially in the beginning of the strategic period. During this strategic period the Library will also strive to significantly improve the quality of local services and digitising.

Image 1. The National Library clientele will expand in the beginning of the strategic period to cover the whole network of publicly financed libraries. The Library will prioritise the enhancement of centralised services for the library network.

The National Library customers



Information users

- For those in need of information the Library is an academic and cultured environment, which offers not only services but also inspiration and experiences. In the fields of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences national digital resources and interactive services are needed to complement the traditional printed book. The Library is a principal national provider of both literature and services on these fields.

Libraries

- The Library provides centralised services for university, polytechnic, special and public libraries. Improving these facilities is a priority for the National Library. The services to the library network will expand during this strategic period, and their role in securing access to information in the society will be more prominent. The National Library also serves other library customers, e.g. corporate libraries.

Publishing industry

- The services to the publishing industry are affected by the revision of the legal deposit legislation as well as the copyright legislation and also changes in the standard number systems. This group of customers consists of authors, publishers, other actors in the book industry and legal deposit deliverers.

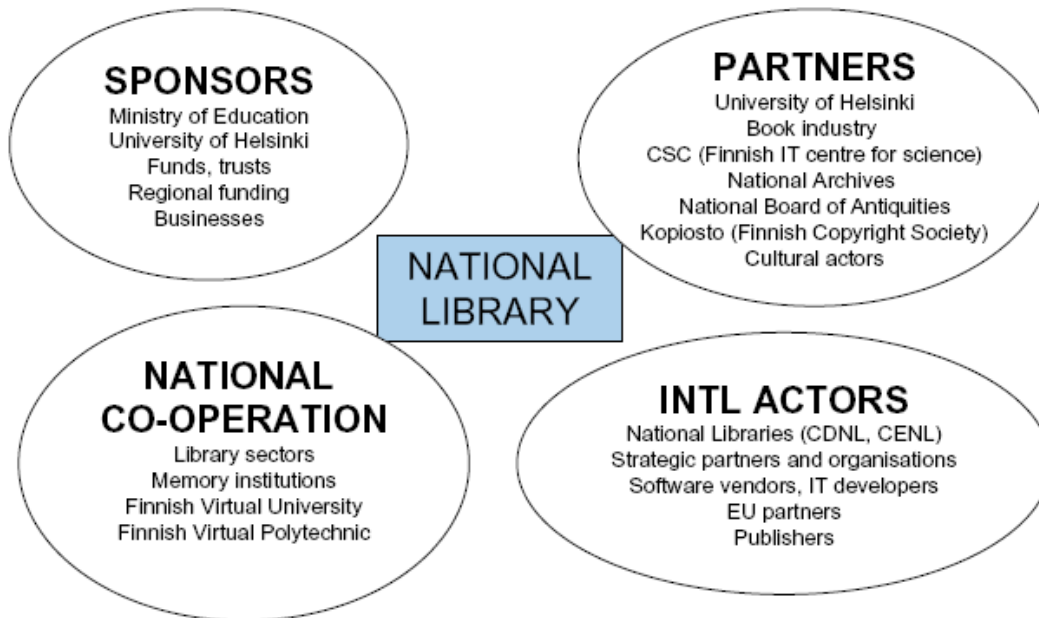
Cultural audience

- An important cultural mission for the Library is to make the national collections known to the general public. To achieve this aim the Library is arranging exhibitions, concerts and other events in close co-operation with experts in the academic community and other cultural institutions, in order to produce information and experiences for the citizens. During this strategic period the Library tries to win new audiences as one of the major national cultural institutions.

The interest groups are influential in assuring the success of the National Library. During this strategic period co-operation with the core sponsors and the library network is more vital due to the change in the Library status. Partnerships help develop services and processes. International co-operation is especially important in building information systems.

Image 2. The Library secures success by working closely together with its core interest groups

The National Library interest groups



Sponsors

- The main Library funding consists of the funds the Ministry of Education has reserved for national purposes and the University of Helsinki funding. Extensive projects are funded by several sponsors. External sources include e.g. private funds and trusts, EU funding and regional funding.

Partners

- Partnerships are one way to improve services. The Library will form strategic partnerships with national and international actors. The main partners on national level are the University of Helsinki, the book industry, CSC – the Finnish IT center for science, and other memory institutions, and also Kopioisto – the Finnish Copyright Society, the city of Mikkeli and various cultural actors.

National co-operation

- The Library works in close interaction with the library sectors (university, public, polytechnic and special libraries) and other memory institutions. As the Library's clientele and responsibilities expand, co-operation with the library network will increase. The objective is functional interaction, which will provide added value for the library network, the National Library and also the society as a whole.

International co-operation

- The National Library of Finland is a member of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) and the worldwide Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL).

The Library is active in international standardisation work participating in organisations and working groups. Software vendors and system developers are also important partners. As the publishing industry is in transition co-operation with the actors on this field will become more important. The Library takes active part in the digitising of European cultural heritage and in the international co-operation of the memory institutions.

Pivotal change factors in the operational environment

During this strategic period the operational environment of the National Library of Finland will undergo major changes. The status of the Library as a provider of centralised national services in the information society will become more prominent. On the other hand there will be more competition. Globalisation and new actors in the information market as well as the ever growing role of the Internet will affect decision making in libraries. Because of these major changes in the operational environment, that affect both the responsibilities and the services of the Library, the main funding should grow during this period.

Management of Information and documentation work

- Promoting access to information in the information society requires administration across ministerial boundaries. Providing relevant information for each different user group and preserving the national heritage for future generations are major challenges for the information society. The enhancement of the national infrastructure of information must be taken into account in projects developing a scientific infrastructure.
- The national library network will be developed into an international model of networking and interactive co-operation for the promotion of services in the information society.
- Management of information and documentation work will affect both the prospects to organise the service supply and to develop competitive technology for the library network and the wider society as well.

Information management and usage

- The production and dissemination of information have been greatly facilitated by the advances in technology. Material in digital form is easily accessible for various users on the Internet. However, it is difficult to filter high quality, evaluated material from this vast mass of information.
- To prosper on the information market the National Library has to make the right strategic decisions and to join in strategic partnerships in order to ensure that its customers can easily access high quality, evaluated material.

Competition

- Demands on technical and economic efficiency and competition will grow in the operational environment of libraries. Libraries evaluate providers of various services and select the option most suitable for them. Therefore the National Library has to be able to provide competitive services and technology for its customers. The National Library evaluates technical and service solutions and invites tenders for them and also anticipates demands for new services.

Internationality

- The operational environment of the National Library is international. The National Library is determined to increase and extend international co-operation so that significant strategic advantage can be achieved by it.
- The National Library will also strive to promote the Finnish library network and to advertise its achievements in international co-operation.

The management, methods and external communication of the Library must react to the changes in the operational environment. The expectations focus on the transparency, profitability and impact of the Library functions.

Strategic management

- The change in the national status of the Library and the effective execution of its new duties will require strategic decisions. During this strategic period there will be totally new responsibilities, which will have impact on the functions of the whole Library. In a multifunctional organisation the choices that are made affect both economic decisions and staff allocations.

Organisational flexibility

- The importance of national library network services will increase in the future as will also the need to secure funding for them. The practices of the organisation should respond to the changes in the expectations of both the customers and the sponsors.

External communication

- In communications the various customer groups are taken into account so that each customer will get information about the Library that is both up-to-date and relevant. An interactive communication system will be built for the library network.

The National Library mission, values, vision and strategic objectives

Extensive changes are taking place in both the national and the international operational environment of the National Library. In this strategy the Library aims to confront the challenges while it also prepares for future changes.

Mission

The National Library ensures the availability of the published national heritage in the community.

The National Library disseminates and produces information content for the citizens and the community and builds services together with the library network and other actors in the information society.

Values

The prime values of the Library are essential factors in the process of improving unity and practices. The values guide our actions both in dealings with customers and partners and also internally.

Image 3. The values of the National Library



Our national heritage is always present

- We actively promote our cultural heritage, preserve it and pass the national resources on to the present and the future

We work together

- We improve our services together with our customers so that we can best meet their needs. We work together joining our various fields of expertise to produce high standard service.

We are explicit and reliable in our work

- We make sure our service charters are put into practice. We act explicitly and actively give information about our work.

We are competent and keep advancing professionally

- We respond to the customers' needs in a way that is professional and of a high standard. We seek innovative and enduring solutions. We support and reward professional progress.

Vision

The National Library – the national gateway to information

Strategic objectives of the National Library

In the long run the vision implies that in 2015:

- **The 'national memory' and the citizens' right to information is ensured by access to and preservation of the national material.**
 - In the beginning of the strategic period the Library will prepare a preservation policy for published materials, and will start implementing it
 - Ensuring the 'national memory' requires active enhancement, distribution of the work between the memory institutions and long-term funding.
- **The national infrastructure of information, which consists of services and content, is efficient and cost-effective for the society. The infrastructure of information is a vital part of the infrastructure of science, and its impact on the results of the academic community is significant and can be measured.**
 - The term national infrastructure of information covers the printed and electronic information contents of libraries and digital library software
 - The National Library is responsible for the national infrastructure of information and will develop it together with the library network and other interest groups. The enhancement of services is based on distribution of work, cost awareness and know-how.
 - The term national infrastructure of science covers e.g. research equipment, national supercomputing, telecommunications, clusters of know-how and information contents.
 - The Finnish infrastructure of science is excellent also on European level and its results are used as an example elsewhere.

- **The library network provides quick and easy access to information for both the academic community and private citizens.**
 - The digital library concept provides the user with a range of information resources and efficient facilities to search and use them
 - In 2015 the citizens have a large selection of national and international online services at their disposal
- **The library network, other memory institutions, the academic community and public administration gain from the international co-operation of the National Library.**
 - The National Library of Finland will work in closer strategic co-operation with international actors. The National Library will improve its own software environment in strategic co-operation.
 - The National Library will evaluate its key functions on a regular basis using international peer evaluation.

Critical success factors

The Library will reinforce the vision and the strategic objectives by making sure that the critical success factors are implemented on the intended level.

The National Library critical success factors (4.11.2005)

