



Accountability Report

2023–24

Cyber Security and Digital Solutions



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Accountability Report 2023–2024

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions for the year ended March 31, 2024, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the 2023-2024 Business Plan.

Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions

Original signed by:

Hon. Colton LeBlanc

Minister

Natasha Clarke

Deputy Minister

Introduction

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions (CSDS) is responsible for leading the digital transformation of government services and delivery to give Nova Scotians access to high-quality citizen centred services. CSDS is responsible for information, communication, cyber security, and technology services for government and is a partner in healthcare delivery.

In May 2023, the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions was created. The 2023-24 Business Plan of the former Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services is now represented in the 2023-24 Accountability Reports of the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions and the Department of Service Nova Scotia.

Measuring Our Performance

Deliver simple, secure online public services and information

- Supported disaster relief efforts by delivering urgent and important information and services to Nova Scotians through novascotia.ca during the spring 2023 wildfires and July 2023 floods.
- Developed and launched the [Government of Nova Scotia Blog Platform](#) as a way for government to work in the open and provide more opportunities for transparency and engagement with the people we serve.
- Launched the [CSDS Blog](#) to share with Nova Scotians how government is embracing digital transformation, and how CSDS is building and iterating digital products and services to provide the best user experience for Nova Scotians to access government services.
- Supported partners across government to design and deliver digital products, services, and information resources that are secure, reliable, and responsive to user needs, including:
 - Developed online service to administer grant funds to licensed childcare centres in Nova Scotia through Education and Early Childhood Development's (EECD) Quality Investment Grant program.
 - Launched end-to-end integrated services for Provincial Deed Transfer Tax.
 - Launched online services for two new tax programs: More Opportunities for Skilled Trades and Fertility and Surrogacy Tax Credit.
 - Supported the implementation of the Oncology Transformation Project and the Healthy Management of Supplies in the Nova Scotia Health Warehouse leading up to Point of Use in hospitals.
 - Delivered a new Courts website for the Nova Scotia Judiciary.
 - Delivered discovery research and a prototype for the Provincial Court Scheduling system with Department of Justice and Chief Judge's Office of the Provincial Court.
 - Launched new user-focused Procurement Online service with Service Nova Scotia.
 - Launched a new International Fuel Tax Agreement Management System.
 - Supported the deployment of Single Sign-on with tap readers in healthcare facilities, reducing login time throughout the shifts of healthcare workers.

Reduce risk in old technology

- Continued the multi-year Registries Transformation and Modernization Initiative.
 - Continued significant Registry of Motor Vehicle Modernization to address old systems that need to be replaced, delivering safe and secure services for all aspects of the registry.
 - Improved processes and technology to reduce wait times to book road tests.
 - Delivered a new driver suspension and reinstatement digital service, providing better service to Nova Scotians on the status of their license.
 - Initiated planning for Land Registry Modernization, and improved stability in the technical environment for the current service.
 - Continued the SAP Modernization Program, transforming government's enterprise financial, procurement, human resource systems and the reporting capabilities for the Province, Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health Centre, Regional Centres for Education (RCEs), and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP). The modern system will enable government to be more responsive, make data more readily available, improve user experience, and be more secure.
- Developed and implemented a new approach to managing risk in legacy technologies, systems and processes, improving the reliability and usability of public services for Nova Scotians.
- Upgraded the Orders in Council online search service and internal administration system.

Enable accessible data for better services and decision making

- Worked with partner departments to develop Public Generative AI Acceptable Use Guidelines to ensure the Nova Scotia Public Service is equipped to understand the implications and necessary considerations when using Public Generative AI tools. This approach ensured the guidelines were relevant and easy to understand for public servants.
- Initiated planning and discovery work on a strategic action plan for data, and created a Data Management Office within the department to dedicate capacity and support for this work. The work will continue in 2024-25.

Secure government services and people's information

- Established a Cyber Security and Enterprise Risk division to dedicate more focus to cyber security.
- Launched new mandatory Cyber Security Awareness Training on Phishing to help public servants identify and respond to phishing attacks.
- Coordinated the response and management of the global privacy breach impacts to Nova Scotians from a security issue with a file transfer system, MOVEit, that is used by the Province.

Contributing to Nova Scotia's *Action for Health* Strategic Plan

- Partnered with Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health Centre, and Department of Health and Wellness to provide critical technology to enable the delivery of the One Person One Record Program.

- Developed standards for healthcare providers to have the right devices, at the right time, in the right place (e.g., tablets, mobile phones, laptops, etc.)
- Developed a plan to improve continuous access to wireless networks in healthcare facilities and ensure system reliability.
- Improved technical support for healthcare providers.
- Enhanced technology to allow healthcare providers to log into information systems with a tap card, and secure access to patient data faster and across devices.
- Designed, built, installed, and maintained new technology requirements, including those related to clinical systems, cyber security, and accessibility, to support operations at new healthcare sites.
- Worked with health partners and Build Nova Scotia to put the enabling technology and services in place for the new Bayers Lake Community Outpatient Centre.
- Expanded the use of government's secure login service My NS Account to the YourHealthNS app for Nova Scotians participating in the pilot project to access their health records through the app.

Support the goal of Building an Accessible Nova Scotia by 2030

- Continued capacity building around the accessibility needs of Nova Scotians when building services. This includes embedding inclusion and accessibility into digital service design planning and development processes to support an inclusive and accessible-by-design approach.

Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)

<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2023-2024 Estimate</u>	<u>2023-2024 Actuals</u>	<u>2023-2024 Variance</u>
Senior Management	80	256	176
Digital Culture, Strategy, & Performance	4,304	3,996	(308)
Digital Solutions	62,707	60,967	(1,740)
Cyber Security & Technology	<u>162,058</u>	<u>165,346</u>	<u>3,288</u>
Total - Departmental Expenses	<u>229,149</u>	<u>230,565</u>	<u>1,416</u>
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenues	---	---	---
Fees and Other Charges	---	---	---
Ordinary Recoveries	9,277	15,640	6,363
Total: Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries	9,277	15,640	6,363
TCA Purchase Requirements	75,361	20,081	(55,280)
Funded Staff (# of Net FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	758.0	668.5	(89.5)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions expenditures were \$1.4 million or 0.6 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to \$6.4 million for recoverable purchases on behalf of related entities, \$3.3 million for cashflow changes for major IT projects, and \$1.0 million in response to a global cyber security breach. These increases were partially offset by \$5.4 million of vacancy savings and \$1.8 million less for amortization costs.

Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions 2023-24 recoveries were \$6.4 million or 69% higher than estimate primarily for purchases on behalf of related entities.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions Tangible Capital Asset purchase requirements were \$55 million or 73% lower than estimate primarily due to multi-year project cashflow modifications for major IT projects.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions Provincially Funded FTEs were 89.5 or 12% lower due to delays in filling vacancies.

Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

Annual Report under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or,
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2023-2024
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing.	N/A