



Accountability Report

2023–24

Intergovernmental Affairs



© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, July 2024

Accountability Report 2023–2024

ISBN 978-1-77448-663-4

Contents

Accountability Statement	3
Measuring Our Performance.....	4
Premier Chairs the Council of the Federation.....	4
Atlantic Regional Collaboration.....	4
Strategic Trade Objectives.....	5
Developing and Leveraging Global Relationships.....	5
The Military and Defence Sector in Nova Scotia.....	6
Accessibility Initiative.....	6
Financial Summary	7
Annual Report Under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act	8

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs 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 Intergovernmental Affairs outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs 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 Department of Intergovernmental Affairs 2023-24 Business Plan.

Department of Intergovernmental Affairs

(Original signed by)

The Honourable Tim Houston
Premier of Nova Scotia
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Minister of Trade

(Original signed by)

Tracey Taweel
Executive Deputy Minister
Department of Intergovernmental Affairs

Measuring Our Performance

During 2023-24, the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) focused on advancing Nova Scotia's priorities for health care, the economy, and healthy communities, through work with the Government of Canada, Council of the Federation, the Council of Atlantic Premiers, the Committee on Internal Trade, foreign governments including international missions, and engagement with key sector stakeholders. The Department undertook actions and made progress delivering IGA's ministerial and legislated mandates.

Premier Chairs the Council of the Federation

- Assumed chair of the Council of the Federation (COF) Premiers' forum in July 2023
- Hosted a health summit and fall COF meeting in November 2023, featuring Nova Scotia's Health Innovation Hub
- Advanced COF's request to the Prime Minister for a First Ministers' Meeting on strategic infrastructure and infrastructure funding
- Led co-ordination and alignment among provincial departments in preparation for national forums, including COF and ministerial meetings
- Pursued federal funding programs to enhance environmental and economic sustainability and infrastructure, including programs that expand access to affordable housing
- Advised on provincial responses to federal engagement initiatives on oceans management, conservation, marine planning, and offshore renewable energy
- Advised departments on bilateral agreements with the federal government through the bilateral agreement guidelines, which were developed with departmental intergovernmental officials
- Engaged with the federal government to provide briefings to Nova Scotia officials on proposed federal policy and legislative changes

Atlantic Regional Collaboration

- Through the Atlantic Growth Strategy, led the regional focus on housing innovation in work with the federal government, and the development of an Atlantic response on housing
- Leveraged the Council of Atlantic Premiers' forum to advance Nova Scotia priorities, regional co-operation, and alignment, particularly on health care solutions
- Supported participation in regional Premiers' forums by co-ordinating the provincial response among departments to advocate for Nova Scotia priorities
- Sought federal commitments on immigration and housing programs that support Nova Scotia's objectives for population growth and labour market needs
- Through the Atlantic Growth Strategy Leadership Committee, pursued economic and regional objectives, particularly for regional air access, housing, and critical infrastructure, managing population growth, retaining a strong workforce, and advancing the transition to more renewable energy

Strategic Trade Objectives

- Supported the Province's objectives for global and interprovincial trade and export growth by providing market intelligence to departments to help inform business development activities
- Advocated Nova Scotia's interests in Canada's free trade agreement negotiations with Indonesia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Ecuador
- Worked to reduce interprovincial trade barriers by supporting national and regional working groups on supply chains, labour mobility, and mutual recognition, and by contributing to the Atlantic Trade and Procurement Partnership's annual workplan
- Engaged with federal and provincial partners to resolve market access issues in fisheries, forestry, alcohol, and government procurement
- Worked with partners to help Nova Scotia companies understand opportunities created by free trade agreements, and to identify industry barriers in international markets
- Worked with provincial departments to use the applicable trade rules to achieve government objectives in key areas, such as procurement and regional economic development
- Led initial stages of preparation for the upcoming review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement
- Worked with partners to help Nova Scotia companies understand opportunities created by free trade agreements, and to identify industry barriers in international markets

Developing and Leveraging Global Relationships

- Advanced Premier-led missions to Europe, Asia, and the United States to strengthen trade and tourism, recruit healthcare workers, enhance market development and diversification, and grow key sector opportunities including in the areas of health innovation and energy
- Supported the Tree for Boston events, which showcased several Nova Scotia industries
- Supported the development and implementation of formal agreements and structures to strengthen engagement between Nova Scotia and foreign jurisdictions
- Supported the execution of a Joint Declaration between The Province of Nova Scotia and the Philippines Department of Migrant Workers to facilitate labour mobility between our jurisdictions, particularly in the healthcare and construction sectors
- Continued to work with the Department of Public Works, the Department of Economic Development, airlines and Nova Scotia airports to maintain and enhance air access in the province
- Welcomed and developed impactful programs for representatives of more than 20 foreign governments (including Japan, France, Mexico, Iceland, United Kingdom, Belgium and Germany) visiting the province, with the objective of promoting trade, strategic sectors, post-secondary collaboration, and immigration opportunities with Nova Scotia

The Military and Defence Sector in Nova Scotia

- Facilitated and supported provincial representation in commemorative events and ceremonies, including Royal Canadian Navy vessel departures and arrivals, commissioning of new vessels, Royal Canadian Air Force 100th Anniversary celebrations, and visits by foreign delegations
- Supported the participation of the Minister responsible for Military Relations in the Seamless Canada Steering Committee's conferences, and provincial engagement with Seamless working groups that support military families being relocated to Nova Scotia, and military spouses seeking employment opportunities
- In collaboration with provincial partners, existing provincial employment supports were leveraged to ensure access for relocating military families prior to their arrival in Nova Scotia
- Facilitated and supported the Minister responsible for Military Relations in outreach and engagement meetings with regional senior leaders in the Canadian Armed Forces, and with military community stakeholders
- In collaboration with provincial partners, quantified the value of the defence sector and military presence in Nova Scotia, to help encourage continued growth in the sector
- Supported provincial representation in meetings and events with defence sector stakeholders, including exploring opportunities to encourage innovation through the establishment in Halifax of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's North American regional office of the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA)

Accessibility Initiative: In support of initiatives being advanced by the Province's Interdepartmental Committee on Accessibility, IGA continued the development of a cross-jurisdictional comparative review of accessibility legislation at the federal and provincial-territorial levels. This work is scheduled for completion in 2024-25.

Financial Summary

2023-24 IGA Financial Summary

Intergovernmental Affairs			
Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24
Programs and Services	Estimate	Actual	Variance
Administration	3,725	3,671	(54)
Government House	1,017	1,131	114
Protocol and Honours Secretariat	277	271	(6)
Total - Departmental Expenses	5,019	5,073	54
Ordinary Recoveries	-	98	98
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	34.0	33.9	(0.1)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Intergovernmental Affairs expenses were \$54 thousand higher than estimate. This was due to an expense to IGA under a Federal agreement (APEC study, \$98 thousand), which was partly offset by net operational savings. The study cost was a fully recoverable expense, noted under Ordinary Recoveries.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

FTEs were lower than estimated due to temporarily vacant positions.

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 Intergovernmental Affairs:

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	Not applicable
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing.	Not applicable