



ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

2024-25

Intergovernmental Affairs

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Accountability Report 2024–2025

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs for the year ended March 31, 2025, 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 2024-25 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 2024-25, the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) focused on advancing Nova Scotia's priorities for the economy, health care and healthy communities, through work with the Government of Canada, the 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.

Premiers and First Ministers' Meetings

- Chaired the Council of the Federation (COF) Premiers' forum from July 2023 until July 2024.
- Hosted the in-person summer Council of the Federation meeting in July 2024 in Halifax.
- Organized and chaired an in-person meeting of Canada's Premiers and National Indigenous Organizations (NIOs) in July 2024 in Halifax, marking the first time since 2016 that all five NIO leaders came together with Premiers.
- Advanced COF's request to the Prime Minister for increased partnership to revitalize cooperative federalism in Canada, including in economic sustainability, clean growth, infrastructure, and housing.
- Promoted Nova Scotia's priorities at First Ministers' Meeting in Ottawa in January and March 2025, and through multiple videoconferences.
- Advised departments on potential impacts on Nova Scotia's interests and priorities regarding proposed federal commitments made during and after the 2025 federal election.
- Co-ordinated and led alignment among provincial departments in preparation for national forums, including COF and ministerial meetings.
- Advised departments on bilateral agreements with the federal government and engaged with the federal government to provide briefings to Nova Scotia officials on proposed federal policy and legislative changes.

Atlantic Regional Collaboration

- Leveraged the Council of Atlantic Premiers' forum (CAP) to advance Nova Scotia priorities, regional co-operation, and alignment.
- Coordinated provincial responses with departments to advocate for Nova Scotia priorities at regional forums.
- Continued work with Atlantic colleagues to develop a pilot program to increase air access and connectivity within the region with the aim to launch in fiscal year 2025/26.
- Through the Atlantic Growth Strategy Leadership Committee, pursued economic and regional objectives in areas such as housing.
- Advanced regional positions and priorities at national level forums through preparatory efforts through CAP.

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.
- Advanced Nova Scotia's interests and supported stakeholders in addressing U.S. trade barriers and unjustified tariffs.
- Advocated Nova Scotia's interests in Canada's free trade agreement negotiations including with Indonesia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Ecuador
- Supported the development of legislation, the *Free Trade and Mobility within Canada Act*, which was passed in the House of Assembly, to remove interprovincial trade barriers, promote labour mobility and support mutual recognition.
- Engaged with federal and provincial partners to address market access issues, such as tariffs and regulatory and administrative barriers, in fisheries, forestry, alcoholic beverages, and government procurement.
- Worked with partners to help Nova Scotia companies understand opportunities created by free trade agreements, and to identify trade barriers in international markets.
- Worked with provincial departments to maximize the use of 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.

Developing and Leveraging Global Relationships

- Developed and supported 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, seafood export, and energy.
- Supported the Premier's participation in missions to the United States to advocate for the removal or reduction of tariffs.
- Supported the Halifax Stanfield International Airport in negotiating the return of WestJet's seasonal flights to Europe including to London, Dublin, Edinburgh, and Paris; Halifax-Zurich seasonal service by Edelweiss Airlines; and resumption of seasonal service by Discover Airlines and Icelandair.
- Welcomed and developed impactful programs for representatives of more than 20 foreign governments (including France, Singapore, Philippines, New Zealand, Iceland, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Germany) and industry representatives 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

- Supported the Minister responsible for Military Relations and their role as co-Chair of Seamless Canada – a pan-Canadian forum that aims to alleviate stressors imposed on members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families when experiencing interprovincial postings.
- Developed a new cross-government subcommittee structure to advance the work of Seamless Canada.
- Developed and launched a Military Relations newsletter to share information on the military's presence in Nova Scotia and how the government of Nova Scotia is supporting the Canadian Armed Forces members and their families.

Accessibility Initiative

- In support of initiatives being advanced by the Province's Interdepartmental Committee on Accessibility, this year IGA completed the development of a cross-jurisdictional comparative review of accessibility legislation at the federal and provincial-territorial levels.

Financial Summary

2024-25 IGA Financial Summary

Intergovernmental Affairs			
Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
	2024-25	2024-25	2024-25
Programs and Services	Estimate	Actual	Variance
Administration	4,426	4,235	(191)
Government House	1,032	1,196	164
Protocol and Honours Secretariat	286	225	(61)
Total - Departmental Expenses	5,744	5,656	(88)
Ordinary Recoveries	-	-	-
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	35.0	32.8	(2.2)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Intergovernmental Affairs expenses were \$88 thousand lower than estimate due to temporary vacancy savings and other net operating savings.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

FTEs were lower than estimate 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