

**Atlantic Canada Opportunities
Agency**

2022-23

Departmental Plan



The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor
Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for
the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

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From the Minister

It is my pleasure to present the 2022-23 Departmental Plan for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).

As economic recovery continues in Canada and around the world, our government is committed to ensuring that businesses and communities are able to navigate uncertainties and set a course for future growth as we finish the fight against COVID-19.

In Atlantic Canada, ACOA will play a vital role in advancing our government's recovery plan. Building on its 35-year record of fuelling economic growth in the region, the Agency will continue to provide tailored assistance to small and medium-sized businesses and support job creation in communities recovering from the pandemic.



The Agency will focus on improving the quality of jobs, increasing productivity and digitization for greater competitiveness, fostering a more diverse workforce to address labour shortages, and leveraging green technologies for economic growth.

In addition to delivering its regular programming and economic relief measures, the Agency will also deliver key funding under the Black Entrepreneurship Program and the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy to strengthen capacity in these underserved groups. ACOA will also continue to deliver the Canada Coal Transition Initiative to help communities in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick move beyond reliance on coal-powered plants.

In support of reconciliation, ACOA will work with Indigenous communities and governments, other government departments and economic development organizations to advance Indigenous economic priorities.

Through the Atlantic Growth Strategy, ACOA will work with federal and provincial partners to renew the Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy to promote Atlantic Canada as a trading partner and investment target. The Agency will also work to renew the Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism to fuel growth and promote recovery in the tourism industry. ACOA will also leverage the Atlantic Immigration Program to attract talent, and it will advance the Atlantic Loop to enhance access to clean energy.

The Agency will continue to support development of traditional and emerging industries, which includes harnessing the potential of the ocean economy and leveraging knowledge sectors such as information technology and life sciences.

I invite you to read this report to learn more about how ACOA will foster a diverse, inclusive and resilient economy that offers everyone the opportunity to prosper.

Plans at a glance

In 2022-23, ACOA will continue to promote short- and long-term job creation and economic development in Atlantic Canada, particularly through the delivery of regionally tailored programs, services, knowledge and expertise, so that all communities have access to place-based programming and support. These activities will support a strong recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and help create a more resilient economy.

These efforts will directly contribute to the Government of Canada's recovery plan to build a stronger and more resilient Canada, as outlined in the [2021 Speech from the Throneⁱ](#) and the [2021 Economic and Fiscal Updateⁱⁱ](#). Activities will complement and bolster federal initiatives such as the [Innovation and Skills Planⁱⁱⁱ](#), and the [Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy Plan^{iv}](#). The Agency will also prioritize growth in Atlantic Canada's key sectors such as those in the blue economy. ACOA will be guided by four overarching strategic lenses: digitization as a competitive advantage, supporting the workforce of the future, greening the economy, and inclusion of under-represented groups in Atlantic Canada's workforce.

The Agency will work diligently to ensure the economic recovery is as steady as possible, maximizing the potential of businesses that have realigned their activities to respond to exceptional economic impacts of COVID-19 and supporting the hardest-hit, which are facing longer recoveries. ACOA will continue to transition from broad-based support to more targeted measures, using programs such as the Canada Community Revitalization Fund, the Tourism Relief Fund, the Jobs and Growth Fund and the Aerospace Regional Recovery Initiative, as well as existing programs. The Agency will continue to deliver initiatives such as the Black Entrepreneurship Program (BEP) National Ecosystem Fund to strengthen capacity among Black-led non-profit business organizations; the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (WES) Ecosystem Fund to address gaps and build capacity in the entrepreneurship ecosystem for women; and the Canada Coal Transition Initiative to support a just and sustainable transition away from coal-powered plants in affected communities.

The Agency will work in continued collaboration, engagement and complementarity with the network of regional development agencies across Canada, other federal departments, the four provincial governments in Atlantic Canada, municipalities, Indigenous partners, and other stakeholders such as the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs). ACOA's activities will also help develop and implement initiatives that advance the goals of the [Atlantic Growth Strategy^v](#), including renewing the Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy, the Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism, the newly permanent Atlantic Immigration Program, and enhancing access to clean energy through the Atlantic Loop.

Businesses – The Agency will work with industry to capitalize on existing sector strengths and capacities, helping businesses scale up and grow exports in markets with high-growth potential by:

- accelerating recovery efforts with access to strategic financing, advice and planning, including optimizing supply chains;
- supporting efforts to alleviate labour and skills shortages for many Atlantic Canadian businesses;
- harnessing the economic potential of Atlantic Canada’s ocean economy, promoting recovery in tourism, and leveraging other high impact and growth sectors such as information and communications technology, clean technology, life sciences and biosciences;
- renewing the Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy and its agreement to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) become globally successful through market diversification and expansion;
- supporting businesses as they adapt to greener and more sustainable operations;
- helping growth-oriented Atlantic Canadian businesses expand by providing them with essential, hands-on support through the Accelerated Growth Service;
- positioning Atlantic Canadian firms to leverage major Canadian Coast Guard and defence procurement through Canada’s Industrial Benefits Policy; and
- promoting and encouraging inclusive actions through initiatives such as the WES and the BEP.

Technologies – The Agency will help businesses invest in new technologies to improve their efficiency, productivity, competitiveness and growth. ACOA will help Atlantic businesses to:

- accelerate technology adoption and automation to increase productivity and competitiveness. Transformative technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics can enable innovation and adaptation in new operating environments and in traditional industries;
- increase use of e-commerce to facilitate business transactions, better meet consumer demand, generate added sales and increase expediency;
- build stronger linkages with innovation ecosystems by working collectively with other public, private and institutional partners, and by supporting start-ups;
- support the greening of the region’s economy through industrial decarbonization with new clean technologies and products. Activities will leverage the region’s significant potential for renewable energy, electrification and energy efficiency; and
- help advance the Atlantic Loop initiative to connect surplus clean power to regions transitioning away from coal.

Communities – The Agency will invest in inclusive growth, support the launch and growth of SMEs, and invest in community capacity to plan, attract, hire and retain skilled talent.

ACOA will:

- deliver support for under-represented entrepreneurs and address gaps in the ecosystem to help them grow their businesses and pursue new opportunities, including support for entrepreneurs in official language minority communities;
- contribute to designing and delivering the new Futures Fund for Newfoundland and Labrador, which supports local and regional economic diversification and strategies;
- help communities to address labour shortages, including by attracting and retaining newcomers and international students, with better labour market matches, accelerated transitions and improved settlement services;
- help non-profit, third-party organizations such as the Atlantic Association of CBDCs to support SMEs in small, rural and remote communities as they accelerate their recovery;
- work with provincial and federal partners to support the inclusive workforce of the future by improving school-to-work transitions, helping to build new skills in growing sectors and increasing digital skills; and
- support Indigenous economic development by strengthening partnerships and working with Indigenous communities and governments, as well as other government departments and economic development organizations.

For more information on ACOA’s plans, see the “[Core responsibilities: planned results and resources, and key risks](#)” section of this document.

Core responsibilities: planned results and resources, and key risks

This section contains information on the department's planned results and resources for each of its core responsibilities. It also contains information on key risks related to achieving those results.

Economic development in Atlantic Canada

Description

Support Atlantic Canada's economic growth, wealth creation and economic prosperity through inclusive clean growth and by building on competitive regional strengths. Help SME growth through direct financial assistance and, indirectly, through business support organizations. SMEs become more innovative by adopting new technologies and processes and by pursuing new avenues for expansion and market diversification in order to compete and succeed in a global market.

Planning highlights

In 2022-23, ACOA will continue to help firms scale up, develop new markets and expand, as well as assist with the adoption of new technologies and processes. The Agency will be the main sponsor of place-based investments in the Atlantic Canadian innovation ecosystem while helping communities advance and diversify their economies in an inclusive way. This will help build a strong and more resilient economy post-pandemic. Four strategic lenses will guide activities: achieving digitization as a competitive advantage, supporting the workforce of the future, greening the economy, and inclusion of under-represented groups in Atlantic Canada's workforce. The work will be coordinated across the country with other regional development agencies, federal departments, and other governments and stakeholders.

The Agency's activities will shift from emergency support to economic recovery, helping SMEs and communities pivot to new opportunities and longer-term strategies. As outlined in the [Speech from the Throne^{vi}](#) and the [Economic and Fiscal Update 2021^{vii}](#), the recovery is well under way and jobs have returned to pre-COVID levels. Short-term, COVID-19 is expected to have implications on labour shortages, the supply of goods and services, housing, and the region's downtowns in both rural and urban communities. The suite of programming delivered by ACOA will also reflect the interconnectedness of the environment, the economy and society, which is more apparent now than ever.

To support economic stability and future growth, the Agency will strategically invest in specific growth sectors such as food, oceans, aquaculture, clean technology and tourism, all while supporting advanced manufacturing, the start-up ecosystem, exports and a workforce of the future through immigration and skills development as drivers of competitiveness. In 2022-23, the Agency will adapt its programming to longer-term needs and restructuring of the region's economic drivers, notably with an additional \$191 million committed in Budget 2021 to be delivered through ACOA to help position Atlantic Canada for a robust recovery and long-term

growth. For example, the [Regional Economic Growth through Innovation^{viii}](#) (REGI) Program, one of the Government of Canada's four flagship platforms for economic development, will continue to enhance competitiveness and growth through technology adoption, development and adaptation, productivity improvements, and commercialized and market expansion. Broad-based support under REGI will be complemented by more targeted recovery measures using initiatives such as the following:

- [Jobs and Growth Fund^{ix}](#) – to provide funding to businesses and organizations to help create jobs and position local economies for long-term growth.
- [Canada Community Revitalization Fund^x](#) – to help communities across Atlantic Canada build and improve community infrastructure projects so they can rebound from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Tourism Relief Fund^{xi}](#) – to support tourism businesses and organizations to adapt their operations to meet public-health requirements while investing in products and services to facilitate their future growth. Ten percent of this fund will be targeted for Indigenous tourism businesses and organizations.
- [Aerospace Regional Recovery Initiative^{xii}](#) – to support SMEs in improving productivity, strengthening commercialization, and greening their operations and products.

The Agency will also focus on inclusive community economic development, including investing in Indigenous priorities in collaboration with Indigenous partners and through targeted initiatives such as these:

- [Black Entrepreneurship Program National Ecosystem Fund^{xiii}](#) – to strengthen capacity among Black-led non-profit business organizations.
- [Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund^{xiv}](#) – to address gaps and build capacity in the entrepreneurship ecosystem for women.
- [Canada Coal Transition Initiative^{xv}](#) – to support a just and sustainable transition away from coal-powered plants in affected rural communities.

ACOA will act as a pathfinder for Atlantic businesses to better access and benefit from federal programs and investments, as well as to ensure short-term supports are complementary in areas such as skills development and the green economy. This includes continuing to position and promote regional industry in major Canadian Coast Guard and defence procurement projects via Canada's Industrial Technological Benefits policy. Finally, ACOA will continue to rely on well-informed policy decisions reflecting regional opportunities and challenges through the Atlantic Policy Research Initiative and other sources.

In 2022-23, ACOA will work to advance its three departmental results and the minister's mandate letter commitments with the following initiatives, activities and actions.

Businesses are innovative and growing in Atlantic Canada – The Agency will work with SMEs to capitalize on sector strengths and capacities, develop and diversify markets, and scale their business by:

- helping businesses at various stages of development – from start-up to high growth – to adapt and green their operations to accelerate their growth and scale up, and to enhance their productivity and competitiveness in both domestic and global markets through the Business Scale-up and Productivity stream of the REGI Program;
- enabling growth through exports in key industry sectors, ensuring a greater presence for Atlantic Canadian companies in key markets either in person or through e-commerce and virtual trade, and promoting foreign direct investment by renewing the Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy and Agreement with Atlantic provincial governments;
- harnessing the economic potential of Atlantic Canada’s ocean economy, promoting recovery in tourism, and leveraging other high impact and growth sectors such as information and communications technology, clean technology, life sciences and biosciences;
- leveraging company-oriented growth plans under the Accelerated Growth Service, led by ACOA in Atlantic Canada and involving other federal and provincial organizations, by building a pipeline of clients with strong potential for growth and providing them with focused sales and export support;
- collaborating with federal, provincial and industry partners to support the longer-term recovery of the tourism sector and its local businesses through the Tourism Relief Fund, planning the renewal of the Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism, and other programming to support the sector; and
- positioning Atlantic Canadian firms to leverage major Canadian Coast Guard and defence procurement through Canada’s Industrial Benefits Policy through networking between regional stakeholders and global aerospace and defence firms.

Businesses invest in the development and commercialization of innovative technologies in Atlantic Canada – The Agency will help businesses invest in new technologies to improve their efficiency, productivity, competitiveness and growth. ACOA will help Atlantic Canadian businesses:

- accelerate digitization and the use of transformative technologies in Atlantic Canada. This will ensure businesses have the capacity to implement advanced manufacturing solutions to be more innovative, agile and resilient in response to changing market conditions. This includes increasing the use of e-commerce to facilitate business transactions, better meet consumer demand, generate added sales and increase expediency;
- deliver the Regional Innovation Ecosystem stream of the REGI Program and its initiatives to create, grow and nurture inclusive regional ecosystems that support business needs and foster an entrepreneurial environment conducive to innovation, growth and competitiveness by

convening innovation ecosystem stakeholders. This includes specific support for Black-led and women-led business support organizations;

- support the greening of the region's economy through industrial decarbonisation with new clean technologies and products. Activities will leverage the region's significant potential for renewable energy, electrification and energy efficiency; and
- help advance the Atlantic Loop initiative to connect surplus clean power to regions transitioning away from coal to help transform how Atlantic Canada's economy and communities are powered.

Communities are economically diversified in Atlantic Canada – The Agency will invest in inclusive growth, support the launch and growth of SMEs, and invest in community capacity to plan, attract, hire and retain skilled talent. ACOA will:

- deliver support for under-represented entrepreneurs and address gaps in the ecosystem to help them grow their businesses and pursue new opportunities, including support for entrepreneurs in official language minority communities;
- contribute to designing and delivering the new Futures Fund targeting several provinces, including Newfoundland and Labrador, which would support local and regional economic diversification to move toward net-zero greenhouse gas emissions;
- support immigration to help address labour and skills shortages in Atlantic Canada, and act as a pathfinder, notably supporting federal and provincial partners, leveraging initiatives such as the Atlantic Immigration Program. In this regard, the Agency will continue to focus on employers, newcomers and international students;
- help communities to address labour shortages with better labour market matches, accelerated transitions and improved settlement services. This includes working with provincial and federal partners to support the inclusive workforce of the future by improving school-to-work transitions, helping to build new skills in growing sectors, and increasing digital skills;
- reach a larger number of Indigenous businesses by supporting efforts that target capacity building and increase knowledge and awareness through convening federal, provincial, stakeholder and community partners through joint participation in key committees, initiatives and communities of interest;
- help non-profit, third-party organizations such as CBDCs to support SMEs in small, rural and remote communities as they accelerate their recovery; and
- support priority projects and economic diversification in communities in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia affected by the future phase out of coal-fired electricity generation and the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Gender-based analysis plus

ACOA programs will be delivered with an inclusion lens to support groups that are under-represented in Atlantic Canada's economy and among its entrepreneurs and workforce, notably through capacity-building activities that increase access to opportunities for different groups in rural and urban communities. These groups include women, Indigenous people, Black and racialized Atlantic Canadians, newcomers, international students, women, youth, older workers and persons with disabilities, as well as remote, rural and official language minority communities. The Agency will include and collaborate with various communities, and actively seek out and incorporate the diverse view of Atlantic Canadian stakeholders on economic development issues. For example, ACOA developed flexibility in its program guidelines to reduce barriers to access and adapt to the unique realities of Indigenous businesses on-reserve. The Agency will train its staff and engage stakeholders to leverage this flexibility into better support for these businesses and communities.

ACOA integrates gender-based considerations for new initiatives, program evaluations, data and reporting mechanisms, including agreements with Statistics Canada for disaggregated data and enhancing administrative data collection with voluntary declarations for under-represented groups and gender and diversity commitments in contribution agreements with funding recipients.

ACOA will also foster its internal corporate diversity and inclusiveness with several initiatives, including through its Office of Inclusion, Equity and Anti-Racism, and the continued implementation of its Employment Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Action Plan.

United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals

The Agency's activities and initiatives under its sole core responsibility of supporting economic development in Atlantic Canada advance objectives related to several of the United Nation's sustainable development goals (SDGs), including:

- ensuring access to reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all through initiatives such as the Atlantic Loop and targeted initiatives for Newfoundland and Labrador's oil and gas sector (SDG 7: clean energy);
- supporting workers, businesses and communities to adopt, develop and demonstrate clean technologies, and transition to a green economy (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; SDG 9: Infrastructure, Innovation and Industry);
- ensuring sustainable consumption through low-carbon government initiatives (SDG 13: Climate Action, led by Treasury Board Secretariat for greening government activities).

Experimentation

In 2022-23, ACOA will continue to foster innovation and commits to making experimentation an integral part of its operations. For example, the Agency will:

- continue to explore how data science such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Big Data Analytics algorithms can be applied to streamline operations, provide better service to clients and support evidence-informed decisions;
- support growth-oriented clients by de-risking strategic investments in areas such as skills and inclusive workforce, digitization and automation, international business growth and/or the green economy. The goal is to help SMEs anticipate future disruptions and support their long-term growth needs;
- create firm-centric, growth-oriented pilot initiatives to explore and experiment with how the Agency can best grow Atlantic Canadian SMEs through trade and investment. This experimental approach will involve running a sample of pilots, each with their own features, monitoring and assessing lessons learned, and potentially scaling the most successful approach to benefit growth.

Key risks

ACOA has identified two main risks to fulfilling its mandate. The first is a risk that the Agency's economic development programming may be affected by external factors that contribute to uncertainties for economic growth in Atlantic Canada, including the implications of COVID-19 on economic activities. The second is a risk that the capacity of ACOA's stakeholders – other governments, partners, communities and clients – for the identification, development and successful implementation of strategic projects may not be sufficient to support the optimal achievement of ACOA's program objectives.

ACOA will continue to capitalize on the flexibility of its programs, including emergency funding, on its advocacy role, and on its integrated planning to mitigate potential risks associated with an evolving economy and the depth of regional stakeholders' capacity. As the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt throughout Atlantic Canada, the Agency will conduct analyses on regional economic issues and collaborate with stakeholders to foster client and community capacity to help achieve targets under key federal priorities.

Planned results for economic development in Atlantic Canada

The following table shows, for economic development in Atlantic Canada, the planned results, the result indicator, the target and the target date for 2022-23, and the actual results for the three most recent fiscal years for which actual results are available.

| Departmental result | Departmental result indicator | Target | Date to achieve target | 2018-19 actual result | 2019-20 actual result | 2020-21 actual result |
|--|---|---|------------------------|---|---|---|
| Communities are economically diversified in Atlantic Canada | Percentage of Atlantic Canadian SMEs that are majority owned by women, Indigenous people, youth, visible minorities and persons with disabilities | 17% of female ownership, 1% of Indigenous ownership, 10.5% of youth ownership, 4% of visible minority ownership, and 0.3% of SMEs majority owned by persons with disabilities | March 31, 2023 | 17.1% female, 1.1% Indigenous, 10.6% youth, 4.5% visible minorities, and 0.3% persons with disabilities (2017) ¹ | 17.1% female, 1.1% Indigenous, 10.6% youth, 4.5% visible minorities, and 0.3% persons with disabilities (2017) ¹ | 17.1% female, 1.1% Indigenous, 10.6% youth, 4.5% visible minorities, and 0.3% persons with disabilities (2017) ¹ |
| | Percentage of professional-, science- and technology-related jobs in Atlantic Canada's economy | 32% | March 31, 2023 | 32% (2018) | 31.8% (2019) | 33.7% (2020) |
| | Amount leveraged per dollar invested by ACOA in community projects | \$0.60 for every dollar invested by ACOA in Atlantic Canada | March 31, 2023 | \$1.32 | \$1.00 | \$0.58 |
| Businesses invest in the development and commercialization of innovative technologies in Atlantic Canada | Value of business expenditures in research and development by firms receiving ACOA program funding, in dollars | \$90M | March 31, 2023 | \$86.7 million (2012 – 2016) ² | \$85.3 million (2013 – 2017) ² | \$90.3 million (2014 – 2018) ² |
| | Percentage of businesses engaged in collaborations with higher-education institutions in Atlantic Canada | 16% | March 31, 2023 | 18% (2017) ¹ | 18% (2017) ¹ | 16.9% (2019) |

¹ Figures represent the latest available data from Statistics Canada at the time of drafting. Statistics Canada data may have been modified since this report was drafted.

² A five-year average is used.

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Businesses are innovative and growing in Atlantic Canada | Number of high-growth firms in Atlantic Canada | 600 | March 31, 2023 | 610 (2016) ¹ | 620 (2017) ¹ | 590 (2018) ¹ |
| | Value of export of goods (in dollars) from Atlantic Canada | \$28 billion | March 31, 2023 | \$26.4 billion | \$28.7 billion | \$23.9 billion |
| | Value of export of clean technologies (in dollars) from Atlantic Canada | \$450 million | March 31, 2023 | \$450 million (2017) | \$493 million (2018) ³ | \$481 million (2019) ³ |
| | Revenue growth rate of firms supported by ACOA programs | 3% | March 31, 2023 | 7.2% (2012 – 2016) ² | 9.2% (2013 – 2017) ² | 8.2% (2014 – 2019, excl. 2018) ² |

The financial, human resources and performance information for ACOA's program inventory is available on [GC InfoBase](#).^{xvi}

Planned budgetary spending for economic development for Atlantic Canada

The following table shows, for economic development for Atlantic Canada, budgetary spending for 2022-23, as well as planned spending for that year and for each of the next two fiscal years.

| 2022-23 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates) | 2022-23 planned spending | 2023-24 planned spending | 2024-25 planned spending |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 408,789,581 | 408,789,581 | 291,790,859 | 275,782,887 |

Financial, human resources and performance information for ACOA's program inventory is available on [GC InfoBase](#).^{xvii}

Planned human resources for economic development for Atlantic Canada

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents (FTEs), the human resources the department will need to fulfill this core responsibility for 2022-23 and for each of the next two fiscal years.

| 2022-23 planned FTEs | 2023-24 planned FTEs | 2024-25 planned FTEs |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 397 | 387 | 381 |

Financial, human resources and performance information for ACOA's program inventory is available on [GC InfoBase](#).^{xviii}

³ Preliminary total from Statistics Canada. This refers to clean technologies exported by firms from all sectors.

Internal services: planned results

Description

Internal services are those services that are provided within a department so that it can meet its corporate obligations and deliver its programs. There are 10 categories of internal services.

- ▶ management and oversight services
- ▶ communications services
- ▶ legal services
- ▶ human resources management services
- ▶ financial management services
- ▶ information management services
- ▶ information technology services
- ▶ real property management services
- ▶ materiel management services
- ▶ acquisition management services

Outside of these services, ACOA has created the Office of Inclusion, Equity and Anti-Racism. This office is a neutral entity that provides leadership, strategic direction, policy advice, professional development and expertise with respect to inclusion, equity and anti-racism. It will also engage external stakeholders in supporting corporate inclusion initiatives to remove systemic barriers. The office is led by a senior advisor who reports to senior management.

Planning highlights

In 2022-23, ACOA will continue to foster an agile, equipped and inclusive workforce, focusing on well-being throughout the changes incurred while working remotely during the pandemic. ACOA will continue to support a healthy, diverse and innovative workplace through the implementation of wellness, diversity and inclusion initiatives, with a particular focus on continuing to respond to the Clerk's call to action, and government-wide strategies such as the accessibility strategy, "Nothing without us" the Federal Public Service Workplace Mental Health strategy, and the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention program. The Agency will also focus on equipping employees through the piloting of our new Building and Supporting Leaders program.

In addition, ACOA will continue to implement organizational initiatives to strengthen and improve the efficiency of services and program delivery and build upon its excellence. Specifically, ACOA will:

- plan and prepare for the safe return to occupancy of Agency staff, ensuring the analysis and mitigation of risks and the provision of necessary protocols, directives, equipment and support.

- continue the implementation of its new Grants and Contributions Program Management business system and associated client web portal;
- implement information management/information technology initiatives in support of the Government of Canada's Digital Operations Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024. These user-centric and service-oriented initiatives work towards modernizing service delivery, improving sustainability and promoting digital stewardship; and,
- continue to focus on effective organizational oversight and on safeguarding financial and other resources, with particular focus on providing financial oversight in the delivery of the various COVID-19 related measures.

Planned budgetary spending for internal services

The following table shows, for internal services, budgetary spending for 2022-23, as well as planned spending for that year and for each of the next two fiscal years.

| 2022-23 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates) | 2022-23 planned spending | 2023-24 planned spending | 2024-25 planned spending |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 27,714,064 | 27,714,064 | 27,211,458 | 27,072,986 |

Planned human resources for internal services

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents (FTEs), the human resources the department will need to carry out its internal services for 2022-23 and for each of the next two fiscal years.

| 2022-23 planned FTEs | 2023-24 planned FTEs | 2024-25 planned FTEs |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 202 | 197 | 196 |

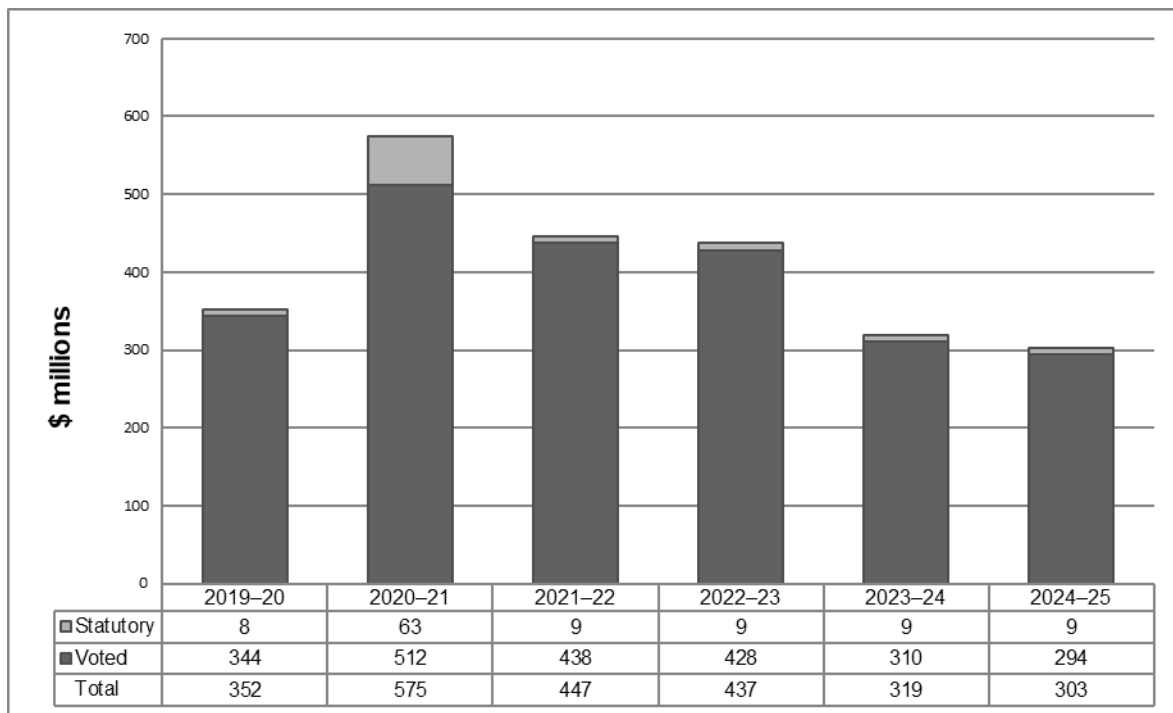
Planned spending and human resources

This section provides an overview of the department's planned spending and human resources for the next three fiscal years and compares planned spending for 2022-23 with actual spending for the current year and the previous year.

Planned spending

Departmental spending 2019-20 to 2024-25

The following graph presents planned spending (voted and statutory expenditures) over time.



Actual spending: 2019-20, 2020-21. Planned spending: 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25.

Planned spending for 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 does not include excess amounts related to the collection of repayable contributions because decisions on the excess amount of collections that can be reinvested by the Agency are made later in the fiscal cycle.

Budgetary planning summary for core responsibilities and internal services (dollars)

The following table shows information on spending for each of ACOA's core responsibilities and for its internal services for 2022-23 and other relevant fiscal years.

| Core responsibilities and internal services | 2019-20 actual expenditures | 2020-21 actual expenditures | 2021-22 forecast spending | 2022-23 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates) | 2022-23 planned spending | 2023-24 planned spending | 2024-25 planned spending |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Economic Development in Atlantic Canada | 324,518,205 | 545,036,957 | 419,024,312 | 408,789,581 | 408,789,581 | 291,790,859 | 275,782,887 |
| Subtotal | 324,518,205 | 545,036,957 | 419,024,312 | 408,789,581 | 408,789,581 | 291,790,859 | 275,782,887 |
| Internal services | 27,141,436 | 30,008,659 | 28,448,853 | 27,714,064 | 27,714,064 | 27,211,458 | 27,072,986 |
| Total | 351,659,641 | 575,045,616 | 447,473,165 | 436,503,645 | 436,503,645 | 319,002,317 | 302,855,873 |

In the 2022-23 Main Estimates, the Agency's available funding is \$436.5 million. This represents a decrease of \$11.0 million from the 2021-22 forecast spending of \$447.5 million. The variance is explained as follows:

- a total decrease of \$87.0 million due to:
 - \$31.1 million attributable to the conclusion of temporary funding announced in the Fall Economic Statement 2020 related to the Regional Air Transportation Initiative;
 - \$52.5 million attributable to the conclusion of temporary funding related to the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, including:
 - \$29.5 million announced in the Fall Economic Statement, 2020, to support small and medium-sized enterprises;
 - \$18.0 million announced in Budget 2021 to support the Community Futures Network;
 - \$5.0 million announced in Budget 2021 to support small and medium-sized enterprises;
 - \$3.1 million in temporary funding in support of the Halifax International Security Forum. (ACOA continues its role as the delivery agency, with a transfer of funds from the Department of National Defence for the annual initiative);
 - \$0.3 million in various adjustments.

- This decrease is offset by a total increase of \$76.0 million due to:
 - \$20.5 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Tourism Relief Fund;
 - \$16.2 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Canada Community Revitalization Fund;

- \$14.1 million related to the reprofiling of funds as a result of project/contracting delays;
- \$10.5 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Jobs and Growth Fund;
- \$7.4 million attributable to the conclusion of funding transferred to Natural Resources Canada for Protecting Jobs in Eastern Canada's Forestry Sector, as announced in Budget 2018;
- \$4.8 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2019 related to the Canada Coal Transition Initiative – Infrastructure Fund;
- \$2.5 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Aerospace Regional Recovery Initiative.

In 2023-24, planned spending is \$319.0 million, a decrease of \$117.5 million from the \$436.5 million in the 2022-23 Main Estimates as a result of:

- \$31.9 million related to the reprofiling of funds from fiscal year 2021-22 to fiscal year 2022-23;
- \$29.8 million attributable to the conclusion of temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Canada Community Revitalization Fund;
- \$29.0 million attributable to the conclusion of temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Tourism Relief Fund;
- \$17.4 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Jobs and Growth Fund;
- \$9.3 million attributable to the conclusion of temporary funding announced in Budget 2018 in support of the Regional Economic Growth through Innovation measures: Regional Development Agencies and A New Women Entrepreneurship Strategy; and
- \$0.1 million in various adjustments.

In 2024-25, planned spending is \$302.9 million, a decrease of \$16.1 million from the \$319.0 million in 2023-24 planned spending as a result of:

- \$10.4 million attributable to the conclusion of temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Jobs and Growth Fund;
- \$5.0 million attributable to the conclusion of temporary funding announced in Budget 2021 related to the Aerospace Regional Recovery Initiative; and
- \$0.7 million in temporary funding announced on September 9, 2020, by the Prime Minister of Canada related to the Black Entrepreneurship Program.

Planned human resources

The following table provides information on human resources, in full-time equivalents (FTEs), for each of ACOA's core responsibilities and for its internal services for 2022-23 and other relevant years.

Human resources planning summary for core responsibilities and internal services

| Core responsibilities and internal services | 2019-20 actual FTEs | 2020-21 actual FTEs | 2021-22 forecast FTEs | 2022-23 planned FTEs | 2023-24 planned FTEs | 2024-25 planned FTEs |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Economic Development in Atlantic Canada | 378 | 383 | 393 | 397 | 387 | 381 |
| Subtotal | 378 | 383 | 393 | 397 | 387 | 381 |
| Internal services | 197 | 201 | 201 | 202 | 197 | 196 |
| Total | 575 | 584 | 594 | 599 | 584 | 577 |

Human resource levels at ACOA show an increase starting in 2020-21 that reflects the additional human resources required to support the efforts by the Government of Canada and ACOA to effectively deliver on COVID-19 emergency measures. The situation will normalize starting in fiscal year 2024-25. The remaining fluctuations occurring reflect the realignment of human resources to support priorities, projects and new temporary initiatives. The Agency will continue to achieve its results by allocating its human resources to best support its priorities and programs.

Estimates by vote

Information on ACOA's organizational appropriations is available in the [2022-23 Main Estimates](#).^{xix}

Future-oriented condensed statement of operations

The future-oriented condensed statement of operations provides an overview of ACOA's operations for 2021-22 and 2022-23.

The forecast and planned amounts in this statement of operations were prepared on an accrual basis. The forecast and planned amounts presented in other sections of the Departmental Plan were prepared on an expenditure basis. Amounts may therefore differ.

A more detailed future-oriented statement of operations and associated notes, including a reconciliation of the net cost of operations with the requested authorities, is available on [ACOA's website^{xx}](#).

Future-oriented condensed statement of operations for the year ending March 31, 2023 (dollars)

| Financial information | 2021-22 forecast results | 2022-23 planned results | Difference (2022-23 planned results minus 2021-22 forecast results) |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Total expenses | 323,734,465 | 351,985,471 | 28,251,006 |
| Total revenues | 25,354 | 20,381 | (4,973) |
| Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers | 323,709,111 | 351,965,090 | 28,255,979 |

Planned total expenses for fiscal year 2022-23 are \$352.0 million, an increase of \$28.3 million compared to the 2021-22 forecast results. The planned expenses do not include unconditionally repayable contributions transfer payments, which are estimated to be \$102.5 million; these are classified as assets.

Total revenues represent the gain on the disposal of tangible capital assets.

Corporate information

Organizational profile

Appropriate minister: The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, PC, MP

Institutional head: Francis P. McGuire, President

Ministerial portfolio: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Enabling instrument:

Part I of the *Government Organization Act*, Atlantic Canada 1987, R.S.C., 1985, c. 41 (4th Supp.), also known as the *Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act*. See the [Department of Justice Canada website](#)^{xxi} for more information.

Year of incorporation / commencement: 1987

Raison d'être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do

Information on ACOA's raison d'être, mandate and role is available on the Agency's [website](#)^{xxii}.

Information on ACOA's mandate letter commitments is available in the [Minister's mandate letter](#)^{xxiii}.

Operating context

Information on the operating context is available on ACOA's [website](#)^{xxiv}.

Reporting framework

ACOA’s approved departmental results framework and program inventory for 2022-23 are as follows.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|
| Departmental Results Framework | Core Responsibility: Economic development in Atlantic Canada | | Internal Services |
| | Departmental Result: Communities are economically diversified in Atlantic Canada. | Indicator: percentage of Atlantic Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises that are majority-owned by women, Indigenous people, youth, visible minorities and persons with disabilities | |
| | | Indicator: percentage of professional-, science- and technology-related jobs in Atlantic Canada’s economy | |
| | | Indicator: amount leveraged per dollar invested by ACOA in community projects | |
| | Departmental Result: Businesses invest in the development and commercialization of innovative technologies in Atlantic Canada. | Indicator: value of business expenditures in research and development (in dollars) by firms receiving ACOA program funding | |
| | | Indicator: percentage of businesses engaged in collaborations with higher education institutions in Atlantic Canada | |
| | Departmental Result: Businesses are innovative and growing in Atlantic Canada. | Indicator: number of high-growth firms in Atlantic Canada | |
| | | Indicator: value of export of goods (in dollars) from Atlantic Canada | |
| | | Indicator: value of export of clean technologies (in dollars) from Atlantic Canada | |
| | | Indicator: revenue growth rate of firms supported by ACOA programs | |
| Program Inventory | Program: Inclusive Communities | | |
| | Program: Diversified Communities | | |
| | Program: Research and Development, and Commercialization | | |
| | Program: Innovation Ecosystem | | |
| | Program: Business Growth | | |
| | Program: Trade and Investment | | |
| | Program: Policy Research and Engagement | | |

Supporting information on the program inventory

Supporting information on planned expenditures, human resources, and results related to ACOA's program inventory are available on [GC InfoBase](#).^{xxv}

Supplementary information tables

The following supplementary information tables are available on ACOA's [website](#).^{xxvi}:

- ▶ [Details on transfer payment programs](#)^{xxvii}
- ▶ [Gender-based analysis plus](#)^{xxviii}

Federal tax expenditures

ACOA's Departmental Plan does not include information on tax expenditures.

Tax expenditures are the responsibility of the Minister of Finance. The Department of Finance Canada publishes cost estimates and projections for government-wide tax expenditures each year in the [Report on Federal Tax Expenditures](#).^{xxix} This report provides detailed information on tax expenditures, including objectives, historical background and references to related federal spending programs, as well as evaluations, research papers and gender-based analysis plus.

Organizational contact information

Mailing address:

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Moncton, New Brunswick, E1C 9J8

Telephone:

General inquiries: 506-851-2271
Toll free (Canada and the United States): 1-800-561-7862
TTY: 1-877-456-6500

Fax:

General: 506-851-7403
Secure: 506-857-1301

Email: acoa.information.apeca@acoa-apeca.gc.ca

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities.html>

Appendix: definitions

appropriation (crédit)

Any authority of Parliament to pay money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

budgetary expenditures (dépenses budgétaires)

Operating and capital expenditures; transfer payments to other levels of government, organizations or individuals; and payments to Crown corporations.

core responsibility (responsabilité essentielle)

An enduring function or role performed by a department. The intentions of the department with respect to a core responsibility are reflected in one or more related departmental results that the department seeks to contribute to or influence.

Departmental Plan (plan ministériel)

A document that sets out a department's priorities, programs, expected results and associated resource requirements, covering a three-year period beginning with the year indicated in the title of the report. Departmental Plans are tabled in Parliament each spring.

departmental result (résultat ministériel)

A change that a department seeks to influence. A departmental result is often outside departments' immediate control, but it should be influenced by program-level outcomes.

departmental result indicator (indicateur de résultat ministériel)

A factor or variable that provides a valid and reliable means to measure or describe progress on a departmental result.

departmental results framework (cadre ministériel des résultats)

A framework that consists of the department's core responsibilities, departmental results and departmental result indicators.

Departmental Results Report (rapport sur les résultats ministériels)

A report on a department's actual performance in a fiscal year against its plans, priorities and expected results set out in its Departmental Plan for that year. Departmental Results Reports are usually tabled in Parliament each fall.

experimentation (expérimentation)

The conducting of activities that explore, test and compare the effects and impacts of policies and interventions in order to inform decision-making and improve outcomes for Canadians. Experimentation is related to, but distinct from, innovation. Innovation is the trying of something new; experimentation involves a rigorous comparison of results. For example, introducing a new

mobile application to communicate with Canadians can be an innovation; systematically testing the new application and comparing it against an existing website or other tools to see which one reaches more people, is experimentation.

full-time equivalent (équivalent temps plein)

A measure of the extent to which an employee represents a full person-year charge against a departmental budget. Full-time equivalents are calculated as a ratio of assigned hours of work to scheduled hours of work. Scheduled hours of work are set out in collective agreements.

gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) (analyse comparative entre les sexes plus [ACS Plus])

An analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people experience policies, programs and services based on multiple factors including race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability.

government-wide priorities (priorités pangouvernementales)

For the purpose of the 2022-23 Departmental Plan, government-wide priorities are the high-level themes outlining the government’s agenda in the 2021 Speech from the Throne: protecting Canadians from COVID-19; helping Canadians through the pandemic; building back better – a resiliency agenda for the middle class; the Canada we’re fighting for.

horizontal initiative (initiative horizontale)

An initiative in which two or more federal organizations are given funding to pursue a shared outcome, often linked to a government priority.

non-budgetary expenditures (dépenses non budgétaires)

Net outlays and receipts related to loans, investments and advances, which change the composition of the financial assets of the Government of Canada.

performance (rendement)

What an organization did with its resources to achieve its results, how well those results compare to what the organization intended to achieve, and how well lessons learned have been identified.

plan (plan)

The articulation of strategic choices, which provides information on how an organization intends to achieve its priorities and associated results. Generally, a plan will explain the logic behind the strategies chosen and tend to focus on actions that lead up to the expected result.

planned spending (dépenses prévues)

For Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports, planned spending refers to those amounts presented in the Main Estimates.

A department is expected to be aware of the authorities that it has sought and received. The determination of planned spending is a departmental responsibility, and departments must be able to defend the expenditure and accrual numbers presented in their Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports.

program (programme)

Individual or groups of services, activities or combinations thereof that are managed together within a department and that focus on a specific set of outputs, outcomes or service levels.

program inventory (répertoire des programmes)

An inventory of a department's programs that describes how resources are organized to carry out the department's core responsibilities and achieve its planned results.

result (résultat)

An external consequence attributed, in part, to an organization, policy, program or initiative. Results are not within the control of a single organization, policy, program or initiative; instead, they are within the area of the organization's influence.

statutory expenditures (dépenses législatives)

Expenditures that Parliament has approved through legislation other than appropriation acts. The legislation sets out the purpose of the expenditures and the terms and conditions under which they may be made.

target (cible)

A measurable performance or success level that an organization, program or initiative plans to achieve within a specified time period. Targets can be either quantitative or qualitative.

voted expenditures (dépenses votées)

Expenditures that Parliament approves annually through an Appropriation Act. The vote wording becomes the governing conditions under which these expenditures may be made.

Endnotes

- i Speech from the Throne 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/campaigns/speech-throne/2021/building-resilient-economy.html>
- ii Economic and Fiscal Update 2021, <https://www.budget.gc.ca/efu-meb/2021/report-rapport/intro-en.html>
- iii Innovation and Skills Plan, https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/062.nsf/eng/h_00105.html#:~:text=The%20Innovation%20and%20Skills%20Plan%20features%20a%20number,Research%20Chairs%20Program%20attracts%20and%20retains%20world-leading%20researchers
- iv Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy Plan, <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2020/12/a-healthy-environment-and-a-healthy-economy.html>
- v Atlantic Growth Strategy, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/atlanticgrowth.html>
- vi Speech from the Throne 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/privy-council/campaigns/speech-throne/2021/speech-from-the-throne.html>
- vii Economic and Fiscal Update 2021, <https://budget.gc.ca/efu-meb/2021/home-accueil-en.html>
- viii Regional Economic Growth through Innovation, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/services/regional-economic-growth-through-innovation.html>
- ix Jobs and Growth Fund, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/campaigns/covid19/jgf.html>
- x Canada Community Revitalization Fund, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/campaigns/covid19/canada-community-revitalization-fund.html>
- xi Tourism Relief Fund, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/campaigns/covid19/tourism-relief-fund.html>
- xii Aerospace Regional Recovery Initiative, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/campaigns/covid19/aerospace-regional-recovery-initiative.html>
- xiii Black Entrepreneurship Program National Ecosystem Fund, <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/black-entrepreneurship-program/en/ecosystem-fund>
- xiv Women Entrepreneurship Strategy Ecosystem Fund, <https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/women-entrepreneurship-strategy/en>
- xv Canada Coal Transition Initiative, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/services/canada-coal-transition-initiative.html>
- xvi. GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- xvii. GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- xviii. GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- xix. 2022-23 Main Estimates, <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/planned-government-spending/government-expenditure-plan-main-estimates.html>
- xx Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/corporate/transparency/dp-2022-23-foso.html>
- xxi. Government of Canada, Justice Laws Website, <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/G-5.7/page-1.html>
- xxii Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/corporate/transparency/dp-2020-21-toc/dp-2022-23-raison.html>
- xxiii Office of the Prime Minister, <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/12/16/minister-official-languages-and-minister-responsible-atlantic-canada>
- xxiv Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/corporate/transparency/dp-2022-23-operatingcontext.html>
- xxv. GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- xxvi Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/corporate/transparency/parliamentaryreports.html>
- xxvii Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/corporate/transparency/dp-2022-23-detailstpp.html>
- xxviii Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/corporate/transparency/dp-2022-23-gba.html>
- xxix. Report on Federal Tax Expenditures, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/services/publications/federal-tax-expenditures.html>