

Office of the Intelligence Commissioner 2024–25 Departmental Plan

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada



Office of
the Intelligence
Commissioner

Bureau du
commissaire
au renseignement

Canada 

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Catalogue No.: D95-6E-PDF

ISSN 2563-0377

Office of the Intelligence Commissioner's 2024–25 Departmental plan at a glance

A departmental plan describes a department's priorities, plans and associated costs for the upcoming three fiscal years.

- [Vision, mission, raison d'être and operating context](#)

[\[Read the full departmental plan\]](#)

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Key priorities

- Timely, comprehensive quasi-judicial reviews
- Transparency
- Effective management of internal services

Refocusing Government Spending

In Budget 2023, the government committed to reducing spending by \$14.1 billion over the next five years, starting in 2023–24, and by \$4.1 billion annually after that.

While not officially part of this spending reduction exercise, the ICO will respect the spirit of this exercise by doing the following:

- Review of professional services contracts
- Review of discretionary travel
- Review of internal services

The figures in this departmental plan reflect these reductions.

Highlights

A Departmental Results Framework consists of an organization's core responsibilities, the results it plans to achieve, and the performance indicators that measure progress toward these results.

Quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions

Departmental results:

- Enhancing transparency and accountability of the national security framework

Planned spending: \$1,937,145

Planned human resources: 6.5

- Continue to refine existing processes and procedures to better align resources to conduct quasi-judicial reviews in accordance with the deadlines set out in the legislation;
- Review organizational structure with a focus on maintaining a highly skilled workforce and increasing diversity; and
- Continue to utilize the departmental results framework and performance measurement regime in accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat's Policy on Results.

More information about the quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions can be found in the full departmental plan.

Office of the Intelligence Commissioner 2024–25 Departmental plan

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From the Institutional head

As Intelligence Commissioner (IC) and Deputy Head, I am pleased to present the 2024–25 Departmental Plan for the Office of the Intelligence Commissioner (ICO). The 2024-25 Departmental Plan provides Canadians with an overview of the ICO’s objectives, planned activities and expected results during the reporting period, as well as the financial and human resources forecast to deliver those results.

The ICO is a separate agency of the federal government. More specifically, the ICO supports the fulfillment of my independent oversight mandate. My mandate as IC is set out in the *Intelligence Commissioner Act (IC Act)*. The IC’s mandate is to approve – or not approve – certain national security and intelligence activities planned by the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) or the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS).

In the interest of national security and intelligence collection, these agencies may sometimes engage in activities that could involve breaking the laws of Canada or another country or interfere with the privacy interests of Canadians. Any activities of this kind must first be authorized in writing by the cabinet minister responsible for the agency (i.e., Minister of National Defence or the Minister of Public Safety) involved or, in some cases, by the Director of CSIS. The ministerial authorization must include the conclusions – effectively the reasons – supporting the activities are being authorized.

The IC then reviews the conclusions given for authorizing the activities to determine whether they meet the test of “reasonableness” as recognized by Canadian courts. If so, the IC approves the ministerial authorization, and the agencies can proceed with the planned activities. The activities cannot take place without approval from the IC.

In conducting independent oversight of governmental decisions, the IC plays a central role in assuring effective governance of national security and intelligence activities in Canada – the IC holds the government accountable by ensuring that the Minister or Director appropriately balance national security and intelligence objectives with the respect of the rule of law and privacy interests.

The IC's function is quasi-judicial in nature — reviewing and analyzing ministerial authorizations, applying legal tests to the facts, and writing decisions that are binding on CSE and CSIS. The ICO publishes the IC's decisions on its website.

The 2024–25 plan continues to build on the ICO's initiatives and achievements of previous years. The ICO will remain steadfast in ensuring that my decisions and the reasons for them are delivered in accordance with the deadlines set out in legislation. As well, the ICO will continue to improve the accessibility of my decisions, including writing decisions in plain language and preparing a classified annex to render the final published decisions more readable, with less redactions and direct access to the vetted decisions through online tools.

July 2024 will mark the 5-year anniversary of the establishment of the ICO. The ICO will use this milestone as an opportunity to conduct a strategic resource planning exercise, with a view of ensuring that human and financial resources continue to meet the ongoing needs of the organization. As part of this exercise, the ICO will continue to work with other government departments and agencies to reinforce ICO's technical, security and internal services infrastructure. The ICO will also conduct a review of its internal services to ensure that they are being delivered in manner that is effective, efficient, and sustainable.

The ICO will also continue to engage and connect with external stakeholders to communicate the key role of the Intelligence Commissioner in ensuring ministerial accountability in national security and intelligence activities by maintaining the proper balance between national security interests on the one hand, and respect for the rule of law and the rights and freedoms of Canadians on the other.

I have full confidence that the ICO will continue to serve Canadians in an open and transparent manner, and in doing so, strengthen the national security framework through greater transparency and enhanced accountability.

The Honourable Simon Noël, K.C.
Intelligence Commissioner

Plans to deliver on core responsibilities and internal services

Core responsibilities and internal services:

- [Quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions](#)
- [Internal services](#)

Quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions

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- Summary of changes to reporting framework since last year

Description

The ICO is an independent oversight body. Under the *IC Act*, the IC is responsible for performing quasi-judicial reviews of the conclusions on the basis of which certain authorizations are issued or amended, and certain determinations are made, under the *Communications Security Establishment Act* and the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*. In each case, the IC, supported by the ICO, undertakes an in-depth analysis of the records. If the IC is satisfied that the conclusions reached by the decision-maker are reasonable, the IC must approve the authorization or determination in a written decision that sets out the reasons for doing so.

Consistent with the IC’s oversight role, an authorization or determination is valid only after it is approved by the IC. The activities described in the authorizations or determinations cannot be carried out by the intelligence agencies without the IC’s approval.

The *IC Act* requires that the IC’s decision be rendered within 30 days after the day on which the IC received notice of the authorization or determination, or within any other period that may be agreed on by the IC and the decision-maker. In the case of an authorization issued by the Director of CSIS for a query of a dataset in exigent circumstances, the IC must render his or her decision and the reasons for it as soon as feasible.

Quality of life impacts

This core responsibility contributes to the “Good Governance” domain of the [Quality of Life Framework for Canada](#) and, more specifically, “confidence in institutions,” and “respect of justice and human rights” through all the activities mentioned in the core responsibility description.

Results and targets

The following tables show, for each departmental result related to the quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions, the indicators, the results from the three most recently reported fiscal years, the targets and target dates approved in 2024–25.

Table 1: Indicators, results and targets for departmental result

Enhancing transparency and accountability of the national security framework

Indicator	[2020–2021] result	[2021–2022] result	[2022–2023] result	Target	Date to achieve
% of decisions and the reasons for them delivered in accordance with the deadlines set out in the legislation	100%	100%	100%	100%	March 31, 2025
Annual report on Commissioner’s activities delivered to the	100%	100%	100%	100%	March 31, 2025

Indicator	[2020–2021] result	[2021–2022] result	[2022–2023] result	Target	Date to achieve
Prime Minister by March 31 st					

The financial, human resources and performance information for the ICO’s program inventory is available on [GC InfoBase](#).

Plans to achieve results

The role of the IC and that of the ICO is to provide greater transparency, better accountability and, ultimately to bolster public confidence in Canada’s national security framework. To carry out that role, the IC and the ICO’s core responsibility is to perform quasi-judicial reviews of certain ministerial conclusions.

In support of its ability to perform quasi-judicial reviews in accordance with the deadlines established by the legislation, in 2024–25, the following activities will be undertaken:

- Continue to refine existing processes and procedures to better align resources to conduct quasi-judicial reviews in accordance with the deadlines set out in the legislation;
- Review organizational structure with a focus on maintaining a highly skilled workforce and increasing diversity; and
- Continue to utilize the departmental results framework and performance measurement regime in accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat’s Policy on Results.

Key risks

Human resources management

The ICO must ensure that it has sufficient resources in place to meet the review and reporting requirements set out in the legislation. Regardless of the number and complexity of the quasi-judicial reviews conducted, the requirements of the legislation must be met. The ICO’s workload is largely demand-driven by the reviews submitted to the IC for approval, and subject to fluctuations in the volume and complexity of the file submitted over which the ICO has limited control. This significantly affects the ICO’s operational context and places pressures on the ICO.

The ICO will continue to apply strategies to effectively recruit, retain and manage its human resources to meet the requirements of the IC and provide the necessary support to achieve program delivery.

Snapshot of planned resources in 2024–25

- Planned spending: \$1,937,145
- Planned full-time resources: 6.5

Related government priorities

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
 More information on the ICO’s contributions to Canada’s Federal Implementation Plan on the 2030 Agenda and the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy can be found in our [Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#).

Program inventory

The quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions is supported by the following program:

- Quasi-judicial review program

Supporting information on planned expenditures, human resources, and results related to the ICO's program inventory is available on [GC Infobase](#).

Internal services

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Description

Internal services are the 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

Plans to achieve results

- In continuing to strengthen internal services, the ICO will examine its existing service agreements with other government departments to ensure the planned collaboration is continuing to provide the services requested in an effective and efficient manner.
- Continuing to explore acquiring additional services from other government departments to improve productivity and increase efficiency.
- Completing the third phase of the Office of the Comptroller General's comprehensive compliance self-assessment utilizing the tools developed by the Office of the Comptroller General.

Snapshot of planned resources in 2024-25

- Planned spending: \$638,708
- Planned full-time resources: 4

Related government priorities

Planning for contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses

The ICO is committed to meet the mandatory minimum target of 5% of the total value of contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses annually. The ICO will leverage tools established by Public Services and Procurement Canada, such as standing offers and supply arrangements, to assist in contracting with Indigenous businesses.

Table 2: Planning for contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses

5% reporting field	2022-23 actual result	2023-24 forecasted result	2024-25 planned result
Total percentage of contracts with Indigenous businesses	NA	NA	5%

Planned spending and human resources

This section provides an overview of ICO’s planned spending and human resources for the next three fiscal years and compares planned spending for 2024–25 with actual spending from previous years.

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Spending

Table 3: Actual spending summary for core responsibilities and internal services (\$ dollars)

The following table shows information on spending for each of ICO’s core responsibilities and for its internal services for the previous three fiscal years. Amounts for the current fiscal year are forecasted based on spending to date.

Core responsibilities and internal services	[2021–2022] actual expenditures	[2022–2023] actual expenditures	[2023–2024] forecast spending
Quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions	1,547,470	1,887,758	1,666,808
Internal services	504,415	597,080	665,204
Total	2,051,885	2,484,838	2,332,012

The reduction in 2023–2024 forecast spending for the core responsibility is primarily the result of the refocusing of spending following a review of contracts and discretionary expenditures, including travel and a decrease in retroactive salary payments as compared to 2022–2023. The increase in internal services forecast spending is primarily reflected by increased costs related to security.

Table 4: Budgetary planning summary for core responsibilities and internal services (dollars)

The following table shows information on spending for each of the ICO’s core responsibilities and for its internal services for the upcoming three fiscal years.

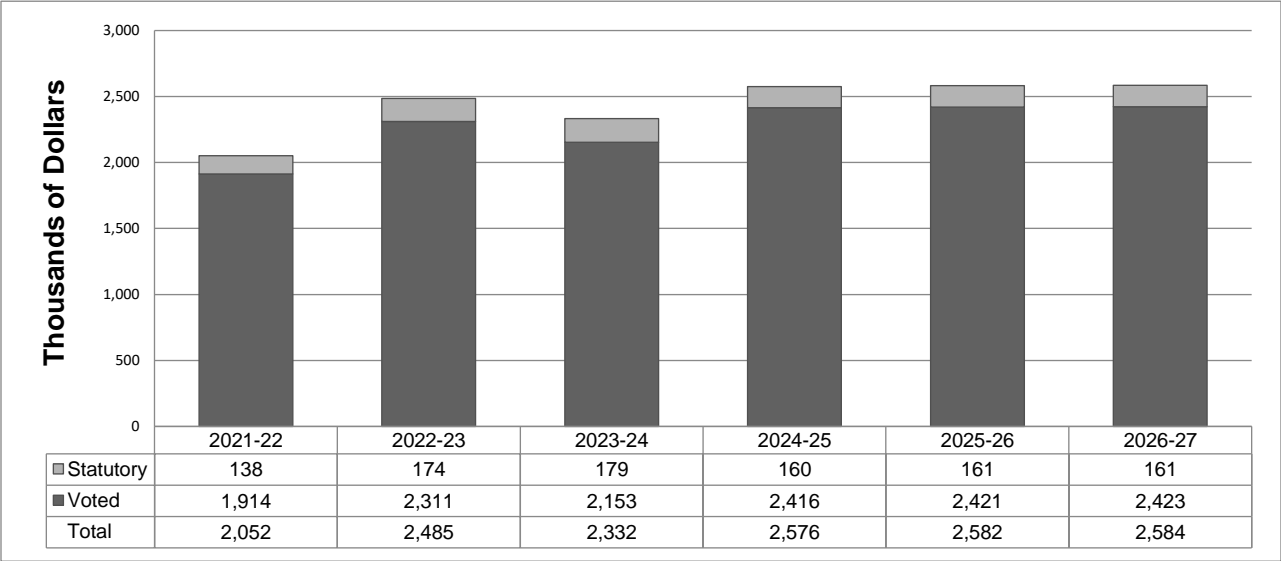
Core responsibilities and internal services	[2024-25] budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	[2024-25] planned spending	[2025-26] planned spending	[2026-27] planned spending
Quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions	1,937,145	1,937,145	1,942,312	1,943,381
Internal services	638,708	638,708	640,059	640,338
Total	2,575,853	2,575,853	2,582,371	2,583,719

The slight increases in budgetary and planned spending over the three years include additional salary and Employee Benefit Plan adjustments reflecting collective agreements signed in the core public administration.

Funding

Figure 1: Departmental spending 2021–22 to 2026–27

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



The planned spending in 2024–25 is approximately \$244 thousand higher than the forecast spending in 2023–24. The planned spending is based on a full FTE complement. In addition, ICO anticipates spending additional funds to enhance its security infrastructure to meet requirements.

Estimates by vote

Information on the ICO’s organizational appropriations is available in the [2024–25 Main Estimates](#).

Future-oriented condensed statement of operations

The future-oriented condensed statement of operations provides an overview of the ICO’s operations for 2023–24 to 2024–25.

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, are available at the [ICO's website](#).

Table 5: Future-oriented condensed statement of operations for the year ending March 31, 2025 (dollars)

Financial information	[2023–24] forecast results	[2024–25] planned results	Difference ([2024–25] planned results minus [2023–24] forecast results)
Total expenses	2,429,583	2,707,291	277,708
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	2,429,583	2,707,291	277,708

The planned full complement of FTEs in 2024–25 accounts for the difference between planned and forecast results.

Human resources

Table 6: Actual human resources for core responsibilities and internal services

The following table shows a summary of human resources, in full-time equivalents (FTEs), for the ICO's core responsibilities and for its internal services for the previous three fiscal years. Human resources for the current fiscal year are forecasted based on year to date.

Core responsibilities and internal services	[2021–22] actual FTEs	[2022–23] actual FTEs	[2023–24] forecasted FTEs
Quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions	5	5	5
Internal services	2	2	2
Total	7	7	7

Table 7: Human resources planning summary for core responsibilities and internal services

The following table shows information on human resources, in full-time equivalents (FTEs), for each of the ICO's core responsibilities and for its internal services planned for 2024–25 and future years.

Core responsibilities and internal services	[2024–25] planned fulltime equivalents	[2025–26] planned fulltime equivalents	[2026–27] planned fulltime equivalents
Quasi-judicial review of certain ministerial conclusions	6.5	6.5	6.5
Internal services	4	4	4
Total	10.5	10.5	10.5

Corporate information

Organizational profile

Appropriate minister: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P. – Prime Minister of Canada

Institutional head: The Honourable Simon Noël, K.C. – Intelligence Commissioner

Ministerial portfolio: Prime Minister

Enabling instrument: [Intelligence Commissioner Act](#)

Year of incorporation / commencement: 2019

Organizational contact information

Mailing address

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Website: www.canada.ca/en/intelligence-commissioner.html

Supplementary information tables

The following supplementary information tables are available on the [ICO’s website](#):

- [Gender-based analysis plus](#)

Information on the ICO’s departmental sustainable development strategy can be found on the [ICO’s website](#).

Federal tax expenditures

The ICO’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](#).

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.

[Expand/collapse sections]

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.

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 tool used to support the development of responsive and inclusive policies, programs and other initiatives. GBA Plus is a process for understanding who is impacted by the issue or opportunity being addressed by the initiative; identifying how the initiative could be tailored to meet diverse needs of the people most impacted; and anticipating and mitigating any barriers to accessing or benefitting from the initiative. GBA Plus is an intersectional analysis that goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences to consider other factors, such as age, disability, education, ethnicity, economic status, geography, language, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

government-wide priorities (priorités pangouvernementales)

For the purpose of the 2024–25 Departmental Plan, government-wide priorities are the high-level themes outlining the government’s agenda in the 2021 Speech from the Throne: building a healthier today and tomorrow; growing a more resilient economy; bolder climate action; fighter harder for safer communities; standing up for diversity and inclusion; moving faster on the path to reconciliation and fighting for a secure, just, and equitable world.

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.

Indigenous business

As defined on the [Indigenous Services Canada website](#) in accordance with the Government of Canada’s commitment that a mandatory minimum target of 5% of the total value of contracts is awarded to Indigenous businesses annually.

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.