

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

2025-26 Departmental Plan

The Honourable Sean Fraser

Minister of Justice and Attorney General of
Canada and Minister responsible for the
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada 

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, 2025.

Cat. No. AC2-8E-PDF

ISSN 2371-719X

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's 2025-26 Departmental Plan: At a glance

A departmental plan describes a department's priorities, plans and associated costs for the coming 3 fiscal years.

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

Key priorities

In 2025-26, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) will build on the region's momentum to support economic growth, wealth creation and economic prosperity in Atlantic Canada, while fostering Indigenous economic reconciliation and inclusive growth. ACOA's top priorities for 2025-26 are as follows:

- Focus on productivity and growth to guide the Agency's place-based approaches and interventions. Enhancing the region's productivity will foster economic competitiveness, boost business growth and lead to higher living standards. This includes renewing the Agency's focus on growth sectors, increasing adoption of automation and advanced digital technologies, and leveraging the talents of the region's workforce and diverse population to catalyze inclusive economic growth and increase competitiveness.
- Continue to leverage its experience to fuel long-term economic growth in Atlantic Canada through regionally tailored, client-centric and place-based assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), ecosystems and communities in urban and rural areas.

Highlights

In 2025-26, total planned spending (including internal services) for ACOA is \$362,024,356 and total planned full-time equivalent staff (including internal services) is 572. For complete information on ACOA's total planned spending and human resources, read the [Planned spending and human resources section](#) of the full plan.

The following provides a summary of the department's planned achievements for 2025-26 according to its approved Departmental Results Framework. A Departmental Results Framework consists of a department's core responsibilities, the results it plans to achieve, and the performance indicators that measure progress toward those results.

Core responsibility 1: Economic development in Atlantic Canada

Planned spending: \$333,256,478

Planned human resources: 379

Departmental results:

- Businesses are innovative and growing in Atlantic Canada
- Businesses invest in the development and commercialization of innovative technologies in Atlantic Canada
- Communities are economically diversified in Atlantic Canada

In 2025-26, ACOA will bolster the momentum of Atlantic Canada to promote long-term economic growth in the region. The Agency will provide regionally tailored, client-centric and place-based assistance to ecosystems, to SMEs, which accounted for 99.8% of all Atlantic businesses in June 2023,¹ and to communities in urban and rural areas, the latter of which have accounted for approximately half of ACOA's projects and expenditures in recent years.²

Atlantic Canada is expected to outperform the national economy in a variety of economic measures in 2025-26.³ The Government of Canada is committed to growing the economy to be more innovative and productive, where every SME has the tools it needs to grow. ACOA's efforts will support the government's economic plan by investing in the technologies critical to increasing productivity, fostering innovation, and attracting more private investment to Atlantic Canada. While strong economic headwinds are present, especially the uncertain impacts of the of potential U.S. trade actions on Atlantic Canada's economy, there continues to be economic momentum in Atlantic Canada and ACOA will work with other government departments to improve access to financing and leverage economic opportunities in the region.

ACOA's overarching strategic priority will be enhancing productivity and growth.

The Agency will emphasize efforts aimed at closing the productivity gap of the region. This will be done by focusing on 3 areas:

1. Growing strategic sectors: ACOA will promote place-based economic diversification and market expansion by propelling key sectors such as biosciences, cybersecurity, clean technologies, and aerospace and defence.
2. Technology adoption: The Agency will help SMEs increase the adoption of automation and advanced digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, to optimize their value, create efficiencies and reduce waste.
3. Workforce development: ACOA will work with businesses to ensure that key industries have the skilled workers needed to enhance their productivity, and help communities attract and develop the talent required to foster economic growth.

This focus on productivity, competitiveness and diversification, combined with ACOA's flexible programming and close relationship with its business clients, will allow the Agency to help Atlantic

Atlantic Canada's 2024 economic momentum

The [Public Policy Forum](#), a leading national think tank, published the second edition of [The Atlantic Canada Momentum Index](#) in September 2024. It found that Atlantic Canada showed considerable points of strength, with growth in 15 of 20 social and economic indicators examined between 2015 and 2023. The region's forward momentum continues to transform its economy thanks to growth in areas such as population, median age, employment and labour productivity. However, the report highlighted the need for concerted and coordinated effort to better spur and manage growth in key areas such as housing supply and affordability.

¹ Source: Statistics Canada. Table 33-10-0717-01 Canadian Business Counts, with employees, June 2023, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3310071701>.

² Source: ACOA internal databases.

³ Source: Atlantic Economic Council. [ATLANTIC Economic Outlook \(October 31, 2024\)](#).

Canadian SMEs, sectors and communities navigate economic insecurity, mitigate the impacts of trade disruptions with the U.S., and ensure future growth and competitiveness in the region.

Sustainability will continue to be an important guiding principle for the Agency as it explores new growth opportunities and positions industries for success as they transition to a cleaner economy. In October 2024, the Agency tabled its [2023–2027 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy – 2023-24 Report](#), which outlines its contributions to Canada’s sustainable development goals, notably on meaningful work and economic growth. The Agency’s activities will help Atlantic Canada’s economy to diversify and transition to a low-carbon future by accelerating the decarbonization of firms and supply chains, advancing the development of clean technologies for domestic and international markets, and supporting Atlantic Canada’s immense opportunities in clean energy. ACOA will also build on the success of its investments in recent years by implementing a new Clean Growth Initiative that will provide targeted support to promote sustainability among Atlantic Canadian SMEs by assisting them in adopting clean technologies and sustainable practices.

These efforts, along with ACOA’s regular programming, will help support strong and resilient urban and rural communities as an integral part of the Canadian economy. Each of these efforts will also be informed by advocacy and collaboration with other federal agencies and departments, and by working with the network of regional development agencies across Canada, the 4 provincial governments in Atlantic Canada, including through the [Atlantic Growth Strategy](#), as well as municipalities, Indigenous partners, non-profit organizations, industry associations and other stakeholders such as [Community Business Development Corporations](#).

Assistance will continue to respond to regional needs and be delivered through flexible core programs such as the [Regional Economic Growth through Innovation program](#). Targeted initiatives such as the [Regional Homebuilding Innovation Initiative](#), [Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative](#) and [Elevate Tourism Initiative](#) will help boost investment in private-sector businesses to elevate their products and services and attract even more investment to the Atlantic region. The Agency will also remain resolute in its promotion of the Atlantic region across the Government of Canada’s activities, including efforts to competitively position Atlantic Canadian firms for defence and Canadian Coast Guard procurement through Canada’s [Industrial and Technological Benefits Policy](#).

These priorities will directly contribute to the Government of Canada’s plan to catalyze investment and build a new Canadian economy, including a strong Atlantic Canada – one that creates higher-paying careers, raises incomes and can withstand future shocks.

More information about [economic development in Atlantic Canada](#) can be found in the full plan.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency 2025-26 Departmental Plan

On this page:

- [From the Minister](#)
- [Plans to deliver on core responsibilities and internal services](#)
 - [Economic development in Atlantic Canada](#)
 - [Internal services](#)
- [Planned spending and human resources](#)
 - [Spending](#)
 - [Funding](#)
 - [Future-oriented condensed statement of operations](#)
 - [Human resources](#)
- [Corporate information](#)
- [Supplementary information tables](#)
- [Federal tax expenditures](#)
- [Definitions](#)

From the Minister

I am pleased to present the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's (ACOA) 2025-26 Departmental Plan. The Agency's focus is clear: accelerating productivity and spurring growth in Atlantic Canada. Advancing these priorities will build the foundation for a diversified, sustainable economy that positions Canada to lead globally. By boosting productivity and growth, we create better jobs, help small and medium-sized enterprises expand, and drive innovation across traditional and emerging sectors – all while improving the quality of life for Atlantic Canadians.

ACOA is focused on helping businesses and communities start up and scale up, pursue new markets and be more resilient to shocks. We are unlocking potential by growing key sectors, empowering under-represented groups, and helping communities diversify their economies while prioritizing affordability and sustainable growth. Together with all levels of government and Indigenous partners, we are building a vibrant, inclusive Atlantic Canada that contributes to Canada's long-term prosperity.

The Agency has a key role to play in transforming the economy. It will use its programs, tools, advocacy and partnerships to help businesses be more competitive, increase wages and reinvest in their growth. Programs such as the Regional Homebuilding Innovation Initiative, the Elevate Tourism Initiative and the Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative are examples of how the Agency is contributing to a stronger Canadian economy.

I invite you to read this report for more details on ACOA's plans to strengthen Canada's economic foundation, enhance the vitality and prosperity of our communities, and ensure a brighter, more affordable future for all.

With a bold vision, we will transform our economy for the people who call Atlantic Canada home.



The Honourable Sean Fraser

Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Plans to deliver on core responsibilities and internal services

Core responsibilities and internal services

- [Economic development in Atlantic Canada](#)
- [Internal services](#)

Core responsibility 1: Economic development in Atlantic Canada

In this section

- [Description](#)
- [Quality of life impacts](#)
- [Indicators, results and targets](#)
- [Plans to achieve results](#)
- [Key risks](#)
- [Planned resources to achieve results](#)
- [Related government priorities](#)
- [Program inventory](#)

Description

Support Atlantic Canada’s economic growth, wealth creation and economic prosperity through inclusive clean growth and by building on competitive regional strengths. Help small and medium-sized enterprise (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 to compete and succeed in a global market.

Quality of life impacts

This core responsibility contributes to the “Prosperity” domain of the [Quality of Life Framework](#) for Canada and the indicators of gross domestic product per capita, productivity, investment in in-house research and development (R&D), firm growth, and employment. This core responsibility also contributes to the “Environment” domain.

Indicators, results and targets

This section presents details on the department’s indicators, the actual results from the 3 most recently reported fiscal years, the targets and the target dates approved in 2025-26 for economic development in Atlantic Canada. Details are presented by departmental result.

Table 1: Departmental result 1 – Businesses are innovative and growing in Atlantic Canada

Table 1 provides a summary of the target and actual results under Economic development in Atlantic Canada.

Departmental result indicators	Actual results	Target	Date to achieve target
Number of high-growth firms in Atlantic Canada	2021-22: 660 2022-23: 590 2023-24: 820	800	March 31, 2026
Value of export of goods from Atlantic Canada	2021-22: \$33,300,000,000 2022-23: \$41,900,000,000 2023-24: \$38,900,000,000	\$39,000,000,000	March 31, 2026

Departmental result indicators	Actual results	Target	Date to achieve target
Value of exports of clean technologies from Atlantic Canada	2021-22: \$458,000,000 2022-23: \$663,000,000 2023-24: \$895,000,000	\$670,000,000	March 31, 2026
Revenue growth rate of firms supported by ACOA programs	2021-22: 6.9% (2015-2020 excl. 2018) 2022-23: 8.1% (2016-2021 excl. 2018) 2023-24: 6.8% (2017-2022 excl. 2018)	7%	March 31, 2026

Table 2: Departmental result 2 – Businesses invest in the development and commercialization of innovative technologies in Atlantic Canada

Table 2 provides a summary of the target and actual results under Economic development in Atlantic Canada.

Departmental result indicators	Actual results	Target	Date to achieve target
Value of business expenditures in R&D by firms receiving ACOA program funding	2021-22: \$93,700,000 (2015-2019) 2022-23: \$104,630,000 (2016-2020) 2023-24: \$103,630,000 (2017-2021)	\$105,000,000	March 31, 2026
Percentage of businesses engaged in collaborations with higher education institutions in Atlantic Canada	2021-22: not available 2022-23: not available 2023-24: 12.0%	15%	March 31, 2026

Table 3: Departmental result 3 – Communities are economically diversified in Atlantic Canada

Table 3 provides a summary of the target and actual results under Economic development in Atlantic Canada.

Departmental result indicators	Actual results	Target	Date to achieve target
Percentage of Atlantic Canadian SMEs that are majority owned by women, Indigenous people, youth, visible minorities or persons with disabilities	2021-22: 16.7% of female ownership, 0.4% of Indigenous ownership, 9% of youth ownership, 2.9% of visible minority ownership, 1.2% of SMEs majority owned by persons with disabilities 2022-23: not available 2023-24: not available	17% of female ownership, 1% of Indigenous ownership, 10% of youth ownership, 4% of visible minority ownership, 1% of SMEs majority owned by persons with disabilities	March 31, 2026

Departmental result indicators	Actual results	Target	Date to achieve target
Percentage of professional-, science- and technology-related jobs in Atlantic Canada's economy	2021-22: 33.7% 2022-23: 32.9% 2023-24: 33.2%	33%	March 31, 2026
Amount leveraged per dollar invested by ACOA in community projects	2021-22: \$1.02 2022-23: \$1.98 2023-24: \$0.88	\$1.10	March 31, 2026

Additional information on the [detailed results and performance information](#) for ACOA's program inventory is available on GC InfoBase.

Plans to achieve results

The following section describes the planned results for economic development in Atlantic Canada in 2025-26.

In 2025-26, ACOA will remain a reliable source of place-based investments in Atlantic Canada to build a stronger and more resilient economy that works for everyone. This will help firms scale up, develop new markets and adopt new technologies and processes to be more productive and sustainable. Activities will help Atlantic Canadians, including groups such as Indigenous peoples and rural communities that are under-represented in the economy, to advance and diversify regional economies in an inclusive way.

ACOA's overarching strategic priority will be enhancing productivity and growth. The Agency will emphasize efforts aimed at closing the productivity gap of the region. This will be done by focusing on 3 areas:

1. Growing strategic sectors: ACOA will promote place-based economic diversification and market expansion by propelling key sectors such as biosciences, cybersecurity, clean technologies, and aerospace and defence.
2. Technology adoption: The Agency will help SMEs increase the adoption of automation and advanced digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, to optimize their value, create efficiencies and reduce waste.
3. Workforce development: ACOA will work with businesses to ensure that key industries have the skilled workers needed to enhance their productivity, and help communities attract and develop the talent required to foster economic growth.

The Agency's focus on productivity, competitiveness and diversification, combined with ACOA's flexible programming and close relationship with its business clients, will help Atlantic Canadian SMEs, sectors and communities navigate economic insecurity, mitigate the impacts of U.S. trade disruptions, and ensure future growth and competitiveness. The region has strong and deep trade ties with its trade partners, particularly in the U.S., and the Agency's flexible programming can help mitigate disruptions to those ties by enhancing the region's value proposition.

Atlantic Canada has the ingredients to become an economic force and a magnet for investment in the future. It has seen recent population, employment and capital investment development that create the right conditions for growth. Through its promotion of Atlantic issues and its suite of programming, ACOA will prioritize productivity to foster economic competitiveness, boost business growth, and lead to

higher living standards. Advocacy and pathfinding in national policies and programs will also help Atlantic Canadian stakeholders leverage opportunities and ensure the region is at the forefront of Canada's overall economic success.

The Agency will maximize the potential of its suite of programming, including the [Regional Economic Growth through Innovation program](#), one of the Government of Canada's 4 flagship platforms for economic development. It will also enhance competitiveness and growth through technology development, commercialization, adoption and adaptation, productivity improvements, and market expansion with trusted trading partners. Broad-based support will be complemented by more targeted growth-enabling initiatives such as the [Regional Homebuilding Innovation Initiative](#). This initiative will support innovative approaches for building houses, including designing and upscaling modular homes, the use of 3D printing, panelized construction, as well as implementing net-zero and climate-resilient homebuilding practices to build houses faster and make them more affordable. Additionally, the [Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative](#) will help SMEs adopt and adapt artificial intelligence (AI) solutions by bridging the gap between cutting-edge research and broader marketplace applications, positioning Atlantic Canadian businesses for future success. Finally, focused investments such as the [Tourism Growth Program](#) and its [Elevate Tourism Initiative](#) will help diversify regional economies, notably by investing in tourism products and experiences that will encourage visitation to and within Atlantic Canada.

ACOA's key priorities are guiding principles in the achievement of its core responsibilities through the 3 departmental results below:

Departmental result 1: 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 up by:

- helping businesses at various stages of development – from start-up to maturity – to enhance their productivity, adapt and green their operations, accelerate their growth, scale up, optimize their supply chains, and be competitive in domestic and global markets. This includes leveraging company-oriented growth plans under the [Accelerated Growth Service](#), led by Innovation, Science and Economic Development's Innovation Canada in partnership with other federal and provincial organizations. The service builds a pipeline of clients with strong potential for growth and provides them with focused sales and export support in a dynamic trade environment
- accelerating 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 efficiency
- enabling and diversifying growth through exports in key industry sectors and dynamic markets, 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 with the [Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy](#)
- continuing to deliver the 3-year [Tourism Growth Program](#) in Atlantic Canada to support the tourism industry and contributing to the [Federal Tourism Growth Strategy](#), which charts a course for long-term growth, investment and stability. This includes implementing the [Elevate](#)

[Tourism Initiative](#), a focused effort to enhance regional tourism offerings. ACOA will also collaborate with federal, provincial and industry partners to implement the [Atlantic Canada Agreement on Tourism](#)

- advocating and partnering to foster the participation of Atlantic Canadian companies in emerging clean technologies such as wind-to-hydrogen, energy storage, small modular reactors, hydroelectricity and critical mineral development, and supporting Atlantic Canadian companies in traditional energy industries as they transition to a low-carbon future. This includes working closely with motivated partners through ACOA's Clean Growth Initiative
- positioning Atlantic Canadian firms to leverage major Canadian Coast Guard and defence procurement through Canada's [Industrial and Technological Benefits](#) policy by networking with regional stakeholders and global aerospace and defence firms

Departmental result 2: 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, notably by:

- fostering investments in R&D among Atlantic Canadian firms to enhance their productivity, reduce their environmental footprint, and improve their capacity to innovate to help create industry-advancing solutions for some of the biggest sectoral challenges, and to grow trade through partnerships between innovators. This includes supporting the region's innovators who develop and commercialize clean technologies, products and services
- creating, growing and nurturing 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 supporting collaboration between SMEs and the region's business incubators and accelerators, research organizations and post-secondary institutions
- addressing the AI adoption lag among Canadian businesses and helping enhance productivity, growth and competitiveness. Support will focus on investing in companies developing AI-based solutions and addressing challenges faced by SMEs, such as skills gaps, AI integration complexities, and compliance with regulatory and industry standards
- helping advance energy innovation by leveraging the region's significant potential for renewable energy, electrification and energy efficiency while also enhancing its competitiveness in the global marketplace

Departmental result 3: 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 to support a clean and sustainable economy. ACOA will:

- support local and regional economic diversification in communities to foster place-based growth in key sectors and to support them in the transition to a cleaner economy
- promote diversity and inclusion to enhance SME competitiveness by delivering support for under-represented entrepreneurs, helping existing SMEs adopt more inclusive practices, and addressing gaps in the ecosystem to help all entrepreneurs grow their businesses and pursue new opportunities

- reach a larger number of Indigenous businesses by supporting efforts that target capacity building, working closely with Indigenous communities and organizations, pathfinding to national programs to leverage support, and increasing knowledge and awareness by convening federal and provincial governments, stakeholders and community partners through joint participation in key committees, initiatives and communities of interest
- help non-profit, third-party organizations such as Community Business Development Corporations support SMEs in small, rural and remote communities
- help communities attract and develop the talent required to foster economic growth by acting as a pathfinder, notably supporting federal and provincial partners with better labour market matches. 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, increasing digital skills, and recruiting and retaining skilled newcomers by leveraging initiatives such as the [Atlantic Immigration Program](#)

Key risks

ACOA has identified 2 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, such as potential trade disruptions with the U.S. 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 its program objectives.

ACOA will continue to capitalize on the flexibility of its programs, including emergency funding, on its advocacy role, close relationship with its business clients, and on its integrated planning to mitigate potential risks associated with an evolving economy and the depth of regional stakeholders’ capacity. The Agency will also 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 resources to achieve results

Table 4: Planned resources to achieve results for economic development in Atlantic Canada

Table 4 provides a summary of the planned spending and full-time equivalents required to achieve results.

Resource	Planned
Spending	\$333,256,478
Full-time equivalents	379

[Complete financial](#) and [human resources information](#) for ACOA’s program inventory is available on GC InfoBase.

Related government priorities

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 diverse groups in rural and urban communities. These groups include women, Indigenous people, Black and racialized Atlantic Canadians,

persons with disabilities, newcomers, international students, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, youth, older workers, as well as persons living in remote and rural areas, Acadians and francophones. The Agency will include and collaborate with various communities and actively seek out and incorporate the diverse views of Atlantic Canadian stakeholders on economic development issues.

ACOA integrates gender-based considerations for new initiatives, program evaluations, data and reporting mechanisms, including agreements with Statistics Canada for disaggregated data and enhanced administrative data collection with voluntary declarations for under-represented groups and gender and diversity commitments in contribution agreements. ACOA will also foster its internal corporate diversity and inclusiveness with initiatives and the continued implementation of its Employment Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Action Plan.

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UN 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), as outlined in the [2022–2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy](#). They include the following:

- SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy: Advance the development and deployment of clean and renewable energy. This includes advancing priority transmission projects and supporting new and developing clean technologies and energy sources
- SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth: Support workers, businesses and communities in their transition to a greener and more inclusive economy through economic development and diversification, skills and training investments, and project development and growth assistance. This includes supporting efforts to green supply chains and to decarbonize and electrify sectoral and business operations to remain competitive in Canada and internationally. It also includes supporting the Government of Canada's interim [Sustainable Jobs Plan](#) in Atlantic Canada
- SDG 10 – Reducing Inequalities: Support the implementation of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* by fostering inclusion within the Agency and taking an inclusion lens on program delivery
- SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 13 – Climate Action: Fostering practices that promote sustainable development in its internal operations and project management activities

More information on ACOA's contributions to [Canada's Federal Implementation Plan for the 2030 Agenda](#) and the [Federal Sustainable Development Strategy](#) can be found in ACOA's [Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#).

Innovation

In 2025-26, ACOA will continue to pursue high-impact innovations and make them an integral part of its operations and programming. For example:

- working with partners to explore innovative ways to grow Atlantic Canadian SMEs through trade and investments, and adapting programming to meet their needs in an ever changing environment
- monitoring results on a continual basis to better focus on clients and their needs to grow and scale their businesses

- implementing a client-centric approach to the design of internal processes and claims processing to adapt to evolving client expectations
- modernizing and streamlining client services by moving toward more automated processes and reducing redundancies in client services to improve efficiency in program delivery

Program inventory

Economic development in Atlantic Canada is supported by the following programs:

- Inclusive Communities
- Diversified Communities
- Research and Development, and Commercialization
- Innovation Ecosystems
- Business Growth
- Trade and Investment
- Policy Research and Engagement

Additional information related to the program inventory for economic development in Atlantic Canada is available on the [Results page on GC InfoBase](#).

Internal services

In this section

- [Description](#)
- [Plans to achieve results](#)
- [Planned resources to achieve results](#)
- [Planning for contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses](#)

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

Outside of these services, ACOA 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 within the Agency. It will engage external stakeholders in supporting corporate inclusion initiatives to remove systemic barriers.

Plans to achieve results

In 2025-26, ACOA's Internal Services will continue to support sustainable change and the modernization of its processes. This includes being inclusive, equitable and accessible, and aiming to be free of racism, harassment and discrimination. Ultimately, these efforts will support the Agency's standard of excellence for Atlantic Canadians through effective programs and services. To do so, Internal Services will:

- continue to implement strategies that align with government priorities, providing accurate and timely information for decision making as well as modernizing operations to support efficiencies and maintaining a high standard of program delivery and services that benefit Canadians, support regional representation and maintain a diverse workforce
- continue to modernize the Agency's grants and contributions program management system and the associated client web portal to enhance program operations, improve client services and streamline program delivery. This modernization effort aims to make it easier for the public to access ACOA services, ensuring a more user-friendly and efficient experience
- support the Government of Canada's updated [Digital Ambition strategy](#), notably by modernizing tools and investing in strategies such as AI to improve operational and internal process efficiencies
- implement the third year of its 2023–2026 Employment Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Plan to promote and support a diverse and inclusive workplace. This includes continued support for the Elder-in-Residence Initiative, which fosters stronger Indigenous reconciliation within the Agency; continued delivery of the Diversity, Inclusion, Competence, Excellence (DICE) course, which was specifically designed to promote awareness and action regarding diversity and inclusion in the workplace; and prioritizing official languages training for equity employees throughout the Agency
- continue to prioritize mental health, wellness and official languages by supporting activities and initiatives aligned with the [Clerk's Call to Action](#) and other government-wide strategies such as the "[Nothing Without Us](#)" accessibility strategy, the [Federal Public Service Workplace Mental Health Strategy](#) and the [Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Program](#), and ensuring compliance toward the modernized [Official Languages Act](#)
- continue to advance the conversation on values and ethics through a renewed Code of Conduct and by fostering a culture of trust and accountability at all levels of the organization
- continue to develop employee leadership at all levels with the new Building and Supporting Leaders talent management approach, with specific consideration for employees from equity groups. For example:
 - participation of ACOA employees in the Atlantic Federal Council's Diverse Leadership Development and Building Black Leaders programs, as well as in the Treasury Board Secretariat's Mosaic Leadership Development program and Mentorship Plus initiative
 - greater access to language training to align with the Agency's priorities on representation and succession planning
 - enhanced leadership coaching opportunities

Planned resources to achieve results

Table 5: Planned resources to achieve results for internal services this year

Table 5 provides a summary of the planned spending and full-time equivalents required to achieve results.

Resource	Planned
Spending	\$28,767,878
Full-time equivalents	193

[Complete financial](#) and [human resources information](#) for ACOA’s program inventory is available on GC InfoBase.

Planning for contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses

Government of Canada departments are to meet a target of awarding at least 5% of the total value of contracts to Indigenous businesses each year. This commitment is to be fully implemented by the end of 2024-25.

ACOA is resolute in supporting the Government of Canada’s commitment that 5% of the total value of all contracts be awarded to Indigenous businesses. ACOA is a Phase 2 organization and was required to achieve the minimum 5% target by the end of fiscal 2023-24. The Agency surpassed the target, with a result of 27.8 %, and plans to surpass it for the next 2 years.

Table 6: Percentage of contracts planned and awarded to Indigenous businesses

Table 6 presents the current, actual results with forecasted and planned results for the total percentage of contracts with Indigenous businesses.

5% reporting field	2023-24 actual result	2024-25 forecasted result	2025-26 planned result
Total percentage of contracts with Indigenous businesses	27.8%	5%	5%

Planned spending and human resources

This section provides an overview of ACOA’s planned spending and human resources for the next 3 fiscal years and compares planned spending for 2025-26 with actual spending from previous years.

In this section

- [Spending](#)
- [Funding](#)
- [Future-oriented condensed statement of operations](#)
- [Human resources](#)

Spending

This section presents an overview of the department’s planned expenditures from 2022-23 to 2027-28.

Budgetary performance summary

Table 7: Three-year spending summary for core responsibilities and internal services (dollars)

Table 7 presents how much money ACOA spent over the past 3 years to carry out its core responsibilities and for internal services. Amounts for the current fiscal year are forecasted based on spending to date.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2022-23 actual expenditures	2023-24 actual expenditures	2024-25 forecasted spending
Economic development in Atlantic Canada	402,753,191	447,178,438	363,917,964
Internal services	30,372,837	31,252,148	29,992,234
Totals	433,126,028	478,430,586	393,910,198

Analysis of the past three years of spending

The Agency's 2024-25 forecast spending represents a decrease from the 2023-24 actual expenditures, largely due to the conclusion of temporary funding related to the Hurricane Fiona Recovery Fund.

More financial information from previous years is available on the [Finances section of GC Infobase](#).

Table 8: Planned three-year spending on core responsibilities and internal services (dollars)

Table 8 presents how much money ACOA plans to spend over the next 3 years to carry out its core responsibilities and for internal services.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2025-26 planned spending	2026-27 planned spending	2027-28 planned spending
Economic development in Atlantic Canada	333,256,478	241,991,966	227,596,202
Internal services	28,767,878	28,610,499	28,610,283
Totals	362,024,356	270,602,465	256,206,485

Analysis of the next three years of spending

In the 2025-26 Main Estimates, the Agency's available funding is \$362.0 million. This represents a decrease of \$31.9 million from the 2024-25 forecast spending of \$393.9 million. The variance is explained as follows.

- A total decrease of \$44.2 million due to:
 - the absence of
 - \$31.0 million related to the reprofiling of funds from fiscal year 2023-24 to fiscal year 2024-25
 - \$2.7 million in temporary funding for the Keir's Shore Landing project
 - \$1.5 million in temporary funding for the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship
 - the conclusion of
 - \$9.0 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2019 for the Canada Coal Transition Initiative – Infrastructure Fund

- This decrease is offset by a total increase of \$12.3 million due to:
 - \$7.7 million related to the reprofiling of funds as a result of project/contracting delays
 - \$1.7 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2024 related to the Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative
 - \$1.6 million in temporary funding for the BioAccelerator project
 - \$1.3 million in other adjustments

In 2026-27, planned spending is \$270.6 million, a decrease of \$91.4 million from the \$362.0 million in the 2025-26 Main Estimates as a result of the following.

- A total decrease of \$92.7 million due to:
 - the conclusion of
 - \$76.5 million related to interim funding in replacement of the Regional Development Agency Repayment Recycling Mechanism
 - \$5.8 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2024 related to the renewal of top-up funding for the Regional Economic Growth through Innovation program
 - \$4.3 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2023 related to the Tourism Growth Program
 - a reduction of \$5.5 million in temporary funding for the BioAccelerator project
 - a reduction of \$0.6 million in other adjustments
- This decrease is offset by a total increase of \$1.3 million due to temporary funding announced in Budget 2024 related to the Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative.

In 2027-28, planned spending is \$256.2 million, a decrease of \$14.4 million from the \$270.6 million in 2026-27 planned spending as a result of the following.

- A total decrease of \$14.4 million due to:
 - the absence of
 - \$4.8 million in temporary funding in support of the Halifax International Security Forum
 - the conclusion of
 - \$9.0 million in temporary funding for the BioAccelerator project
 - \$0.6 million in temporary funding in support of a renewed Food Policy for Canada

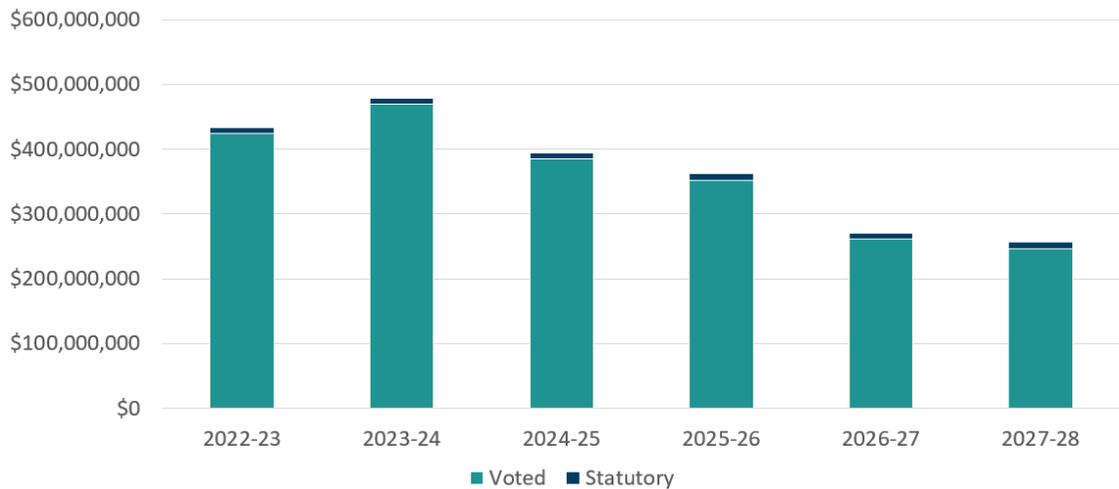
More [detailed financial information on planned spending](#) is available on the Finances section of GC Infobase.

Funding

This section provides an overview of the department's voted and statutory funding for its core responsibilities and for internal services. For further information on funding authorities, consult the [Government of Canada budgets and expenditures](#).

Graph 1: Approved funding (statutory and voted) over a six-year period

Graph 1 summarizes the department’s approved voted and statutory funding from 2022-23 to 2027-28.



Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Statutory	\$9,266,243	\$9,479,725	\$8,630,325	\$9,497,319	\$9,405,376	\$9,405,376
Voted	\$423,859,785	\$468,950,861	\$385,279,873	\$352,527,037	\$261,197,089	\$246,801,109
Total	\$433,126,028	\$478,430,586	\$393,910,198	\$362,024,356	\$270,602,465	\$256,206,485

Fiscal year	Total	Voted	Statutory
2022-23	\$433,126,028	\$423,859,785	\$9,266,243
2023-24	\$478,430,586	\$468,950,861	\$9,479,725
2024-25	\$393,910,198	\$385,279,873	\$8,630,325
2025-26	\$362,024,356	\$352,527,037	\$9,497,319
2026-27	\$270,602,465	\$261,197,089	\$9,405,376
2027-28	\$256,206,485	\$246,801,109	\$9,405,376

Analysis of statutory and voted funding over a six-year period

Actual spending: 2022-23, 2023-24. Planned spending: 2024-25, 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28.

Planned spending for 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 does not include amounts stemming from Budget 2025, funding for the recently approved Commerce and Purchasing (CP) collective agreement, and the replacement of the current recycling mechanism expected in 2026-27 and beyond.

For further information on ACOA’s departmental appropriations, consult the [2025-26 Main Estimates](#).

Future-oriented condensed statement of operations

The future-oriented condensed statement of operations provides a general overview of ACOA’s operations for 2024-25 to 2025-26. The forecast of financial information on expenses and revenues is prepared on an accrual accounting basis to strengthen accountability and to improve transparency and financial management. The forecast and planned spending amounts presented in other sections of the Departmental Plan are prepared on an expenditure basis; as a result, amounts may differ.

A more detailed [future-oriented statement of operations and associated notes for 2025-26](#), including a reconciliation of the net cost of operations to the requested authorities, are available on ACOA’s website.

Table 11 Future-oriented condensed statement of operations for the year ended March 31, 2026 (dollars)
 Table 11 summarizes the expenses and revenues that net to the cost of operations before government funding and transfers for 2024-25 to 2025-26. 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.

Financial information	2024-25 forecast results	2025-26 planned results	Difference (forecast results minus planned)
Total expenses	273,373,781	238,686,815	(34,686,966)
Total revenues	19,964	31,037	11,073
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	273,353,817	238,655,778	(34,698,039)

Analysis of forecasted and planned results

Planned total expenses for fiscal year 2025-26 are \$238.7 million, a decrease of \$34.7 million compared to the 2024-25 forecast results. The decrease in planned expenses for fiscal year 2025-26 is due to the sunsetting of multiple initiatives.

Total revenues represent the gain on disposal of tangible capital assets. A more detailed [future-oriented statement of operations and associated notes for 2025-26](#), including a reconciliation of the net cost of operations with the requested authorities, is available on ACOA’s website.

Human resources

This section presents an overview of the department’s actual and planned human resources from 2022-23 to 2027-28.

Table 12: Actual human resources for core responsibilities and internal services

Table 12 provides a summary of human resources, in full-time equivalents, for ACOA’s core responsibilities and for its internal services for the previous 3 fiscal years. Human resources for the current fiscal year are forecast based on year to date.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2022-23 actual full-time equivalents	2023-24 actual full-time equivalents	2024-25 forecasted full-time equivalents
Economic development in Atlantic Canada	386	371	366
Internal services	210	199	206
Totals	596	570	572

Analysis of human resources over the last three years

The human resource levels at ACOA in 2022-23 reflect the additional temporary staffing required to support the Government of Canada’s COVID-19 emergency response efforts. In the following years, the number of FTEs declined due to several factors, including the phasing out of COVID-19 emergency initiatives and the reduction outlined in Budget 2023 as part of the “Refocusing Government Spending to Deliver for Canadians” initiative, effective in 2024-25.

Table 13: Human resources planning summary for core responsibilities and internal services

Table 13 shows information on human resources, in full-time equivalents, for each of ACOA’s core responsibilities and for its internal services planned for the next 3 years.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2025-26 planned full-time equivalents	2026-27 planned full-time equivalents	2027-28 planned full-time equivalents
Economic Development in Atlantic Canada	379	373	373
Internal services	193	190	190
Totals	572	563	563

Analysis of human resources for the next 3 years

Human resource levels at ACOA show a decrease to the total full-time equivalents base, reflecting the reduction announced in Budget 2023 related to the [Refocusing Government Spending to Deliver for Canadians initiative](#). The Agency will continue to achieve its results by allocating its human resources to best support its priorities and programs.

Corporate information

Departmental profile

Appropriate minister: The Honourable Sean Fraser, PC, MP

Institutional head: Laura Lee Langley, 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](#) for more information.

Year of incorporation / commencement: 1987

Departmental contact information

Mailing address:

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

P.O. Box 6051

Moncton, New Brunswick

E1C 9J8

Telephone: 1-800-561-7862 (toll free in Canada and the United States)

TTY: 7-1-1 (ask your TTY operator to connect the call to 1-888-576-4444)

Fax: 506-851-7403

Email: information@acoa-apeca.gc.ca

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

Supplementary information tables

The following supplementary information tables are available on ACOA's website:

- [Details on transfer payment programs](#)
- [Gender-based analysis plus](#)

Information on ACOA's departmental sustainable development strategy can be found on [ACOA's website](#).

Federal tax expenditures

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

The tax system can be used to achieve public policy objectives through the application of special measures such as low tax rates, exemptions, deductions, deferrals and credits. The Department of Finance publishes cost estimates and projections for these measures each year in the [Report on Federal Tax Expenditures](#).

This report also provides detailed background information on tax expenditures, including descriptions, objectives, historical information and references to related federal spending programs as well as evaluations and Gender-based Analysis Plus of tax expenditures.

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, departments 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 report on the plans and expected performance of an appropriated department over a 3-year period. Departmental Plans are usually tabled in Parliament each spring.

departmental result (résultat ministériel)

A consequence or outcome that a department seeks to achieve. 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 quantitative measure of progress on a departmental result.

departmental results framework (cadre ministériel des résultats)

A framework that connects the department's core responsibilities to its departmental results and departmental result indicators.

Departmental Results Report (rapport sur les résultats ministériels)

A report on a department's actual accomplishments against the plans, priorities and expected results set out in the corresponding Departmental Plan.

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. For a particular position, the full-time equivalent figure is the ratio of number of hours the person actually works divided by the standard number of hours set out in the person's collective agreement.

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

Is 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 (including rurality), language, race, religion, and sexual orientation.

Using GBA Plus involves taking a gender- and diversity-sensitive approach to our work. Considering all intersecting identity factors as part of GBA Plus, not only sex and gender, is a Government of Canada commitment.

government priorities (priorités gouvernementales)

For the purpose of the 2025-26 Departmental Plan, government priorities are the high-level themes outlining the government's agenda in the most recent Speech from the Throne.

horizontal initiative (initiative horizontale)

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

Indigenous business (entreprise autochtones)

For the purpose of the Directive on the Management of Procurement Appendix E: Mandatory Procedures for Contracts Awarded to Indigenous Businesses and the Government of Canada's commitment that a mandatory minimum target of 5% of the total value of contracts is awarded to Indigenous businesses, a department that meets the definition and requirements as defined by the [Indigenous Business Directory](#).

non-budgetary expenditures (dépenses non budgétaires)

Non-budgetary authorities that comprise assets and liabilities transactions for loans, investments and advances, or specified purpose accounts, that have been established under specific statutes or under non-statutory authorities in the Estimates and elsewhere. Non-budgetary transactions are those expenditures and receipts related to the government's financial claims on, and obligations to, outside parties. These consist of transactions in loans, investments and advances; in cash and accounts receivable; in public money received or collected for specified purposes; and in all other assets and liabilities. Other assets and liabilities, not specifically defined in G to P authority codes are to be recorded to an R authority code, which is the residual authority code for all other assets and liabilities.

performance (rendement)

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

performance indicator (indicateur de rendement)

A qualitative or quantitative means of measuring an output or outcome, with the intention of gauging the performance of a department, program, policy or initiative respecting expected results.

plan (plan)

The articulation of strategic choices, which provides information on how a department 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 to the expected result.

planned spending (dépenses prévues)

For Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports, planned spending refers to those amounts presented in 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 the department and focus on a specific set of outputs, outcomes or service levels.

program inventory (répertoire des programmes)

Identifies all the department's programs and describes how resources are organized to contribute to the department's core responsibilities and results.

result (résultat)

A consequence attributed, in part, to a department, policy, program or initiative. Results are not within the control of a single department, policy, program or initiative; instead they are within the area of the department'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 a department, 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.