

FOUNDATIONS FOR TRANSFORMATION

**2024-25 Annual Report
to Governments**



Canadian
Intergovernmental
Conference
Secretariat

Secrétariat
des conférences
intergouvernementales
canadiennes

Également publié en français sous le titre :
**Rapport annuel aux gouvernements 2024-2025 –
LES FONDEMENTS DE LA TRANSFORMATION**

This document is available on the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's [website](#), and in alternative formats upon request.

For more information, contact:

Canadian Intergovernmental
Conference Secretariat
P.O. Box 488, Station 'A'
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 8V5
E-mail: info@scics.ca



In our efforts to provide the best service possible and the most up to date information to you, our clients, CICS welcomes your comments and suggestions.

Here are our coordinates:

General Inquiries

Telephone: 613-995-2341

E-mail: info@scics.ca

Website: www.scics.ca

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 488, Station 'A'

Ottawa, Ontario

K1N 8V5

Location / Deliveries

222 Queen St., 12th Floor

Ottawa, Ontario

K1P 5V9



Hollow Square Conference Room Setup



CONTENTS

5.

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

7.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE OFFER

- About 7
- Conferencing.....7
- Who we serve..... 8
- Archiving..... 8

9.

YEAR IN REVIEW

- Highlights from 2024-25..... 9
- Notable Achievements10
- Conference Activity Overview... 11
- Conferences by Month..... 12
- Conferences by Format..... 13
- Conferences by Level14
- Conferences by Type..... 15
- Sectors Served 16

21.

LOOKING AHEAD

23.

FINANCIALS

- Provincial Contributions..... 23
- Distribution of Provincial Contribution towards CICS' 2024-25 Budget (\$ Thousands) 24
- Financial Results..... 25

27.

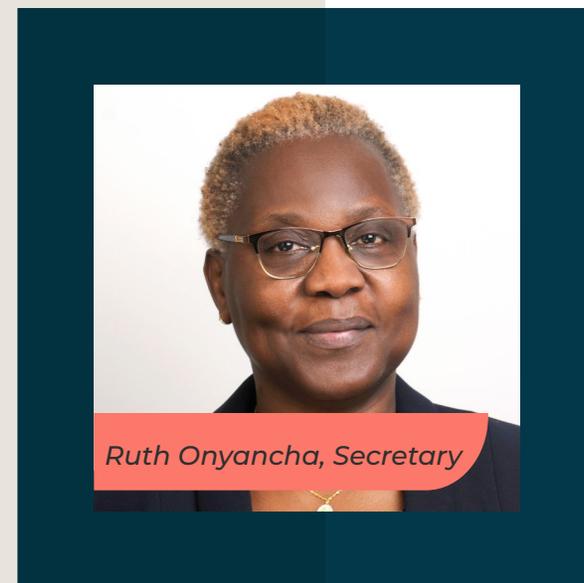
REQUESTING CICS' SERVICES

- Client Engagement and Program Evaluation.....17
- Client Satisfaction18
- Conference Services:
 - Innovation and Modernization 19
 - Internal Improvements:
 - People, Policy, and Process 20

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

As Secretary of the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS), I am pleased to present our 2024–25 Annual Report: *Foundations for Transformation*. This year marked a pivotal period in our evolution as an organization—one defined by thoughtful reflection, proactive planning, and the laying of groundwork for long-term transformation. The Secretariat continues to evolve in response to the changing needs of our clients and the broader intergovernmental landscape. We embraced transformation through innovation, collaboration, and a renewed commitment to service excellence. Our team demonstrated resilience and adaptability, ensuring that we remained a trusted partner in delivering high-quality conference services.

Our work continues to support the essential operations of federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) and provincial-territorial (PT) intergovernmental relations. Over the past year, CICS supported 163 conferences across Canada, including 125 FPT meetings and 38 PT events, covering 38 different sectors and serving all levels



Ruth Onyancha, Secretary

of government. Client satisfaction remained high, and we were able to sustain service continuity despite financial limitations and internal restructuring.

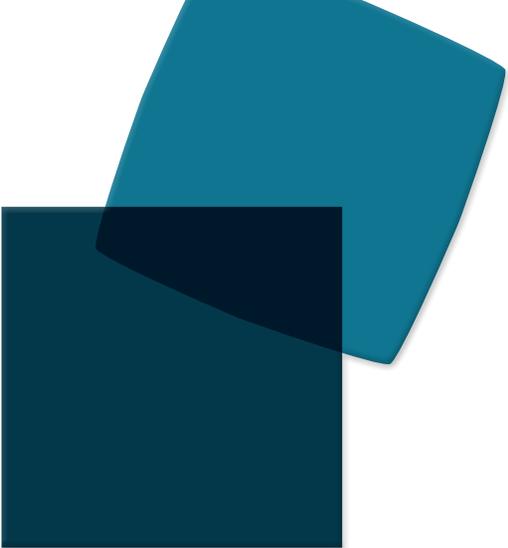
Beyond operational delivery, 2024–25 was marked by a significant step forward in our strategic journey. Through the launch of a comprehensive program evaluation, we engaged clients, examined internal processes, reviewed conference planning, and assessed our service model against future realities. The early insights from this exercise have been both validating and instructive, confirming CICS' strong performance and reaffirming the importance of our mandate. We heard clearly that CICS provides exceptional value to governments across Canada—delivering professional, neutral, and high-quality conference

services. They also underscored the need for deliberate transformation, to modernize our funding and governance models, and better integrate into the broader government planning ecosystem. We also took important steps to enhance financial stewardship, updating core frameworks for procurement and financial delegation, improving forecasting tools, and completing several initiatives under our strategic priority of efficient resource management. Our goal has been to reflect on where we are as an agency, what we have learned from our stakeholders, and how best to position CICS for long-term sustainability. Looking ahead, we are excited to build on our successes and pursue new opportunities that align with our strategic priorities.

As we look ahead to 2025–26, we are turning our evaluation

insights into action. We are preparing a three-year transformation strategy, developing a new cost-sharing and recovery model, and deepening our collaboration with stakeholders to ensure a more sustainable and innovative future for CICS. The foundation we've built this year—through evidence, engagement, and experimentation—positions us well for what's next.

I extend my sincere thanks to the entire CICS team for their resilience, creativity, and professionalism. I am equally grateful to our federal, provincial and territorial partners for their trust and collaboration. Together, we are building a strong foundation for CICS' future as an agency able to adapt and thrive as a trusted intergovernmental service provider.



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE OFFER

About

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) is an impartial agency whose mandate is to provide administrative support and planning services for federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, throughout Canada.

Conferencing

Our primary objective is to relieve client governments and departments of the numerous technical and administrative tasks associated with planning and conducting multilateral conferences, thereby enabling participants to concentrate on substantive intergovernmental policy issues.

The Secretariat's services are available to federal, provincial and territorial government



38
sectors served
throughout
all levels
of government

departments that are called upon to organize and chair such meetings.

Being truly intergovernmental in nature, the agency is funded by the federal and provincial governments, and its staff is comprised of federal, provincial and territorial public servants.

Who we serve

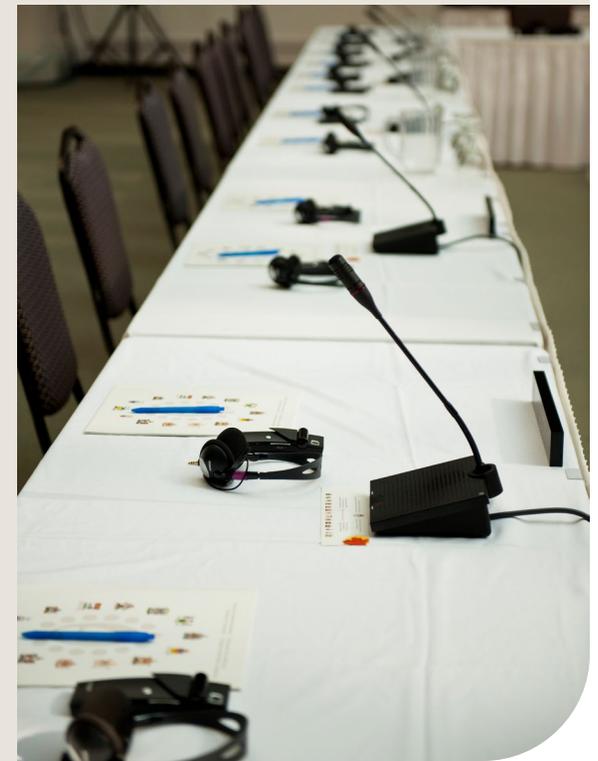
- First Ministers/Premiers
- Ministers
- Deputy Ministers

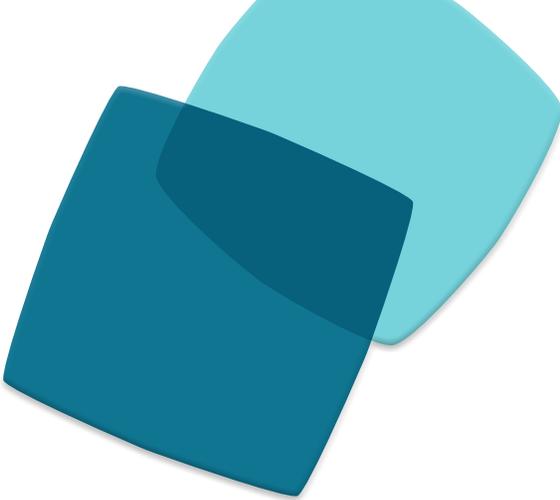
Most senior-level intergovernmental conferences are supported by our organization. A complete list of our client sectors is available in this report, under [Sectors Served](#).

Archiving

Any and all documents presented to participants at conferences served by CICS are carefully safeguarded and archived. This means agendas, list of delegates, 3 years' worth of conference recordings, presentations, reports, communiqués, summary of decisions, verbatims, etc. Even the last-minute documents that were table dropped on conference site are kept and treated according to their security classification. So, whether you're a current client needing access to that conference recording to draft minutes for the meeting, a new co-chair needing to see what has been done in the past, a conference delegate who has attended the meeting but no longer has access to an important presentation or a legislative library looking to fill in the gaps in their collection, the team responsible for the

CICS archive can help. A simple email to info@scics.ca is all it takes. Should any doubt exist over whether access can be given, the team will liaise with the responsible authorities. Note that, while the public may also have access to documents emanating from the CICS collection, these are limited to public documents, most of which are already available on the CICS website.





YEAR IN REVIEW

Highlights from 2024-25

In 2024–25, the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) embarked on a year of strategic renewal, and made meaningful progress across several key areas. Under the theme *Foundations for Transformation*, the organization focused on assessing its programs, streamlining processes, modernizing tools, and actively



engaging stakeholders to better support intergovernmental dialogue across Canada.

**Videoconferences
increased by**

48%

Notable Achievements

- **Delivered a record number of conferences** in a fiscal year that included in-person meetings—163 in total—marking the highest volume of service ever achieved by the Secretariat under a hybrid (in-person and virtual) delivery model.
- **Launched a comprehensive program evaluation** to assess CICS’s long-term relevance, effectiveness, and performance through internal analysis and stakeholder consultation.
- **Advanced accessibility, innovation, and service excellence** by enhancing tools and formats that better support inclusive, client-centered conferences.
- **Modernized the Conference Management System (CMS)**—now fully launched—with improved usability, accessibility, and continuous upgrades planned through 2025–26.
- **Initiated an update of the Conference Policy** to support forward-looking, consistent planning and better align conference delivery with future needs.
- **Continued the multi-year review of the CICS archives**, laying the foundation for a future client-facing data retrieval tool that will promote transparency and informed decision-making.
- **Strengthened internal controls and governance**, including improved financial forecasting, new procurement strategies, and revised policy frameworks.



Conference Activity Overview

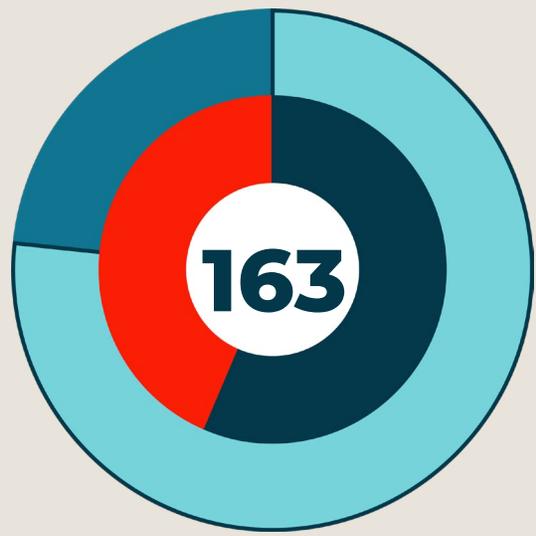
The 2024–25 fiscal year marked another year of strong performance for the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS), with sustained growth across all core areas of conference delivery. The Secretariat supported a total of 163 intergovernmental conferences, reflecting steady demand for its impartial and professional services. This year was also notable for its unpredictability: the introduction of U.S. tariffs prompted a series of high-priority intergovernmental discussions, many of which were organized on short notice. Several conferences were convened with only a few days' notice, underscoring CICS's agility and ability to deliver high-quality service under accelerated timelines.



Despite growing demand and complexity, service quality remained exceptionally high. The Secretariat maintained strong client satisfaction rates, with conference organizers averaging 94.5% and conference participants averaging 94.8%, affirming the Secretariat's ability to meet high expectations for neutrality, professionalism, and excellence across all events.

average client
satisfaction
rate of
94.7%

Overview of intergovernmental conference activity in 2024-25:



Conferences

● **38**

Provincial-Territorial

● **125**

Federal-Provincial-Territorial

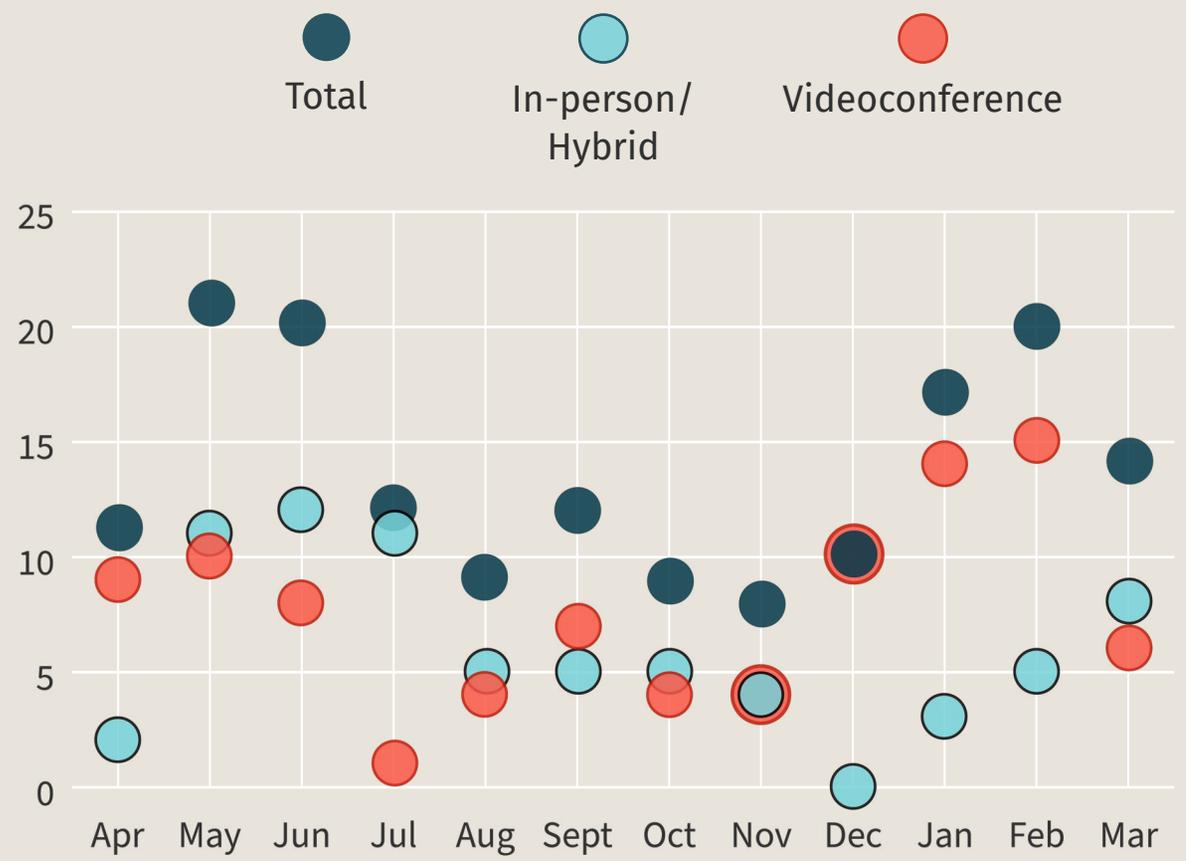
● **71**

In-person/Hybrid

● **92**

Videoconference

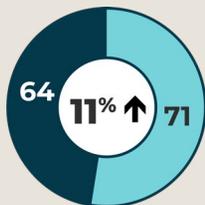
Conferences by Month



April	11	2	9	October	9	5	4
May	21	11	10	November	8	4	4
June	20	12	8	December	10	-	10
July	12	11	1	January	17	3	14
August	9	5	4	February	20	5	15
September	12	5	7	March	14	8	6

Conferences by Format

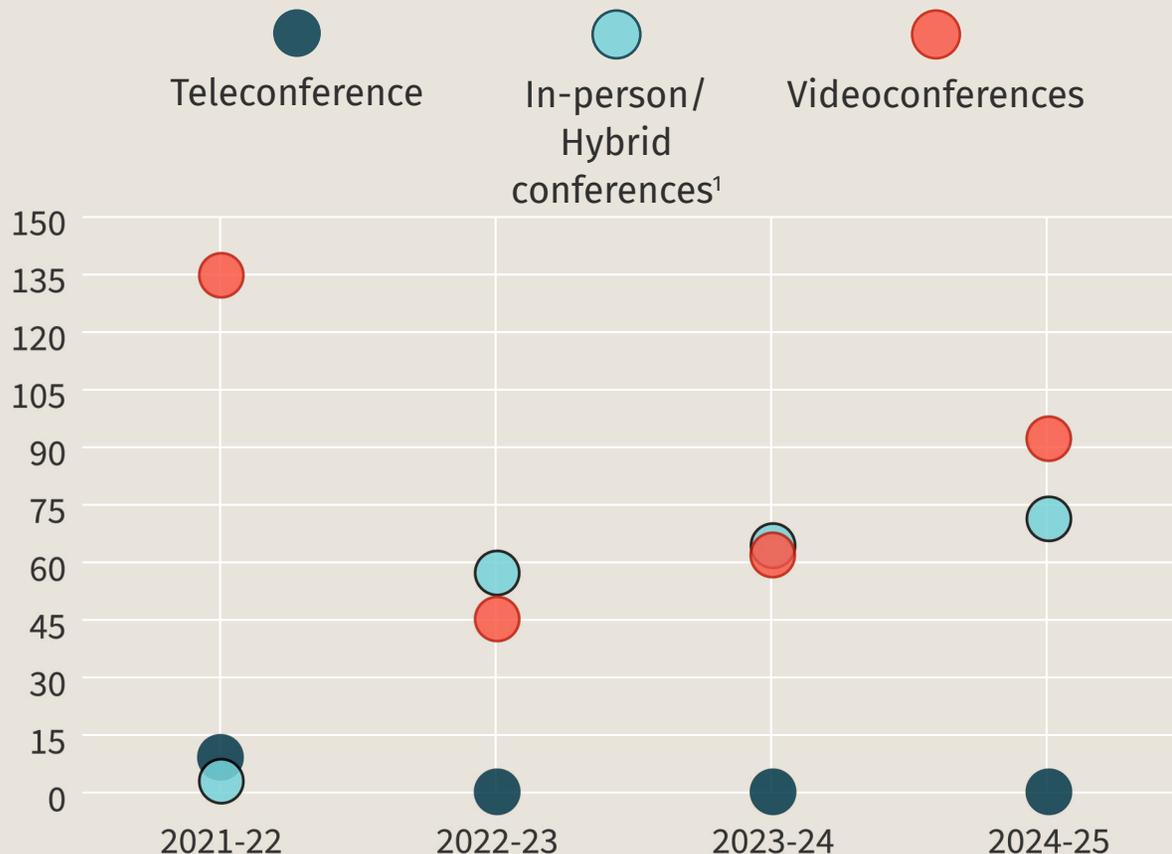
In-person/hybrid format



2023-24 versus 2024-25

In terms of conference formats, the number of in-person/hybrid conferences rose 11% to 71, up from 64 the previous year. This represents a continued return to in-person engagement, alongside a growing interest in flexible hybrid models.

Videoconferencing also increased significantly to 92 meetings, up from 62 in 2023-24, an increase of 48%, underscoring the ongoing importance of virtual platforms in facilitating intergovernmental dialogue. Notably, teleconferences were once again absent from CICS-supported activity, a trend consistent with evolving



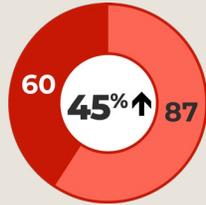
client preferences for more robust and dynamic conferencing tools. In total, CICS supported 163 conferences this year. This is the highest number of conferences ever delivered in a year that included in-person meetings. This is a significant milestone given the resource intensity needed to support in-person and hybrid formats.

2021-22	9	3	135
2022-23	-	57	45
2023-24	-	64	62
2024-25	-	71	92

¹ Until 2021-22, these meetings were in-person only. However, in 2022-23 and beyond, a virtual component is now included at almost all in-person conferences, making them a hybrid of the two formats (videoconference and in-person).

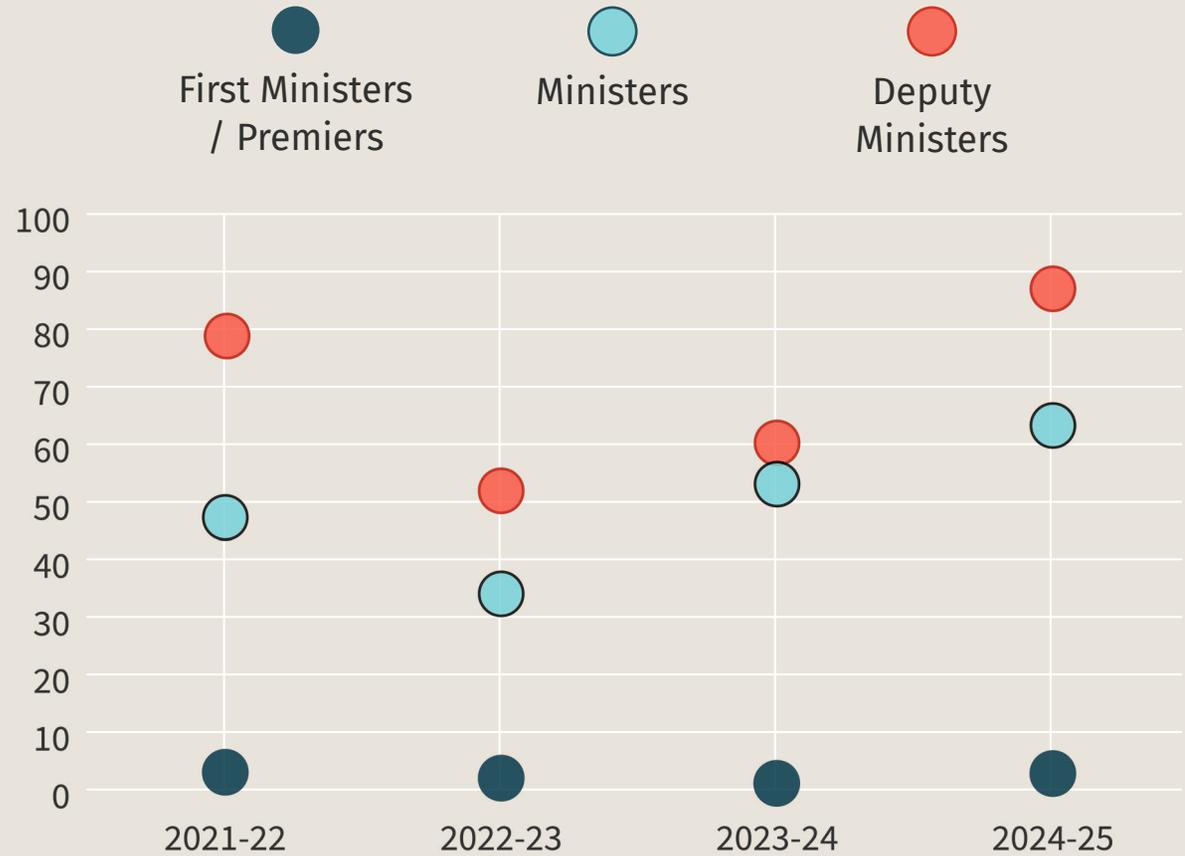
Conferences by Level ²

Deputy Minister-level conferences

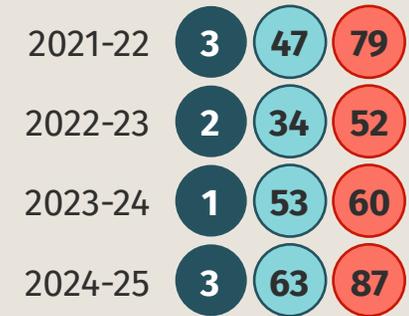


2023-24 versus 2024-25

Minister-level meetings increased by 19% from the previous year (rising from 53 to 63), while Deputy Minister-level conferences saw a 45% increase to 87 up from 60. Minister and Deputy Minister level conferences accounted for 150 of the 163 conferences, showing the continued importance of high-level collaboration. There was also a return to higher-level leadership engagement, with three First Ministers/ Premiers meetings held this year compared to just one



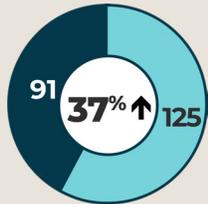
the previous year. This year's total also included several urgent conferences convened in response to newly imposed U.S. tariffs, some of which were organized on very short notice, underscoring CICS's agility and responsiveness.



² Figures do not include other levels of conferences.

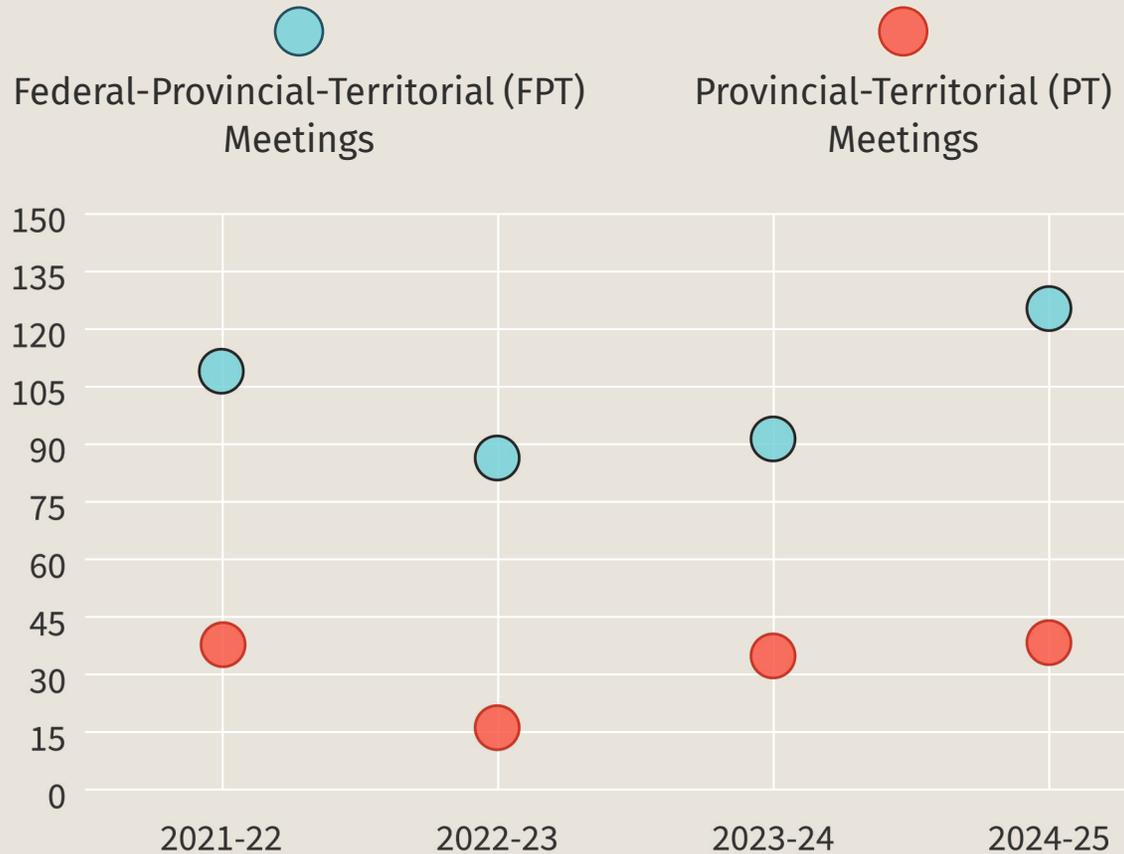
Conferences by Type

Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meetings



2023-24 versus 2024-25

CICS continued to expand its support for both Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) and Provincial-Territorial (PT) collaboration. The Secretariat supported 125 FPT meetings—a 37% increase over 2023–24—and 38 PT meetings, representing continued momentum following a 9% increase in PT activity the previous year. The lower PT meeting numbers in 2022-23 were largely due to resource constraints within the organization. Despite the temporary budget increase, the organization experienced

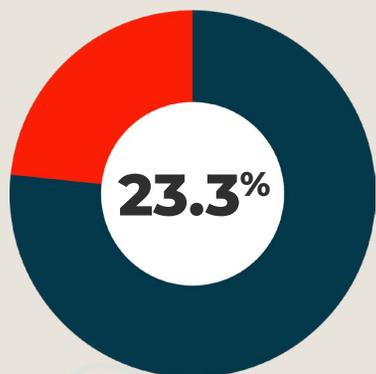


financial limitations but nonetheless succeeded in sufficiently staffing and allocating resources in 2023-24 and 2024-25, enabling it to meet the demand for requested meetings.



Sectors Served

3 Most Convened Sectors



Of the 38 sectors of intergovernmental activity served in 2024-25, the three that convened most often were Justice and Public Safety, Status of Women, and Labour Market. Together, these sectors represented 23.3% of all meetings served by CICS. This year also marked the addition of a new sector: *Digital Trust and Cyber Security*, reflecting the evolving priorities of federal, provincial, and territorial governments.

**New sector:
Digital Trust and
Cyber Security**

Sector or table	No.
Agriculture	3
CAALL (Canadian Association of Administrator of Labour Legislation)	2
Citizenship and Immigration	2
Clerks and Cabinet Secretaries	2
Construction Research	2
Culture and Heritage	3
Digital Trust and Cyber Security	2
Early Learning and Childcare	7
Education	6
Emergency Preparedness	1
Energy and Mines	5
Environment	5
Finance	4
First Ministers Meeting (FMM)	2
Fisheries	7
Forests	6
Francophonie	3
Governor General	1
Health	4

Sector or table	No.
Housing	6
Infrastructure	2
Internal Trade	7
Justice and Public Safety	14
Labour Market	11
Local Government	3
NAPTG (Public Trustees and Guardians)	1
Northern Development	1
Public Works and Government Administration	6
Rural Economic Development	1
Seamless Canada	2
Seniors	2
Service Delivery Collaboration	6
Social	7
Sports and Recreation	1
Status of Women	13
Tourism	4
Transport	8
Western Premiers	1



CICS Staff

Client Engagement and Program Evaluation

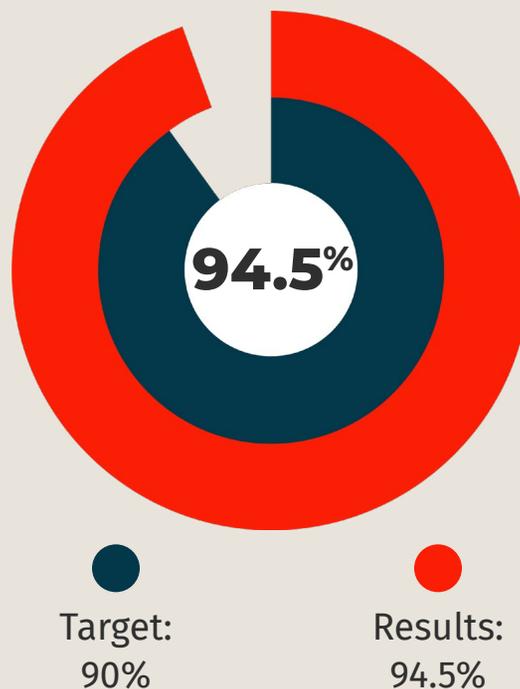
In 2024–25, CICS undertook a full-scale program evaluation, supported by an external consultant, to assess its relevance, performance, and capacity to meet future demands. This initiative engaged federal, provincial, and territorial partners to gather

insights on client needs, service delivery, and organizational value. The evaluation confirmed the enduring importance of CICS' neutral role in facilitating intergovernmental discussion, while identifying areas for strategic modernization. Findings from this work are informing the development of the agency's three-year strategic plan, including new funding and governance models, refined

service delivery frameworks, and key transformation priorities. In parallel, CICS began developing a client engagement framework and deepened outreach efforts through targeted consultations. These activities mark a foundational step toward building a more sustainable, client-focused, and future-ready organization.

Client Satisfaction

Two surveys are used to assess client satisfaction, one being an annual sampling of conference organizers and the other one focusing on delegates' perspective. Both provide valuable and very timely feedback on all aspects of the administrative and technical support CICS provides. In turn, this insight informs the Secretariat's decisions about the alignment of its services and approaches with clients' evolving needs and priorities. Both surveys conducted in 2024-25 showed a very high client satisfaction rate:

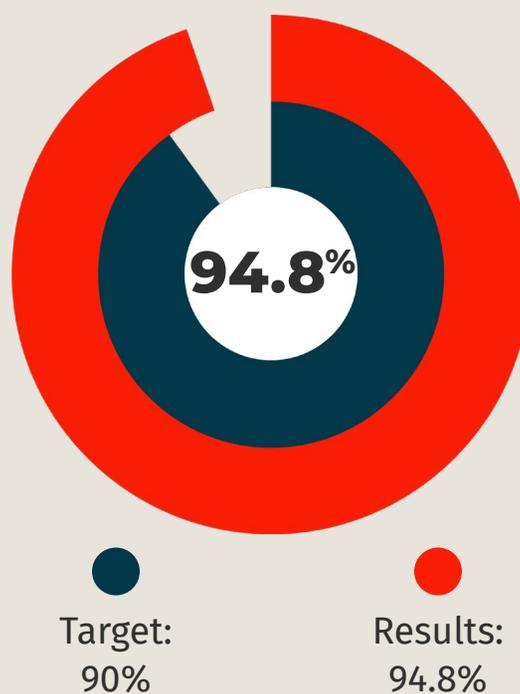


Expected results

Professionally planned and supported conferences, including effectively addressing unforeseen challenges.

Performance indicators

Client (conference organizer) satisfaction levels for the full range of CICS services provided in support of PT and FPT conferences.



Expected results

Clients' and conference participants' conference needs identified and addressed accordingly.

Performance indicators

Client (conference participant) satisfaction levels for the full range of CICS services provided in support of PT and FPT conferences.

Conference Services: Innovation and Modernization

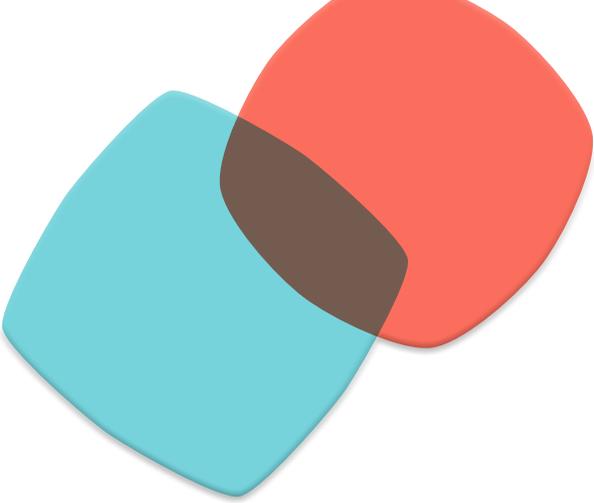
This year, CICS introduced several innovations to strengthen service delivery, increase efficiency, and enhance the client experience:

- **Modernized Conference Management System (CMS):** The new CMS platform officially launched in fall 2024, offering a more intuitive interface, enhanced scheduling tools, and improved accessibility features. It supports a more seamless experience for both staff and clients, and includes integrated reporting and data management capabilities.
- **Conference Policy Update:** The three-year Conference Policy, introduced in 2023–24 and updated annually, continued to support internal planning and strategic discussions. While it is still evolving in its application, the policy remains a valuable tool to help guide service delivery, identify trends, and inform future decisions.
- **AI-Assisted Archive Project:** CICS streamlined its multi-year archival modernization effort using AI-assisted tools. Over 50% of historical conference records were summarized this year, contributing to the foundation of a future client-facing data retrieval system that supports transparency and informed policy work.
- **Cybersecurity Enhancements:** CICS upgraded its cybersecurity protocols to ensure the protection of sensitive conference information and enhance system resilience.
- **Hybrid and Virtual Delivery Capabilities:** CICS supported 92 videoconferences and 71 in-person/hybrid meetings, continuing to offer flexible formats tailored to the needs of clients across Canada. Staff were trained on evolving technology platforms to ensure seamless delivery.



**Over
50%
of historical
conference records
summarized**

- **Accessibility Integration:** Accessibility remained central to CICS' approach, with new training for staff and improved conference planning checklists. The CMS was developed with WCAG compliance in mind, and accessibility best practices have been integrated into various phases of the conference planning process.
 - **Internal Training and Process Improvements:** Staff participated in targeted training to strengthen operational consistency, and divisions collaborated to improve conference planning workflows. These efforts contributed to improved efficiency, reduced costs, and high client satisfaction levels.
- Internal Improvements:
People, Policy, and Process**
- In 2024–25, CICS made significant progress in strengthening internal capacity and creating a more agile, inclusive, and future-ready organization. The agency continued to prioritize organizational health, efficiency, and workforce development:
- **Workforce Development:** A new HR team leader was appointed to lead strategic initiatives such as implementing the CICS Succession Plan, coordinating training across all units, streamlining staffing processes, and reducing turnaround times by producing offer letters in-house.
 - **Mental Health and Inclusion:** Regular sessions focused on mental health, diversity, equity, and inclusion continued throughout the year, fostering a healthy and inclusive workplace culture.
- **Human Resources Review:** A comprehensive, multi-year review of HR policies, organizational structure, and wellness frameworks was launched to align internal systems with CICS's evolving operational needs.
 - **Financial Stewardship:** CICS improved its financial forecasting and analysis tools, implemented a new Procurement Management Framework, and implemented an updated Financial Delegation Instrument to strengthen internal controls and accountability.
 - **Policy Renewal:** Obsolete policies were formally archived, and remaining ones were prioritized for revision using a three-year risk-based approach. Cross-divisional collaboration ensured policies remain current and relevant to operations.



LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025–26, CICS will focus on the following strategic priority areas to build on the transformation groundwork laid in 2024–25:

- **Program Evaluation & Transformation Strategy**
 - Develop and implement a three-year funding and agency governance transformation strategy based on the program evaluation report.
- **Agency Sustainability**
 - Finalize and implement a sustainable cost allocation



Executive Committee

- and recovery model aligned with stakeholder input.
- Prepare the Budget Proposal 2026 with an updated funding model.
- Strengthen internal financial and procurement controls and streamline the internal forecasting



**Prepare the
Budget Proposal
2026**

process by fully using the current financial system to forecast expenditures.

- Align HR planning with overall government fiscal restraint measures, anticipated conference delivery and cost trends.
- Implement procurement improvements to increase transparency and efficiency.
- **Service Modernization**
 - The Conference Policy will continue to support planning and strengthen client engagement, while offering insight into long-term trends and evolving service needs.
 - Continue CMS enhancements and explore AI-based tools for service delivery.

- Launch an interactive and dynamic public-facing conference schedule to improve access and transparency.

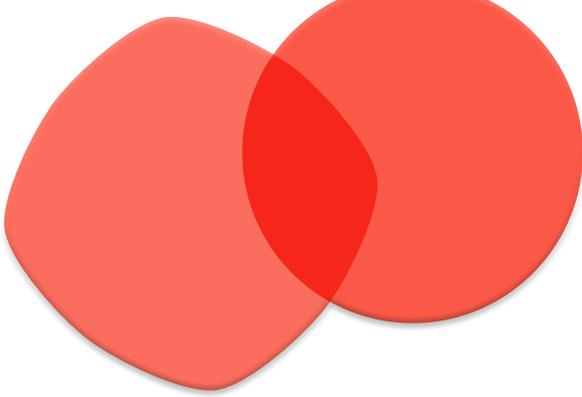
- **Accessibility and Archives**

- Finalize the archive summary and launch a client-facing data retrieval tool to support decision-making.
- Advance internal accessibility training for staff and integrate best practices into conference planning.
- Improve client-facing tools and digital services to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) accessibility standards.

- **Human Resources and Culture**

- Support innovation through language training and developing a multi-skilled nimble workforce, that can be deployed in all areas of CICS operations.
- Focus on skills development, building staff resilience balanced with wellness, mental health, and succession planning.
- Update the CICS Code of Conduct and facilitate focussed discussions to support understanding, and consistent application across the organization.

These initiatives will further improve CICS availability to serve all eligible conferences.



FINANCIALS

Provincial Contributions

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) is financed by both the Government of Canada through parliamentary appropriations and by the provinces through contributions under a shared cost agreement. Table 1 shows the provinces' shares for the 2024-25 budget, as well as the actual amounts received.



**\$8.19
million
Total Funding
for 2024-25**

Distribution of Provincial Contribution towards CICS' 2024-25 Budget (\$ Thousands)



Table 1. Distribution of provincial contributions towards CICS' 2024-25 budget (\$ thousands)

Province	% Based on 2021 population census	Distribution of provincial share of CICS' 2024-25 budget	2024-25 Requested contribution	2024-25 Actual contribution received
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.4	46.4	46.4	46.4
Nova Scotia	2.6	86.2	86.2	86.2
New Brunswick	2.1	69.6	69.6	68.8
Prince Edward Island	0.4	13.3	13.3	13.3
Quebec	23.1	765.4	765.4	131.3
Ontario	38.6	1,279.0	1,279.0	265.0
Manitoba	3.5	116.0	116.0	116.0
Saskatchewan	3.1	102.7	102.7	23.0
Alberta	11.6	384.4	384.4	384.4
British Columbia	13.6	450.6	450.6	95.0
Total	100.0	3,313.6	3,313.6	1,229.4

Financial Results

A summary of CICS's financial results is presented in Table 2. The total funding is composed of the Main Estimates budget and adjustments. The Main Estimates are the voted appropriations at the beginning of the fiscal year, which started on April 1, 2024. The total authorities in 2024-25 is very similar to 2023-24, reflecting the three-year temporary additional funding of \$1.6 million allocated in Budget 2023, which will extend through to 2025-26.

Table 2. 2024-25 Financial Results (\$ thousands)

CICS budget	2024-25	2023-24
Main Estimates	7,826.5	6,091.1
Supplementary Estimates	0.0	1,602.8
Adjustments & Transfers	367.7	493.3
Total Funding	8,194.2	8,187.2
CICS Expenditures	2024-25	2023-24
Salaries & Wages	4,386.6	3,871.5
Employee Benefit Plans	578.8	576.0
Sub-total— Personnel Costs	4,965.4	4,447.5
Other Operating Costs	3,159.4	3,475.1
Capital Costs	0	0
Sub-total— Other Operating & Capital Costs	3,159.4	3,475.1
Total Expenditures	8,124.8	7,922.6
Lapsed (over expended)	69.4	264.6

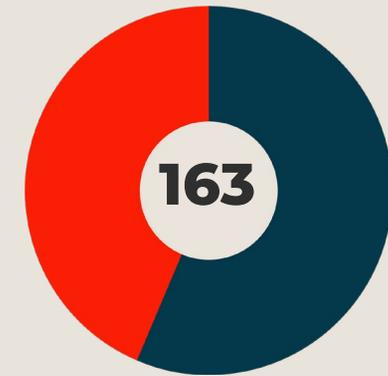
The total expenditures for 2024-25 saw a slight increase compared to the previous fiscal year, primarily due to the increase in in-person conferences and videoconferences which required additional human and technical resources, leading to higher operational expenses. The observed increase also reflects operational expenses incurred for the Independent Program Evaluation of CICS, aimed at enhancing efficiency and achieving organizational objectives. As a result, the total expenditures for the 2024-25 fiscal year rose by approximately 202.2 thousand compared to 2023-24, representing a substantial increase of 2.6%.

It is important to clarify that CICS does not initiate intergovernmental meetings; rather, it responds to decisions made by governments to convene on key national or specific issues. Factors such as the number, timing, duration, location, and format of these meetings are all determined externally and remain beyond the Secretariat's control. Nevertheless, these variables have a direct impact on CICS's annual expenditures. The Secretariat remains committed to responsible financial management, carefully planning for fluctuations in conference volume, support levels, and delivery formats to ensure it operates within its allocated budget.

As demonstrated in this report, fiscal year 2024–25 has experienced a notable increase in demand for both in-person conferences and videoconferences. CICS supported 163 senior-level intergovernmental meetings, compared to 126 in 2023–24. Of these 163 conferences, 71 were in-person or hybrid, and 92 were virtual. In-person and hybrid meetings incur significantly higher costs than videoconferences or teleconferences, due to travel, overtime, and specialized audio-visual requirements.

These heightened demands have placed considerable pressure on the organization's financial capacity as CICS utilized the full CICS budget and lapsed only a minimum amount. Although a temporary budget increase was granted, it has proven insufficient to fully absorb the

additional costs associated with the growing number and complexity of in-person and hybrid conferences. As a result, CICS continues to face financial constraints while striving to fulfill its mandate efficiently and responsibly.

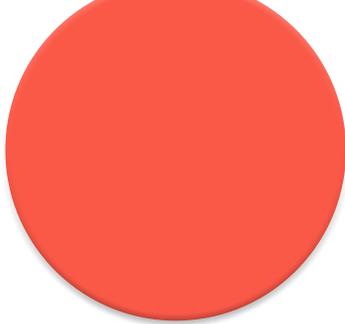


● **71**

In-person/Hybrid

● **92**

videoconference



REQUESTING CICS' SERVICES

CICS services are available to any federal, provincial or territorial government department that organizes an intergovernmental meeting of First Ministers, Ministers or Deputy Ministers.

For in-person meetings, the host government is responsible for arrangements and the costs of conference rooms and hospitality; CICS covers the cost of most other conference services. For virtual meetings, most costs are assumed by CICS.

To make your conference as successful as possible, we encourage you to contact us as soon as you start planning it. We recommend a lead time of at least 3 months for in-person/hybrid meetings, and 1 month for videoconferences.

We look forward to working with you on your next event!

- Complete and submit our [online request form](#); or
- Contact Conference Services at 343-548-2933 or services@scics.ca.



services
@
scics.ca