

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency 2026–27 Departmental Plan

The Honourable Sean Fraser, PC, KC, MP
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

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ACOA's 2026–27 Departmental Plan

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At a glance

This departmental plan details the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency's (ACOA) priorities, plans and associated costs for the upcoming three fiscal years.

These plans align with the priorities outlined in the [Mandate Letter](#), as well as ACOA's [Vision, mission, raison d'être](#) and [operating context](#).

Key priorities

In 2026–27, ACOA will build on Atlantic Canada's strengths to grow the economy, create wealth and support long-term prosperity while continuing to advance Indigenous economic reconciliation.

Our focus for the year includes the following key strategic priorities to enhance productivity and growth, focused on closing the productivity gap of the region:

- **Growing strategic sectors:** ACOA will promote place-based economic diversification and market expansion by propelling key sectors such as aerospace and defence, critical minerals, biosciences, cybersecurity and clean technologies.
- **Technology adoption:** The Agency will help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) increase the adoption of automation and advanced digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), to optimize their value, create efficiencies and reduce waste.
- **Workforce development:** ACOA will work with businesses to ensure that key industries have the skilled workers needed to enhance their productivity, support talent development

in collaboration with partners, and help communities attract and retain the talent required to foster economic growth.

Comprehensive Expenditure Review

The government is committed to restraining the growth of day-to-day operational spending to make investments that will grow the economy and benefit Canadians.

As part of meeting this commitment, ACOA is planning the following spending reductions:

- **2026–27:** \$25,347,000
- **2027–28:** \$29,006,000
- **2028–29:** \$45,904,000¹

It is anticipated that these spending reductions will involve a decrease of approximately 67 full-time equivalents by 2028–29.

ACOA will achieve these reductions by finding efficiencies in internal services, programs and service delivery.

The figures in this departmental plan reflect these reductions.

Highlights for ACOA in 2026–27

In 2026–27, total planned spending (including internal services) for ACOA is \$389,405,777 and total planned full-time equivalent staff (including internal services) is 534.

Summary of planned results

The following provides a summary of the results the department plans to achieve in 2026–27 under its main areas of activity, called “core responsibilities”.

Core responsibility 1: Economic development in Atlantic Canada

In 2026–27, ACOA will bolster the resilience 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 SMEs, which accounted for 99.8% of all Atlantic businesses in June 2025,² and to communities in urban and rural areas, the latter of which have accounted for over 40% of ACOA’s projects and expenditures in recent years.

Planned spending: \$361,832,715

Planned human resources: 359

Departmental results:

- Businesses are innovative and growing in Atlantic Canada

¹ Annual amounts are cumulative from 2026-27 to 2028-29.

² Statistics Canada, Table 33-10-1014-01 Canadian Business Counts, with employees, June 2025, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3310101401>.

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

ACOA is a key driver of growth and investment built for dynamic times. It was born from a vision of a more productive Atlantic Canada where people get ahead. ACOA's business clients are 18% more productive than their peers. Workers employed by client firms earn, on average, \$36.90 an hour, well above the \$28.20 earned by workers at non-client firms in the region. ACOA continues to deliver on the Government of Canada's priorities, to build One Canadian Economy with strong Atlantic Canadian contributions domestically and globally, to boost business productivity and competitiveness, to diversify local economies, and to leverage regional strengths. This will support many of the [Mandate Letter](#) commitments, notably:

- Supporting Atlantic Canadian firms in expanding and diversifying their exports while advancing efforts to attract investment to the region. This will help strengthen our collaboration with reliable trading partners and allies around the world
- Boosting the production of manufactured homes in Atlantic Canada to make housing more affordable, and public-private co-operation contributing to a modern housing industry
- Building capability and capacity in Atlantic Canada's defence cluster to help protect Canadian sovereignty and keep Canadians safe. It will also help develop and commercialize dual civilian-military technologies in a range of industries

By prioritizing productivity, competitiveness and diversification, supported by ACOA's flexible programming and strong client relations, the Agency will help Atlantic Canadian SMEs, sectors and communities navigate economic insecurity, mitigate the impacts trade of disruptions, and secure long-term growth and competitiveness in the region. ACOA will also work with partners to support internal trade and help firms shift to Canadian suppliers, guided by ongoing advocacy and collaboration with other federal agencies and departments, the network of regional development agencies (RDAs) across Canada, the four provincial governments in Atlantic Canada as well as municipalities, Indigenous partners, non-profit organizations, industry associations and other stakeholders such as Community Business Development Corporations. ACOA will also work closely to support the [Atlantic Economic Panel](#) on the region's economy, and will be informed by the panel's goals for future and sustained economic growth. Finally, ACOA will continue to actively participate in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's activities to advance Canadian priorities related to regional development.

In support of Canada's new Climate Competitiveness Strategy, the Agency will explore competitive advantages for growth and position industries for success as they transition to a cleaner economy. In October 2025, the Agency tabled its [2023–2027 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy – 2024–25 Report](#), which outlines its contributions to Canada's sustainable development goals. The Agency's activities will help drive Atlantic Canada's economic diversification and low-carbon transition by accelerating the decarbonization of firms and supply chains, advancing clean technology developments in domestic and global markets, mobilizing capital for net-zero transition, and supporting the region's immense clean energy opportunities.

The Agency will continue its strong focus on promoting long-term economic development in the region. Its [Regional Economic Growth through Innovation](#) program and [Business Development Program](#) will continue to focus on investments that drive economic growth. The [Regional Tariff Response Initiative](#) will support SMEs impacted by tariffs, strengthening the competitiveness of Canadian businesses by helping them boost productivity, cut costs, build more resilient supply chains and reach new markets. Other targeted initiatives such as the [Regional Defence Investment Initiative](#) and the [Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative](#) will help boost investment in businesses to elevate their products and services and attract greater investments to the Atlantic region in the defence and AI fields.

The Agency will remain resolute in its promotion of the Atlantic region across the Government of Canada, including efforts to competitively position Atlantic Canadian firms for defence and Canadian Coast Guard procurement through Canada's [Industrial and Technological Benefits](#) Policy. ACOA will support Indigenous economic reconciliation under its regular programming and delivery of the [Northern Isolated Community Initiatives Fund](#) in the Nunatsiavut region of northern Labrador to support food-related initiatives that diversify economic activity.

The Agency will improve productivity and efficiency in delivering its programs by integrating new technologies and AI into systems, programs and processes, while staying aligned with government priorities, regional needs and community-focused decision making. More information about [Economic development in Atlantic Canada](#) can be found in the full plan.

For complete information on ACOA's total planned spending and human resources, read the [Planned spending and human resources section](#) of the full plan.

From the Minister

Atlantic Canada: Strengthening Communities, Growing Economies

When we think about Canada’s economic future, we often imagine big cities or global hubs. Too often we overlook the opportunities right here in Atlantic Canada.

The truth is that the region’s future is being built in our communities, our businesses and our research labs. Across Atlantic Canada, entrepreneurs and innovators are creating new technologies, growing companies and building the skilled workforce that will drive the economy forward.

ACOA is helping make that happen. We are supporting small and medium-sized businesses to grow, innovate and compete on the global stage. Investments are helping companies adopt new digital tools, automate processes and prepare people for the jobs of tomorrow. We are working with industry, communities, post-secondary institutions and governments to support clean growth, strengthen supply chains, and position the region to succeed in domestic and international markets.

Programming stays flexible and focused on clients. It reflects the strengths and needs of communities. Our commitment to an inclusive economy remains strong. We are advancing Indigenous economic reconciliation, promoting diversity and accessibility, and opening pathways for more people to participate in the economy.

These efforts deliver real results: more jobs, growing businesses, thriving communities, and expanded export markets. Small and medium-sized businesses make up almost all firms in the region and drive productivity and higher wages. We are building on this momentum by supporting key sectors such as biosciences, housing manufacturing, cybersecurity, clean technologies, ocean technologies, and aerospace and defence.

To ensure Atlantic Canadians benefit from new opportunities, we launched the Atlantic Economic Panel in November 2025. This business-led group is identifying what works, what holds the region back, and how we can grow productivity and competitiveness.

At the same time, the federal government is making sure spending is strategic, responsible and effective. ACOA’s services remain open across the region. Investments continue to support growth, innovation and opportunity. Businesses and communities can rely on the supports they need.

Now is the time to build on the momentum we have created. Atlantic Canada has the talent, the drive and the innovation to shape the region’s future, and we are making sure the benefits stay here at home.

I invite you to explore the 2026–27 Departmental Plan and see how, with federal support and regional leadership, we are creating a stronger, more prosperous future for everyone.



**The Honourable Sean Fraser,
PC, KC, MP**

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Plans to deliver on core responsibilities and internal services

Core responsibilities and internal services

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Core responsibility 1: Economic development in Atlantic Canada

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Description

Support Atlantic Canada’s economic growth, wealth creation and economic prosperity by building on competitive regional strengths and through inclusive clean growth. 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 three most recently reported fiscal years, the targets and target dates 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 for each indicator associated with the results under Economic development in Atlantic Canada.

Departmental Result Indicators	Actual Results	2026–27 Target	Date to achieve target
Number of high-growth firms in Atlantic Canada	2022–23: 590 2023–24: 820 2024–25: 1,000	880	March 31, 2027
Value of export of goods from Atlantic Canada	2022–23: \$41,900,000,000 2023–24: \$38,900,000,000 2024–25: \$38,400,000,000	\$38,000,000,000	March 31, 2027
Value of exports of clean technologies from Atlantic Canada	2022–23: \$663,000,000 2023–24: \$895,000,000 2024–25: \$861,000,000	\$800,000,000	March 31, 2027
Revenue growth rate of firms supported by ACOA programs	2022–23: 8.1% (2016–2021 excl. 2018) 2023–24: 6.8% (2017–2022 excl. 2018) 2024–25: 5.9%	7%	March 31, 2027

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 for each indicator associated with the results under Economic development in Atlantic Canada.

Departmental Result Indicators	Actual Results	2026–27 Target	Date to achieve target
Value of business expenditures in R&D by firms receiving ACOA program funding	2022–23: \$104,630,000 (2016–2020) 2023–24: \$103,630,000 (2017–2021) 2024–25: \$125,500,000 (2018–2022)	\$125,000,000	March 31, 2027
Percentage of businesses engaged in collaborations with higher-education institutions in Atlantic Canada	2022–23: not available 2023–24: 12.0% 2024–25: not available	15%	March 31, 2027

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

Table 3 provides a summary of the target and actual results for each indicator associated with the results under Economic development in Atlantic Canada.

Departmental Result Indicators	Actual Results	2026–27 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	2022–23: not available 2023–24: not available 2024–25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18% female ownership 2.5% Indigenous ownership 10.8% youth ownership 5.1% visible minority ownership 0.9% persons with disabilities ownership 	18% female ownership, 2% Indigenous ownership, 10% youth ownership, 4% visible minority ownership, 1% persons with disabilities ownership	March 31, 2027
Percentage of professional-, science- and technology-related jobs in Atlantic Canada’s economy	2022–23: 32.9% 2023–24: 33.2% 2024–25: 33.3%	33%	March 31, 2027
Amount leveraged per dollar invested by ACOA in community projects	2022–23: \$1.98 2023–24: \$0.88 2024–25: \$2.17	\$1.70	March 31, 2027

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 2026–27.

In 2026–27, ACOA will remain a reliable source of place-based investments in Atlantic Canada to contribute to a strong Canadian economy. Activities will help Atlantic Canadians, including groups such as Indigenous peoples and rural communities that are under-represented in the economy, to grow the region’s economy.

ACOA’s overarching strategic priority will be enhancing productivity and growth. The Agency will emphasize efforts to close the productivity gap of the region, focusing on three areas:

1. **Growing strategic sectors:** ACOA will promote place-based economic diversification and market expansion by propelling key sectors such as aerospace and defence, critical minerals, biosciences, cybersecurity and clean technologies.

2. **Technology adoption:** The Agency will help SMEs increase the adoption of automation and advanced digital technologies, including AI, 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, support talent development, and help communities attract and retain that talent.

The Agency's focus on productivity, competitiveness and diversification – paired with flexible programming and strong ties to business clients – positions Atlantic Canadian SMEs, sectors and communities to seize new opportunities, strengthen productivity and drive long-term growth. The region's strong trade relationships, and recent gains in population, employment and investment create ideal conditions to attract capital and become a rising economic force. Through strategic advocacy and pathfinding in national policies and programs, ACOA will help Atlantic Canadian stakeholders navigate disruptions, enhance the region's value proposition, and ensure it remains a key contributor to Canada's economic success. The Agency's delivery will also support the Government of Canada's [Buy Canadian Policy](#) to ensure that public investment supports Canadian-made products and services whenever possible.

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 four flagship platforms for economic development. It will enhance competitiveness and growth through technological development, commercialization, adoption and adaptation, productivity improvements, and market expansion with trusted trading partners. Broad-based support will be complemented by targeted growth-enabling initiatives such as the [Regional Tariff Response Initiative](#), which supports SMEs impacted by tariffs by strengthening the competitiveness of Canadian businesses and helps them boost productivity, cut costs and build more resilient supply chains. This will also help them reach new markets and seize new opportunities, adapt to global trade disruptions, and boost domestic trade. Other targeted initiatives such as the [Regional Defence Investment Initiative](#) will accelerate the integration of businesses and regional ecosystems into domestic and international defence supply chains to increase their industrial and innovation capacity. The [Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative](#) will help SMEs adopt and adapt AI solutions by bridging the gap between cutting-edge research and broader marketplace applications, and positioning Atlantic Canadian businesses for future success. ACOA will also support its Indigenous economic reconciliation priority through initiatives under the Agency's regular programming and the [Northern Isolated Community Initiatives Fund](#) in the Nunatsiavut region of Labrador to support food-related initiatives that strengthen and diversify economic activity.

ACOA's key priorities and its Minister's mandate letter commitments are guiding principles in the achievement of its core responsibilities through the three departmental results below:

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

Results we plan to achieve

The Agency will work with SMEs to capitalize on sector strengths and capacities, develop and diversify markets, and scale up by:

- supporting businesses at every stage – from start-up to maturity – to boost productivity, adapt, decarbonize, scale up, optimize supply chains, and compete 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 partners, to build a pipeline of high-potential firms and equip them with targeted sales and export support in a rapidly evolving trade environment

- accelerating digitization and the adoption of transformative technologies in Atlantic Canada so businesses can deploy advanced-manufacturing solutions, be more innovative and stay agile and resilient in shifting market conditions. This includes increasing the use of e-commerce to streamline transactions, boost sales, meet consumer demand and increase efficiency
- driving diversified exports in key sectors and dynamic markets by increasing the presence of Atlantic Canadian companies in key markets – both in-person and through virtual trade – and attracting foreign direct investment with the [Atlantic Trade and Investment Growth Strategy](#)
- positioning Atlantic Canadian firms to leverage major Canadian Coast Guard and defence procurement through Canada's [Industrial and Technological Benefits Policy](#) and Canada's new [Defence Investment Agency](#) 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

Results we plan to achieve

The Agency will help businesses invest in new technologies to improve their efficiency, productivity, competitiveness and growth, notably by:

- fostering R&D investments among Atlantic Canadian firms to drive productivity, reduce the environmental footprint, and strengthen innovation, enabling industry-advancing solutions to major sector challenges and expanding trade through stronger partnerships. This includes supporting innovators developing and commercializing clean technologies, products and services
- growing and nurturing inclusive regional ecosystems that meet business needs and foster entrepreneurship, innovation, growth and competitiveness by convening key innovation ecosystem stakeholders. This includes strengthening collaboration among SMEs, incubators and accelerators, research organizations and post-secondary institutions
- addressing the AI adoption lag in the region by helping businesses boost productivity, growth and competitiveness. Support will focus on investing in companies developing AI-driven solutions and overcoming SMEs' skills gaps, AI integration challenges, and regulatory or industry compliance requirements
- advancing energy innovation by harnessing the region's significant potential in renewable energy, electrification and energy efficiency while enhancing its competitiveness in the global marketplace
- driving innovation and boosting manufacturing and construction in the housing sector by supporting investments in new technologies such as modular construction, and helping firms adapt, adopt and scale existing and innovative technologies and methods, including developing industry tools that accelerate construction innovation and advance the use of modern methods of construction

Departmental result 3 – Communities are economically diversified in Atlantic Canada

Results we plan to achieve

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 transition to a cleaner economy
- promote diversity and inclusion to enhance SME competitiveness by supporting under-represented entrepreneurs, helping SMEs adopt more inclusive practices, and closing ecosystem gaps so all entrepreneurs can grow and seize new opportunities
- expand its reach to Indigenous businesses by targeting capacity building, working closely with Indigenous communities and organizations, pathfinding to national programs, and increasing knowledge and awareness through coordinated engagement with federal and provincial governments, stakeholders and community partners
- help non-profit, third-party organizations such as Community Business Development Corporations support SMEs in small, rural and remote communities
- help communities attract and retain the talent needed for economic growth by acting as a pathfinder and supporting stronger labour market matches with federal and provincial partners. This includes supporting the inclusive workforce of the future by improving school-to-work transitions, building new skills in growing sectors, increasing digital skills, and recruiting and retaining skilled newcomers through initiatives such as the [Atlantic Immigration Program](#)

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. Capacity-building activities will aim to 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.

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	\$361,832,715
Full-time equivalents	359

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

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

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- [Plans to achieve results](#)
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- [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:

- acquisition management services
- communications services
- financial management services
- human resources management services
- information management services
- information technology services
- legal services

- material management services
- management and oversight services
- real property management services

Plans to achieve results

This section presents details of the department’s plans to achieve results and meet internal service targets.

In 2026–27, internal services will help drive modernization across the Agency, ensuring ACOA continues to uphold its high standard of excellence. To support this work, internal services will:

- support government-wide transformation by delivering effective and efficient government services and processes. This includes:
 - enabling a high standard of program delivery and services that benefit Canadians, support regional representation and maintain a diverse workforce
 - reducing government expenditures through the Comprehensive Expenditure Review, the Office Portfolio Reduction Plan and the modernization of operations to support efficiencies
 - implementing strategies that align with government priorities and broader transformation initiatives across the federal public service
 - delivering results with agility, ensuring timely and effective execution of priorities by adopting agile practices and responding quickly to emerging needs
 - establishing a Digital Hub to drive and support digital transformation initiatives, leveraging AI and automation to enhance efficiency and optimize service delivery
- launch a next-generation client portal as part of its program delivery modernization. The portal will give Atlantic Canadian businesses and communities faster, easier access to programs and services. Combined with ongoing improvements to the Agency’s grants and contributions system, it will support more efficient, integrated program delivery
- support the Government of Canada’s updated Digital Ambition, notably by modernizing tools and investing in strategies such as AI to improve operational and internal process efficiencies
- continue to act on ACOA’s Official Languages Action Plan, which aims to prioritize official languages training and position ACOA as a leader in respecting the *Official Languages Act* and its obligations as well as supporting the advancement of the official language minority communities in Atlantic Canada
- implement the Agency’s new 2026–2029 Employment Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Action Plan based on the results from the 2024 Public Service Employee Survey and the Agency’s employment systems review. Its purpose is to promote and support a diverse and inclusive workplace
- support government-wide initiatives and Agency strategies such as its Accessibility Action Plan 2026–2028 and the “Nothing Without Us” accessibility strategy, the Government of Canada Workplace Digital Accessibility Passport, both the Agency’s and the Federal Public

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	\$27,573,062
Full-time equivalents	175

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

Planning for contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses

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. The Agency has surpassed this target every year (2024–25: 12.05%) and plans to continue to meet or surpass the 5% commitment in the future by advocating for the use of Indigenous suppliers.

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 the department awarded to Indigenous businesses.

5% Reporting Field	2024–25 Actual Result	2025–26 Forecasted Result	2026–27 Planned Result
Total percentage of contracts with Indigenous businesses	12.05%	5%	5%

Department-wide considerations

- [Related government priorities](#)
- [Key risks](#)

Related government priorities

Artificial intelligence

ACOA will work to leverage AI in its own operations and ensure that employees are prepared to use artificial intelligence safely and effectively. The Agency plans to:

- leverage AI in program delivery systems and internal processes to increase productivity and generate efficiencies
- continue modernizing the grant and contribution system and client-facing portal
- require employees to complete mandatory training on the responsible use of AI

These activities will contribute to the Government of Canada’s objective of increasing productivity and equip employees with the skills needed to leverage new technologies to improve efficiency.

Key risks

ACOA has identified two main risks to fulfilling its mandate. The first is a risk that the Agency’s economic development programming may be affected by external factors that contribute to uncertainties for economic growth in Atlantic Canada, such as potential global trade disruptions. The second is a risk that ACOA’s stakeholders – including other governments, partners, communities and clients – may not have sufficient capacity to identify, develop and successfully implement strategic projects, which could limit the achievement of its program objectives.

ACOA will manage these risks by using the flexibility of its programs, including emergency funding, and by drawing on its strong relationships with businesses, clients and communities. The Agency will also use its advocacy role and integrated planning to mitigate potential risks associated with changing economic conditions and the depth of regional stakeholders’ capacity. Finally, ACOA will analyze regional economic issues and collaborate with stakeholders to foster client and community capacity to help achieve targets under key federal priorities.

Planned spending and human resources

This section provides an overview of ACOA’s planned spending and human resources for the next three fiscal years and of planned spending for 2026–27 with actual spending from previous years.

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Spending

This section presents an overview of the department's planned expenditures from 2023–24 to 2028–29.

Budgetary performance summary

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

Table 7 presents ACOA’s spending over the past three years to carry out its core responsibilities and for internal services. Amounts for the 2025–26 fiscal year are forecasted based on spending to date.

Core responsibilities and Internal services	2023–24 Actual Expenditures	2024–25 Actual Expenditures	2025–26 Forecast Spending
Economic development in Atlantic Canada	447,178,438	368,846,946	390,256,979
Internal services	31,252,148	31,621,353	29,203,750
Total	478,430,586	400,468,299	419,460,729

Analysis of the past three years of spending

The Agency’s 2025-26 forecast spending represents an increase from the 2024–25 actual expenditures, largely due to the addition of temporary funding related to the implementation of the Regional Defence Investment Initiative and Regional Economic Growth through Innovation – Regional Tariff Response Initiative.

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 ACOA’s planned spending over the next three years by core responsibility and for internal services.

Core responsibilities and Internal services	2026–27 Planned Spending	2027–28 Planned Spending	2028–29 Planned Spending
Economic development in Atlantic Canada	361,832,715	338,416,991	283,148,662
Internal services	27,573,062	27,085,860	26,110,987
Total	389,405,777	365,502,851	309,259,649

Analysis of the next three years of spending

In the 2026–27 Main Estimates, the Agency’s available funding is \$389.4 million. This represents a decrease of \$30.1 million from the 2025–26 forecast spending of \$419.5 million. The variance is explained as follows.

- A total decrease of \$120.6 million due to:
 - the absence of
 - \$2.8 million related to the Cybersecurity Data Attribution Centre

- the reduction of
 - \$15.2 million related to the Comprehensive Expenditure Review³
 - \$5.6 million in temporary funding for the BioAccelerator project
 - \$4.5 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2025 for the implementation of the Regional Defence Investment Initiative
 - \$3.2 million in temporary funding in support of the Halifax International Security Forum
 - \$2.7 million in temporary funding for the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship
- 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
- This decrease is offset by a total increase of \$90.5 million due to:
 - \$82.2 million related to funding for program contributions to continue supporting ongoing regional economic development, replacing the Regional Development Agency Repayment Recycling Mechanism
 - \$5.8 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2025 for the Regional Economic Growth through Innovation – Regional Tariff Response Initiative
 - \$1.3 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2024 related to the Regional Artificial Intelligence Initiative
 - \$0.8 million related to compensation allocations resulting from revised collective agreements
 - \$0.4 million in other adjustments

In 2027–28, planned spending is \$365.5 million, a decrease of \$23.9 million from the \$389.4 million in the 2026–27 Main Estimates as a result of the following.

- A total decrease of \$24.0 million due to:
 - the absence of
 - \$6.5 million in temporary funding for the Centre for Ocean Ventures and Entrepreneurship
 - \$4.8 million in temporary funding in support of the Halifax International Security Forum

³ This amount excludes the sunsetting of temporary initiatives.

- the reduction of
 - \$3.1 million related to the Comprehensive Expenditure Review⁴
- 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
- This decrease is offset by a total increase of \$0.1 million in other adjustments

In 2028–29, planned spending is \$309.3 million, a decrease of \$56.2 million from the \$365.5 million in 2027–28 planned spending as a result of the following.

- A total decrease of \$56.7 million due to:
 - the reduction of
 - \$28.2 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2025 for the Regional Economic Growth through Innovation – Regional Tariff Response Initiative
 - \$16.9 million related to the Comprehensive Expenditure Review
 - the conclusion of
 - \$11.6 million in temporary funding announced in Budget 2025 for the implementation of the Regional Defence Investment Initiative
- This decrease is offset by a total increase of \$0.5 million in other adjustments

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

Information on the alignment of [ACOA's spending with Government of Canada's spending and activities](#) is available on GC InfoBase.

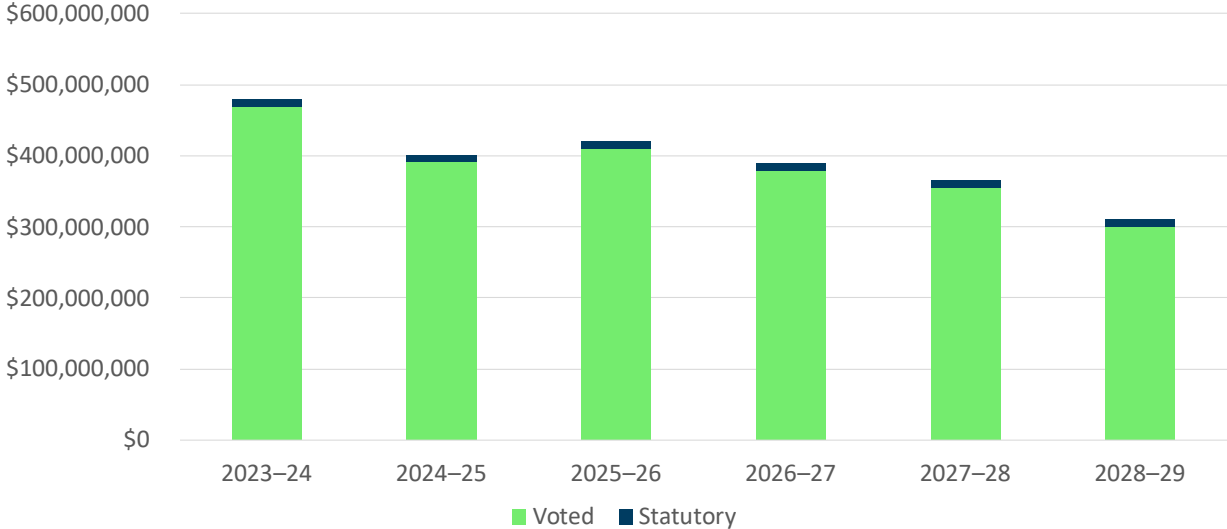
Funding

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](#).

⁴ This amount excludes the sunsetting of temporary initiatives.

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

Graph 1 summarizes the department’s approved voted and statutory funding from 2023–24 to 2028–29.



Fiscal year	Total	Voted	Statutory
2023–24	\$478,430,586	\$468,950,861	\$9,479,725
2024–25	\$400,468,299	\$391,124,459	\$9,343,840
2025–26	\$419,460,729	\$409,887,714	\$9,573,015
2026–27	\$389,405,777	\$379,178,994	\$10,226,783
2027–28	\$365,502,851	\$355,456,429	\$10,046,422
2028–29	\$309,259,649	\$299,631,005	\$9,628,644

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

Actual spending: 2023–24, 2024–25. Planned spending: 2025–26, 2026–27, 2027–28 and 2028–29.

Planned spending for 2026–27, 2027–28 and 2028–29 does not include amounts stemming from Budget 2026.

For further information on ACOA’s departmental appropriations, consult the [2026–27 Main Estimates](#).

Future-oriented condensed statement of operations

The future-oriented condensed statement of operations provides an overview of ACOA’s operations for 2025–26 and 2026–27.

Table 9: Future-oriented condensed statement of operations for the year ended March 31, 2027 (dollars)

Table 9 summarizes the expenses and revenues that net to the cost of operations before government funding and transfers for 2025–26 and 2026–27. The forecast and planned amounts in this statement of operations were prepared on an accrual basis to strengthen accountability and to improve transparency and financial management. 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	2025–26 Forecast results	2026–27 Planned results	Difference (Planned results minus forecast)
Total expenses	292,220,998	279,442,146	(12,778,852)
Total revenues	21,857	33,766	11,909
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	292,199,141	279,408,380	(12,790,761)

Analysis of forecasted and planned results

Planned total expenses for fiscal year 2026–27 are \$279.4 million, a decrease of \$12.8 million compared to the 2025–26 forecast results. The decrease in planned expenses for fiscal year 2026–27 is due to the sunseting of several initiatives and the implementation of Refocusing Government Spending and Comprehensive Expenditure Review measures.

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

A more detailed [Future-Oriented Statement of Operations and associated Notes for 2026–27](#), 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 2023–24 to 2028–29.

Table 10: Actual human resources for core responsibilities and internal services

Table 10 shows a summary of human resources, in full-time equivalents, for ACOA’s core responsibilities and internal services for the previous three fiscal years. Human resources for the 2025–26 fiscal year are forecasted based on year to date.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2023–24 Actual full-time equivalents	2024–25 Actual full-time equivalents	2025–26 Forecasted full-time equivalents
Economic development in Atlantic Canada	371	364	341
Internal services	199	205	202
Total	570	569	543

Analysis of human resources over the last three years

Human resource levels at ACOA for 2025–26 are forecasted to be lower than in previous years due to staffing strategies implemented in anticipation of reductions outlined in the Comprehensive Expenditure Review announced in Budget 2025, in addition to cumulative impacts of the Refocusing Government Spending initiative announced in Budget 2023.

Table 11: Human resources planning summary for core responsibilities and internal services

Table 11 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 three years.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2026–27 Planned full-time equivalents	2027–28 Planned full-time equivalents	2028–29 Planned full-time equivalents
Economic development in Atlantic Canada	359	353	338
Internal services	175	170	159
Total	534	523	497

Analysis of human resources for the next three years

Human resource levels at ACOA show a decrease to the total full-time equivalents, reflecting the reduction announced in Budget 2025 related to the Comprehensive Expenditure Review, in addition to cumulative impacts of the Refocusing Government Spending initiative announced in Budget 2023. The Agency will continue to achieve its results by allocating its human resources to best support its priorities and programs.

Supplementary information tables

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

- [Details on transfer payment programs](#)

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 Canada 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 GBA Plus of tax expenditures.

Corporate information

Departmental profile

Appropriate minister: The Honourable Sean Fraser, PC, KC, 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/acoa>

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 2026-27 Departmental Plan, government priorities are the high-level themes outlining the government's agenda in the [2025 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)

Requirements for verifying Indigenous businesses for the purposes of the departmental result report are available through the Indigenous Services Canada [Mandatory minimum 5% Indigenous procurement target](#) website.

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.