

2023-2026

ACTIVITY PLAN

**Intergovernmental
Affairs Secretariat**



MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

I am pleased to present the Activity Plan for the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat for the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026. This plan sets forth a solid path to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador is successful in achieving its priorities that require intergovernmental engagement and cooperation.

Specifically, this plan will help Newfoundland and Labrador achieve its economic, social and trade policy priorities through leadership in international forums, bilateral and multilateral partnerships with the federal government, other provinces and territories and international jurisdictions. With a focus on working in collaboration, our Government will leverage and optimize federal programs and policies to meet our province's unique needs and circumstances. Geopolitics, the pandemic, global climate action, energy security and immigration are just a few of the issues driving the need, more than ever, for strong national and international relationships. Our plan prioritizes collective action with like-minded partners throughout Canada and around the world to advance a healthier and more prosperous Newfoundland and Labrador.

As Premier and Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, I am committed to achieving the goals and objectives outlined in this plan. It was prepared in accordance with requirements for category three entities under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, as well as Government's strategic directions.

Together we will improve our collective health: physical, mental, social, financial and economic.

Sincerely,

Honourable Dr. Andrew Furey
Premier
Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs

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Overview and Mandate

The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat (the Secretariat) is located within the Office of the Executive Council, and is the Provincial Government's lead entity for coordinating the Province's intergovernmental and trade priorities. The Secretariat provides strategic policy advice, analysis, and support to the Premier, ministers, and departments on intergovernmental and trade policy issues and priorities. The Secretariat also supports the Premier and ministers in building and strengthening relationships with other sovereign governments and international entities to advance provincial interests.

Organization Structure

The Secretariat's three divisions work to frame policy advice on economic, social, and trade priorities, ensuring our province's unique needs and circumstances are always at the forefront of intergovernmental dialogue and negotiations.

The **Economic Policy** division provides intergovernmental policy advice related to measures that promote sustainable economic growth, including in the areas of natural resource management, the environment, fiscal and economic policy, industrial and technology development, infrastructure and other matters of constitutional interest.

The **Social Policy** division provides intergovernmental policy advice related to measures that improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities, including in the areas of health, housing, education, immigration, labour and employment, reconciliation and inclusion, tourism, and justice. The division also leads on provincial interests related to national defence and foreign affairs.

The **Trade Policy** division represents the province's interests in interprovincial and international trade agreements. This includes the negotiation, ratification, and implementation of each agreement. The division is also responsible for providing trade

analysis and advice relating to obligations under relevant domestic and international agreements.

For more information about the Secretariat's work, please visit: www.gov.nl.ca/exec/ias .

Lines of Business

The Secretariat's lines of business include:

Intergovernmental Policy Advice: IGAS is responsible for monitoring and analyzing intergovernmental scopes of social, fiscal, economic, resource and constitutional policy matters in order to formulate and provide policy advice on the development of government's intergovernmental strategy and agenda.

Promotion of the Province's interests: IGAS builds relationships with other governments and international entities to advance the province's interests. The Secretariat advocates for Newfoundland and Labrador at bilateral, multilateral, regional and international intergovernmental meetings and conferences to present and promote Newfoundland and Labrador's positions on matters of importance to this province. IGAS further promotes the Province's interests by assisting departments in their participation in intergovernmental meetings and negotiations, and their negotiation of intergovernmental agreements.

Support and Coordination: IGAS coordinates and provides support for interdepartmental initiatives that have intergovernmental implications for the Province.

Vision

The Secretariat envisions a strong, self-reliant Newfoundland and Labrador advancing its best interests with governments in Canada and abroad.

Staff and Budget

As of March 31, 2023, the Secretariat had a staff complement of 14 and an estimated budget of \$2,066,400.

The entire Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat staff complement is located in the East Block Confederation Complex in St. John's.

Strategic Issues

Issue One – Progressing the Province’s Strategic Intergovernmental Priorities

The Secretariat is dedicated to advancing Newfoundland and Labrador’s intergovernmental priorities through constructive engagements with the Federal Government and other provincial and territorial governments across Canada, as well as other sovereign governments worldwide. This involves promoting provincial objectives through various intergovernmental engagements and forums, such as the Council of the Federation, Council of Atlantic Premiers, First Ministers’ Meetings, New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, and Atlantic Growth Strategy and other multilateral, bilateral, and regional engagements.

Under the **Intergovernmental Affairs Act**, the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs is required to participate in the negotiation and execution of all intergovernmental agreements between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and other sovereign governments. The Secretariat plays a fundamental role in providing assistance and support to government departments during these negotiations and assessing agreements to ensure they are consistent with the government’s intergovernmental policies and priorities.

The Secretariat recognizes continued and effective intergovernmental collaboration is essential to securing a healthier province in all areas; our economy, our finances, and our people. Working closely with other provincial and territorial governments, as well as the Federal Government, on economic, health and well-being supports and funding opportunities is fundamental to securing a bright future for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Goal

By March 31, 2026 the Secretariat will have supported the progression of Government’s strategic economic and social intergovernmental priorities.

Goal Indicators

- Supported Government in advancing the Province's intergovernmental objectives through multilateral and bilateral meetings and policy frameworks.
- Provided intergovernmental policy advice and strategic support to Government departments and agencies, including support for the negotiation of intergovernmental agreements.
- Leveraged federal funding and increased the number of federal-provincial programs and initiatives in which Government is participating.

Objective 2023-2024

By March 31, 2024, the Secretariat will have supported the progression of Government's strategic intergovernmental priorities.

Objective Indicators

- Provided strategic support and policy advice on key intergovernmental issues, including federal-provincial fiscal frameworks.
- Supported and managed the Province's participation in intergovernmental forums to advance Provincial priorities, including the Council of the Federation, the Council of Atlantic Premiers, First Ministers' Meetings, New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, and the Atlantic Growth Strategy.
- Participated in the negotiation of intergovernmental agreements, and supported efforts across Government to strategically maximize federal support, particularly in areas aligned with provincial priorities.

Objective 2024-2025

By March 31, 2025, the Secretariat will have further supported the progression of Government's strategic intergovernmental priorities.

Objective 2025-2026

By March 31, 2026, the Secretariat will have continued to support the progression of Government's strategic intergovernmental priorities.

Issue Two – Progressing and Protecting the Province’s Domestic and International Trade Priorities

As the Provincial Government's primary division responsible for negotiating and executing trade agreements, the Secretariat's Trade Policy Division plays a central role in stimulating a strong economy. Trade policy encompasses the objectives, regulations, agreements, and various arrangements that govern trade relations between governments and jurisdictions. In essence, trade policy strives to minimize and eliminate obstacles to the unrestricted movement of individuals, commodities, services, and investments between regions.

The Secretariat is committed to positioning Newfoundland and Labrador to leverage opportunities to access new markets around the globe, decrease barriers to interprovincial trade within Canada, and respond effectively to any protectionist measures that may be introduced by other jurisdictions to ensure Newfoundland and Labrador has the best access to Canadian and global markets.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Secretariat will have supported the progression and protection of the Province’s domestic and international trade priorities.

Goal Indicators

- Provided advice and consultative services within the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador related to international trade agreement negotiations and disputes, including adherence to existing international trade agreements, such as the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) and the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

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- Represented the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's economic and policy interests at ongoing trade forums and negotiations, internationally and domestically.
- Coordinated and supported Provincial Government efforts on reducing interprovincial trade barriers within Canada and strengthening trade relationships between provinces, territories, the Federal Government, and international jurisdictions, through participation in the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), Regulatory Reconciliation and Cooperation Table (RCT), other CFTA working groups and the Atlantic Trade and Procurement Partnership (ATPP).

Objective 2023-2024

By March 31, 2024, the Secretariat will have supported the progression and protection of the Province's domestic and international trade priorities.

Objective Indicators

- Coordinated provincial input on the negotiation of free trade agreements and provided strategic advice and analysis on the implementation of existing agreements, including responses to protectionist policies in other jurisdictions.
- Advanced the Province's positions on internal trade, collaborating with other provinces and territories to reduce internal trade barriers under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.
- Advocated for the Province's interests in the negotiations of ongoing international free trade agreements, including negotiation of a Canada-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement; Early Progress Trade Agreement between Canada and India; the modernization of the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement; and Canada's negotiation of Asian free trade agreements, including with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Indonesia free trade agreements.

Objective 2024-2025

By March 31, 2025, the Secretariat will have further supported the progression and protection of the Province's national and international trade priorities and interests, in both agreed and ongoing trade commitments.

Objective 2025-2026

By March 31, 2026, the Secretariat will have continued to support the progression and protection of the Province's domestic and international trade priorities and interests, in both agreed and ongoing trade commitments.

Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic Direction: A Healthy Economy

Outcome: Growth of partnerships and initiatives with federal, provincial, territorial, and other sovereign governments on economic development, including diversification, transition to a low-carbon economy, and trade-related initiatives.

This outcome requires focus in the following areas:

- Engaging with the Federal Government on projects, programs, and other initiatives that will deliver economic benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador in various areas, including: renewable energy and the green economy, immigration and labour, climate change, infrastructure, and critical minerals;
- Collaborating with other jurisdictions through intergovernmental forums, conferences and related working groups;
- Negotiating and implementing national and international trade agreements, as well as provincial positioning on ongoing and potential trade disputes; and
- Maximizing access to federal funding programs that align with provincial priorities.

Strategic Direction: A Healthy Society

Outcome: Growth of partnerships and initiatives with federal, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous peoples, and international jurisdictions on ways to improve the health and well-being of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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This outcome requires focus in the following areas:

- Supporting departments in advocating for provincial health and well-being priorities to the Federal Government, including funding mechanisms and programs that respect provincial jurisdiction and are responsive to Newfoundland and Labrador's unique social determinants of health and demographic needs;
- Participating in intergovernmental discussions on areas of shared health care-related priorities, including: timely access to services, health human resource capacity, mental health and substance use, modernizing health care systems, seniors, Indigenous care, pharmacare, long-term care, dental care, and virtual care; and,
- Participating in intergovernmental discussions on other areas of well-being priorities including: affordability measures, housing, immigration, labour challenges, and public safety.

