

Intergovernmental Affairs

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

Intergovernmental Affairs

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Province of New Brunswick
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TRANSMITTAL LETTERS

From the Minister to the Lieutenant-Governor

Her Honour The Honourable Brenda Murphy

Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of the Intergovernmental Affairs, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Jean-Claude D'Amours
Minister

From the Minister Responsible to the Lieutenant-Governor

Her Honour The Honourable Brenda Murphy

Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of La Francophonie, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Robert Gauvin
Minister Responsible

From the Acting Deputy Minister to the Minister

**Honourable Jean-Claude D'Amours
Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs**

Sir:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of Intergovernmental Affairs for the fiscal year April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Charles Ayles
Acting Deputy Minister

From the Acting Deputy Minister to the Minister Responsible

**Honourable Robert Gauvin
Minister Responsible for La Francophonie**

Sir:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of La Francophonie for the fiscal year April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Charles Ayles
Acting Deputy Minister

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MINISTER FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Intergovernmental Affairs helped to manage New Brunswick's relationships with the federal government, and with Canada's provinces and territories through the Council of the Federation. They also helped advance our important partnerships with our Atlantic neighbours through the Council of Atlantic Premiers, Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, and with the federal government through the Atlantic Growth Strategy.

Intergovernmental Affairs played a key role in strengthening our economic and cultural links with the International Francophonie and addressed New Brunswick's interests in Canadian and international trade policy issues. In addition, the Office of Protocol played a key role in welcoming diplomats and foreign dignitaries to the province.

On April 1, 2023, the government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the 2021 review of the *Official Languages Act* came to full fruition with the launch of the Secretariat of Official Languages. The Secretariat team quickly got down to work to strengthen our capacity as a government to offer high-quality services in both official languages, while identifying innovative solutions to meet the needs of both linguistic communities. The Secretariat has also taken advantage of the 2023-2024 fiscal year to prepare a new action plan that meets the requirements of the *Official Languages Act*.

I wish to offer my thanks to the staff of Intergovernmental Affairs for their work and dedication to the Province of New Brunswick during the past year.



Honourable Jean-Claude D'Amours
Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for Military Affairs

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR LA FRANCOPHONIE

It gives me great pleasure to highlight the work accomplished by Intergovernmental Affairs in 2023–2024 to successfully fulfill our mandate and assume our leadership role in the Francophonie.

The year 2023–2024 was marked by the participation of a delegation of International Francophonie team members and representatives from several other partners and departments in the activities surrounding the 250th anniversary of the return of the Acadians to Poitou, France. We also took part in the Ministerial Conference of La Francophonie in Cameroon, and our networking efforts continued through partnerships established with Côte d'Ivoire.

New Brunswick continued to play its leading role in the promotion and advancement of the Canadian Francophonie. At the meeting of ministers responsible for the Canadian Francophonie in Vancouver in July 2023, progress was made on issues of national importance such as Francophone economic development, services in French, the International Francophonie and the shortage of bilingual workers.

On the provincial level, thanks to the efforts of the Secretariat of Official Languages, significant funds were once again allocated toward community and school projects and initiatives contributing to the growth, development and vitality of New Brunswick's Acadian and Francophone communities. It is important to note that these efforts were acknowledged by the federal government, which substantially increased its financial contribution under our bilateral Francophonie agreements.

Finally, my sincere thanks to everyone at Intergovernmental Affairs, to whom I extend my heartfelt gratitude and great admiration.



Honourable Robert Gauvin
Minister Responsible for La Francophonie
Minister of Public Safety

ACTING DEPUTY MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Intergovernmental Affairs plays a key role supporting the work not only of the Premier and members of the Executive Council, but also facilitating collaboration across departments to further the objective of serving New Brunswickers.

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, we saw the creation of the Secretariat of Official Languages, housed within Intergovernmental Affairs. The Secretariat plays a vital role in enhancing New Brunswick's status as Canada's only officially bilingual province. Its role is to manage the implementation plan required under the *Official Languages Act*; to support government employees in providing services to New Brunswickers in the official language of their choice; and to promote the use of our two official languages across the province.

The Secretariat was established on April 1, 2023, and is working to develop an implementation plan as required by the *Official Languages Act*.

Promoting cultural engagement and trade are also key elements of Intergovernmental Affairs' mandate. IGA officials supported visits by dozens of diplomats from across the globe, ensured New Brunswick's interests were represented in international and pan-Canadian trade agreement negotiations and established a France-New Brunswick Strategy to guide our engagement in trade and cultural relations with France.

IGA officials supported the renewal of the Order of New Brunswick, with the implementation of a revised legislative mandate and the induction of five prominent New Brunswickers to the Order.

I wish to extend my thanks to the staff at Intergovernmental Affairs for their continued dedication to making New Brunswick a better place to work and live.



Charles Ayles
Acting Deputy Minister

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Strategy and Operations Management

The Government of New Brunswick (GNB) uses leading business practices to develop, communicate and review strategy. This provides the Public Service with a proven methodology to execute strategy, increase accountability and continuously drive improvement.

Government Priorities

Our vision for 2023-2024 is a vibrant and sustainable New Brunswick. To make progress towards this vision, we must focus on our government's priorities.

- Energize private sector
- Vibrant and sustainable communities
- Affordable, responsive and high-performing government
- Dependable public health care
- World-class education, and
- Environment

HIGHLIGHTS

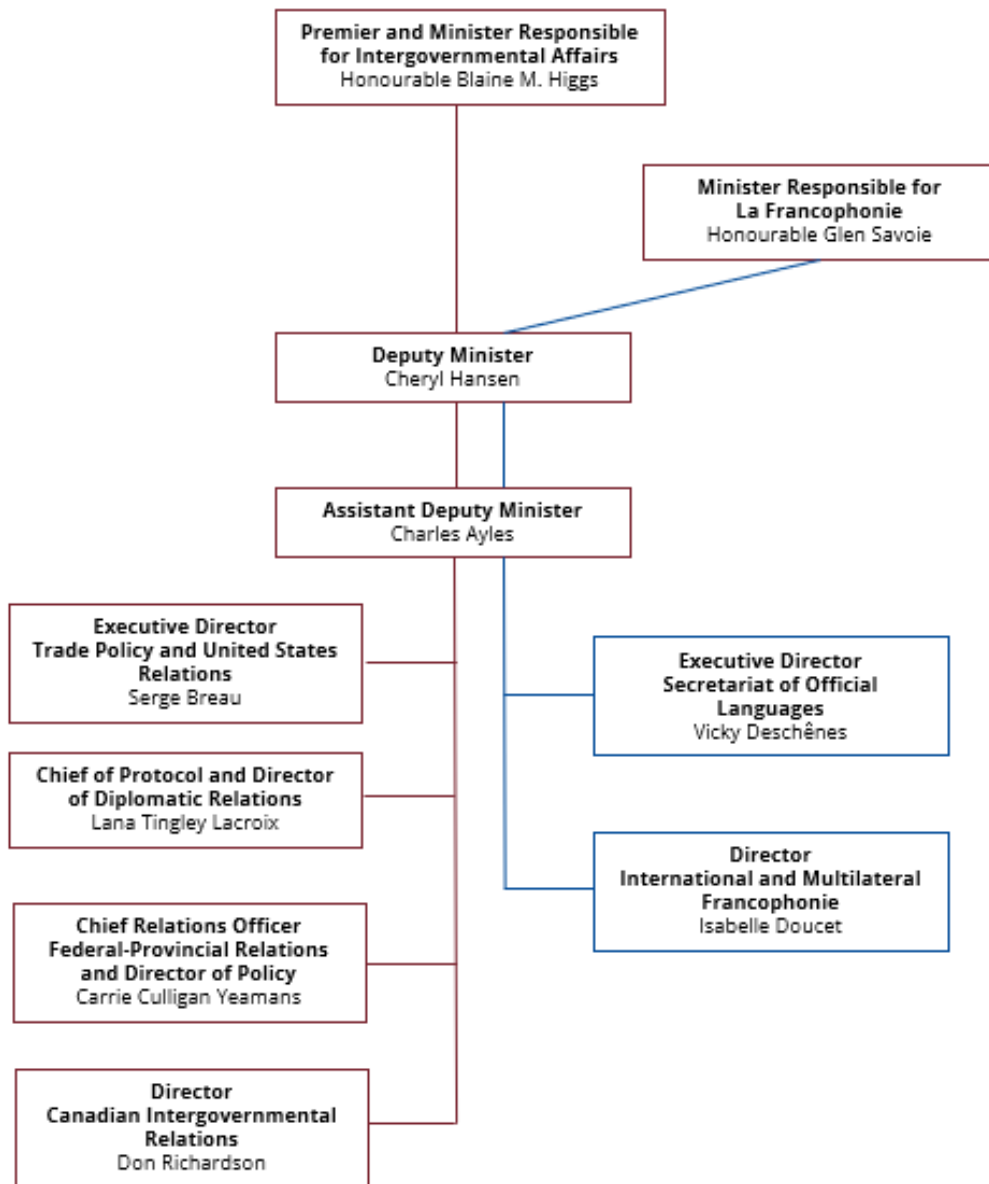
During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Intergovernmental Affairs focused on these government priorities through:

- Supported ministers at various intergovernmental meetings related to trade, US relations and military Liaison.
- Led New Brunswick's litigation efforts in the ongoing Softwood Lumber dispute.
- Led New Brunswick's efforts to promote and defend the province's interests through Canada's negotiation of free trade agreements.
- The creation of the Secretariat of Official Languages, in response to the 2021 Review of the *Official Languages Act*.
- The development of a new implementation plan for the *Official Languages Act*.
- The creation of a France-New Brunswick Strategy.
- Modernization of the *Order of New Brunswick Act*.
- Investing five deserving New Brunswickers with the province's highest honour, the Order of New Brunswick.
- Hosting the visit of HRH The Princess Royal in honour of the 175th anniversary of the 8th Canadian Hussars and the 150th anniversary of the RCMP.
- Managing the official diplomatic visits to New Brunswick of dozens of Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Consuls General to advance the province's strategic interests.
- Establishing the Atlantic Physician Registry in collaboration with physician's organizations and regulatory bodies, so that physicians can work anywhere in the region.
- Signing an agreement with the Atlantic Provinces to better integrate technical safety standards and ensure tradespeople can move between jobs across the region as seamlessly as possible.

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS

The mandate of Intergovernmental Affairs is to provide a strategic and corporate approach to the management of relations with other governments, communities, and organizations in support of the government's vision of New Brunswick.

High-Level Organizational Chart



DIVISION OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

TRADE POLICY AND US RELATIONS

Overview

The Trade Policy Division aims to maximize opportunities and minimize constraints inherent in trade relations for all New Brunswickers, by actively engaging in the negotiation, implementation, and dispute settlement aspects of domestic and international trade agreements.

The trade-related responsibilities also include supporting the Premier, as Minister responsible for Trade at the Committee on Internal Trade, a federal-provincial-territorial ministerial table which oversees the implementation of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

The division also promotes the Government of New Brunswick's interests in the United States by strengthening partnership with US States, including through the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premier's Conference (NEG-ECP), and the South-East US - Canadian Provinces Alliance (SEUS-CP).

Highlights

- Supported Minister Greg Turner at a meeting of Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for International Trade in September 2023.
- Supported Minister Greg Turner as he led the New Brunswick delegation at the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers meeting in Quebec City in September 2023
- Supported Minister Mary Wilson in her duties as Co-Chair of Seamless Canada, a forum of Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers responsible for Military Liaison.
- Led New Brunswick's litigation efforts in the ongoing US-Canada Softwood Lumber dispute.
- Led New Brunswick's efforts to promote and defend the province's interests through Canada's negotiation of free trade agreements.

SECRETARIAT OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Overview

The mandate of the Secretariat is to promote the *Official Languages Act* and to administer its full implementation.

The Secretariat has three main functions:

- **Coordination:** to provide advice and work with government institutions regarding the Act; meet the needs of the two linguistic communities; to develop, review, and evaluate the implementation plan required by the Act; prepare an annual report on outcomes based on the activities undertaken as part of the Act; evaluate the Act on a continual basis and make recommendations for amendments, as required.

- **Support:** to provide the appropriate support to government employees so they can work in an environment conducive to the use and learning of both official languages as stipulated in the Language of Service Policy and Guidelines, and the Language of Work Policy Guidelines.
- **Promotion:** to undertake public outreach campaigns to promote respect, knowledge, and communication between the two linguistic communities and the economic benefits of bilingualism in the province; and to ensure regular consultation with various stakeholders from both linguistic communities.

The Secretariat continues to be responsible for the coordination and promotion of activities of GNB within the provincial and Canadian Francophonie. It also interacts with its counterparts in the other provincial and territorial governments and the Government of Canada in the Francophonie and is involved with the various authorities of the Francophonie in provincial and national associations.

Highlights

Launch of the Secretariat

The creation of the Secretariat of Official Languages was announced by government in December 2022, in response to the 2021 Review of the *Official Languages Act*. The Secretariat became operational on April 1st, 2023, and replaced the former Canadian Francophonie and Official Languages Division.

The Secretariat staff includes all positions from the former division and two positions from Finance and Treasury Board (FTB). This transfer from FTB enables the Secretariat to take over the linguistic evaluation and second-language training programs for the provincial civil service.

One of the first tasks of the Secretariat was to support the Premier during the legislative process that followed the revision of the *Official Languages Act*. The Secretariat also met with each department to emphasize its commitment to developing a collaborative approach across government departments.

Implementation Plan

The Secretariat has been working closely with all departments and government agencies to create a new implementation plan for *the Official Languages Act*. Various consultations took place over the year, and a draft plan covering 2024 to 2031 has been prepared for the government consideration.

Promotion of Bilingualism and Official Languages

One of the Secretariat's functions is to promote bilingualism and official languages to help foster a positive approach, both within government and in New Brunswick's communities. From the outset, the Secretariat has developed marketing and promotional campaigns. In addition, the Secretariat has developed a financial assistance program to help non-profit bilingual organizations organize promotional activities in their communities.

On September 14, 2023, the Premier signed a declaration designating the second Thursday in September of each year as Official Languages Day in New Brunswick. This will provide an opportunity to celebrate the rich linguistic heritage of New Brunswick and reflect on the many social and economic benefits of official bilingualism.

In March 2024, the Secretariat organized a dialogue meeting on bilingualism in New Brunswick held in Moncton, to create links between fifteen bilingual organizations and encourage the creation of joint projects and initiatives.

A highlight of the internal efforts is La Dictée Paul-Gérin-Lajoie (P.G.L.) de la Francophonie that was held on March 1, 2024, as a kick-off activity for the Francophonie month. More than 200 GNB Francophones and Francophiles employees participated in the dictation, which was read by Minister Glen Savoie.

Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of the Minister's Council on the Canadian Francophonie (MCFF)

The Canadian Francophonie Division participated in the federal-provincial-territorial meeting of the MCFF in July 2023 in Vancouver, British Columbia. The federal-provincial-territorial Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-2028, Francophone Immigration, labour shortage, innovation in French-language services, International Francophonie, economic development, and promotion were at the heart of the discussions and commitments adopted.

Canada-New Brunswick Agreement on the Provision of French-Language Services

The program is designed to support initiatives that allow the provincial government to improve services in French and to contribute to the equality of the two official linguistic communities. Since the current version of the agreement was scheduled to expire on March 31, 2023, negotiations for its renewal were to have taken place in 2022-2023. However, it was agreed to wait until the federal government had tabled its new Official Languages plan before proceeding with negotiations. As a result, the Secretariat took charge of obtaining the necessary authorizations to amend the current agreement by adding an extra year.

The agreement was consequently amended in April 2023 to extend it to 2023-2024, and it was amended a second time later in the year to account for the additional funding of \$863,735 from the Government of Canada. Negotiations for a new agreement also took place over the course of the year.

Canada – New Brunswick Agreement on French First-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction

This multi-year, multilateral agreement between the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories sets the key parameters for collaboration between the two orders of government on Official Languages in education and provides a mechanism through which the federal government contributes to the costs incurred by the provinces and territories in the delivery of minority-language education and second-language instruction. Under this agreement, each province and territory negotiates a bilateral cost-sharing agreement that is tailored to its unique priorities.

The current agreement expired on March 31, 2023. Discussions for a new agreement have since been taking place, but a new long-term agreement could not be developed in time for March 31, 2024. It was therefore agreed to sign a retroactive extension from April 1, 2023, to add another year under the same terms of the 2019-2020 to 2022-2023 agreement. The extension of this agreement is intended as an interim measure that will enable the development of a new agreement for the period 2024-2025 to 2027-2028.

Rendez-vous Acadie-Québec 2024

The Secretariat worked closely with its partners, the Secrétariat du Québec aux relations canadiennes, the Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick and the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec, to organize the *Rendez-vous Acadie Québec 2024*, scheduled to take place in the Acadian Peninsula in May 2024.

The *Rendez-vous Acadie-Québec* is a biennial networking event where more than 200 entrepreneurs and economic stakeholders from across New Brunswick and Quebec meet to discuss new business opportunities and establish partnerships.

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTILATERAL FRANCOPHONIE

Overview

The mandate of the International and Multilateral Francophonie Branch is to coordinate New Brunswick's participation in the work and bodies related to the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) and its member states.

The Branch coordinates the implementation of bilateral agreements with OIF member states as well as exploratory missions to countries throughout the Francophonie with the objective of identifying economic, cultural, institutional and other opportunities for the people of New Brunswick.

The Branch is staffed by four persons, including a permanent correspondent to the OIF in Paris. An expert in decentralized cooperation was loaned to the Branch by the Government of France in November 2023 for a two-year term.

Highlights

MULTILATERAL

Remote and in-person participation of the Sherpa in the Permanent Council of La Francophonie (PCF) and the Ministerial Conference of La Francophonie (MCF) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in November 2023.

Participation in OIF working groups and various activities by New Brunswick's Paris-based national correspondent.

Provision by the Government of New Brunswick of a youth expert to serve on the team at the youth, sport and citizenship unit (Moncton office) from April 2023 to March 2024.

BILATERAL

Agreement with Department of Vienne, France

New Brunswick and the Department of Vienne have been parties to a cooperation agreement since 1983. A new five-year action plan was signed in 2019. In June and August 2023, delegations travelled to Poitiers and the surrounding region to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the return of the Acadians to Poitou. Ministers, government officials and partners were present.

Agreement with Louisiana

New Brunswick and Louisiana have maintained cultural relations for many years, culminating in the signing of a bilateral agreement in 2014 and the development of a five-year action plan in 2019. In April 2023, a delegation travelled to the Festival International de Louisiane for an Acadian pavilion with several New Brunswick artists, and in October 2023, a delegation travelled to the Festivals Acadiens et Créoles.

Agreement with Benin

In 2021, the Government of New Brunswick signed a cooperation agreement with Benin with the objective of enhancing cooperation in the areas of economic, social and human development, the environment, trade and industry, science and new technologies, education and training, and culture and tourism. In October 2023, with the support of Opportunities New Brunswick and the Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick, we welcomed a delegation of five entrepreneurs from Benin to Moncton and Tracadie.

New Brunswick–France Development Strategy

In May 2023, the Premier of New Brunswick travelled to Paris to meet with several French companies in the energy and information technology sectors. He also had the opportunity to speak at a breakfast organized by the Movement of the Enterprises of France as well as at a New Brunswick reception organized in partnership with the Canadian embassy in Paris.

In March 2024, a multi-sector delegation led by the Branch spent a week in France to promote New Brunswick, generate investment opportunities and recruit Francophone skilled workers. Immigration New Brunswick and Vitalité Health Network met with candidates and made on-the-spot offers. Positive economic discussions were held with French companies in the energy and information technology sectors as well as with the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region.

In July 2022, the Government of New Brunswick launched the first New Brunswick–France development strategy with the aim of expanding intergovernmental cooperation, with the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs as the focal point, to capitalize on our historical, economic and linguistic ties with France. During the 2023–2024 fiscal year, our universities welcomed more than 100 students from France and our schools more than 25 French-speaking teachers and assistants. Exports to France more than doubled, and the number of prospects for agri-food and seafood products companies exceeded the annual target by 50%.

Decentralized cooperation

Sébastien Rodts, an international technical expert, was assigned to the Government of New Brunswick by Expertise France effective in November 2023. Based in Moncton, his role is to strengthen decentralized cooperation between French territorial collectivities and Acadian local authorities. The first few months of his mission provided an opportunity to take stock of existing twinning arrangements and draw up a detailed action plan for the duration of his assignment.

Bilateral relations – other

Saint-Pierre and Miquelon

In May 2023, we supported the mission of the Minister of Local Government to Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. A number of economic, institutional and cultural meetings were organized, with a delegation of business leaders from Saint-Pierre and Miquelon subsequently travelling to New Brunswick in September 2023. In November 2023, we took part in a meeting of the Joint Commission with Saint-Pierre and Miquelon and all four Atlantic provinces in Halifax.

Côte d'Ivoire

In September 2023, the minister responsible for La Francophonie led a mission to Côte d'Ivoire to begin negotiations regarding a bilateral agreement with that country to attract more international students and skilled workers in key sectors, notably health, early childhood and construction. Representatives of the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Université de Moncton were in attendance along with the honorary consul of Côte d'Ivoire.

OFFICE OF PROTOCOL

Overview

Protocol, at the heart of New Brunswick's diplomatic and international engagement, allows the province to build bridges between New Brunswick and foreign governments, promote New Brunswick's economic and cultural agenda to foreign audiences, create a lasting positive image of the province, and nurture ongoing relationships with diplomats and dignitaries both in Canada and abroad.

Highlights

DIPLOMATIC AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The Office of Protocol coordinates and supports a variety of out-of-province, Premier or Minister-led missions, in addition to hosting numerous incoming diplomatic visits and international delegations with the objective of advancing the province's strategic interests internationally and building upon existing relationships or partnerships to explore potential economic or cultural opportunities.

The Royal Family

The Government of New Brunswick, together with the 8th Canadian Hussars Association, supported the visit of HRH The Princess Royal to New Brunswick in May 2023. This visit was in honour of the Regiment's 175th anniversary and HRH's 51st anniversary as Colonel-in-Chief. Anniversary celebrations took place in Moncton and Sussex during the long weekend in May (18-21) 2023. The visit also included a program at the Fredericton RCMP J Division headquarters in honour of the 150th anniversary of the RCMP.

International Mission

In May 2023, the Office of Protocol supported the Premier's international mission to France and the Netherlands.

Diplomatic Visits

Throughout 2023-2024 the Office of Protocol managed official diplomatic visits to the province by the following:

- Ambassador of the Czech Republic
- Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Ambassador of Côte d'Ivoire
- Ambassador of France
- Consul General of France

- Ambassador of Bénin
- President of the Territorial Council of Saint-Martin
- Ambassador of Latvia
- Consul General of Cuba
- Consul General of India
- Group of Francophone Ambassadors
 - Ambassador of Morocco
 - Ambassador of Haiti
 - Ambassador of Serbia
 - High Commissioner of Rwanda
 - Ambassador of Belgium
 - Ambassador of Estonia
 - Ambassador and Consul of the Republic of the Congo
 - Ambassador of Costa Rica
 - Ambassador of Tchad
 - Ambassador of Senegal
 - Ambassador of Tunisia
 - Chargé d'affaires of Gabon
 - Consul of Burkina Faso
 - Consul of the Dominican Republic
 - Delegate-general of Wallonia-Brussels
- Consul General of the Republic of Korea

HONOURS AND AWARDS

The Order of New Brunswick

The Office of Protocol manages the Order of New Brunswick program. It is the highest provincial honour awarded annually to no more than five New Brunswickers who are nominated by their peers. The Advisory Council, chaired by the Chief Justice of New Brunswick, reviews all nominations and puts forward a recommended list of not more than five members annually for approval by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Recipients are selected on the basis of demonstrated excellence and achievement and for having made exceptional contributions to the social, cultural or economic well-being of the province.

In 2023, the following individuals were announced as recipients:

- Bernard Poirier, Dieppe
- J. W. (Bud) Bird, Fredericton
- Joanne E. McLeod, Fredericton
- Isabelle McKee-Allain, Moncton
- Catherine (Kate) Akagi, Saint Andrews

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AND CANADIAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Overview

Canadian Intergovernmental Relations seeks to promote New Brunswick's interests within the Canadian federation, pursue regional cooperation in achieving New Brunswick's social and economic priorities, and to seek increased federal investment in achieving the province's key public policy objectives.

Canadian Intergovernmental Relations coordinates New Brunswick's participation as a member of the Council of the Federation, the Council of Atlantic Premiers, meetings of the Atlantic Growth Strategy Leadership Committee, and with the federal government through meetings of First Ministers.

Highlights

Atlantic Physician Registry

In collaboration with physicians' organizations and regulatory bodies, the Council of Atlantic Premiers established the Atlantic Physician Registry to enable physicians licensed by one Atlantic province to work anywhere in the region without further licensing requirements. Since the program was launched in May 2023, more than 270 Atlantic Canadian physicians have joined the Registry, improving labour mobility for health professionals across the region. In February 2024, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business awarded its annual "Golden Scissors Award" to the Council of Atlantic Premiers for this program, recognizing Premiers' efforts to reduce barriers to business and employment within the region.

Workforce, Immigration and Housing

Record population growth in New Brunswick has increase demands for housing as well as job training to meet the demands of a growing economy. New Brunswick worked closely with regional and national partners in seeking federal funding to support infrastructure development, meet the need for new housing and address gaps in job training programs. Atlantic Premiers urged the federal government to ensure measures taken to reduce the number of international students entering Canada did not disadvantage Atlantic Canada's universities and community colleges.

Atlantic Technical Safety Agreement

In June 2023, Atlantic Premiers signed an agreement to better integrate technical safety standards, to ensure tradespeople can move between jobs across the region as seamlessly as possible. This includes aligning the requirements for training, certification, and licensing, and expediting registration processes for skilled tradespeople, including fuel technicians, power engineers, and elevator mechanics, among others.

PREMIER-LEVEL FORUMS

Council of the Federation

The Council of the Federation was founded in 2003 by Canada's 13 provincial and territorial Premiers, who meet regularly to discuss ways to improve the lives of Canadians. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Premiers met twice in person (Winnipeg in July 2023 and Halifax in November 2023) as well as meeting virtually on several other occasions to discuss Canada's housing crisis, infrastructure needs,

affordability issues and inflation, immigration levels, improving health care and protecting public safety.

Council of Atlantic Premiers

The Council of Atlantic Premiers has provided leadership on improving public services and collaborating on regional issues for more than 50 years. Premiers met in Mill River, PEI in June 2023 and virtually on several other occasions to address regional concerns in housing, immigration, health care, energy development and economic growth. They collaborated on a joint effort to urge the federal government to minimize the impact of carbon pricing on consumers in Atlantic Canada.

Atlantic Growth Strategy

Atlantic Premiers and federal cabinet ministers representing the Atlantic region remain focused on exploring collaborative means to support Atlantic Canada's long-term economic growth. Premiers and Ministers met in Moncton, NB in July 2023 where discussions focused on leveraging regional population growth, meeting demands for housing and job training programs, enhancing labour mobility, promoting tourism and improving transportation services within the region.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2023-2024 Expenses	Budget	Actuals	Variance
Executive Office	\$906,000	\$402,325	\$503,675
Secretariat of Official Languages	\$4,577,997	\$5,348,126	(\$770,129)
Federal Provincial Relations	\$880,000	\$520,478	\$359,522
International Francophonie	\$1,594,003	\$1,495,351	\$98,652
International Relations and Office of Protocol	\$507,000	\$513,152	(\$6,152)
Trade Policy	\$1,335,000	\$1,432,287	(\$97,287)
Total IGA Expenses	\$9,800,000	\$9,711,719	\$88,281
2023-2024 Revenues	\$2,210,000	\$3,297,995	(\$1,087,995)

SUMMARY OF STAFFING ACTIVITY

Pursuant to section 4 of the *Civil Service Act*, the Secretary to Treasury Board delegates staffing to each Deputy Head for his or her respective department(s). Please find below a summary of the staffing activity for 2023-2024 for Intergovernmental Affairs.

NUMBER OF PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES AS OF DEC. 31 OF EACH YEAR		
EMPLOYEE TYPE	2024	2023
Permanent	22	21
Temporary	1	0
TOTAL	23	21

The department advertised one competition, including one open (public) competition and no closed (internal) competitions.

Pursuant to sections 15 and 16 of the *Civil Service Act*, the department made the following appointments using processes to establish merit other than the competitive process:

APPOINTMENT TYPE	APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION	SECTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT	NUMBER
Specialized Professional, Scientific or Technical	An appointment may be made without competition when a position requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a high degree of expertise and training a high degree of technical skill recognized experts in their field 	15(1)	0
Equal Employment Opportunity Program	Provides Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and members of a visible minority group with equal access to employment, training and advancement opportunities.	16(1)(a)	0
Department Talent Management Program	Permanent employees identified in corporate and departmental talent pools, who meet the four-point criteria for assessing talent, namely performance, readiness, willingness and criticalness.	16(1)(b)	0
Lateral transfer	The GNB transfer process facilitates the transfer of employees from within	16(1) or 16(1)(c)	1

APPOINTMENT TYPE	APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION	SECTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT	NUMBER
	Part 1, 2 (school districts) and 3 (hospital authorities) of the Public Service.		
Regular appointment of casual/temporary	An individual hired on a casual or temporary basis under section 17 may be appointed without competition to a regular properly classified position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(i)	1
Regular appointment of students/ apprentices	Summer students, university or community college co-op students or apprentices may be appointed without competition to an entry level position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(ii)	0

Pursuant to section 33 of the *Civil Service Act*, no complaints alleging favouritism were made to the Deputy Head of Intergovernmental Affairs and no complaints were submitted to the Ombud.

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

BILL #	NAME OF LEGISLATION	DATE OF ROYAL ASSENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
37	<p><i>An Act Respecting the Official Languages Act</i></p> <p>Bill-37.pdf (legnb.ca)</p>	June 16, 2023	<p><i>An Act Respecting the Official Languages Act</i> established the Secretariat of Official Languages which was created to co-ordinate, support and promote the <i>Official Languages Act</i>. The secretariat began official operations in April 2023 within Intergovernmental Affairs.</p>
48	<p><i>An Act to Amend the Order of New Brunswick Act</i></p> <p>Bill-48.pdf (legnb.ca)</p>	June 16, 2023	<p>The <i>Act to Amend the Order of New Brunswick Act</i> modernized the nomination and selection process for the Order of New Brunswick. The intent of the changes is to safeguard the integrity of the province's highest honour which, each year, recognizes people who have made significant contributions to the economic, cultural, or social well-being of the province.</p> <p>The government proposed three amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not more than five individuals are submitted to the Executive Council each year for consideration as members of the Order of New Brunswick as opposed to 10; • the Clerk of the Executive Council may name a designate

			<p>to participate in his/her place on the advisory council; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow the secretary, at the direction of the council, to establish specific criteria and guidelines to support the selection process of new members under extraordinary circumstances so that individuals who have contributed to the province in exceptional situations, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, can be recognized by this honour.
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The acts for which the department was responsible in 2023-2024 are:

- *Centre communautaire Sainte-Anne Act*
- *Council of Maritime Premiers Act*
- *Maritime Economic Cooperation Act*
- *Official Languages Act*
- *An Act Recognizing the Equality of the Two Official Linguistic Communities in New Brunswick*
- *Order of New Brunswick Act*

Legislation may be found at:

<https://laws.gnb.ca/en/bycategory/cs?categoryId=departmentId&itemId=executive>

SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs attained all its official languages objectives.

The Secretariat of Official Languages became operational on April 1, 2023, within the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs. The Secretariat is mandated to coordinate, support and promote the *Official Languages Act* within government. Its role is to develop, review, monitor and evaluate the implementation plan required by the Act, to work with government departments and agencies, to undertake public outreach campaigns and to regularly review the Act and regulations and make recommendations for amendments if required.

Focus 1

Ensure access to service of equal quality in English and French throughout the province:

The Department of Intergovernmental Affairs ensured that all communications and services were available in both official languages or, where applicable, in the preferred language of the recipient or user. The Department ensures services are offered to New Brunswick residents in both official languages.

The launch of the Secretariat made it possible to renew collaborative ties with government departments, promote bilingualism internally and externally, and create conditions conducive to bringing New Brunswick's two official language communities closer together.

Two consultation sessions with official languages coordinators and human resources directors in all departments, as well as four information sessions with coordinators, were organized to resume work in the area of bilingual services and the *Official Languages Act*.

Contracts were renewed with the various partners for second-language training for New Brunswick government employees, enabling more than 400 departmental and hospital network employees to receive the language training they need to serve New Brunswickers in both official languages.

The Secretariat achieved its objectives by arranging the following activities:

1. The premier's signing of the first-ever declaration recognizing Official Languages Day in New Brunswick.
2. Working sessions with departments to initiate the process of developing the Government of New Brunswick's next implementation plan for official languages.
3. A partnership with the language learning centre falling under the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
4. A meeting to discuss bilingualism in New Brunswick with bilingual organizations across the province to foster ties bringing the two linguistic communities closer together.
5. La Dictée P.G.L. de la Francophonie, a province-wide activity for Part I employees who are Francophone, Francophile or learning French as a second language, as part of Francophonie Month.

The Office of Protocol carried out its activities in both official languages, whether for protocol visits, international missions or discussions with other provinces and territories and the federal government. The Order of New Brunswick ceremony remains bilingual.

All news releases issued in relation to meetings of the Council of Atlantic Premiers, the Premiers' Conference and the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers were published in both languages simultaneously.

Focus 2

An environment and climate that encourages, for all employees, the use of the official language of their choice in their workplace:

Within the department, all employees are encouraged to speak in the language of their choice at meetings and have access to the work tools they need to perform their tasks successfully.

Meetings are bilingual, performance evaluations are conducted in the employee's language of choice and second-language training is available if required.

Focus 3

The new Secretariat conducted bilingual consultations with departments, Crown agencies and bilingual organizations in both official languages.

The Secretariat launched the New Brunswick Bilingualism Support Program to promote official languages and bilingualism. Its objective is to help bring New Brunswick's two linguistic communities closer together.

Federal funding for the Program on the Provision of Official-Language Services was increased, enabling the New Brunswick government to meet its objectives with regard to improving French-language services and achieving equality of the two linguistic communities.

Focus 4

Ensure public service employees have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the *Official Languages Act*, relevant policies, regulations, and the province's obligations with respect to official languages:

The Secretariat's mandate includes informing the public and public service employees about the objectives and origins of the *Official Languages Act*.

An intranet page was created on the Government of New Brunswick network to provide public service employees with access to work tools and best practices in a bilingual environment. This page contains videos and educational flyers explaining the Act and the Secretariat's role. Flyers are also available in government waiting rooms.

Conclusion

As a central agency of the Government of New Brunswick, the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs assumes its responsibilities in the area of official languages.

Additionally, in its first year, the Secretariat posted numerous successes: the declaration of Official Languages Day in New Brunswick, a partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Language Learning to promote learning in French in the province's Anglophone schools, a dialogue meeting on bilingualism in New Brunswick to create connections between bilingual organizations, the development of communications material for employees and the outstanding participation in La Dictée P.G.L. de la Francophonie of Government of New Brunswick employees who are Francophones, Francophiles and second-language learners.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Intergovernmental Affairs did not receive any recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General for the current reporting year and the previous year.

REPORT ON THE *PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT*

As provided under section 18(1) of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*, the chief executive shall prepare a report of any disclosures of wrongdoing that have been made to a supervisor or designated officer of the portion of the public service for which the chief executive officer is responsible. Intergovernmental Affairs did not receive any disclosures of wrongdoing in the 2023-2024 fiscal year.