

# Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat

2021–22

## **Departmental Plan**

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The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.

President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and  
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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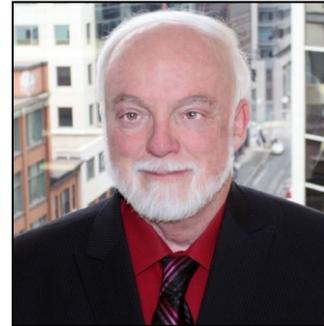
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## From the Institutional Head

As Secretary of the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS), I am pleased to present the agency’s 2021-22 Departmental Plan. This plan provides parliamentarians and Canadians with information on our mandate and objectives for the upcoming year.



Through its unique program, the Secretariat provides professional administrative and technical support services required for the planning and conduct of federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers across Canada. The Government of Canada has made a commitment to Canadians to pursue its goals with a renewed sense of collaboration and improved partnerships with provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples.

Along with the added benefits of confidentiality, impartiality and expertise in service delivery, CICS facilitates multilateral intergovernmental conferences, which continue to be a key component of Canadian federalism. It is a valued instrument for open communication, coordination, consultation and collaboration among federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments.

One of the top priorities for the Agency in 2020-21 was to ensure that its services remained relevant and responsive to stakeholders’ rapidly evolving needs. This included the adoption of new meeting formats and supporting technologies in conference service delivery, including virtual conferencing which prepared CICS well for the significant number of virtual conferences served throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For 2021-22 we expect virtual conferencing to be the dominant preference for governments to meet.

CICS will continue to broaden its expertise in 2021-22 focussing on videoconferencing in particular and adding to the current technology options. The Secretariat’s ongoing initiative to realign and retool in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis demonstrates the organization’s flexibility, resilience and adaptability.

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André M. McArdle  
Secretary,  
Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat



## Plans at a glance

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) is fully committed to delivering quality, cost-effective conference services to federal, provincial and territorial governments. Our impartiality, commitment to official languages and expertise in service delivery make us the conference service provider of choice for senior-level intergovernmental conferences. Through 2021-22, CICS will have a strong focus on collaboration and partnerships with federal, provincial and territorial governments to implement national commitments and priorities that depend on these strong relationships.

CICS will also continue to strengthen its relationships with other stakeholders, including meeting organizers in client governments and permanent secretariats that support intergovernmental relations. The Secretariat will keep its clients updated on new services and tools that will enable the organization to continue responding to governments' needs, but also to proactively guide and advise clients in new areas and directions such as web-based video conferencing to ensure the effective and efficient planning and delivery of senior-level intergovernmental meetings.

Although CICS saw an overall decrease of 5% in conference activity when comparing totals of 2018-19 and 2019-20, this data fails to account for variance in activity that occurred during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. When analyzing the first 3 quarters of 2020-21 compared to the same period in 2019-20, the number of conferences served has in fact increased by 89% as a direct result of the pandemic and the availability of virtual conferencing. The Secretariat's initiatives, especially in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and its current and future impacts, will focus on remaining adaptable, ensuring our capacity to respond to high demand, and the following four priorities: partnerships; relevance; resources; and innovation. Highlighted below are a few of our key initiatives planned for 2021-22:

### **Conduct multiple knowledge exchange forums with federal and provincial-territorial meeting organizers**

In 2021-22, CICS plans to conduct semi-annual knowledge exchange forums with meeting organizers to share timely and innovative event management solutions (with special emphasis on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including technical and administrative services in support of virtual conferencing with remote interpretation). The Secretariat will continue its efforts to connect with private and public sector service providers to broaden our knowledge of industry trends and best practices. This initiative supports our "Partnerships" priority.

### **Implement recently upgraded or developed client surveys, event planning guides as well as technologies and services in support of virtual conferences, to ensure ongoing service relevance and usefulness**

In 2021-22, recently developed or revamped client surveys for both planners and conference delegates as well as new guidance and information documents intended for clients who organize intergovernmental meetings will all be put into full use. Surveys will continue to be conducted with a target minimum satisfaction rate of 90%. Analysis of the results acts as a primary source of information to determine service improvements and measure success in achieving our overall objective of service excellence and responsiveness. This will include the tracking of progress against the objectives of CICS' Modernization Action Plan. In support of a growing interest in virtual and especially video conferencing, CICS will make available to its clients the necessary technical support as well as an expanded slate of administrative services. These initiatives support our "Relevance" priority.

**Ensure multi-platform conference capabilities and other innovative solutions to facilitate tele- and videoconferencing now and in the long-term**

In spite of all its negative impacts, the COVID-19 pandemic is the catalyst that will have resulted in many client sectors acknowledging the advantages – health-related, financial and logistical – of videoconferencing, a meeting format that is expected to remain popular even once the COVID-19 situation has subsided. CICS will continue to test and implement platforms and other technical solutions in support of fully virtual meetings and to link a significantly greater number of remote delegates to in-person meetings when these resume. During the last fiscal year, the Secretariat successfully implemented eight new innovations out of those identified through the work of its Innovation Committee. Some of these include remote support software, digital asset tracking, cloud-based backups, and a conference calendar tool. This initiative supports our "Innovation" priority.

**Create awareness and encouragement of learning opportunities, and explore new ways to engage employees**

CICS aims to be an agile department, where internal processes are continuously reviewed, improved and streamlined to be end-to-end, integrated and efficient. As such, the Secretariat will continue to use internal committees and employee input (including internal staff surveys) for program decision-making. The Agency's greatest asset remains its employees. Emphasis will be placed on encouraging learning opportunities in order to foster a healthy workplace and to promote mental health, as well as a culture of continual improvement and innovation. By doing so, CICS strives to create a work environment conducive to career development and job satisfaction. This initiative supports our "Resources" priority.

For more information on the [Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's](#) plans, priorities and planned results, see the "Core responsibilities: planned results and resources, and key risks" section of this report.

## Core responsibilities: planned results and resources, and key risks

This section contains detailed information on the department’s planned results and resources for each of its core responsibilities. It also contains information on key risks related to achieving those results.

### Intergovernmental Conference Services

#### **Description**

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat provides expert planning, archival services, and impartial administrative support for federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, throughout Canada.

#### **Planning highlights**

The Conference Services program delivers the Agency’s core responsibility and, consequently, conducts the professional, innovative and successful delivery of services to senior-level intergovernmental meetings. With the federal government’s strong focus on collaboration and partnerships with provinces, territories and Indigenous Peoples, as well as the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of intergovernmental meetings is expected to be about the same as in 2020-21 (or almost double what it was in 2019-20) due to what is expected to be a continued strong emphasis on virtual conferencing even once the COVID-19 situation subsides and in-person meetings resume. This reality continues to offer an excellent opportunity for CICS to strengthen its relationships with federal, provincial and territorial conference delegates as well as other stakeholders. These include meeting organizers in chair and/or host governments and in permanent secretariats that support intergovernmental relations in sectors of activity that will be of key importance over the next year and beyond.

An ongoing priority will be to ensure our Agency’s capacity to respond to a sustained, high demand for its broader range of services while ensuring that those services remain relevant, forward looking and of the highest quality. While CICS must remain responsive to the traditional needs and requirements of its clients, met through a reliable slate of tried-and-true solutions, there is a definite expectation and opportunity – especially in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond – for the organization to proactively lead the way, to advise, guide and encourage its clients to adopt new and innovative approaches. This is especially true in relation to virtual conferencing, most notably videoconferencing through various cloud-based videoconferencing platforms to better support meetings requiring simultaneous interpretation. All this will help to ensure the success of senior-level intergovernmental meetings, and will help maintain strong, open and collaborative relationships between the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

This expanded leadership role that CICS can and should play will be enabled and fulfilled largely through the implementation of best practices and “gold-standard” technologies and methods. These were identified during the modernization exercise that CICS conducted in 2018 which led to the development of a comprehensive Modernization Action Plan.

The broad elements of this Plan, as well as the changing technical and administrative requirements related to the growing interest in videoconferencing as witnessed in 2020, are integrated in the activities and actions that will be undertaken or expanded in support of the following five key initiatives, which are designed to advance the Agency’s core responsibility:

1. Remain in step with the expanding needs of intergovernmental clients and other stakeholders. Activities in this area will aim to:

- Achieve recognition among governments of CICS as the key conference service provider for senior-level intergovernmental meetings. To do so, the organization will continue expanding its methods and networks to ensure that it remains at the forefront of evolving event management technologies and processes. This will be particularly important in support of a sustained number of virtual meetings but also (when they resume) in-person conferences where there will be significantly greater demand for remote participation, all in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath including the evolving health and safety requirements.
- Fully implement new client guidance and information documents completed and launched in 2020-21 and conduct knowledge exchange forums with federal and provincial/territorial meeting organizers, in order that CICS remains a hub for access to timely and innovative event management solutions for the benefit of its clients.
- Upgrade the Secretariat’s Conference Management Software (CMS) to move it beyond a mostly internal work tool and introduce outward-facing elements that are more client-focussed.

2. CICS will continue to encourage the use of new formats and technologies in conference service delivery, including those that will:

- Support/facilitate virtual meetings or the remote participation of delegates, presenters and others in in-person meetings, as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic but, in the longer term, in response to a heightened interest in virtual conferencing and all its financial and logistical advantages. This will be achieved through: (1) enhanced tele- and video-conferencing capabilities including the implementation of new platforms; (2) expansion of a value-added suite of services (beyond technology) in support of virtual meetings; and (3) the development or expansion of guides and best practices intended for organizers and participants. This will be performed with a view to help achieve the

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government's desire for open, honest government that is accountable to Canadians, while applying the utmost diligence and prudence in the handling of public funds.

- Advance the government's objective to deliver the real results that Canadians demand while continuing to strive for greater inclusiveness, engagement, openness, effectiveness and transparency.

3. CICS will implement the use of new or upgraded tools developed in 2020-21 to conduct external and internal post-conference evaluations:

- Client surveys of both conference planners and delegates (upgraded to ensure their ongoing relevance and usefulness) will be fully implemented while maintaining a target satisfaction rate of at least 90%. Analysis of these program evaluation results will be used as a primary source of information to determine service improvements and measure success in achieving our overall objective of service excellence and responsiveness;
- Revised/upgraded checklists reflecting a changing suite of services and the various meeting formats now served by CICS will be put into full use. While the checklists remain primarily for planning purposes, the new format and design will make it easier to access information and integrate a post-conference assessment, all for easy reference when planning future events.

4. The Agency's greatest asset remains its employees; CICS aims to be an agile department, where internal processes are continuously reviewed and improved through staff surveys and feedback. The Secretariat will continue to use internal committees and employee input for program decision-making, taking full advantage of our staff's experience, skills, knowledge and innovative ideas. Emphasis will be placed on encouraging learning opportunities in order to foster a healthy workplace and to promote mental health, as well as a culture of continual improvement and innovation.

5. Considerable effort will be expended to review and refine training and development strategies for conference service delivery to ensure that our people, internal processes, and technologies are aligned to respond to the current environment, future demands, and the changing needs of clients while constantly strengthening CICS' client service mindset. This initiative will be that much more critical in 2021-22 in view of the COVID-19 situation and its aftermath, and the major impacts on CICS' operations and services.

All of the above initiatives are aligned with the four organizational priorities of the Secretariat:

1) Partnerships; 2) Relevance; 3) Resources; and 4) Innovation.

### **Gender-based analysis plus**

CICS does not work with the public; it works in close collaboration with its clients which are other federal, provincial and territorial government departments. Decisions concerning the location, content, and participants of such meetings are all factors beyond the control of the Secretariat. As a micro agency, there are many unique constraints in terms of financial and human resource capabilities and capacities. CICS strives to create awareness and encouragement of learning opportunities with the goal of increasing labour force participation rates.

### **United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The Secretariat will take action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13), more specifically, target 13.3 (improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning).

### **Experimentation**

CICS has not planned any experimentation activities, but will continue to promote and facilitate innovation. Experimentation is related to, but distinct from innovation (the trying of new things), because it involves a rigorous comparison of results. As a micro-agency, the Secretariat lacks the human and financial resources that would be necessary to support a full-scale and valid experiment.

### **Key risk**

#### *Human Resource Management*

There is a risk that the organization will be unable to sustain an adequate workforce with the appropriate competencies due to a large turnover of staff (retirements & departures, provincial-territorial secondment rotations, peak period staffing), resulting in potential staff shortage, errors, client dissatisfaction, and loss of corporate knowledge and confidence in the organization. This risk was identified in the 2018-19 DP and continues to be a key risk because in a micro-agency, the departure of even one employee has an impact on the organization as a whole. With respect to COVID-19, there is a risk of exposure to the virus through returning to the office and in-person conferences.

In 2020-21, CICS successfully mitigated this risk through the implementation of its most current Human Resources Plan and Succession Plan for key positions. Focus on succession planning remains critical as CICS is forecasting retirements and other departures from critical positions in the short to mid-term. CICS has continued to staff via key streams including students to create a next generation of employees, while also utilizing short term employment mechanisms to ensure

prompt staffing at peak intervals. CICS has also placed a heightened emphasis on rotations as the lean nature of a micro-agency emphasizes the need for an agile and multi-skilled workforce.

#### Planned results for Intergovernmental Conference Services

Departmental result	Departmental result indicator	Target	Date to achieve target	2017–18 actual result	2018–19 actual result	2019–20 actual result
R1: Facilitate productive federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial discussions through centralized planning and professionally supported conferences	Conference organizer satisfaction rate <sup>1</sup>	> 90%	March 31, 2022	93.3%	92.6%	96.8%
	Conference participant satisfaction rate <sup>2</sup>	> 90%	March 31, 2022	92.4%	93%	94.8%
R2: Continuous innovation in process and service delivery to meet evolving client needs	Usage rate of key technologies and service delivery innovations by clients <sup>3</sup>	> 75%	March 31, 2022	79%	83%	83%

Financial, human resources and performance information for the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's program inventory is available in the [GC InfoBase](#).<sup>i</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Proportion of respondents who provide a grade of 4 or 5 out of 5 to a series of interview questions

<sup>2</sup> Proportion of respondents who provide a grade of 4 or 5 out of 5 to a series of survey questions

<sup>3</sup> Percentage of innovative solutions being adopted by clients

Planned budgetary financial resources for Intergovernmental Conference Services

2021–22 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2021–22 planned spending	2022–23 planned spending	2023–24 planned spending
4,666,373	3,991,758	3,991,758	3,991,758

Financial, human resources and performance information for the CICS’s program inventory is available in the [GC InfoBase](#).<sup>ii</sup>

Planned human resources for Intergovernmental Conference Services

2021–22 planned full-time equivalents	2022–23 planned full-time equivalents	2023–24 planned full-time equivalents
25	25	25

Financial, human resources and performance information for the CICS’s program inventory is available in the [GC InfoBase](#).<sup>iii</sup>

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## Internal Services: planned results

### Description

Internal Services are those groups of related activities and resources that the federal government considers to be services in support of Programs and/or required to meet corporate obligations of an organization. Internal Services refers to the activities and resources of the 10 distinct services that support Program delivery in the organization, regardless of the Internal Services delivery model in a department. These services are:

- ▶ Management and Oversight Services
- ▶ Communications Services
- ▶ Legal Services
- ▶ Human Resources Management Services
- ▶ Financial Management Services
- ▶ Information Management Services
- ▶ Information Technology Services
- ▶ Real Property Management Services
- ▶ Materiel Management Services
- ▶ Acquisition Management Services

### Planning highlights

The Internal Services program is expected to support the Agency in meeting its mandate through sound management and careful stewardship of assets, financial and human resources, and information technology services. CICS aims to be an agile department with streamlined processes that are continuously reviewed and improved.

In 2021-22, Internal Services will continue to apply the utmost care and prudence in the handling of public resources, and will monitor and report on its internal control framework. Internal Services will strategically assess all potential investments in Information Technology assets and improvements to services in light of the evolving workplace.

Ongoing efforts will continue to address the pay system issues and support impacted employees. CICS will be working with Public Service and Procurement Canada on the implementation of the Overpayment Project within the organization, with an objective to implement an improved, standardized, end-to-end process for Emergency Salary Advances (ESA) and Priority Payments (PP).

Furthermore, the organization will continue to promote and encourage learning opportunities in order to foster a healthy workplace, promote mental health as well as a culture of continual improvement and innovation. Of note, CICS will ensure the full policy implementation and

completion training for all employees pertaining to Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention.

Finally, CICS will promote innovative recruitment strategies to focus on services-oriented individuals that are capable, talented and high-performing and who embrace new ways of working and the use of new technologies to serve clients’ evolving needs. CICS is committed to building and maintaining an engaged and diversified workforce by devoting time and effort retaining employees and implementing inclusive human resources practices.

In order to evaluate its performance and support openness and transparency in government, CICS will continue to seek internal feedback and develop action plans based on results. Additionally, CICS will analyze and report on audit results and reviews in relation to the identified targets. Actions will be taken as necessary to address any gaps identified in the audits and reviews.

**Planned budgetary financial resources for Internal Services**

2021–22 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2021–22 planned spending	2022–23 planned spending	2023–24 planned spending
1,364,105	1,270,888	1,270,888	1,270,888

**Planned human resources for Internal Services**

2021–22 planned full-time equivalents	2022–23 planned full-time equivalents	2023–24 planned full-time equivalents
7	7	7

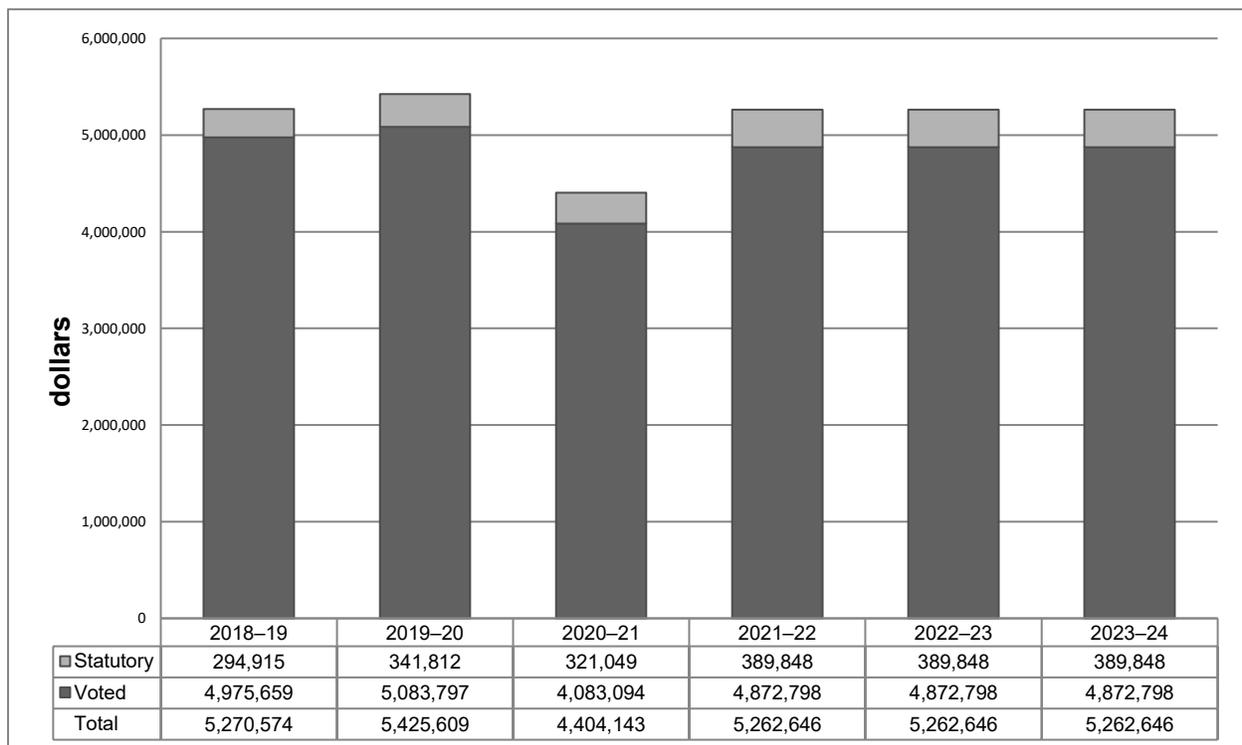
## Spending and human resources

This section provides an overview of the department's planned spending and human resources for the next three consecutive fiscal years and compares planned spending for the upcoming year with the current and previous years' actual spending.

### Planned spending

Departmental spending 2018–19 to 2023–24

The following graph presents planned (voted and statutory) spending over time.



For detailed information see the "Budgetary planning summary for core responsibilities and Internal Services" section of this report.

### Budgetary planning summary for core responsibilities and Internal Services (dollars)

The following table shows actual, forecast and planned spending for each of CICS's core responsibilities and to Internal Services for the years relevant to the current planning year.

Core responsibilities and Internal Services	2018–19 expenditures	2019–20 expenditures	2020–21 forecast spending	2021–22 budgetary spending (as indicated in Main Estimates)	2021–22 planned spending	2022–23 planned spending	2023–24 planned spending
Intergovernmental Conference Services	3,990,884	4,125,601	3,341,384	4,666,373	3,991,758	3,991,758	3,991,758
Internal Services	1,279,690	1,300,008	1,062,759	1,364,105	1,270,888	1,270,888	1,270,888
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,270,574</b>	<b>5,425,609</b>	<b>4,404,143</b>	<b>6,030,478</b>	<b>5,262,646</b>	<b>5,262,646</b>	<b>5,262,646</b>

It is important to note that CICS does not convene intergovernmental meetings. It is called upon to respond to decisions taken by governments to meet on key national or specific issues.

Decisions concerning the location of such meetings, their number in a given fiscal year, their timing and duration, are all factors beyond the control of the Secretariat. The level of CICS expenditures for each fiscal year is, however, directly affected by these factors. An event can consist of one or more conferences and it is used to plan the budget for each of the conferences in terms of transportation and communication, rentals, translation and interpretation services.

The increased spending in 2019-20, compared to 2018-19 was mainly due to an increase in salary charges, resulting from staffing vacant positions.

The expenditures for 2020-21 are anticipated to be approximately \$1 million lower than in 2019-20 due to decreased expenditures as a result of restrictions implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restrictions and an attempt to minimize the spread of the virus, have led to a complete, although temporary, pivot from in-person conferences to videoconferences and teleconferences. The number of conferences in this time period are more than double that of previous years, although less costly per conference due to their virtual nature.

As of December 31, 2020, CICS provided its services to 168 conferences, split between videoconferences and teleconference. In 2020-21, no in-person conferences have taken place due to the pandemic. The forecast from January 1 to March 31, 2021 shows 15 additional conferences. However, videoconferences and teleconferences are often scheduled closer to the date of the event as compared to in-person conference. As such, CICS anticipates notably more than 15 conferences for the remainder of the fiscal year.

With the continued uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, CICS anticipates maintaining the same level of intergovernmental meetings in 2021-22 and for the majority of those meetings to continue to be delivered through videoconference or teleconference.

## Planned human resources

The following table shows actual, forecast and planned full-time equivalents (FTEs) for each core responsibility in CICS's departmental results framework and to Internal Services for the years relevant to the current planning year.

### Human resources planning summary for core responsibilities and Internal Services

Core responsibilities and Internal Services	2018–19 actual full-time equivalents	2019–20 actual full-time equivalents	2020–21 forecast full-time equivalents	2021–22 planned full-time equivalents	2022–23 planned full-time equivalents	2023–24 planned full-time equivalents
Intergovernmental Conference Services	20	22	18	25	25	25
Internal Services	6	8	8	7	7	7
<b>Total</b>	26	30	26	32	32	32

CICS human resources have increased over the last two years due to the staffing of vacant positions. 2020-21 will see a decrease in FTEs as a result of unplanned departures during the year. As a proactive measure, the Secretariat has increased focus on its succession plan to address potential departures. CICS has also developed a career plan to retain current employees and has implemented innovative recruitment strategies. Due to this proactive approach, CICS is now forecasting an FTE increase for 2021-22 as other vacancies are planned to be staffed.

## Estimates by vote

Information on the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's organizational appropriations is available in the [2021–22 Main Estimates](#).<sup>iv</sup>

## Future-oriented Condensed statement of operations

The future-oriented condensed statement of operations provides an overview of the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's operations for 2020–21 to 2021–22.

The amounts for forecast and planned results in this statement of operations were prepared on an accrual basis. The amounts for forecast and planned spending presented in other sections of the Departmental Plan were prepared on an expenditure basis. Amounts may therefore differ.

A more detailed future-oriented statement of operations and associated notes, including a reconciliation of the net cost of operations to the requested authorities, are available on the [Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's website](#).

Future-oriented Condensed statement of operations for the year ending March 31, 2022 (dollars)

Financial information	2020–21 forecast results	2021–22 planned results	Difference (2021–22 planned results minus 2020–21 forecast results)
Total expenses	4,985,965	5,887,926	901,961
Total revenues	0	0	0
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	4,985,965	5,887,926	901,961

Forecasted results for 2020-21 are anticipated to be approximately \$900 thousand lower than the 2021-22 planned results. On account of the COVID-19 pandemic, CICS has only held videoconferences and teleconferences during the fiscal year. The direct costs of these meetings are significantly less than in-person meetings which has resulted in a reduction in expenses.

Total expenses are anticipated to approach normal levels in 2021-22, with a partial return to in-person meetings during the fiscal year and an expected significantly greater need (and cost) to fully support remote participants in these. The organization anticipates conference numbers in 2021-22 to be similar to the levels in 2020-21, almost double the number those of previous years. CICS has planned expenditures to improve IT infrastructure and also to renew equipment relating to conference support services during 2021-22. In addition, CICS will be staffed at full strength to support the heightened demand for its services.

## Corporate information

### Organizational profile

**Appropriate minister(s):** The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc

**Institutional head:** André M. McArdle

**Ministerial portfolio:** Intergovernmental Affairs

**Enabling instrument(s):** The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat was established pursuant to an agreement reached at the May 1973 First Ministers' Conference and was designated a department of the federal government by an Order-in-Council dated November 29, 1973.

**Year of incorporation / commencement:** 1973

### Raison d'être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do

“Raison d'être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do” is available on the [Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's website](#).

For more information on the department's organizational mandate letter commitments, see the [“Minister's mandate letter”](#).

### Operating context

The number of meetings served annually since 2016-17 has been well above the 15-year average. During the same period, we have seen an increase in meetings that utilize more virtual technologies, such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing, with the number of virtual meetings being consistently in the 33-40% range as a proportion of the total number of conferences served each year. These numbers do not take into consideration the dramatic increase in (virtual) conferences served since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a trend that is expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

As governments and senior officials change across Canada, it is important for CICS to maintain and renew its relationships with client governments to actively promote the organization and its services, as well as its neutrality. Communication efforts are continuing in order to sustain the number of intergovernmental conferences we serve.

CICS has remained at the forefront of providing conference support services through the Modernization of our delivery model and the deployment of innovations, such as our new in-house virtual conferencing studio. This has led to an ever-increasing number of virtual conferences, particularly teleconferences, with simultaneous interpretation in both official languages. The utilization of these virtual conferencing methods allows all federal, provincial,

territorial governments to reduce both travel time and costs that are associated with participation. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced an even greater shift away from in-person meetings, resulting in higher client expectations in terms of turnaround times and web-conferencing platform alternatives. Updating CICS' organizational structure to reflect the current environment will be a crucial exercise in driving the Secretariat to fulfill its need for specialized skills in virtual conferencing technology. With the goal of increasing internal specialization, CICS is proud to continue offering a wide array of conference solutions that respond to these client needs.

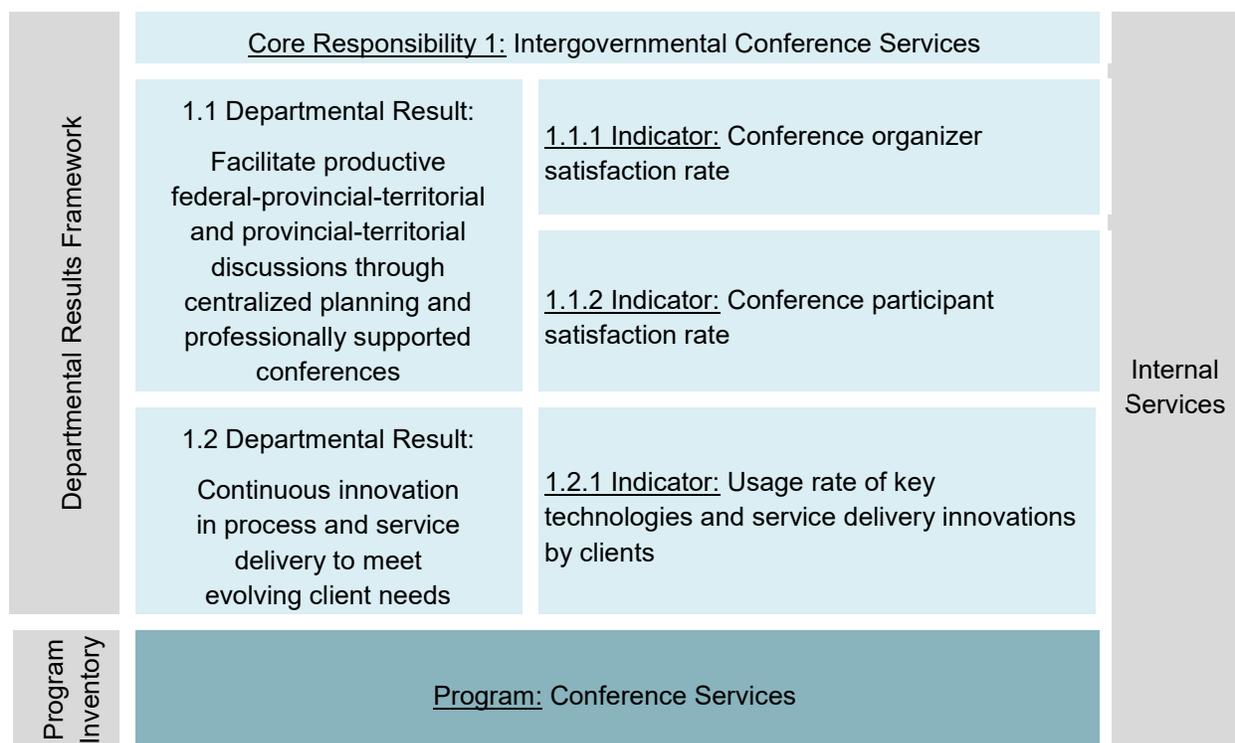
In the next few years, a significant number of the Secretariat's federal public servants will be eligible to retire. These retirements along with the usual provincial-territorial employee rotations will challenge CICS' ability to meet demand of conference activity, and to sustain a knowledgeable workforce with the appropriate competencies. Having succession and transition plans in place for key positions—as well as developmental opportunities for those employees with the desire and ability to be promoted within the organization—will continue to be a critical strategic priority.

The attraction and retention of young, ambitious and motivated staff creates a unique challenge for a micro-agency such as CICS due to employees' limited upward mobility within a small organization. The agency now makes use of the Federal Student Work Exchange Program and CO-OP Programs on a regular basis to encourage interest in a public service career. Sustained efforts will be exerted to maintain and improve employee retention by creating an environment conducive to career development and job satisfaction.

Information on the operating context is available on the [Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's website](#).

## Reporting framework

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat’s approved departmental results framework and program inventory for 2021–22 are as follows:



### Changes to the approved reporting framework since 2020–21

Two indicators have been removed from the reporting framework: 1) Percentage change in number of conferences served by the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat annually, and 2) Number of innovations in technologies and service delivery implemented out of those identified. The purpose of these indicators was to assist the reader in understanding the context in which CICS operates. Given the fact that these are contextual indicators, they cannot have a target and were therefore removed from the reporting framework. However, these indicators will be discussed in the “Plans at a Glance” section, which allows for a more comprehensive explanation.

Structure	2021-22	2020-21	Change	Reason for change
<b>CORE RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Intergovernmental Conference Services	Intergovernmental Conference Services	No change	Not applicable
<b>PROGRAM</b>	Conference Services	Conference Services	No change	Not applicable

## Supporting information on the program inventory

Supporting information on planned expenditures, human resources, and results related to the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's program inventory is available in the [GC InfoBase](#).<sup>v</sup>

## Supplementary information tables

The following supplementary information tables are available on the [Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat’s website](#):

- ▶ [Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#)
- ▶ [Gender-based analysis plus](#)

## Federal tax expenditures

Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat’s Departmental Plan does not include information on tax expenditures that relate to its planned results for 2021–22.

Tax expenditures are the responsibility of the Minister of Finance, and the Department of Finance Canada publishes cost estimates and projections for government-wide tax expenditures each year in the [Report on Federal Tax Expenditures](#).<sup>vi</sup> This report provides detailed information on tax expenditures, including objectives, historical background and references to related federal spending programs, as well as evaluations, research papers and gender-based analysis. The tax measures presented in this report are solely the responsibility of the Minister of Finance.

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## Appendix: 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, organizations 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 a department over a 3-year period. Departmental Plans are tabled in Parliament each spring.

### **departmental priority (priorité ministérielle)**

A plan or project that a department has chosen to focus and report on during the planning period. Departmental priorities represent the things that are most important or what must be done first to support the achievement of the desired departmental results.

### **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 factor or variable that provides a valid and reliable means to measure or describe progress on a departmental result.

### **departmental results framework (cadre ministériel des résultats)**

A framework that consists of the department's core responsibilities, 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.

**experimentation (expérimentation)**

The conducting of activities that seek to first explore, then test and compare, the effects and impacts of policies and interventions in order to inform evidence-based decision-making, and improve outcomes for Canadians, by learning what works and what doesn't. Experimentation is related to, but distinct from innovation (the trying of new things), because it involves a rigorous comparison of results. For example, using a new website to communicate with Canadians can be an innovation; systematically testing the new website against existing outreach tools or an old website to see which one leads to more engagement, is experimentation.

**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. Full-time equivalents are calculated as a ratio of assigned hours of work to scheduled hours of work. Scheduled hours of work are set out in collective agreements.

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

An analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people experience policies, programs and services based on multiple factors including race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability.

**government-wide priorities (priorités pangouvernementales)**

For the purpose of the 2021–22 Departmental Plan, government-wide priorities refers to those high-level themes outlining the government's agenda in the 2020 Speech from the Throne, namely: Protecting Canadians from COVID-19; Helping Canadians through the pandemic; Building back better – a resiliency agenda for the middle class; The Canada we're fighting for.

**horizontal initiative (initiative horizontale)**

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

**non-budgetary expenditures (dépenses non budgétaires)**

Net outlays and receipts related to loans, investments and advances, which change the composition of the financial assets of the Government of Canada.

**performance (rendement)**

What an organization did with its resources to achieve its results, how well those results compare to what the organization 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 an organization, program, policy or initiative respecting expected results.

**performance reporting (production de rapports sur le rendement)**

The process of communicating evidence-based performance information. Performance reporting supports decision-making, accountability and transparency.

**plan (plan)**

The articulation of strategic choices, which provides information on how an organization 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 up to the expected result.

**planned spending (dépenses prévues)**

For Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports, planned spending refers to those amounts presented in the 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 of the department's programs and describes how resources are organized to contribute to the department's core responsibilities and results.

**result (résultat)**

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

**strategic outcome (résultat stratégique)**

A long-term and enduring benefit to Canadians that is linked to the organization's mandate, vision and core functions.

**target (cible)**

A measurable performance or success level that an organization, 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.

## Endnotes

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- i. GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- ii. GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- iii. GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- iv. 2020–21 Main Estimates, <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/planned-government-spending/government-expenditure-plan-main-estimates.html>
- v. GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- vi. Report on Federal Tax Expenditures, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/services/publications/federal-tax-expenditures.html>