

2020–21  
Departmental Results Report

**Canadian Intergovernmental  
Conference Secretariat**

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The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, P.C., Q.C., M.P.  
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure  
and Communities

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## From the Institutional Head

I am pleased to table the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's (CICS) 2020-21 Departmental Results Report.

Since its creation in May 1973, CICS's mandate has been to provide the administrative and logistical support required for the planning and conduct of federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers across Canada. These multilateral meetings continue to be a key component of Canadian federalism. They are a valued instrument for open communication, coordination, consultation and collaboration among federal, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments.



One of the top priorities for the Secretariat 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. However, an unexpected factor came into play a few weeks before the start of this fiscal year: a pandemic that had significant and unprecedented impacts on governments' ability to plan, host and participate in intergovernmental meetings. In this unforeseen context, the Secretariat's ability to realign and retool quickly in response to such a dramatic shift in its operating environment demonstrated yet again the organization's adaptability and its personnel's resolve and dedication to its vision, "Working together to make it happen", no matter what the circumstances. This is how in 2020-21, in the context of the pandemic and all its challenges, CICS was able to support 219 senior level intergovernmental meetings, almost double what we normally serve in a year.

In hindsight, there is no doubt that the "modernization" exercise that CICS conducted in previous years prepared our organization very well for the many changes and the quick decision-making that were necessary to turn the ship around. This level of preparedness and the ability to maintain top-quality service through it all earned CICS a satisfaction rate of 91.8% in our latest annual survey of conference organizers. We could not have done this without our clients' and our partners' understanding and determination to explore, adapt and ultimately succeed in the new COVID reality.

André M. McArdle



## Results at a glance

### Key results achieved in 2020-21

- A videoconferencing platform (secure, user-friendly and with integrated interpretation module) was implemented and quickly became key to the rapid uptake and success of videoconferencing as our clients’ preferred meeting format during the ongoing pandemic. It will most certainly continue to be used for fully virtual meetings in the future and to link remote participants to in-person meetings when these resume.
- CICS expanded its slate of services in support of videoconferences. This includes online registration of delegates and access to documents; assistance with presentations in screen-share mode; expanded moderator role for CICS conference managers; break-outs and other forms of parallel meetings for discussions, communiqué preparation, virtual press conferences, etc.

CICS continued to focus on innovation and delivering high-quality, responsive, and cost-effective conference services to federal, provincial, and territorial governments while adapting its operations and services to a fully virtual mode after February 2020, due to the COVID pandemic. The Secretariat made great strides to develop and implement new technologies and processes, with a focus on addressing technical and other challenges related to video- and teleconferencing with interpretation. As a result of these modernization improvements, CICS was able to react swiftly and seamlessly to the impacts of the complete shift towards teleconferencing during the first three months of the pandemic, then the introduction and rapid uptake of web-conferencing starting in late May 2020.

#### Actual full-time equivalents

27

The Secretariat provided equipment to all employees in order for them to be fully mobile, and put forward new processes to ensure that its workforce was fully operational outside of the office and could support all virtual conferences remotely. In addition, the successful implementation of new policies, tools and procedures will give our workforce the flexibility to be fully productive from anywhere in Canada, either from the office, from a conference site or from home.

#### Actual spending

\$4,665,243

CICS provided its services to 219 senior-level intergovernmental conferences, nearly twice the number served the previous year. The all-virtual environment throughout 2020-21 included 124 teleconferences and 95 videoconferences, the latter being a completely new venture for the Secretariat which, until then, had only served the more “traditional” form of videoconferencing where delegates at various locations across Canada gathered to participate in virtual meetings from boardrooms equipped with permanent VC equipment. The need for social distancing made such facilities inappropriate, and “at-desk” technologies had to be adopted instead. In spite of this significant shift in approach, overall client satisfaction levels continued to be very high. For conference delegates, client satisfaction reached 88% in spite of the complete shift to virtual meetings and all the adjustments that were necessary as a result. For conference planners, the 90% target was

exceeded with a satisfaction rate of 91.8%, the highest rating in the 5 years since the organizer satisfaction rate has been measured separately for virtual meetings.

For more information on the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat’s plans, priorities and results achieved, see the “[Results: what we achieved](#)” section of this report.



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## Results: what we achieved

### Core responsibility

**Description:** The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat provides continuity of planning and archival services as well as impartial administrative support, for federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, throughout Canada.

#### Results:

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. These meetings contribute to this government’s key policy goal of enhancing partnerships with provincial and territorial governments and Indigenous partners, communities and governments. As the COVID-19 crisis evolved, collaboration between federal, provincial and territorial governments as well as Indigenous communities became even more critical in responding to the urgent health, economic and social impacts of the pandemic. As a result, CICS saw the number of intergovernmental meetings nearly double in comparison to the level seen in 2019-20. This record level and pace of activity as well as the complete shift to virtual meeting formats resulted in an even greater reliance on the services and competencies of CICS by conference delegates as well as other stakeholders including meeting organizers and permanent secretariats that supported intergovernmental relations in the 39 sectors of activity served in 2020-21. Although the number of client sectors served was very similar to the two previous years, many needed to hold meetings on a very regular basis which was an important reason for the high number of meetings served, overall.

Throughout the year, the Agency demonstrated its capacity to respond (often on short notice) to the very high demand for its support of virtual meetings, ensuring that its services remained relevant, forward looking and of the highest quality. More than ever, CICS made good on its commitment to proactively lead the way, to advise, guide and encourage its clients to adopt new and innovative approaches to support senior-level intergovernmental meetings in a fully virtual mode and to help maintain strong, open and collaborative relationships between the federal, provincial and territorial governments at a most critical time. For example, CICS personnel spent considerable time and effort coaching meeting chairs, participants and presenters in the use of the new videoconferencing platform ahead of, and during meetings. As part of our promotional work in support of the VC format, we informed and reassured meeting organizers on aspects such as security, technical requirements, VC etiquette and other best practices. Service delivery procedures and tools were reviewed and adapted as required to fit the much more rapid pace of planning and delivering virtual meetings, including greatly reduced lead times to organize all the necessary supports such as AV, interpretation, etc.

This expanded leadership role in the midst of the COVID pandemic was enabled and fulfilled in 2020-21 through the ongoing implementation of the best practices and the “gold-standard”

technologies and methods identified during the modernization exercise that CICS conducted in 2018.

Activities and actions in 2020-21 were undertaken or broadened in support of the following five key initiatives, designed to fulfill/advance the Agency’s core responsibility, at a time of great change and in such ways that could not have been predicted in the months ahead of the COVID pandemic:

<b>Key Initiative 1: Proactively connect with intergovernmental stakeholders and other clients</b>	
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve recognition among governments of CICS as the key conference service provider for senior-level intergovernmental meetings. To do so, the organization will expand its methods and networks to ensure that it remains at the forefront of evolving event management technologies and processes. It will also develop and improve client guidance and information documents and conduct forums in order to become a hub for access to timely and innovative event management solutions for the benefit of its clients;</li> <li>• Develop and explore opportunities with new partners;</li> <li>• Market CICS and its services effectively, so that new and existing clients alike are aware of the Agency’s service offerings as these are adapted and evolve over time.</li> </ul>
<b>Results Obtained</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2020-21, CICS supported 219 conferences, almost double the number served the previous year. This level of activity was distributed amongst a very similar number of client sectors as in the past two years. However, many of them held series of regular meetings during the year, which accounted in good part for the record number of meetings served. CICS even added a few new clients such as Finance Ministers as well as groups that met on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and National Defence’s Seamless Canada initiative.</li> <li>• The sudden and complete shift from in-person to virtual meeting formats provided yet another excellent opportunity to strengthen relations with meeting organizers in all 14 client governments in 2020-21 as they relied heavily on CICS’ experience and competencies to guide and advise them on the technical aspects of virtual conferencing and the related support services.</li> <li>• The COVID situation and the inability to operate from CICS’ offices including its own studio also required that the Agency resume its partnership with and use of private sector audio visual studios. During the first quarter of the fiscal year, CICS also conducted extensive testing of new</li> </ul>

	<p>tele- and videoconferencing technologies in order to offer services of the highest quality, especially in relation to remote interpretation in support of virtual meetings. A Knowledge Exchange Forum was not held in 2020-21 due to the COVID pandemic and the resulting unprecedented level of activity as well as a staff shortage in Conference Services. This event was finally held in June 2021 with great success, bringing together the largest number of participants in recent years. A full report on this event will be included in CICS' 2021-22 Departmental Results Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The significant and unexpected demand for video- or teleconferencing with interpretation, as a result of the pandemic, required that CICS strengthen its network of private sector interpretation and AV suppliers. In the longer term, these partnerships will continue to position CICS very well to offer sustained, effective and efficient interpretation services to its clients in support of fully-virtual meetings that are expected to remain popular but also to link even more remote participants to in-person meetings when these resume.</li> </ul>
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<b>Key Initiative 2: Encourage the use of new formats and technologies in conference service delivery</b>	
Planned Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support/facilitate virtual meetings or the remote participation of delegates, presenters and others in in-person meetings, through (1) enhanced tele-, video- and web-conferencing capabilities and (2) the development of guides and best practices intended for organizers and participants. This will be performed with a view to help achieve the 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;</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Results Obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the popularity of teleconferencing remained high during the first four months of the fiscal year, videoconferencing gradually became the preferred virtual meeting format amongst CICS clients. Although 13 (or 59%) of 22 sectors served during the first half of the fiscal year used videoconferencing, this proportion increased significantly during the next six months and resulted in 32 (or 80%) of 39 sectors served during the entire fiscal year having used videoconferencing as a meeting format (see departmental result R2 in the "<a href="#">Results achieved</a>" table below). This important uptake of videoconferencing by CICS clients was due not only to the addition of image (making for a much more interactive experience for meeting participants) but also the far better quality of the audio for</li> </ul>

	<p>delegates and interpreters alike. Testing continued and resulted in even further improvements to the sound quality of virtual meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The growing popularity of these videoconferencing services, as well as the enhancement of our remote support services, have enabled us to continue to provide unparalleled service to our federal, provincial and territorial clients, regardless of their location in the country. At the same time, the successful implementation of remote interpretation services to support virtual meetings has allowed us to maintain a bilingual environment for all participants.</li> <li>• Planning guides and tools for organizers of in-person events were completed but have been set aside until such events resume. Best practices intended for organizers and the chairs and participants in intergovernmental video- and teleconferences were developed and immediately implemented to coincide with the adoption of virtual meeting formats early in the fiscal year.</li> </ul>
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<b>Key Initiative 3: Review and refine training strategies for conference service delivery</b>	
Planned Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 strengthening CICS’ client service mindset.</li> </ul>
Results obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout 2020-21, training and development opportunities were provided to all Conference Services personnel as they learned to function through telework and to support meetings completely remotely, as effectively and seamlessly as possible.</li> <li>• In addition, new project teams were created to analyze virtual conferencing uptake, current models and technologies utilized, as well as client needs and feedback to improve upon the current model. Eying heightened client needs for flexibility in conference delivery, this included the investment in new assets to maintain and increase the accessibility to conferences for attendees, while ensuring client satisfaction in light of an environment focused on virtual and hybrid conferencing formats.</li> </ul>

<b>Key Initiative 4: Implement client surveys upgraded in 2019-20, while maintaining a target satisfaction rate of at least 90%</b>	
Planned Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully implement client surveys of both conference planners and delegates to ensure an improved level of response that captures effective feedback in relation to virtual as well as in-person meetings.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze these program evaluation results and use as a primary source of information to determine service improvements and measure success in achieving our overall objective of service excellence and responsiveness.</li> </ul>
Results Obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client satisfaction surveys upgraded or expanded in 2019-20 were fully implemented.</li> <li>The two survey types (one of an annual sampling of conference organizers and the other of delegates after each event) are used to assess client satisfaction, which continues to be very high. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For conference delegates, the satisfaction rate reached 88% in 2020-21, a remarkable achievement in an all-virtual mode (including the new videoconferencing format and platform) and at a time of complete transformation of CICS' operations and services as a result of COVID.</li> <li>The rating from organizers of virtual meetings served through 2020 was 91.8%, the highest rating achieved in the five years since organizer satisfaction has been measured separately for virtual meetings.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Results for 9 of the 11 questions used to assess organizer satisfaction rate were sustained or better in 2020, compared to the previous year.</li> </ul>

**Key Initiative 5: Continue using internal committees and employee input for program decision-making and to continuously innovate**

Planned Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take full advantage of staff's experience, skills, knowledge and innovative ideas.</li> </ul>
Results Obtained	<p>While it might be more difficult in a remote working environment to innovate or to promote the environment, our two staff-driven committees proved to be highly adaptable and efficient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Innovation Committee was able to question, analyze and modernize or completely reinvent certain existing practices, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installed a secure locker in the lobby of our offices so that exchange of material can be done without staff having to physically interact with each other.</li> <li>Modernized our tool set to collaborate more efficiently remotely.</li> <li>Found new and innovative ways to foster team cohesion while working remotely.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Digitalized most of our historical paper records, in order to have remote access when required.</li> <li>● The Eco-committee, whose task is to promote best practices to benefit the environment, has also brought innovative ideas to the Secretariat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Activities were done to raise awareness of the use of plastics in day to day life and alternatives to reduce it.</li> <li>○ Monthly newsletters were provided to raise staff awareness on various ecological issues.</li> <li>○ A list of innovative, ecological ideas was created for implementation when employees return to the office.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## Results achieved

Departmental results	Performance indicators	Target	Date to achieve target	2018–19 Actual results	2019–20 Actual results	2020–21 Actual results
R1: Facilitate productive federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) and provincial-territorial (PT) discussions through centralized, professionally planned and supported conferences	Conference organizer satisfaction rate <sup>1</sup>	> 90%	March 31, 2021	92.6%	96.8%	91.8%
	Conference participant satisfaction rate <sup>2</sup>	> 90%	March 31, 2021	93%	95%	88%
	Percentage change in the number of conferences served by CICS <sup>3</sup>	n/a	March 31, 2021	-9%	-5%	84%
R2: Continuous innovation in process and service delivery to meet evolving client needs	Number of innovations in technologies and service delivery implemented out of those identified <sup>4</sup>	n/a	March 31, 2021	4	7	6
	Usage rate of key technologies and service delivery innovations by clients <sup>5</sup>	> 75%	March 31, 2021	83%	83%	80%

<sup>1</sup> Proportion of respondents who provide a grade of 4 or 5 out of 5 to a series of interview questions (based entirely on virtual meetings in 2020-21, due to COVID, as opposed to all types of meetings in previous years).

<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> Number of conferences served in a given year against the previous year.

<sup>4</sup> Number of innovative solutions implemented.

<sup>5</sup> Percentage of innovative solutions being adopted by clients. An explanation of the 2020-21 Actual Results is provided in «Results Obtained» for Key Initiative 2, above.

## Budgetary financial resources (dollars)

2020–21 Main Estimates	2020–21 Planned spending	2020–21 Total authorities available for use	2020–21 Actual spending (authorities used)	2020–21 Difference (Actual spending minus Planned spending)
4,520,258	4,301,526	4,817,238	3,369,649	(931,877)

## Human resources (full-time equivalents)

2020–21 Planned full-time equivalents	2020–21 Actual full-time equivalents	2020–21 Difference (Actual full-time equivalents minus Planned full-time equivalents)
25	20	(5)

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

## Internal Services

### 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 service categories that support Program delivery in the organization, regardless of the Internal Services delivery model in a department. The 10 service categories are:

- ▶ Acquisition Management Services
- ▶ Communication Services
- ▶ Financial Management Services
- ▶ Human Resources Management Services
- ▶ Information Management Services
- ▶ Information Technology Services
- ▶ Legal Services
- ▶ Material Management Services
- ▶ Management and Oversight Services
- ▶ Real Property Management Services

## Results of the planning highlights

The Internal Services program supports the agency in meeting its mandate through sound management and careful stewardship of assets, financial and human resources, and information technology services.

During the pandemic, the Secretariat chose to emphasize well-being, while ensuring ample time for employees to focus on the delivery of core services without creating fatigue. The Secretariat sought creative solutions and input from employees across horizontal working groups to address its delivery of purely virtual conference support services throughout the pandemic. Employees focused their efforts on key priorities stemming from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which included adjusting to their new work arrangements and identifying innovative technological solutions and key asset acquisitions to deliver leading edge virtual conferencing solutions to CICS clients. This approach was highly successful, as employees navigated several real time learning experiences within their role, testing and adopting new methods to support client's virtual conferencing needs.

CICS promoted and encouraged learning opportunities to foster a healthy workplace, promote mental health and to ensure a culture of continuous improvement and innovation by inviting guest speakers to talk about these subjects and by sending related information bulletins with resources to employees. Group sessions were organized throughout the pandemic to virtually bring employees together and promote better mental health on a recurring basis, as well as to address emerging topics impacting both the federal public service and Canadians. CICS participated in numerous working groups and committees focusing on diversity and inclusion in both the workplace and HR practices themselves. Resulting from these committees and sessions, CICS' Deputy Head committed, in partnership with other Human Resources Council members, to take a stand against systemic racism in the public service. Concrete actions implemented thereafter focused on recruitment, commitment to personal learning and increased self-awareness as well as support of leadership development programs for Indigenous, Black and other racialized employees. In addition CICS management remains informed of recruiting opportunities as they relate to equity groups and their representation within the organization.

Additionally, employee learning plans were updated to include additional training on workplace safety. In accordance with the Work Place Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulation under the Canada Labour Code, the organization began developing the CICS Policy on Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention.

CICS continued its efforts to address pay system issues and continued to support impacted employees. During the year, CICS worked closely with its Compensation Services Provider to further standardize and to address future salary overpayments. CICS also devoted internal efforts to detect and correct employee pay issues in a timelier manner by developing and implementing new processes and verifications.



**Budgetary financial resources (dollars)**

2020–21 Main Estimates	2020–21 Planned spending	2020–21 Total authorities available for use	2020–21 Actual spending (authorities used)	2020–21 Difference (Actual spending minus Planned spending)
1,435,763	1,370,427	1,505,045	1,295,594	(74,833)

**Human resources (full-time equivalents)**

2020–21 Planned full-time equivalents	2020–21 Actual full-time equivalents	2020–21 Difference (Actual full-time equivalents minus Planned full-time equivalents)
7	7	0

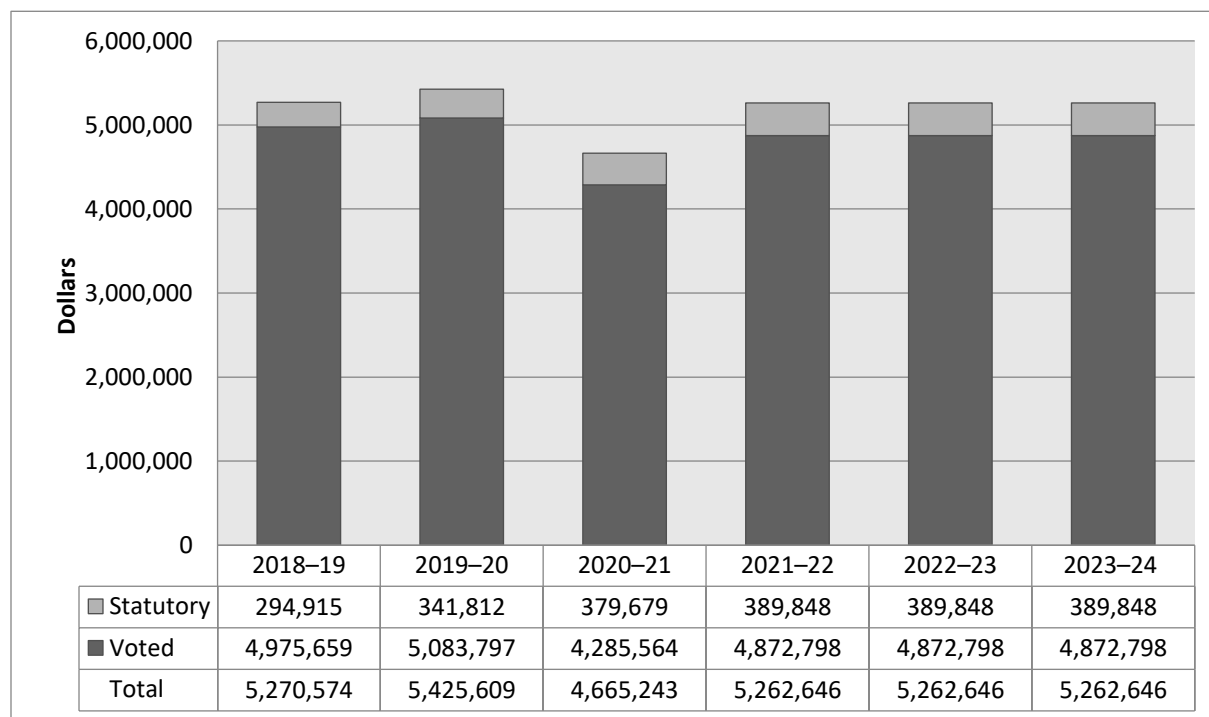


## Analysis of trends in spending and human resources

### Actual expenditures

#### Departmental spending trend graph

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



#### Budgetary performance summary for Core Responsibilities and Internal Services (dollars)

Core responsibilities and Internal Services	2020–21 Main Estimates	2020–21 Planned spending	2021–22 Planned spending	2022–23 Planned spending	2020–21 Total authorities available for use	2018–19 Actual spending (authorities used)	2019–20 Actual spending (authorities used)	2020–21 Actual spending (authorities used)
Intergovernmental Conference Services	4,520,258	4,301,526	3,991,758	3,991,758	4,817,238	3,990,884	4,125,601	3,369,649
Internal Services	1,435,763	1,370,427	1,270,888	1,270,888	1,505,045	1,279,690	1,300,008	1,295,594
Total	5,956,021	5,671,953	5,262,646	5,262,646	6,322,283	5,270,574	5,425,609	4,665,243

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 and format 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. CICS does exercise due care and probity in the expenditure of its funds to meet its mandate, planning for variances for both conference volume, support level and format to ensure continued operation within its available budget. As illustrated in this report, fiscal year 2020-21 was wholly impacted by the pandemic, resulting in no in-person meetings, which are traditionally more costly. Although this temporary shift to alternative (virtual) formats resulted in lower than forecasted expenditures overall, some of the savings generated by this shift, such as the decrease of overtime and travel costs, were reallocated to address new expenditures, such as the implementation of new videoconferencing technologies and tools, and the contracting of private interpreters and AV studios to meet the new demand.

## Actual human resources

### Human resources 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 Planned full-time equivalents	2020–21 Actual full-time equivalents	2021–22 Planned full-time equivalents	2022–23 Planned full-time equivalents
Intergovernmental Conference Services	20	22	25	20	25	25
Internal Services	6	8	7	7	7	7
Total	26	30	32	27	32	32

CICS experienced a high number of vacancies in 2020-21 due to employee departures and employees on leave. In an attempt to minimize the number of staffing processes during the pandemic, CICS put in place temporary measures for some positions while others remained unstaffed on a temporary basis. The temporary hold in staffing occurred in order for the Secretariat to identify and weigh new priorities in staffing as they related to the significantly altered, virtual client service delivery model. Staffing processes were launched thereafter for the second half of the fiscal year.

Time and effort were devoted to retaining new employees through the continued offering of mentoring programs, increased acting opportunities in key roles and also employee rotations to learn new roles across unrelated streams. Emphasizing career progression, CICS created more temporary flexible staffing opportunities, allowing for the continued progression of existing staff within the Secretariat.

## Expenditures by vote

For information on the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat’s organizational voted and statutory expenditures, consult the [Public Accounts of Canada 2020–2021](#).<sup>ii</sup>

## Government of Canada spending and activities

Information on the alignment of the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat’s spending with the Government of Canada’s spending and activities is available in [GC InfoBase](#).<sup>iii</sup>

## Financial statements and financial statements highlights

### Financial statements

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat’s [financial statements \(unaudited\)](#)<sup>iv</sup> for the year ended March 31, 2021, are available on the departmental website.

### Financial statement highlights

#### Condensed Statement of Operations (unaudited) for the year ended March 31, 2021 (dollars)

Financial information	2020–21 Planned results	2020–21 Actual results	2019–20 Actual results	Difference (2020–21 Actual results minus 2020–21 Planned results)	Difference (2020–21 Actual results minus 2019–20 Actual results)
Total expenses	6,212,635	5,360,056	6,119,422	(852,579)	(759,366)
Total revenues	0	0	0	0	0
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	6,212,635	5,360,056	6,119,422	(852,579)	(759,366)

A [detailed future-oriented statement of operations](#)<sup>v</sup> and associated notes, including a reconciliation of the net cost of operations to the requested authorities, are available on the departmental website.

The variance between planned results and actual results relate to a marked reduction in non-salary expenditures throughout the COVID-19 pandemic due to an evolved service delivery model. In addition, CICS continues to experience vacancies in the organization, resulting in lower than planned salary expenditures.

Total expenses were approximately \$5.4 million, roughly \$759 thousand less than the previous year. Fiscal year 2020-21 was wholly impacted by the pandemic, resulting in no in-person meetings, which are traditionally more costly. Consequently, there was a decrease of \$561 thousand in transportation and communications, and a combined decrease of \$309 thousand relating to rentals, equipment and professional and special services. By contrast, salary expenditures rose \$200 thousand mainly due to the fact that collective bargaining salary increases were finalized, while the Secretariat also cash managed numerous maternity and parental leaves.

### Condensed Statement of Financial Position (unaudited) as of March 31, 2021 (dollars)

Financial information	2020–21	2019–20	Difference (2020–21 minus 2019–20)
Total net liabilities	686,327	601,883	84,444
Total net financial assets	428,007	963,667	(535,660)
Departmental net debt	258,320	(361,784)	620,104
Total non-financial assets	7,341	50,666	(43,325)
Departmental net financial position	(250,979)	412,450	(663,429)

Total liabilities were approximately \$686 thousand, an increase of approximately \$84 thousand (14%) over the previous year. Accounts payable and accrued liabilities make up the largest component, representing 58% of total liabilities. The overall increase is mainly due to an increase in vacation pay and compensatory leave liabilities, which increased \$99 thousand.

Total net financial assets were approximately \$428 thousand as at March 31, 2021, a decrease of around \$536 thousand (56%) over the previous year. The overall decrease is mainly attributable to a reduction in accounts receivable from other government departments due to timing difference in processing invoices. This reduction also includes a decrease of \$359 thousand related to receivables due from external parties, since the pandemic led to the delayed receipt of provincial contributions, creating higher than normal receivables in 2019-20.

Total non-financial assets were approximately \$7 thousand as at March 31, 2021, a decrease of some \$43 thousand (86%) over the previous year. The decrease is mainly due to the amortization of tangible capital assets. Non-financial assets are comprised of tangible capital assets and prepaid expenses.

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## Corporate Information

### Organizational profile

**Appropriate minister:** The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc

**Institutional head:** André M. McArdle

**Ministerial portfolio:** Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities

**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](#)<sup>vi</sup>.

For more information on the department's organizational mandate letter commitments, see the [Minister's mandate letter](#)<sup>vii</sup>.

### Operating context

Little did we know, back in February 2020, that COVID-19 would have such a dramatic and long-term impact on CICS, the 39 sectors we serve, and the entire approach to senior level intergovernmental meetings.

At the beginning of the pandemic, as CICS personnel learned to telework full-time, we also began to turn around our service delivery model a full 180 degrees. For three months after in-person meetings stopped, teleconferencing became the go-to format for intergovernmental meetings. But in mid-May, demand started growing for videoconferencing services, as a higher quality and more convivial and effective way for governments to interact.

But in the world of COVID-19 and social distancing, delegates at various locations across Canada could no longer gather in boardrooms equipped with videoconferencing equipment, the way they had traditionally done when using that meeting format. CICS therefore had to quickly turn to “at-desk” videoconferencing technologies that participants could easily use at home. This started a gradual but decisive switch from teleconferences to videoconferences, as more and more of our clients experienced the advantages of this more interactive format. Of course, videoconferencing wasn't new in 2020, but it had been used only in a limited way for senior level intergovernmental meetings before then.

In the year ahead, thanks to client sectors’ very positive experience with videoconferencing since May 2020 and the many benefits of this format (not the least of which are lower cost and reduced carbon footprint), we expect that virtual meetings will continue to be widely used for senior level intergovernmental meetings. Similarly, once in-person conferences resume, we anticipate an increase in the number of remote participants at those meetings. We are therefore committed to developing our technical competencies and videoconferencing equipment to ensure that we are able to meet the demand for virtual, in-person and hybrid conferences in the years to come.

## Reporting framework

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat’s Departmental Results Framework and Program Inventory of record for 2020–21 are shown below.

Departmental Results Framework	<b><u>Core Responsibility 1: Intergovernmental Conference Services</u></b>		Internal Services
	<p><b><u>1.1 Departmental Result:</u></b> Facilitate productive federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial discussions through centralized planning and professionally supported conferences</p>	<p><b><u>1.1.1 Indicator:</u></b> Conference organizer satisfaction rate</p>	
		<p><b><u>1.1.2 Indicator:</u></b> Conference participant satisfaction rate</p>	
		<p><b><u>1.1.3 Indicator:</u></b> Percentage change in the number of conferences served by the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat annually</p>	
<p><b><u>1.2 Departmental Result:</u></b> Continuous innovation in process and service delivery to meet evolving client needs</p>	<p><b><u>1.2.1 Indicator:</u></b> Number of innovations in technologies and service delivery implemented out of those identified</p> <p><b><u>1.2.2 Indicator:</u></b> Usage rate of key technologies and service delivery innovations by clients</p>		
Program Inventory	<b><u>Program: Conference Services</u></b>		



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## Supporting information on the program inventory

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

## Supplementary information tables

The following supplementary information tables are available on the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's website:

- ▶ [Reporting on Green Procurement](#)<sup>ix</sup>
- ▶ [Gender-based analysis plus](#)<sup>x</sup>
- ▶ [Response to parliamentary committees and external audits](#)<sup>xi</sup>

## Federal tax expenditures

The tax system can be used to achieve public policy objectives through the application of special measures such as low tax rates, exemptions, deductions, deferrals and credits. The Department of Finance Canada publishes cost estimates and projections for these measures each year in the [Report on Federal Tax Expenditures](#).<sup>xii</sup> This report also provides detailed background information on tax expenditures, including descriptions, objectives, historical information and references to related federal spending programs as well as evaluations and GBA+ of tax expenditures.

## Organizational contact information

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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 an appropriated department over a 3-year period. Departmental Plans are usually tabled in Parliament each spring.

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

A plan or project that a department has chosen to focus and report on during the planning period. 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 quantitative measure of progress on a departmental result.

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

A framework that connects the department's core responsibilities to its departmental results and departmental result indicators.

### **Departmental Results Report** (*rapport sur les résultats ministériels*)

A report on a department's actual accomplishments against the plans, priorities and expected results set out in the corresponding Departmental Plan.

### **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, for whom and in what circumstances.

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. For a particular position, the full-time equivalent figure is the ratio of number of hours the person actually works divided by the standard number of hours set out in the person's collective agreement.

**gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)** (*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 2020–21 Departmental Results Report, those high-level themes outlining the government's agenda in the 2019 Speech from the Throne, namely: Fighting climate change; Strengthening the Middle Class; Walking the road of reconciliation; Keeping Canadians safe and healthy; and Positioning Canada for success in an uncertain world.

**horizontal initiative** (*initiative horizontale*)

An initiative where 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 to the expected result.

**planned spending** (*dépenses prévues*)

For Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports, planned spending refers to those amounts presented in Main Estimates.

A department is expected to be aware of the authorities that it has sought and received. The determination of planned spending is a departmental responsibility, and departments must be able to defend the expenditure and accrual numbers presented in their Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports.

**program** (*programme*)

Individual or groups of services, activities or combinations thereof that are managed together within the department and focus on a specific set of outputs, outcomes or service levels.

**program inventory** (*répertoire des programmes*)

Identifies all the department's programs and describes how resources are organized to contribute to the department's core responsibilities and results.

**result** (*résultat*)

A consequence attributed, in part, to 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.

**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.



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## Endnotes

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- <sup>i</sup> GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- <sup>ii</sup> Public Accounts of Canada, <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/cpc-pac/index-eng.html>
- <sup>iii</sup> GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- <sup>iv</sup> Financial statements (unaudited), <https://scics.ca/en/publication/unaudited-financial-statements-2020-21>
- <sup>v</sup> Detailed future-oriented statement of operations, <https://scics.ca/en/publication/unaudited-future-oriented-statement-of-operations-2021-22/>
- <sup>vi</sup> Raison d'être, mandate and role, <https://scics.ca/en/publication/raison-detre-mandate-and-role>
- <sup>vii</sup> Minister's mandate letter, <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/mandate-letters>
- <sup>viii</sup> GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- <sup>ix</sup> Reporting on Green Procurement, <https://scics.ca/en/publication/reporting-on-green-procurement-20-21>
- <sup>x</sup> Gender-based analysis plus, <https://scics.ca/en/publication/gender-based-analysis-plus-20-21>
- <sup>xi</sup> Response to parliamentary committees and external audits, <https://scics.ca/en/publication/response-to-parliamentary-committees-and-external-audits-20-21>
- <sup>xii</sup> Report on Federal Tax Expenditures, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/services/publications/federal-tax-expenditures.html>