



# Accountability Report 2022–23

---

Service Nova Scotia & Internal Services



# Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government’s Accountability Report

## Content

- Accountability Statement** ..... 3
- Measuring Performance** ..... 4
  - Advancing our Ministerial Mandate** ..... 4
  - Fulfilling our Legislative Mandate** ..... 4
  - Nova Scotia Digital Service** ..... 6
  - 2022-23 Key Facts and Figures** ..... 6
- Financial Summary and Variance Explanation** ..... 8
- Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act** ..... 9

# Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

## Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services for the year ended March 31, 2023, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services' outcomes includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services 2022-23 Business Plan.

*Original signed by*

*Original signed by*

---

Hon. Colton LeBlanc

---

Joanne Munro

Minister

Deputy Minister

# Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

## 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

### Measuring Performance

Over 2022/23, Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services (SNS-IS) remained committed to meeting its mandated priorities and supporting other Government Departments and agencies to achieve their strategic objectives through its role as a key enabler across government.

#### Advancing our [Ministerial Mandate](#)

In fiscal year 2022-2023, SNS-IS:

- Supported the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) in reaching a 10-year agreement to design, build, and maintain the One Person One Record solution, a foundational piece of the provincial [Action for Health](#) plan to create an efficient, modern, and equitable healthcare system,
- Continued to support DHW in expanding the scope of Virtual Care NS, a telehealth/virtual care solution that is redesigning our province's primary health system,
- Continued to support the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care (SLTC) to plan and execute procurement processes for the expansion and renovation of long-term care facilities,
- Supported other healthcare partners, including Nova Scotia Health (NSH) and the IWK Health Centre, with their modernization initiatives including but not limited to digital transformation initiatives as well as executing equipment procurement for the expansion and renovation of healthcare facilities,
- Issued more than 300 tender notices for construction projects that Departments across Government have been advised and encouraged to employ apprenticeships as part of their tenders, and
- SNS-IS has been supporting the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) to increase employer participation in apprenticeships, by requiring participation in the apprenticeship system in order to be eligible for contract award.

#### Fulfilling our [Legislative Mandate](#)

In fiscal year 2022-2023, SNS-IS:

- Balanced the rights and needs of residential tenants and landlords via extending the rent cap for two years until December 31, 2025, hence protecting renters and simultaneously supporting landlords by adjusting the amount of rent increases,
- In collaboration with SLTC and focusing on the user-centric experience for the senior citizens of Nova Scotia, SNS-IS created and administered an online service for the Seniors Care Grant to provide low-income seniors with financial support to continue to live in their homes,

## Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

### 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

- SNS-IS played a crucial role in providing relief to Nova Scotians as a result of Hurricane Fiona. More than 145,000 applications from across the province were approved for food reimbursements, and more than 7,700 applications were approved for tree removal reimbursements,
- Supported the business continuity efforts of all government services as well as first responders and the recovery teams' radio communications during and after Hurricane Fiona,
- In order to assist Nova Scotians with the cost of living, SNS-IS increased the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) rebate for 2022/23 from \$200 to \$1000 and increased the HARP income threshold eligibility to \$85,000 per household. As a result, SNS-IS received more than 171,000 HARP applications,
- Expanded the Property Tax Rebate for Seniors (PTRS) Online Municipal Tax Verification Pilot to include Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), Argyle, Bridgewater, Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM), East Hants, Kings, Lunenburg, Barrington, Clare, Shelburne, Queens Municipality, West Hants and Yarmouth, hence achieving an estimated citizen burden reduction of 3,200 hours per year. This pilot allows for electronic verification of municipal taxes with HRM to determine eligibility, which eliminates the need applicants to get it verified in person,
- Amended the *Collection and Debt Management Agencies Act* to allow agents to work remotely, hence achieving a burden reduction of \$483,000 per year,
- Amended the Embalmers and Funeral Directors Regulations to remove funeral home location requirements, hence achieving an estimated burden reduction of \$265,000 per year due to a reduction in operating costs,
- Amended the *Revenue Act* so that fuel retailers are no longer required to be subagents of wholesalers, which was a significant red tape,
- Amended the *Companies Act*, *Co-operative Associations Act*, *Societies Act*, and the *Condominium Act* to allow companies, co-operatives, societies, and condominium corporations to continue to hold virtual and hybrid meetings after the COVID-19 pandemic-related State of Emergency was lifted. As a result, businesses are estimated to collectively save \$4 million each year, and citizens and nonprofit volunteers and staff will spend an estimated 460,000 hours less per year travelling to and from meetings,
- Amended the *Liquor Control Act* to enable mixed drinks for take-out and delivery on a permanent basis; and amended the Liquor Licensing Regulations to enable Third-Party delivery of alcohol,
- Amended the *Corporations Registration Act* to eliminate penalty fees for reinstating revoked companies,
- Developed a two-year departmental Accessibility Plan for years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 to implement SNS-IS's commitments based on the [Provincial Accessibility Plan 2022-2025](#); to increase awareness about accessibility issues,
- Supported government departments in fulfilling their obligations under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* by responding to over 2,700 access to information requests and providing privacy impact assessments and reviews for approximately 90 new government programs/initiatives.

## Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

### 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

- Completed development work for the first phase of the International Fuel Tax Credit Agreement (IFTA) modernization. A modern IFTA system will simplify tax filing for Nova Scotia's transportation sector by eliminating manual and paper processes required for compliance with IFTA in Nova Scotia,
- Developed and maintained public-facing dashboards on pandemic-related data, including immunization rates, to share with Nova Scotians.

#### Nova Scotia Digital Service

In fiscal year 2022-2023, SNS-IS:

- Launched a cybersecurity awareness training pilot for Government employees to ensure better protection of systems, data, and information,
- Continued to lead the development of a Digital Strategy to enable safer, faster, and easier services for Nova Scotians,
- Continued to enhance and add to digital platform offerings; and ensured enabling, scaling, and sustaining of digital services,
- Continued to achieve significant progress in the multi-year SAP Modernization project, including the completion of negotiations with the system implementation partner and the organizational change management partner,
- Launched a new credential standard for government and health information systems that provides specific guidelines for selecting and maintaining the credentials used to access those systems. This is important for keeping the systems secure,
- Embedded inclusion and accessibility into digital service design processes to support an inclusive and accessible-by-design approach,
- Continued to engage with our Procurement division to identify and add/expand accessibility related categories and service providers as needed in the Managed Business Service Standing Offer (Flextrack), and
- Created an Assistive Technology Request form to help monitor and incorporate feedback of assistive technology used, as well as created a guideline for application software accessibility that can be used when assessing software requirements.

#### 2022-23 Key Facts and Figures

- We are responsible for over 40 Acts and 60 regulations
- 613,000 calls answered by the Provincial Contact Centre
- 2.2M Registry of Motor Vehicle transactions processed
- 43,125 RMV knowledge tests conducted (including 20,034 conducted online)
- 35,837 Online Driver License renewal transactions completed

## Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

### 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

- 273,950 Online Vehicle Permits Renewal transactions completed
- 827,361 transactions completed by the Business Registration Unit
- 215,350 land documents & plans processes and/or registered
- Responded to 338 consumer complaints
- Over 80% of information for our online programs and services is available in French language
- 125,000+ contacts in support of Public Health Covid-19 Initiatives
- Trunked Mobile Radio 2 (TMR 2): 14,500 Radios, 20,000 Users, 99.98% system reliability
- 61 telecommunications towers owned/maintained by the Province of Nova Scotia
- \$12B in payments issued to businesses in Nova Scotia
- \$2.135B was spent on goods, services, and construction; with 74.6% from NS Suppliers
- 165,000+ low-income households helped with heating costs
- 18,000+ low-income seniors assisted with property taxes
- 17M printed impressions and 3,540 projects at King's Printer
- 27 insurance policies managed with premiums of \$2M
- 1,658 insurance claims a year processed on average
- 840 new contracts established for goods/services/construction
- Responsible for facilities management of 40+ locations across the province
- 2,732 requests for information under the FOIPOP Act completed
- Over 270,000 pages of documents reviewed for release under FOIPOP
- 86 Privacy Impact Assessment checklists completed
- Responded to Hurricane Fiona and 16 other significant weather events
- 210,000+ calls for service handled by Shubenacadie Radio Communications Centre
- \$13.1M in debt recovered
- \$500M collected through fuel, tobacco, vaping products, and vehicle/boat sales tax
- Oversight of the Province's Fraud Reporting Services, which is a key method where employees can safely report fraudulent activities

# Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

## 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

### Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

<b>Departmental Expenses Summary</b> (\$ thousands)			
<b>Programs and Services</b>	<b>2022-2023 Estimate</b>	<b>2022-2023 Actuals</b>	<b>2022-2023 Variance</b>
Senior Management	447	516	69
Corporate Services	11,263	10,881	(382)
Government Services	34,233	57,273	23,040
Internal Audit	2,727	2,537	(190)
Financial Services	13,399	12,852	(547)
Citizen Services	33,749	37,250	3,501
Nova Scotia Digital Services	208,909	176,586	(32,323)
Procurement	9,954	8,851	(1,103)
Program Modernization	44,889	206,373	161,484
<b>Total - Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>359,570</b>	<b>513,119</b>	<b>153,549</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenues	667,756	676,027	8,271
Fees and Other Charges	8,947	8,851	(96)
Ordinary Recoveries	17,090	19,871	2,781
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries</b>	<b>693,793</b>	<b>704,749</b>	<b>10,956</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	16,631	15,179	(1,452)
<b>Funded Staff (# of Net FTEs)</b>			
<b>Department Funded Staff</b>	<b>1,772.6</b>	<b>1,592.9</b>	<b>(130)</b>
<b>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:</b>			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services expenses were \$153.5 million or 42.7 percent higher than estimate primarily due to \$148.6 million in grants for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program, \$17.2 million for the replacement of Trunked Mobile Radios, and \$15.1 million for Hurricane Fiona relief programs. These increases were partially offset by the underspending of \$24.0 million due to cashflow changes in major IT projects, \$2.5 million in vacancy savings and \$1.5 million less for amortization costs.			
<b>Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:</b>			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services 2022-23 revenue were \$10.9 million or 1.6% higher than estimate primarily due to \$8.7 million increase in Motive Fuel Tax, \$4.9 million Levy on Private Sales of Used Vehicles, and a decrease of \$2.7 million for other ordinary revenues and fees.			
<b>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:</b>			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services Tangible Capital Asset purchases were \$1.5 million or 9% lower than estimate primarily due to multi-year project cashflow adjustments.			
<b>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</b>			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services Provincially Funded FTEs were 130 or 7% lower due to continued transition of the department and delays in filling vacancies.			



# Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

## Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or,
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
Details of each wrongdoing (Insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing. (Insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A