



Executive Council Office

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

Executive Council Office

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

Province of New Brunswick
PO 6000, Fredericton NB E3B 5H1 CANADA

ISBN 978-1-4605-3635-3 (Bilingual print edition)
ISBN 978-1-4605-3636-0 (PDF: English edition)
ISSN 2816-6914 (Bilingual print edition)
ISSN 2816-6922 (PDF: English edition)

TRANSMITTAL LETTERS

From the Premier to the Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Brenda Murphy

Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick

May it please your Honour:

It is my privilege to submit the annual report of the Executive Council Office, Province of New Brunswick, for the fiscal year April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Honourable Blaine Higgs

Premier of New Brunswick and the President of the Executive Council

From the Clerk to the Premier

Honourable Blaine Higgs

Premier of New Brunswick and the President of the Executive Council

Sir:

I am pleased to be able to present the annual report describing operations of the Executive Council Office for the fiscal year April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Cheryl Hansen

Chief Operating Officer, Clerk of the Executive Council and Head of the Public Service

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Transmittal letters	3
Premier's message	5
Clerk's message	6
Government priorities	7
Highlights.....	8
Performance outcomes.....	10
Division overview and highlights.....	15
Office of the Clerk and the Chief Operating Officer.....	15
Corporate Communications.....	18
Women's Equality Branch.....	20
Financial information.....	22
Summary of staffing activity	23
Summary of legislation and legislative activity.....	25
Summary of official languages activities.....	26
Summary of recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General	28
Report on the <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act</i>	33

PREMIER'S MESSAGE

Every year, the staff of the Executive Council Office is put to the test. And, every year, this dedicated group manages to rise to the occasion. Each challenge faced is overcome, and so continues the hard work behind the scenes to improve the lives of all New Brunswickers.

Working in the public service is by no means an easy task, but we are fortunate as New Brunswickers to have such hardworking and passionate employees who serve the people of this province. Their hard work has proved invaluable to the continued growth and prosperity of our province and will continue to do so for years to come.

New Brunswick continues to grow across many sectors. Our economy grows in tandem with our population, and as such, our diverse mix of cultures and our shared heritage flourishes. Together, we have taken steps to ensure that we continue to manage our finances responsibly and strengthen our economy, so that our province may continue to surpass expectations.

The staff of the Executive Council Office understand the importance of the role they play within government, and it is not a role taken lightly. They are the facilitators that help all civil servants by providing efficient and reliable services to all departments.

Much of the work done by the staff of the Executive Council Office relates directly to governmental business, however, the office's strategic communications efforts are also to be recognized. Between amending and coordinating the development of new policies and reviewing regulatory and legislative proposals; the Executive Council Office sports a talented team of writing, social media, videography, and marketing professionals who ensure the department's efforts are seen and heard across all government channels. It is with great creativity, innovation, and teamwork that every corner of the Executive Council Office comes together to produce consistently great work.

I consider myself fortunate to work with such an important and multi-talented group.

Every year we get a chance to look back at what we've accomplished, giving us an idea of what we'd like to aim for in the future. Whether we require a shift in direction, a new way of doing things, or a renewed push for purpose, we can rest assured that it will get done, because we will do it together.

None of it would have been possible without the support of the strong team of individuals at the Executive Council Office.

I want to thank the Executive Council Office employees for all that they do on behalf of New Brunswickers. Their hard work and dedication are recognized and appreciated, as even during challenging times they have shown what it means to have a responsive and high-performing government. I hope they are proud of all they have accomplished.

I look forward to many more successes together, as we strive to improve the lives of all New Brunswickers, every day.



Honourable Blaine Higgs

Premier of New Brunswick and the President of Executive Council

CLERK'S MESSAGE

Throughout the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the Executive Council Office has made tremendous progress in the advancement of our mission of helping others succeed. It is a mission that is intrinsically woven into every aspect of our department's planning, actions and outcomes.

It is also a mission that provides a glimpse into how far-reaching the role of the department is, and the extent of its impact. Across all areas of our work, we are equipping employees, teams, and departments, to best deliver on their priorities and continuously improve upon the programs and services offered to New Brunswickers.

One of the many ways we are doing this is with an inward focus, by investing in the ongoing development of our employees. We are providing leadership training opportunities for employees at all career levels through the expansion of our Building Future Ready Leaders program. Designed to develop competencies in both existing and emerging leaders across all Part 1 departments, the initiative continues to grow with a combined total of 203 employees taking part in the Emerging Executives and Evolving Leaders streams throughout the past year.

Our external commitment to keeping the public informed and updated at all times remains at the forefront of our efforts, including new ways to let the public know what we are doing as government, and why. With traditional media shrinking, we further embraced social media as a main communication tool. As a result, our social media audience grew by almost 10 per cent to more than 400,000 followers across all platforms.

Among our long-standing central roles is supporting the operations of government and government's executive branch. Throughout the year, our work included facilitating 545 memorandums to the Executive Council, 134 cabinet and committee meetings, and 56 bills; and overseeing the appointment of 218 members to agencies, boards and commissions.

I am proud of all that we accomplished across our department, and of our team members whose commitment have made our successes possible. Together, we have welcomed approaches that prioritize collaboration and helping one another. Building upon on a foundation of trust and respect, it is a mindset found across our work environments and team philosophies.

Combined with our openness to embracing innovative ideas and new ways of doing things, we have made great strides throughout the 2022-2023 fiscal year. In helping others succeed, we too, succeed as a department, and I am honoured to share our dedicated efforts with you.



Cheryl Hansen
Chief Operating Officer, Clerk of the Executive Council and Head of the Public Service

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Delivering for New Brunswickers - One Team One GNB

One Team One GNB is our vision as an organization and a collaborative approach to how we operate. It is our path forward, and it represents a civil service that is working collectively across departments, professions, and sectors. Together, we are learning, growing, and adapting, and discovering new and innovative ways of doing business. It is enabling us to achieve the outcomes needed for New Brunswickers, and we are working more efficiently and effectively than ever before.

As *One Team One GNB*, we are improving the way government departments:

- communicate with one another,
- work side-by-side on important projects, and
- drive focus and accountability.

Government Priorities

Our vision for 2022-2023 is a vibrant and sustainable New Brunswick. To make progress towards this vision, we must focus on our government's priorities:

- energizing private sector;
- vibrant and sustainable communities;
- affordable, responsive and high-performing government;
- dependable public health care;
- world-class education; and the
- environment.

HIGHLIGHTS

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the Executive Council Office focused on these government priorities through:

- **Leadership Development** – The Organizational Performance team is responsible for the design and implementation of the Building Future Ready Leaders initiative, with over 200 participants to date including 23 Emerging Executives and 180 Evolving Leaders in development. Another cohort of both Emerging Executives and Evolving Leaders is expected to launch in fiscal year 2023–2024.
- **Policy, Governance and Legislative Affairs** – Co-ordinated the business of the house which included the passage of 55 bills in the spring of 2022 and fall of 2022. This involved providing advice, resources, guidance, and training to departments in the achievement of their priorities. Developed an online training course to provide GNB employees entry level information on how government works. The team delivered ten sessions on government decision making, memorandums to Executive Council and briefing note writing and coordinated the process on 218 appointments, including 148 that required Cabinet approval. Received royal assent on two bills to enhance accountability, streamline the appointment process and create efficiencies related to Crown bodies.
- **Office of the Lieutenant-Governor** – As the representative of the Crown and head of state of the Province of New Brunswick, Lt.-Gov. Brenda L. Murphy delivered the speech from the throne, signed 327 orders-in-council, and provided royal assent to 65 bills. She oversaw numerous awards ceremonies, including the Order of New Brunswick and Order of St. John investiture ceremonies, recognizing exceptional New Brunswickers for their contributions. She participated in or hosted many celebrations for Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee and presented Platinum Jubilee Medals to thousands of New Brunswickers around the province. She led the province in mourning the passing of Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022, and had an audience with His Majesty King Charles in late November 2022. The lieutenant-governor hosted or attended approximately 275 events throughout the province. As the patron of more than 25 non-profit organizations, Her Honour supports initiatives targeting poverty reduction, gender equality, the elimination of violence against women by men, reconciliation, and social cohesion.
- **Women’s Equality Branch** – This fiscal year, the branch has invested \$3.3 million for violence prevention initiatives in over 30 agencies, representing an increase of \$1.4 million. There has been an increase in funding to second stage housing and domestic violence outreach services as well as new investment of \$1 million in sexual violence community-based supports to victims. While work of the Ministerial Roundtable on Campus Sexual Violence continued, Women’s Equality Branch focused attention on improving New Brunswick’s response to violence against Indigenous women and girls and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Women’s Equality Branch has continued to engage 21 Gender-Based Analysis Champions across government and has innovated the province’s Gender Impact Statement that is published alongside the budget. The branch also hosted several events including engagement sessions with Indigenous communities and

organizations, Trade & Technology Career Exploration events, virtual forums, training sessions, and the presentation of the Minister's Award for Excellence in Championing Gender Equality on International Women's Day.

- **Corporate Communications** – Partnered with the Department of Finance and Treasury Board to create a new employer brand, "Choose GNB/Choisir GNB," to address staff shortages in the civil service and ensure the continued delivery of government services. This rebranding initiative aims to reposition GNB as an employer of choice, attracting top talent to fill existing and upcoming job opportunities. Also, successfully executed a two-month recruitment campaign that strategically targeted veterinary schools across Canada to address the unique challenge of recruiting large animal veterinarians to New Brunswick. This campaign exceeded industry benchmarks across all strategies, generating over 4.5 million impressions and effectively filling nine out of 11 vacant positions.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

The information below outlines some of the department's priorities and how we measured our performance.

Outcome # 1 - BUILD A CUSTOMIZED AND SUSTAINABLE ACCELERATED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Build a sustainable system to prepare future GNB leaders to lead teams in the delivery of dependable, responsive, and efficient programs and services for New Brunswick taxpayers and customers. The Organizational Performance team has developed customized leadership streams in partnership with departments to address the readiness needs of future GNB leaders.

Why is it important?

Strong, future ready leaders build strong teams who, in turn, deliver on our commitments to New Brunswickers. Attracting, developing, and retaining top leadership and executive talent is key to making GNB's vision a reality. A business and customer-driven, sustainable leadership development pathway is foundational to *creating a vibrant and sustainable New Brunswick*.

Overall performance

As of March 2023, one of the two Emerging Executive cohorts have completed their 18-month journey, while the second Emerging Executive cohort is set to complete their journey in June 2023. Cohort 1 of Evolving Leaders representing 34 participants completed their journey in February 2023, while cohorts 2-5 representing 146 participants are currently in progress. Another 40 participants are scheduled for the fall of 2023. A strong foundation has been built, delivery is on time and on budget, feedback is positive from applicants, participants, their leaders, and executive teams. Key performance indicators are demonstrating progress to desired outcomes as it relates to business and customer impact.

Initiatives or projects undertaken to achieve the outcome

- Launched five Evolving Leaders stream cohorts engaging with departments to support identification of future leaders, applying proven assessment tools and development approaches.
- Cohort 1 of Evolving Leaders completed their 12-month formal learning journey.
- Emerging Executives second cohort in progress with a focus on experiential learning.

Outcome # 2 – PERFORMANCE AGREEMENTS

The preparation of an employee performance agreement, Section 1 of the performance agreement, at the beginning of the performance review period will provide an opportunity for managers and employees to identify, agree and set work objectives and measures based on priorities and overall business results.

Why is it important?

By preparing performance agreements both strategic and organizational objectives will be cascaded through the organization to increase both organizational and individual performance.

Overall performance

Executive Council Office was successful in completing 98.5% per cent of our employee performance agreements. This metric is calculated according to the number of performance agreements established each quarter divided by the total cumulative number of performance agreements eligible that quarter.

Initiatives or projects undertaken to achieve the outcome

Executive Council Office took a proactive approach to ensure that performance agreements were completed on time.

Baseline: 82.9%

Target: 100%

Actual: 98.5%

Outcome # 3 - INCREASE IN SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS AND ENGAGEMENT

Social media is a key component of GNB's strategic communications plan to ensure that communications across GNB are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public and is a key priority under government's digital first approach to public communications.

The objective is to build and broaden the audience for GNB corporate social media accounts during subsequent fiscal years to better inform and engage New Brunswickers who frequently read, watch, and interact with the most popular social media platforms.

Why is it important?

Social media allows government to provide New Brunswickers with timely information, important resources, and responses to questions. Increasing social media followers (the number of people who follow one or more of GNB's corporate social media accounts) and engagement (the number of people who see a post, or who interact with it by liking, commenting on, or sharing a post) broadens our audience, and therefore government's ability to share its message with members of the public.

Overall performance

The GNB Facebook page is now the most followed of any provincial government in Canada.

As of March 31, 2023, our overall social media audience was 416,587 followers, which represents a 10 per cent overall increase over fiscal 2021-2022. A reasonable growth rate in terms of followers would be 10 per cent year over year.

Between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, the social media team assisted with the creation of 8,318 posts on all GNB official channels. Our social media content was displayed to the public 145,897,065 times, and had 3,495,120 engagements, with an average engagement rate of 2.4 per cent.

Initiatives or projects undertaken to achieve the outcome

The social media team has restructured to assign two staff members as strategic content advisors. Their role is to help departments create and post texts and visuals to make their social media content more attractive. They also use the content calendar to schedule posts strategically to get the optimal reach per post. These changes contribute to more engaging social media content for New Brunswickers.

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS

The **Office of the Clerk and the Chief Operating Officer** provides professional non-partisan advice and support on the structure and operations of government. The Clerk also acts as the head of the public service, ensuring effective and efficient management and that the public service is delivering high-quality programs and support on priority files and services, based on evidence-based evaluations.

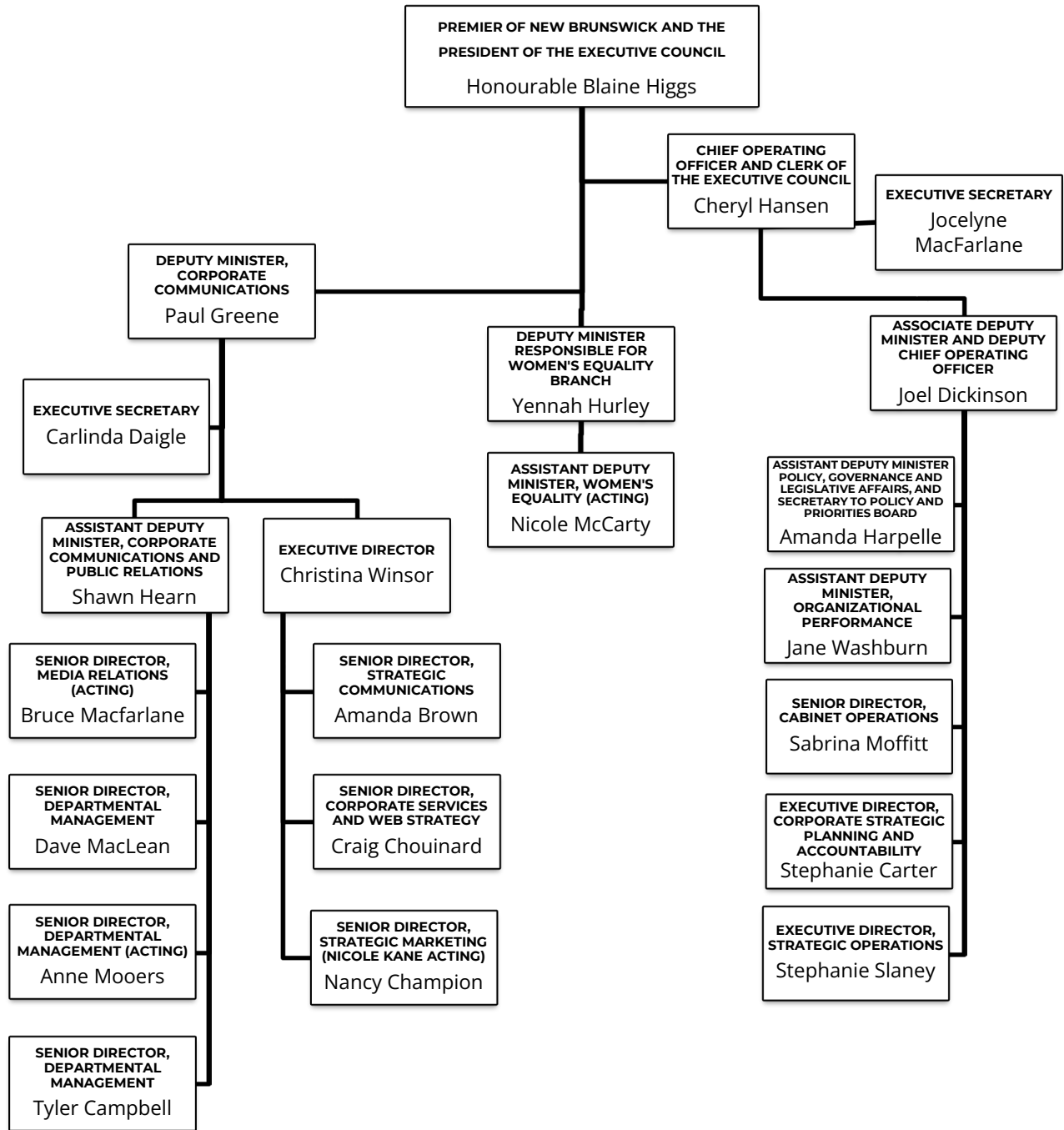
It also provides secretariat and administrative services for Executive Council and the Policy and Priorities Board, and occasionally, the special committees of cabinet. It reviews proposals for the development or amendment of government policy and reviews all regulatory and legislative proposals. It provides central support on appointments and governance of agencies, boards, and commissions. The office also provides support to the government house leader in planning, establishing, and managing the government's agenda for the legislative assembly; and in overseeing policy issues related to democracy and the legislature. It also liaises with the Office of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Executive Council Office (ECO) Corporate Communications is a full-service communications and marketing division serving all other provincial government departments, agencies and boards. Its mandate is to provide strategic communications planning to the Executive Council Office and coordinate communications across government. Key functions include coordinating strategic horizontal projects and digital strategies; establishing and enforcing marketing standards and policies; developing communication plans; and developing, implementing and evaluating strategies.

The **Women's Equality Branch** was created, within the Executive Council Office, to promote gender equality and reduce systemic discrimination, to provide advice and support on advancing equality to the Minister responsible for Women's Equality as well as to departments of government, and to coordinate the implementation of the government's actions and initiatives in the areas of women's personal, economic, and social security.

The **Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick** represents the King within the Province of New Brunswick and is the province's legal head of state. As His Majesty's direct representative in the province, the lieutenant-governor is first in the provincial order of precedence. The lieutenant-governor upholds the province's constitutional framework and serves as both the apex and the unifying link in the constitutional and political structure of the province – executive, legislative, and judicial. To uphold the constitutional framework, the lieutenant-governor ensures the continued existence of government in the province of New Brunswick; selects a first minister as premier of the province; appoints and administers the oaths of office, allegiance and confidentiality to the premier and members of the executive council; summons, prorogues and dissolves the legislature; delivers the speech from the throne; provides royal assent to provincial legislation; and signs orders-in-council, proclamations and other official documents before they have the force of law. In celebratory and promotional roles, the lieutenant-governor celebrates, inspires and connects New Brunswickers, while promoting the history, culture and achievements of the province. They instill pride in the rich natural resources of New Brunswick, as well as the accomplishments of the people of the province. The lieutenant-governor is the patron of many community-based organizations and presides over award ceremonies for the Order of New Brunswick and other prominent provincial awards of excellence.

High-Level Organizational Chart



DIVISION OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS

OFFICE OF THE CLERK AND THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Overview

The Office of the Clerk and the Chief Operating Officer provides professional non-partisan advice and support on the structure and operations of government. The Clerk also acts as the chief operating officer and head of the public service, ensuring effective and efficient management and that the public service is delivering high-quality programs and services, based on evidence-based evaluations. The Office of the Chief Operating Officer has several units supporting the division.

The **Cabinet Operations** unit serves the Clerk of the Executive Council and secretary to cabinet, members of cabinet and cabinet committees by ensuring that the business of cabinet and its committees is conducted in a timely and efficient manner, and that proper collective information is provided. There are three main lines of responsibility: development and implementation of the processes associated with cabinet decision-making; support for the Office of the Lieutenant-Governor in fulfilling ceremonial functions related to the installation of the lieutenant-governor and the swearing-in of cabinet ministers, as well as the statutory requirement for decisions of cabinet requiring subsequent approval of the lieutenant-governor, formally recorded through the issuance of orders-in-council; and support in preparation and planning related to government transition.

The **Corporate Strategic Planning and Accountability** unit works directly with deputy ministers and their senior teams to align departmental strategic plans with government priorities and commitments. The unit is responsible for designing, implementing, and monitoring the accountability process to achieve priority outcomes and the management of government platform commitments. The unit drives corporate accountability and results while overseeing the reporting process, provides coaching, guidance, and co-ordination of corporate requests, and enables collaboration and connections across departments. The unit leads and co-ordinates the annual report process for Part 1 departments. This team also supports the implementation of the *One Team One GNB* brand, practices, and mindsets across GNB.

The **Organizational Performance** unit is responsible to build and execute a customized and sustainable executive and leadership development system. This functions to prepare future GNB leaders to lead teams in the delivery of dependable, responsive, and efficient programs and services for New Brunswick taxpayers and customers. This is in partnership with deputy ministers, their executive teams and human resources teams, and the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO). Building Future Ready Leaders (BFRL) is aligned to the strategic priority of an affordable, responsible, and high-performing government.

The **Strategic Operations** unit provides corporate services (human resources and financial) to all employees of the Office of the Chief Operating Officer and works with Finance and Treasury Board's director of finance to produce the annual budget for the Office of the Chief Operating Officer. The branch is responsible for the oversight of *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act* for Executive Council Office as well as the Office of the Premier, to help support initiatives across GNB departments, and to help to implement the *One Team One GNB* brand across GNB. The branch also provides process documentation co-ordination, internal communications support, and champions employee experience in addition to supporting the deputy chief operating officer.

The **Policy, Governance and Legislative Affairs** unit provides secretariat and administrative services for Executive Council, the Policy and Priorities Board, the Joint Policy and Treasury Board, and occasionally, special committees of cabinet. The unit analyzes proposals for the development or amendment of government policy and oversees all aspects of regulatory and legislative proposals, from policy development through the stages of the legislative assembly. This unit provides central leadership on appointment to, and governance of, provincial agencies, boards and commissions, as well as oversight of accountability requirements for Crown bodies under *the Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act*. The unit provides training on machinery of government. It also supports the government house leader in planning, establishing, and managing the government's agenda for the legislative assembly; and in overseeing policy issues related to democracy and the legislature. Policy, Governance and Legislative Affairs works directly with departments to ensure Executive Council Office receives well-thought-out, strategic proposals for consideration as it relates to governance and public policy, including legislation.

Highlights

Organizational Performance

- Cohort 1 of Evolving Leaders completed their 12-month journey.
- Launched Evolving Leaders cohorts 2 through 5.
- Emerging Executives cohort 2021 completed their 18-month journey.

Policy, Governance and Legislative Affairs

- Implemented the results of the Agencies, Boards and Commissions Mandate Review by collaborating with departments to enhance accountability, streamline the appointment process and create efficiencies related to Crown bodies through the development, and royal assent of the following bills:
 - Bill 100 - focused on red tape reduction whereby transferring the appointment authority for provincial and municipal returning officers to the chief electoral officer, as well as transferring the appointment authority for types of certain appointments from Lieutenant-Governor in Council to the minister or Crown body responsible.
 - Bill 108 - modernized the *Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act* ensuring a more robust accountability process and increasing the scope of the Act by more than doubling the number of Crown bodies subject to the Act.
- Provided training to departments on how government works through legislative and policy development. The team delivered ten sessions on government decision making, memorandum to Executive Council and briefing note writing.
- Analyzed and provided strategic guidance on approximately 364 proposals to government (memorandums to Executive Council).

Key Performance Indicators

Organizational Performance

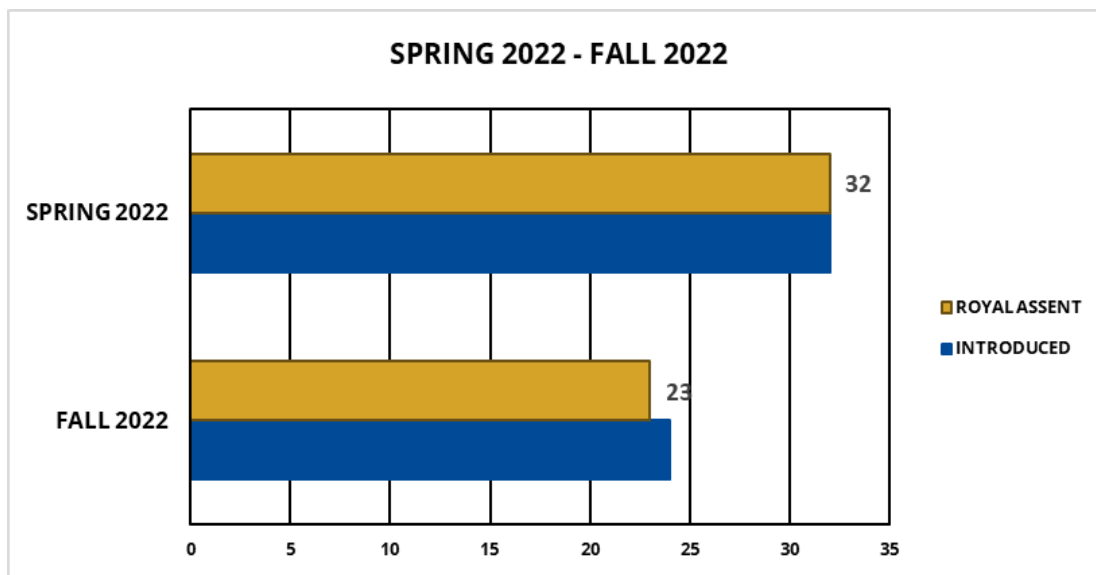
- Emerging Executive cohort 2021 promoted/progressive role change to date (65 per cent as of March 31, 2023)
- All Evolving Leader cohorts group learning events participation rate (97 per cent)
- GNB participant retention rate (96 per cent)
- Evolving Leaders cohort 1 – post program assessment
 - Participant’s managers reported:
 - positive results/impacts on participant’s customers (94 per cent)
 - positive results/impacts on participant’s team/department (100 per cent)
 - demonstrated new/improved behaviours because of Evolving Leaders journey (100 per cent)
 - Participants reported:
 - positive results/impacts on Customer (94 per cent)
 - positive results/impacts on Team/Department (100 per cent)
 - demonstrated new/improved behaviors because of Evolving Leaders journey (100 per cent)

Policy, Governance and Legislative Affairs

Government bills that were introduced and/or received royal assent in fiscal year 2022-2023.

In the spring of 2022, 32 government bills were introduced and 32 received Royal Assent.

In the fall of 2022, 24 government bills were introduced and 23 received Royal Assent.



CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Overview

ECO Corporate Communications is comprised of five units: **Corporate Services and Web Strategy; Strategic Communications; Departmental Management; Media Relations; and Strategic Marketing.**

Corporate Services is responsible for managing the organization's operational budget, human resource development, staff recruitment and training, and communication and marketing contracts. The unit is also responsible for administering and publishing the Royal Gazette, the official publication of the Province of New Brunswick.

In partnership with departments, the **Web Strategy and Development** unit provides assistance in all stages of website development including research and analytics, content analysis, writing and editing, and information architecture development. This assistance is followed by site development, launch and maintenance. The unit also updates and maintains all corporate and departmental pages on gnb.ca and snb.ca as well as for some other government organizations. The unit approves any external website development and is a partner with departments to ensure these sites meet standards and appropriately represent government.

The **Strategic Communications** unit works with departments to help them identify goals for communicating their policies and initiatives. They help generate ideas and gain insights through research and bring together the means necessary to help them implement their plans. The unit is responsible for the management of the GNB corporate communications calendar, providing writing and editing support for the Office of the Premier and the Executive Council Office as well as acting as a liaison between departments and the Office of the Premier's. They also coordinate and develop integrated marketing and communications plans, review communications plans that are attached to memorandums to Executive Council, and work on enhancing evaluation and analytics within corporate communications. They are also responsible for the provincial newswire.

The **Departmental Management** unit is responsible for departmental communications and houses all communications directors and officers. All communications staff are assigned centrally by ECO Corporate Communications but respond to the communications needs of their respective departments.

The **Media Relations** unit strategically assesses and addresses media requests and works with departmental communications staff on their plans and strategies to communicate with the media. They also provide media training for ministers and departmental staff and spokespeople, assist with events management, and manage all media scrums when the Legislative Assembly is in session.

The **Strategic Marketing** unit is responsible for developing, planning and approving all major marketing initiatives and facilitating approvals for marketing campaigns as well as evaluating their success. They provide cost-effective creative services and visual communications expertise including graphic design, content editing, creation and management, and advertising design services. Strategic Marketing includes the Social Media, Digital Photography and Videography Services team, which is responsible for the oversight of government social media channels. They also record hundreds of videos and still images supporting government communications and marketing activities each year.

Highlights

- Partnered with FTB to create a new employer brand, "Choose GNB/Choisir GNB," to address staff shortages in the civil service and ensure the continued delivery of government services. This rebranding initiative aims to reposition GNB as an employer of choice, attracting top talent to fill existing and upcoming job opportunities.
- Successfully executed a two-month recruitment campaign that strategically targeted veterinary schools across Canada to address the unique challenge of recruiting large animal veterinarians to New Brunswick. This campaign exceeded industry benchmarks across all strategies, generating over 4.5 million impressions and effectively filling nine out of 11 vacant positions.
- Created a successful campaign to drive awareness and interest for the Beal University Registered Nursing program specific for New Brunswickers. This campaign performed above industry standards with 7.3 million+ total impressions and a clickthrough rate of 9.4 per cent.
- Participated in several historic ceremonies related to the death of the Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, including filming local ceremonies, producing an archival video celebrating her life and creating relevant social media content for our NB audience.
- Implemented a significant overhaul of the Chancery Place media room and livestream equipment, increasing the division's capacity to meet future needs.
- Significantly increased government's presence on LinkedIn, which was the fastest growing social media platform for GNB in 2022-2023 (net follower growth up 123.1 per cent since 2021-2022).

WOMEN'S EQUALITY BRANCH

Overview

The **Women's Equality Branch** is mandated to promote gender equality and reduce systemic discrimination; provide advice and support on advancing equality to the minister responsible for women's equality as well as to departments of government; and co-ordinate the implementation of the government's actions and initiatives in the areas of women's personal, economic, and social security.

The branch is organized in two units: **Violence Prevention and Community Partnerships**, and **Policy and Strategic Initiatives**.

The **Violence Prevention and Community Partnerships** unit co-ordinates government's action on violence against women and sexual violence. It funds and oversees programs and supports agencies in delivering services. It consults, develops, and implements initiatives, policies, and procedures. It is a vital connection point between government departments and community partners working on violence against all women. This includes supports and services to women victims of domestic, intimate partner and sexual violence, and violence against Indigenous women and girls. By providing advice to community organizations and government departments and by training government and community, the unit facilitates a co-ordinated response to the complex needs of those caught in the cycle of violence and of survivors.

The **Policy and Strategic Initiatives** unit is responsible for ensuring movement towards achieving women's economic security and supporting government policy making that is gender responsive and enhances equality of outcomes for the public. Commitment to enhancing women's economic equality in New Brunswick is undertaken through the promotion of family-friendly workplace initiatives and pay equity practices; supporting gender wage gap reduction initiatives; providing mentorship for students entering non-traditional career training programs; and, developing and distributing information, tools, resources, and strategies to advance women in leadership and decision-making positions.

Highlights

- Partnered with Women and Gender Equality Canada and Sexual Violence NB in support of improving the response to sexual violence at public post-secondary institutions in New Brunswick.
- Invested \$3.3 million for violence prevention initiatives in more than 30 agencies for:
 - Domestic Violence Outreach Program
 - Second Stage Housing
 - Sexual violence education and awareness, police response and community-based supports to victims
 - Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls
 - Provincial Partnership in Action Forum
 - Community Action Fund

- Expanded the success of the Gender Impact Statement on the provincial budget by increasing the number of published budget impact reports by 135 per cent.
- Hosted eight engagement sessions with Indigenous communities and organizations to provide updates on government of New Brunswick's work on a response to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry's Final Report and "Calls for Justice."
- Partnered with Justice Canada and four First Nations communities in support of Indigenous domestic intimate partner violence outreach services.
- Hosted a virtual Trades & Technology Career Exploration event, with more than 450 students participating from 13 middle and high schools, to introduce students to women from their community who are working or studying in skilled trades and technology sectors.
- Trained over 700 government employees on GBA+ and trained over 900 public servants and stakeholders on inclusionary professional practices related to gender diversity.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Fiscal year ending March 31, 2023

EXPENDITURES	TOTAL BUDGET	2022-2023 ACTUALS	VARIANCE	% OF BUDGET
Office of the Clerk, Chief Operating Officer and Head of the Public Service and Executive Council Secretariat	\$3,666,634	\$3,360,829	\$305,805	92%
Corporate Communications	\$7,112,077	\$7,230,708	(\$118,631)	102%
Office of the Lieutenant-Governor	\$481,075	\$499,614	(\$18,539)	104%
Women's Equality Branch	\$5,167,173	\$4,967,824	\$199,349	96%
Executive Council Office	\$16,426,959	\$16,058,975	\$367,984	98%

REVENUES	TOTAL BUDGET	2022-2023 ACTUALS	VARIANCE	% OF BUDGET
Women's Equality Branch Other Conditional Grants	\$0	(\$503,049)	\$503,049	

SUMMARY OF STAFFING ACTIVITY

Pursuant to section 4 of the *Civil Service Act*, the Secretary to Treasury Board delegates staffing to each Deputy Head for his or her respective department(s). Please find below a summary of the staffing activity for 2021-2022 for the Executive Council Office.

NUMBER OF PERMANENT AND TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES AS OF DEC. 31 OF EACH YEAR		
EMPLOYEE TYPE	2022	2021
Permanent	127	127
Temporary	19	18
TOTAL	146	145

The number of employees for 2021 changed from the previously published report as Women's Equality Branch was not included.

The department advertised 11 competitions, including nine open (public) competitions and two closed (internal) competitions.

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

APPOINTMENT TYPE	APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION	SECTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT	NUMBER
Specialized professional, scientific or technical	An appointment may be made without competition when a position requires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a high degree of expertise and training a high degree of technical skill recognized experts in their field 	15(1)	0
Equal Employment Opportunity Program	Provides Aboriginals, persons with disabilities and members of a visible minority group with equal access to employment, training and advancement opportunities.	16(1)(a)	0
Department Talent Management Program	Permanent employees identified in corporate and departmental talent pools, who meet the four-point criteria for assessing talent, namely performance, readiness, willingness and criticalness.	16(1)(b)	2

APPOINTMENT TYPE	APPOINTMENT DESCRIPTION	SECTION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT	NUMBER
Lateral transfer	The GNB transfer process facilitates the transfer of employees from within Part 1, 2 (school districts) and 3 (hospital authorities) of the Public Service.	16(1) or 16(1)(c)	6
Regular appointment of casual/temporary	An individual hired on a casual or temporary basis under section 17 may be appointed without competition to a regular properly classified position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(i)	4
Regular appointment of students/apprentices	Summer students, university or community college co-op students or apprentices may be appointed without competition to an entry-level position within the Civil Service.	16(1)(d)(ii)	0

Pursuant to section 33 of the *Civil Service Act*, there were no complaints alleging favouritism made to the Deputy Head of the Executive Council Office and no complaints submitted to the Ombud.

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

BILL #	NAME OF LEGISLATION	DATE OF ROYAL ASSENT	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
100	<i>An Act Respecting the Appointment Process</i> Bill-100.pdf (legnb.ca)	June 10, 2022	The Bill transferred authority to appoint provincial returning officers and municipal returning officers to the chief electoral officer. Additionally, the Bill changed the approval type of certain appointments from Lieutenant-Governor in Council to ministerial.
107	<i>An Act to Amend the Executive Council Act</i> Bill-107.pdf (legnb.ca)	June 10, 2022	The Bill amended ministerial titles set out in the <i>Executive Council Act</i> and made consequential amendments to the department names and ministerial authorities in all pieces of legislation affected by the restructuring.
108	<i>An Act to Amend the Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act</i> Bill-108.pdf (legnb.ca)	June 10, 2022	The Bill modernized the legislation to ensure a more robust accountability process for crown entities as recommended by the Auditor General in 2021.

The acts for which the department was responsible in 2022-2023 may be found at: [Executive Council \(gnb.ca\)](#)

SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACTIVITIES

Introduction

The Executive Council Office ensures that the Government of New Brunswick implements strategies and plans on official languages and is committed to offering and providing quality services in both official languages. GNB's plan on official languages, *Official Bilingualism: A Fundamental Value*, was launched in July 2015.

Focus 1

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

- Ongoing consultation and discussions between human resources consultants and managers to ensure the department best meets the linguistic profile requirements. Linguistic profiles are all completed and reviewed on a needed basis.
- For Executive Council Office's Building Future Ready Leaders Program, all materials, presentations, and communication are provided in both official languages.
- All orientation material, standard operating procedures, presentations and training material are provided in both official languages.
- Corporate Communications is responsible for creating both internal and external communications materials that enable government to share its message with all New Brunswickers. These materials include news releases, social media posts, communications plans, speeches, and ministerial statements, among others.
- New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province in Canada. New Brunswickers have the right to receive communications from GNB in either official language. All communications materials prepared and distributed by ECO Corporate Communications are provided in English and French, following the *Official Languages Act* and related GNB policies.

Focus 2

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

- New employees were provided an opportunity to state their preferred language of work for communication purposes through the employment acceptance form.
- The active offer is always presented to participants in the leadership development program.
- Presentation and orientation materials are prepared in both official languages internal to the department and in the provision of training across GNB.
- Employees receive their performance review in the language of their choice.
- Policy and Guidelines on the Language of Work are available to all employees and includes detailed information on official languages such as the Guide on Conducting Effective Bilingual Meetings.
- The annual GNB Employee Experience Survey asks employees their satisfaction level with feeling comfortable in using their language of choice at work.
- Corporate Communications implemented an internal working group to better reflect the needs of francophone members of staff and ensure all official information is provided to staff in both official languages.

- Corporate Communications internal working group held an initial meeting to talk about challenges staff members face when it comes to working or expressing themselves in their preferred language, and ways to encourage or help others feel more comfortable in doing so.
- Corporate Communications has made efforts to provide more bilingual information to all staff, including through emails, important documents, and PowerPoint presentations in both official languages.

Focus 3

Ensure that new and revised government programs and policies consider the realities of the province's official language communities:

- Government continues to ensure that official bilingualism is included as a fundamental value of the public service and is clearly included in the code of conduct of the employees of the public service.
- The official language requirements were built into the leadership development program, including ensuring external partner alignment.

Focus 4

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

- Executive Council Office has developed an onboarding program provided to all new employees, which includes information about the *Official Languages Act* and the policies and regulations governing their interactions with respect to official languages. It follows the principles of GNB's onboarding program where official languages is included in the orientation checklist for new employees. The department ensures that all new employees are provided these documents.
- Always continue to remind all employees of their responsibility to provide an active offer of service in both official languages.

Conclusion

Official languages continues to be a priority of Executive Council Office. We understand the importance and value of providing services in both official languages.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

Section 1 – Includes the current reporting year and the previous year.

NAME AND YEAR OF AUDIT AREA WITH LINK TO ONLINE DOCUMENT	RECOMMENDATIONS
	TOTAL
2022 V2 Chapter 2: Contaminated Sites - Department of Environment and Local Government	2
2021 V1 Chapter 2: Regional Development Corporation and Opportunities New Brunswick – Funding for Rural Internet	3
2021 V2 Chapter 3: Crown Agency Salary and Benefits Practices	1
2021 V1 Chapter 3: Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour – Covid-19 Funding – New Brunswick Workers’ Emergency Income Benefit	1
2021 V1 Chapter 4: Executive Council Office – Risks Exist in Government’s Oversight of Crown Agencies	5

IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS TAKEN
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 2: Regional Development Corporation and Opportunities New Brunswick – Funding for Rural Internet</p> <p>2.52 We recommend Executive Council Office ensure responsibility for government policy commitments, including funding for rural internet, be clearly assigned to specific government entities to ensure accountability and transparency for government programs and services.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) has dedicated human resources responsible to provide oversight and guidance regarding commitments. This specific project being audited was approved by government and assigned to the former Department of Economic Development/Opportunities NB. ECO has a mandate to work with departments to ensure commitments are appropriately monitored, measured, and reported on as part of the accountability process. Departments must report monthly to central government regarding the progress of their priorities. Going forward, the file related to rural internet is the responsibility of Finance and Treasury Board’s Office of the Chief Information Officer division.</p>

IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS TAKEN
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 2: Regional Development Corporation and Opportunities New Brunswick – Funding for Rural Internet</p> <p>2.53 We recommend Executive Council Office direct the responsible department or agency to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any future funding for rural internet is delivered via a program which identifies appropriate outcomes and performance metrics; • a needs assessment is conducted to determine the service gap before providing any future funding; and • future applications for rural internet funding be validated to ensure they address service gaps identified through a needs assessment. 	<p>The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) in Finance and Treasury Board (FTB) has identified high-level targets and continues to work with the service providers to align their work with desired outcomes. Future funding decisions will be aligned to specific outcome metrics and service gaps that are to be addressed. OCIO continues to liaise and support internet service providers in an effort (for internet service providers) to procure federal funding for the provision of rural broadband to rural New Brunswick homes. OCIO has established a process to identify gaps in rural broadband service for households and businesses.</p> <p>This work is ongoing and will inform future decisions.</p>
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 2: Regional Development Corporation and Opportunities New Brunswick – Funding for Rural Internet</p> <p>2.63. We recommend that Executive Council Office direct the responsible department or agency to ensure any future funding for rural internet is delivered through a competitive and transparent process by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issuing public tender; or • adhering to the terms and conditions of funding guidelines. 	<p>Government recently approved a financial assistance policy that will apply to for-profit organizations that will soon be fully implemented. Finance and Treasury Board will be responsible for providing the central financial oversight on this new policy. Organizations will be put through a rigorous process and must meet criteria to be approved.</p> <p>This recommendation is currently underway.</p>
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 3: Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour – Covid-19 Funding – New Brunswick Workers’ Emergency Income Benefit</p> <p>3.82 We recommend the Executive Council Office create a formalized process to provide direction, guidance, and resources to departments that are tasked with new activities during an emergency not covered under defined Mission Critical Business Functions within their respective Emergency Preparedness Plans</p>	<p>The Department of Justice and Public Safety, through the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization, monitors risks and co-ordinates planning, resulting in the provincial emergency plan. Established risks and plans include the need for emergency social supports, including financial supports, during events. Arrangements under this plan were leveraged to develop and then deliver the New Brunswick Workers’ Emergency Income Benefit.</p>

IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS TAKEN
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 4: Executive Council Office – Risks Exist in Government’s Oversight of Crown Agencies</p> <p>4.36 We recommend the Executive Council Office prepare, recommend for Ministerial approval, and issue mandate letters to Crown agencies with sufficient time (such as six months in advance) to enable Crown agencies to plan their upcoming fiscal year and address government priorities and objectives.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) has undertaken work with Crown bodies and departments to improve the process.</p>
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 4: Executive Council Office – Risks Exist in Government’s Oversight of Crown Agencies</p> <p>4.37 We recommend the Executive Council Office ensure mandate letters contain all information required by the <i>Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act</i>, such as including performance expectations, prior to Ministerial approval.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) has worked to ensure performance expectations are included.</p>
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 4: Executive Council Office – Risks Exist in Government’s Oversight of Crown Agencies</p> <p>4.45 We recommend the Executive Council Office collaborate with the responsible Minister, department and Crown agency to review Crown agency annual plans/business plans to ensure they comply with the <i>Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act</i> (or other relevant legislation such as the <i>Regional Health Authorities Act</i>) before the documents are approved by the Minister responsible.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) is collaborating with departments and Crown bodies in an oversight role to ensure compliance. It is important that departments play the main role related to the review of annual plans and annual reports.</p> <p>Work will continue as this is work that needs to be accomplished on an ongoing basis.</p>
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 4: Executive Council Office – Risks Exist in Government’s Oversight of Crown Agencies</p> <p>4.46 We recommend the Executive Council Office collaborate with the responsible Minister, department and crown agency to review Crown agency annual reports to ensure they comply with the <i>Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act</i> (or other relevant legislation such as the <i>Regional Health Authorities Act</i>) before the documents are approved by the Minister responsible.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) is collaborating with departments and Crown bodies in an oversight role to ensure compliance. It is important that departments play the main role related to the review of annual plans and annual reports.</p> <p>Work will continue as this is work that needs to be accomplished on an ongoing basis.</p>

IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS TAKEN
<p>2021 V1 Chapter 4: Executive Council Office – Risks Exist in Government’s Oversight of Crown Agencies</p> <p>4.47 We recommend the Executive Council Office develop and implement a formal process to monitor if Crown agencies file annual reports with the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly in the time frame specified by the <i>Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act</i>.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) has formalized an agreement with the Clerk of the legislative assembly to ensure ECO is able to monitor whether Crown agencies file their reports on time.</p>

RECOMMENDATIONS NOT IMPLEMENTED	CONSIDERATIONS
<p>2022 V2 Chapter 2: Contaminated Sites - Department of Environment and Local Government</p> <p>2.83 We recommend the Executive Council Office align its instructions to government departments for annual planning with the requirements of the <i>Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act</i>.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) will align its instructions to government departments for annual planning with the requirements of the <i>Accountability and Continuous Improvement Act</i></p>
<p>2022 V2 Chapter 2: Contaminated Sites - Department of Environment and Local Government</p> <p>2.94 We recommend the Executive Council Office assign responsibility to an oversight body for the co-ordination of all government-owned contaminated sites to ensure sites are remediated in a timely manner to the applicable environmental standard.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) will assign responsibility to an oversight body for the co-ordination of all government-owned contaminated sites to ensure sites are remediated in a timely manner to the applicable environmental standard.</p>
<p>2021 V2 Chapter 3: Crown Agency Salary and Benefits Practices</p> <p>3.27 We recommend the Executive Council Office, in consultation with the Department of Finance and Treasury Board, update the Memoranda of Understanding with each Part IV Crown agency to clearly define what government expects for salary and benefits practices for non-bargaining employees.</p>	<p>The Executive Council Office (ECO) will continue to collaborate with the Department of Finance and Treasury Board. Memorandums of understanding will be updated to reflect this direction.</p>

Section 2 – Includes the reporting periods for years three, four and five.

NAME AND YEAR OF AUDIT AREA WITH LINK TO ONLINE DOCUMENT	RECOMMENDATIONS	
	TOTAL	IMPLEMENTED
2020 V1 Chapter 3: Ambulance Services	1	0
2019 V1 Chapter 5: City of Saint John Funding Agreement – Special Review Executive Council Office	5	5
2018 V1 Chapter 2: WorkSafeNB – Phase 1 - Governance	1	1
2018 V2 Chapter 4: Follow up recommendations from Prior Years Performance Audit Chapters	2	2

REPORT ON THE *PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT*

As provided under Section 18(1) of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act*, the chief executive shall prepare a report of any disclosures of wrongdoing that have been made to a supervisor or designated officer of the portion of the public service for which the chief executive is responsible. The Executive Council Office received no disclosure(s) of wrongdoing in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.