



Business Plan

2023-24

Office of the Auditor General
Independence • Integrity • Impact



Auditor General's Mandate

The Auditor General of Nova Scotia is an officer of the House of Assembly; nonpartisan and independent of government. The Auditor General is appointed by, and reports to, the House of Assembly. The Office derives its mandate, authority, and responsibilities from the Auditor General Act.

The Auditor General's mandate includes issuing opinions on government financial reports and conducting performance audits on public sector operations.

The Auditor General provides annual opinions on the government's consolidated financial statements, the revenue estimates included in the government's budget, and the financial statements of certain other public sector entities.

By exercising these responsibilities, the Auditor General helps the House of Assembly hold the government accountable for its management of public funds and contributes to a well-performing public sector.

Strategic Initiatives

This business plan highlights some of the key strategic initiatives the Office will work on in 2023-24:

- Conduct an office-wide engagement survey to foster a culture of continuous improvement, facilitate collaborative and data-driven decision making, and promote the well-being and overall success of both employees and the Office.
- Review and refine the performance management model ensuring it will maximize individual and organizational performance, boost employee engagement, and drive business success.
- Amplify visibility and accessibility of our reports by leveraging our social media platforms.
- Revise the Internal Communications Plan to align communication strategies with Office objectives, empower employees, and ensure effective and meaningful communication across the organization.
- Develop a three-year performance audit plan.
- Streamline and standardize the process for audit selection, related scope and reporting to increase the number of audits, ensure they are delivered on time and budget, and are impactful with practical recommendations for improvement.
- Collaborate with the Public Accounts Committee to advance its effectiveness in holding Government accountable.





Our Vision

A relevant, valued, and independent audit office serving the public interest as the House of Assembly's primary source of assurance on government performance.



Our Mission

To make a significant contribution to enhanced accountability and performance in the provincial public sector.



Our Values

Our values are a statement of the high standards we hold in conducting ourselves and our work, and of the results we strive to achieve.



Independence

We remain independent of the entities that we audit and are objective in our work.



Integrity

We work together and with others in an open, honest, and trustworthy manner while respecting the confidentiality of the information we obtain.



Impact

We focus on significant issues to make a positive difference for the benefit of Nova Scotians.

Our Priorities

Our mission, vision, and values guide us in our work as independent professionals adding value through audit. We have identified five priorities as key to the achievement of our vision:

Serve the House of Assembly

Conduct and report audits that provide clear and relevant information to the House of Assembly as it holds the government accountable for its performance and stewardship over public funds

Consider the Public Interest

Focus our audit efforts on areas of higher risk that impact on the lives of Nova Scotians

Improve Government Performance

Contribute to a better performing public service by conducting audits that result in practical recommendations for significant improvements

Enhance Government Financial Reporting

Encourage continual improvement in financial reporting by government to the House of Assembly and the people of Nova Scotia

Foster Workplace Excellence

Promote excellence and a professional and supportive workplace at the Office of the Auditor General



Audits and Other Assurance Engagements

The Office conducts a variety of audits and reviews, some of which are mandated by legislation; others are at the discretion of the Auditor General. Our current plan is to conduct the following assignments in 2023-24.

- Audit of the Province's March 31, 2023 consolidated financial statements
- Review of the government's 2024-25 revenue estimates
- Audit of expenditure compliance and internal controls at the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, including MLA expenses
- Audit of the March 31, 2023 financial statements of Nova Scotia Health and the IWK Health Centre
- Six performance audits
- Follow-up on Government implementation of recommendations made in performance audits from 2019 to 2021
- Report on the results of our financial statement audit work and other financial-related topics

Quality Assurance and Office Accountability

A number of processes serve to ensure the quality of our work and our accountability to the House of Assembly, including:

- Publicly reporting the results of our financial and performance audit work through tabling audit reports in the House of Assembly and posting copies of our reports, video and infographic summaries on our website
- Internal quality assurance systems based on Canadian auditing standards, including multiple levels of review
- Implementing recommendations from peer reviews of our audits by other legislative audit offices in Canada
- Addressing findings of periodic reviews of our financial statement audits and associated quality control systems by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia
- Addressing the results of staff surveys and other performance measures to improve the Office's audit work and administration
- Reporting results of the independent audit of the Office's annual financial statements to the Speaker of the House of Assembly
- Submitting an annual business plan and a performance report to the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Assembly
- Publicly reporting on our website the travel and hospitality expenses of our Executive team

Performance Indicators

Performance indicators are elements of an organization’s work efforts, outputs and outcomes that can be measured and assessed against targets in order to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of its operations. The following are performance indicators against which the Office will assess its 2023-24 performance.



 Performance Indicator	 Description	 Office Target
1. Performance audits	Number of planned performance audits reported	Six
2. Performance audit recommendations	Percentage of performance audit recommendations accepted	95% or higher
3. Financial audits	Percentage of financial audits completed by applicable target dates	100%
4. Strategic initiatives	Percentage of 2023-24 strategic initiatives completed	100%
5. MLA satisfaction	Percentage of MLAs satisfied with our work	80% or higher
6. Employee engagement	Employee engagement index*	80 or higher

* Vital metric that measures the level of satisfaction, commitment and enthusiasm among our employees



Resources

The following table outlines the Office's actual and budgeted revenues, expenses and staff positions for 2022-23 and 2023-24. The majority of funding is by way of an annual appropriation of the House of Assembly, but the Office recovers the cost of certain financial audits through billings. The Office's major expense is salaries and benefits, which represent 78% of gross expenditures for 2023-24. All staff members are directly or indirectly involved in providing audit services. \$670,000 of the 2023-24 budget is additional funding relating to the implementation of the health audit function.

Office of the Auditor General Revenues, Expenses and Staffing

	2022-23 Budget	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Budget
Revenues			
Government contributions	\$5,209,000	\$4,785,902	\$6,061,000
Professional Fees	385,000	362,900	345,000
	5,594,000	5,148,802	6,406,000
Expenses			
Salaries and benefits	4,744,000	4,213,973	5,012,000
Office lease and taxes	240,000	237,861	250,000
Professional services	206,000	336,163	555,000
Staff training	107,000	103,497	145,000
Office supplies	95,000	29,415	147,000
Membership dues	75,000	50,231	90,000
Travel	58,000	23,095	85,000
Other services	43,000	35,083	98,000
Telecommunications	20,000	11,552	20,000
Parking	6,000	4,859	4,000
Amortization	nil	45,780	nil
	\$5,594,000	\$5,091,509	\$6,406,000
Staff – Full-time equivalent	38.5	35.8	41.0

Additional Information

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