

50 Years at Your Service

2022 • 2023 Annual Report to Governments



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This document is available on the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat's [website](#), and in alternative formats upon request.

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In our efforts to provide the best service possible and the most up to date information to you, our clients, CICS welcomes your comments and suggestions.

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Contents

Secretary's Message	5
50 years of History	6
Highlights	7
Key Accomplishments	7
Overview	7
Hybrid Conferences	9
Client Satisfaction	9
Conferences by Format	10
Conferences by Level	11
Conferences by Type	12
Sectors Served	13
What the future holds	14
Provincial-Territorial Interchange Program	14
Financials	14
Provincial Contributions	14
Distribution of Provincial Contribution towards CICS' 2022-23 Budget (\$ Thousands)	15
Financial Results	16
Who we are and what we offer	18
About	18
Conferencing	18
Who we serve	18
Archiving	18
Requesting CICS' services	19

Secretary's Message

I am proud to present the 2022-23 Annual Report to Governments, which is my first annual report as Secretary for the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat. 2022-23 marked the departure of the longest serving Secretary, who ably led CICS for a period of 18 years, up to March 30th, 2023. Together with the secretaries before him, André McArdle built a credible conference services secretariat and a highly functional agency. I am honoured to succeed André during this period of intense change.

To say that 2022-23 has been a year of transformation at the Secretariat would be an understatement, and the rise of the hybrid meeting certainly contributed to that. But in truth, change has been the one constant throughout the Secretariat's history, which has been coloured by adaptation, reinvention, and provision of top-tier professional services in the context of an ever-evolving landscape.

As we look back on 50 years of achievements, we also must look to the future to build upon the tradition of excellence and to continue thriving in providing 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.



**Ruth
Onyancha**
Secretary

50 years of History

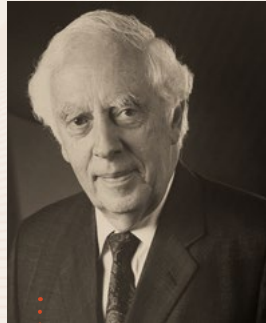
1973

Creation of CICS



1983

Stuart Mackinnon becomes Secretary



2010

CICS inaugurates CMS, its registration website



2015

CICS serves its first videoconference



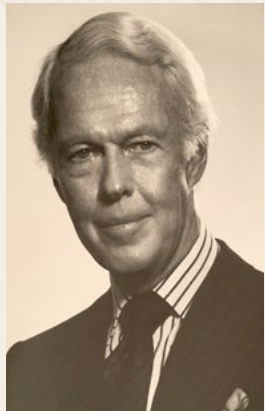
2023

Ruth Onyancha becomes Secretary



1973

Henry Davis becomes the first Secretary of CICS



2000

CICS serves its first conference in Nunavut



2005

André McArdle becomes Secretary

2012

CICS serves its first teleconference



2021

Videoconferences outnumber teleconferences for the first time



Highlights

Key Accomplishments

- Successful transition to a hybrid model.
- Implementation of remote interpretation to increase interpreter availability and reduce environmental impacts of travel.
- Virtual break-out rooms for conferences, and other forms of parallel meetings for discussions.
- Purchased state-of-the-art equipment to increase network security.
- Analyzed, tested and implemented the best solution on the market to provide fast and secure internet for conference participants.
- Renewal of equipment for in-person meetings including vastly improved, high-quality state-of-the-art, mobile projectors.

Overview

The fiscal year of 2022-23 was significant in many ways for the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS), and two contributing elements are related to conference formats. Firstly, there were no teleconferences held throughout the year, which is a first since the inauguration of teleconferences at the Secretariat; The last teleconference served at CICS was in July 2021. Additionally, hybrid conferences outnumbered virtual meetings for the first time since 2019-20, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The year resulted with 55.8% of meetings in a hybrid format, and the remaining being videoconferences. This shift to hybrid conferences required additional resources for each meeting, and involved complex logistics that CICS adapted to seamlessly.

There is an important distinction to be made between events and conferences that are served by the Secretariat. An event defines the overarching assembly of delegates who gather to discuss topics related to a specific sector, whereas conferences are a breakdown of the separate meetings held within an event. For example, CICS will serve events that consist of three conferences, including a Federal-Provincial-Territorial meeting, a Provincial-Territorial meeting, and a meeting with the National Indigenous Organizations. Events can also be broken down into Ministerial and Deputy Minister level conferences. In the 2022-23 Departmental Results Report, the Secretariat reported a total of 81 events. However, these 81 events represented a combined 102 conferences, as outlined in the overview section of this report.

55.8%

of meetings were in a hybrid format.

Overview of intergovernmental conference activity in 2022-23:

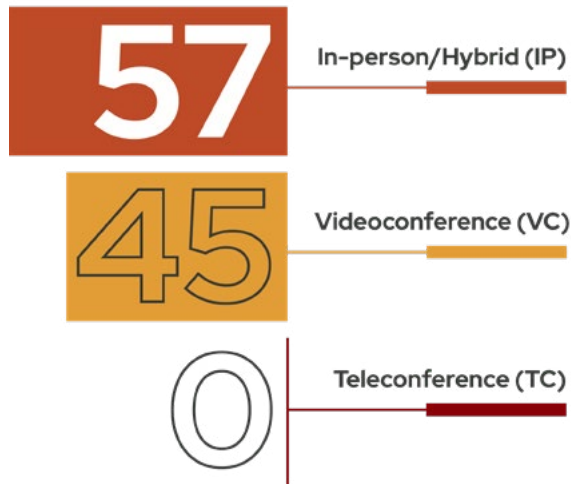
102
conferences

86

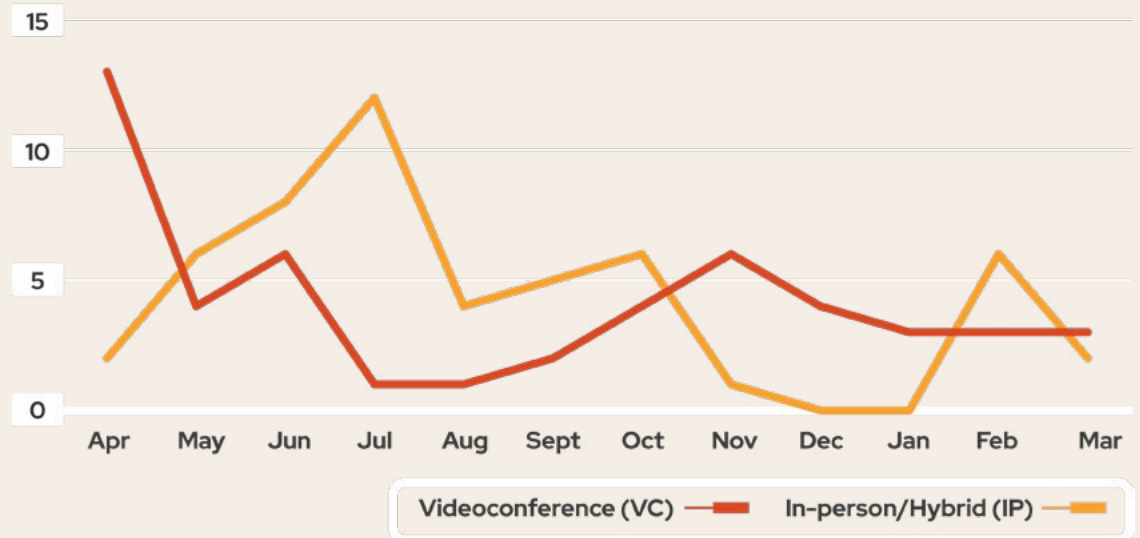
Federal-Provincial-Territorial

16

Provincial-Territorial



Conferences by Month



April	15	October	10
May	10	November	7
June	14	December	4
July	13	January	3
August	5	February	9
September	7	March	5

Hybrid Conferences

A hybrid meeting is one in which some participants are gathered together in person while other participants are remote, dispersed across different locations, typically using video and audio to connect online.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting travel bans and restrictions, many in-person meetings in March 2020 were cancelled, rescheduled, or changed to an online format. In 2020-21, CICS served 218 conferences, none of which were in-person meetings; the vast majority of these were teleconferences. In 2021-22, out of 147 conferences served, only 3 were held in person. For the first time, videoconferences outnumbered teleconferences.

With the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions in 2022-23, in-person meetings resumed with a virtual component to allow those who could not attend in person to participate remotely. The hybrid model became so popular that it accounted for 55.8% of conferences served in 2022-23 by CICS, with the rest being videoconferences.

Because hybrid meetings are a combination of videoconferences and in-person meetings, they require more human and financial resources on the part of CICS, but simultaneously have the capacity to minimize expenses for clients due to the reduction of travel costs.

44.2%
of conferences served in 2022-23
by CICS were videoconferences.

Client Satisfaction

Two surveys are used to assess client satisfaction, one being an annual sampling of conference organizers and the other one focusing on delegates' perspective. Both provide valuable and very timely feedback on all aspects of the administrative and technical support CICS provides. In turn, this insight informs the Secretariat's decisions about the alignment of its services and approaches with clients' evolving needs and priorities. Both surveys conducted in 2022-23 showed a very high client satisfaction rate:

Expected results

Professionally planned and supported conferences, including effectively addressing unforeseen challenges.

Performance indicators

Client (conference organizer) satisfaction levels for the full range of CICS services provided in support of PT and FPT conferences.

90% target **94.1%** result

Expected results

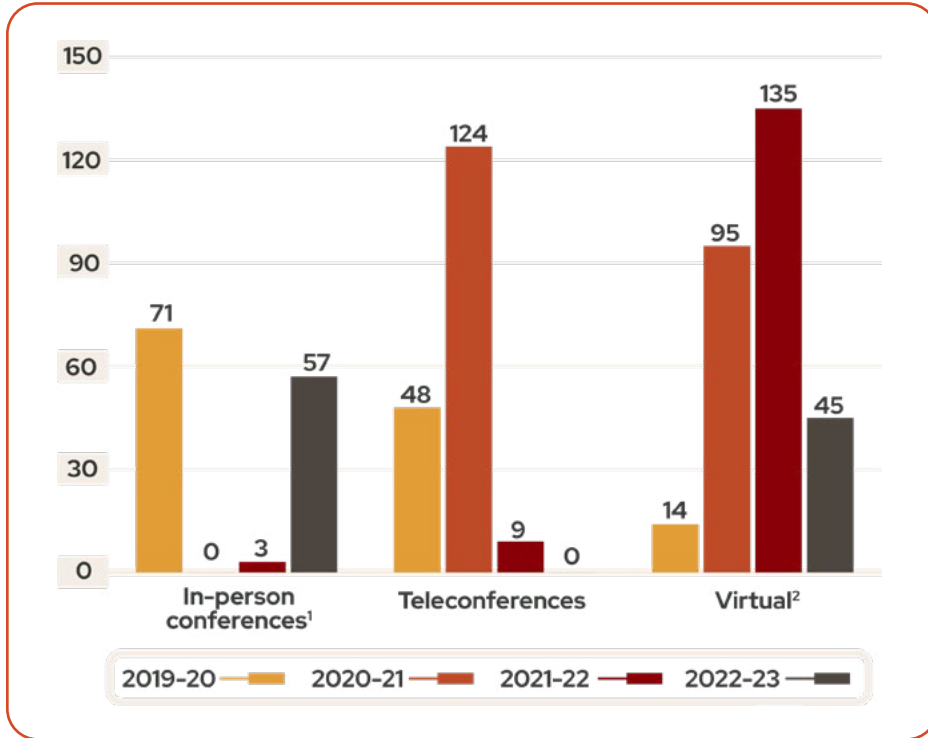
Clients' and conference participants' conference needs identified and addressed accordingly.

Performance indicators

Client (conference participant) satisfaction levels for the full range of CICS services provided in support of PT and FPT conferences.

90% target **95%** result

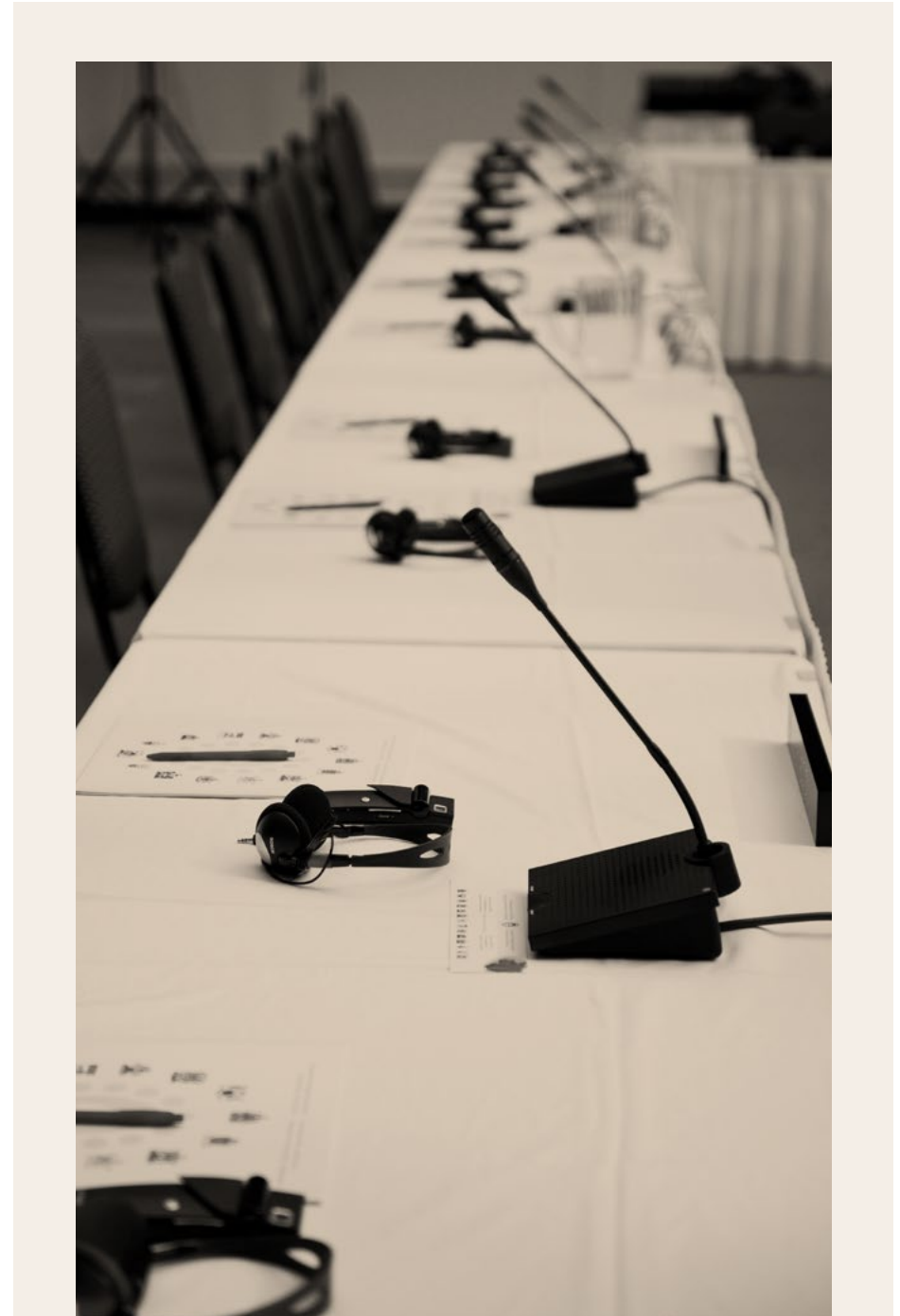
Conferences by Format



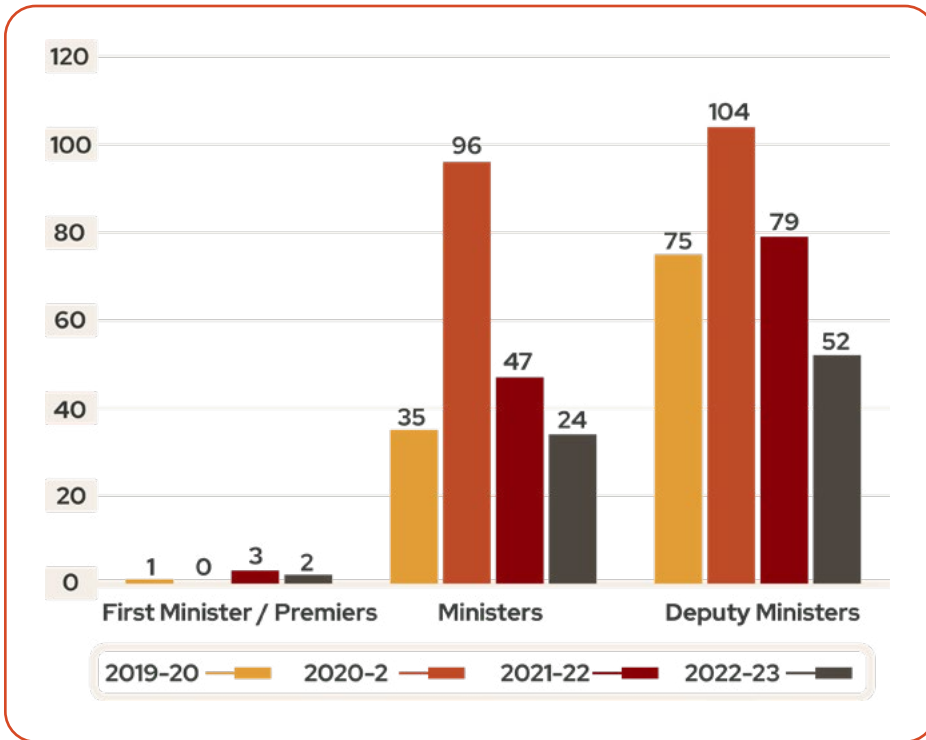
Now that clients are proficient with virtual conferencing platforms, the number of teleconference requests have decreased to zero. CICS expects this trend to continue, with hybrid conferences likely to be the premier choice in coming years.

¹ Until 2021-22, these meetings were in-person only. However, in 2022-23, a virtual component is now included at almost all in-person conferences, making them a hybrid of the two formats (videoconference and in-person).

² For 2019-20, figures included in-person meetings where either teleconference or videoconference equipment was used to link-in remote participants or presenters. For all subsequent years, the conferences indicated were exclusively held by videoconference.

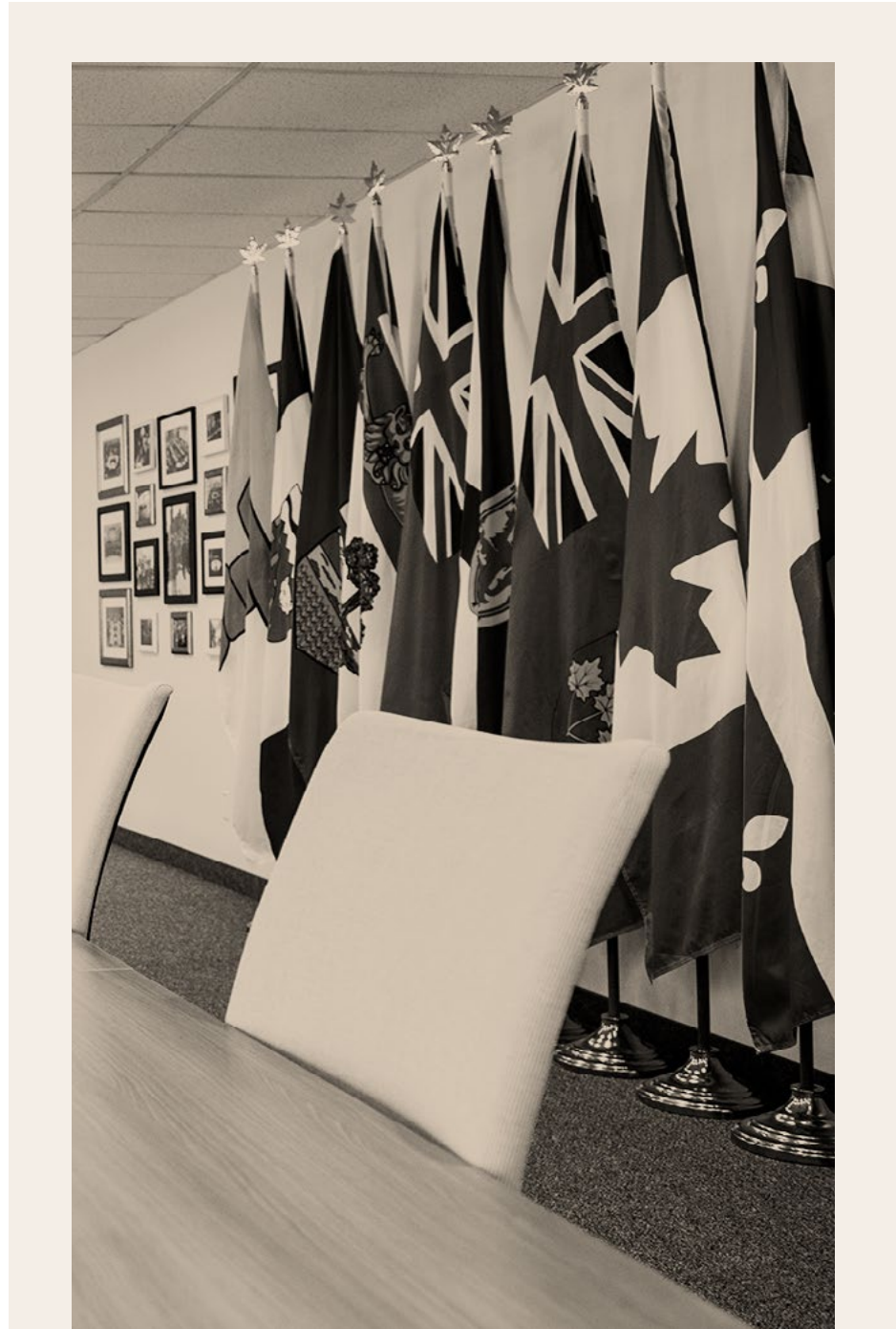


Conferences by Level³

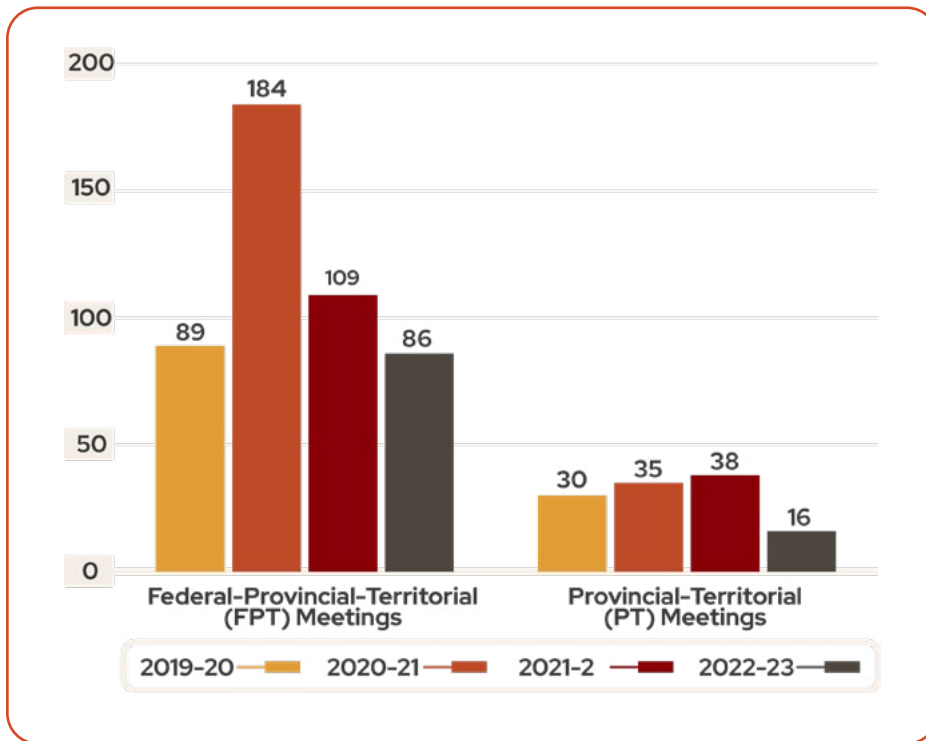


CICS saw a stable number of First Minister/Premier level meetings in 2022-23. Though there was a 27% decrease in Minister meetings when compared to 2021-22, this 2022-23 data point is on par relative to the pre-pandemic statistics. In analysis of the Deputy Minister level meetings, a 34% decrease can be observed. This outlier is explained by reason of resource strain in the organization and a requirement on CICS' part to reschedule or decline meetings when human or financial resources were unavailable.

³ Figures do not include other levels of conferences.



Conferences by Type



CICS served a total of 86 FPT and 16 PT meetings in 2022-23, compared to a 109/38 ratio in 2021-22. This indicates a 21% decrease in the number of FPT meetings since the previous year, and a 57% decrease in the number of PT meetings. The COVID-19 pandemic demanded a higher frequency of meetings in order to respond to the worldwide crisis and its impacts. As a result, we are now seeing FPT conference numbers move back to pre-pandemic levels. The significant decrease in PT meetings can be attributed to resource strain in the organization and a requirement on CICS' part to reschedule or decline meetings when human or financial resources were unavailable.



FPT Meetings

are returning to pre-pandemic levels

Sectors Served

Of the **36 sectors** of intergovernmental activity served in 2022-23, the three that convened most often were Status of Women, Justice and Public Safety, and Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation. Together, these sectors represented 25% of all meetings served by CICS.

Sector or Table	# of conferences
Agriculture	2
Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation	2
Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates	2
Chief Coroners and Chief Medical Examiners	2
Culture and Heritage	4
Education	4
Elections	1
Energy and Mines	3
Environment	4
Finance	1
First Ministers' Meeting	1
Fisheries and Aquaculture	2
Forest	4
Francophonie	2
Governor General, Lieutenant Governors and Territorial Commissioners	1
Health	3
Housing	4
Immigration	3

Sector or Table	# of conferences
Information and Privacy Commissioners	1
Infrastructure	3
Intergovernmental Affairs	4
Justice and Public Safety	7
Labour	1
Local Government	1
National Association of Public Trustees and Guardians	1
Official Languages	1
Public Service Commissioners	1
Public Works	5
Seamless Canada	2
Seniors	1
Service Delivery	4
Social Services	2
Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation	7
Status of Women	11
Tourism	2
Transport	3

What the future holds

Provincial-Territorial Interchange Program

The Provincial-Territorial Interchange Program offers career development opportunities for employees of provincial/territorial governments to gain broader knowledge and experience in the field of intergovernmental affairs, build a balanced and inclusive staff complement in accordance with the establishment agreement of the CICS and its Order in Council, as well as to help strengthen the Secretariat's balanced and neutral approach, knowledge, and capacity to support all clients and agency operations. To offer as many provincial/territorial public servants as possible this unique developmental opportunity, the standard interchange duration is three years. Upon completion of their interchange period with the CICS, provincial/territorial public servants are expected to return to their respective governments enriched with an overview of the machinery of intergovernmental relations and the experience of working with key sectors of intergovernmental activity. The current Provincial-Territorial program will require negotiation in the coming years to enable the Secretariat to bring on more provincial/territorial employees, and to harmonize staff retention policies across the board; This will be considered carefully and accomplished collaboratively.

Financials

Provincial Contributions

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) is financed by both the Government of Canada through parliamentary appropriations and by the provinces through contributions under a shared cost agreement. The amount of \$2.17 million requested from the provinces last fall, for the 2022-23 budget, was calculated by taking the difference between CICS' Main Estimates of \$6.26 million and the federal government contribution⁴ of \$3.34 million and adjusting it on the basis of the 2021-22 lapse.

The total provincial share of the CICS budget is then split among the provinces on a pro rata basis, according to their population, as determined by the last Population Census. Table 1 shows the provinces' shares for the 2022-23 budget, as well as the actual amounts received.

**\$2.17
million**
were requested from the provinces.

⁴ The Federal share includes fifty percent of the total budget plus the employee benefit plans for federal, provincial and territorial employees, the translation costs, the tenant services, the capital costs and any revenue shortfalls resulting from the non-payment or partial payment by the provinces of their respective share.

Distribution of Provincial Contribution towards CICS' 2022-23 Budget (\$ Thousands)

Table 1 Distribution of provincial contributions towards CICS' 2022-23 budget (\$ thousands)

Province	% Based on 2021 Population Census	Distribution of Provincial Share of CICS' 2022-23 Budget	Distribution of Provincial Share of the Adjustment ⁵	2022-23 Requested Contribution	2022-23 Actual Contribution Received
Newfoundland and Labrador	1.4%	31.7	5.9	25.8	25.8
Nova Scotia	2.6%	58.9	11.2	47.7	47.7
New Brunswick	2.1%	47.6	9.0	38.6	38.6
Prince Edward Island	0.4%	9.0	1.8	7.3	7.3
Quebec	23.1%	523.7	0	523.7	131.3
Ontario	38.6%	875.1	0	875.1	265.0
Manitoba	3.6%	79.3	15.5	63.8	63.8
Saskatchewan	3.1%	70.2	0	70.3	23.0
Alberta	11.6%	262.9	49.4	213.6	213.6
British Columbia	13.6%	308.3	0	308.3	95.0
Total	100%	2,267.1	92.8	2,174.2	911.1

⁵ The 2022-23 Budget adjustment represents the difference calculated from the Main Estimate less actual expenditures. The provincial share of the budget adjustment is distributed between provinces which fully contributed towards CICS' operational budget.

Financial Results

A summary of CICS's financial results are presented in Table 2. The total funding is composed of the Main Estimates budget and adjustments. The Main Estimates are the voted appropriations at the beginning of the fiscal year, which started on April 1, 2022. Total funding for CICS has not varied significantly compared with the previous year.

Table 2 2022-23 Financial Results (\$ thousands)

CICS Budget	2022-23	2021-22
Main Estimates	6,056.6	6,030.5
Adjustments & Transfers	359.5	228.3
Total Funding	6,416.2	6,258.8
CICS Expenditures	2022-23	2021-22
Salaries & Wages	3,035.7	2,631.0
Employee Benefit Plans	429.1	355.3
Sub-total—Personnel Costs	3,464.8	2,986.3
Other Operating Costs	2,835.0	1,907.5
Capital Costs	0	0
Sub-total—Other Operating & Capital Costs	2,835.0	1,907.5
Total Expenditures	6,299.8	4,893.8
Lapsed (over expended)	116.5	1,365.0

The total expenditure for 2022-23 notably surged in comparison to the previous fiscal year, primarily attributed to the resumption of face-to-face conferences and hybrid meetings following the relaxation of COVID-19 travel restrictions. The adoption of hybrid conferencing demanded extra human and technical resources, leading to escalated expenses. This was further exacerbated by a considerable inflation in prices, elevating the average cost of in-person events, as well as the general cost of certain acquisitions such as furniture, equipment and machinery. The variance between the total expenditures of 2022-23 and 2021-22 amounts to approximately \$1.4 million, marking a substantial increase of 29%.

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 in conference volume, support level, and format to ensure continued operation within its available budget.

As illustrated in this report, fiscal year 2022-23 has seen a significant influx of requests for in person conferences and a reduction of videoconferences and teleconferences as CICS returns to the new post-pandemic. CICS provided its services to 102 senior-level intergovernmental conferences versus 147 in 2021-22, 57 in-person/hybrids versus 3, 45 videoconferences versus 135, and 0 teleconference versus 9. The in-person hybrid conferences are typically more expensive than videoconferences and teleconferences due to travel, overtime, and audio-visual requirements.

Services provided by CICS in 2022-23 versus 2021-22

Senior-level intergovernmental conferences

102 versus 147

Hybrid

57 versus 3

Videoconferences

45 versus 135

Teleconferences

0 versus 9

Who we are and what we offer

About

The Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS) is an impartial agency whose mandate is to provide administrative support and planning services for federal-provincial-territorial and provincial-territorial conferences of First Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers, throughout Canada.

Conferencing

Our primary objective is to relieve client governments and departments of the numerous technical and administrative tasks associated with planning and conducting multilateral conferences, thereby enabling participants to concentrate on substantive intergovernmental policy issues.

The Secretariat's [services](#) are available to federal, provincial and territorial government departments that are called upon to organize and chair such meetings.

Being truly intergovernmental in nature, the agency is funded by the federal and provincial governments, and its staff is comprised of federal, provincial and territorial public servants.

Who we serve

- First Ministers/Premiers
- Ministers
- Deputy Ministers

Most senior-level intergovernmental conferences are supported by our organization. A complete list of our client sectors is available in this report, under [Sectors Served](#).

Archiving

Any and all documents presented to participants at conferences served by CICS are carefully safeguarded and archived. This means agendas, list of delegates, 3 years' worth of conference recordings, presentations, reports, communiqués, summary of decisions, verbatims, etc. Even the last-minute documents that were table dropped on conference site are kept and treated according to their security classification. So, whether you're a current client needing access to that conference recording to draft minutes for the meeting, a new co-chair needing to see what has been done in the past, a conference delegate who has attended the meeting but no longer has access to an important presentation or a legislative library looking to fill in the gaps in their collection, the team responsible for the CICS archive can help. A simple email to info@scics.ca is all it takes. Should any doubt exist over whether access can be given, the team will liaise with the responsible authorities. Note that, while the public may also have access to documents emanating from the CICS collection, these are limited to public documents, most of which are already available on the CICS website.

Requesting CICS' services

CICS services are available to any federal, provincial or territorial government department that organizes an intergovernmental meeting of First Ministers, Ministers or Deputy Ministers.

For in-person meetings, the host government is responsible for arrangements and the costs of conference rooms and hospitality; CICS covers the cost of most other conference services. For virtual meetings, most costs are assumed by CICS.

To make your conference as successful as possible, we encourage you to contact us as soon as you start planning it. We recommend a lead time of at least 4-6 weeks for in-person/hybrid meetings, and 2-3 weeks for videoconferences.

We look forward to working with you on your next event!

- Complete and submit our [online request form](#); or
- Contact our Director of Conference Services at 613-222-6411/613-995-4328 or services@scics.ca.

Recommended lead time

to contact CICS about their services for successful conferences

4-6 weeks
for in-person/hybrid meetings.

2-3 weeks
for videoconferences.