

News Release

For Immediate Release

Building a vibrant economic future for Atlantic Canada

Federal Ministers and Atlantic Premiers announce the launch of an Atlantic Growth Strategy following a meeting on Atlantic Canada's economy

July 4, 2016 – St. Peters Bay, Prince Edward Island

The Government of Canada and the governments of the four Atlantic Provinces are working together to build a vibrant economic future for Atlantic Canada by focussing their efforts and resources to stimulate the region's economy, support the middle class and address both long standing and emerging regional challenges. These actions will build on other advancements for the middle class, such as the Canada Child Benefit and the recent agreement on the Canada Pension Plan.

To demonstrate this commitment, today, the Government of Canada and the four Atlantic provincial governments jointly announced the launch of an Atlantic Growth Strategy that will direct targeted actions to stimulate the region's economy, support both innovative and resource-based industries, and increase job opportunities for Atlantic Canadians. The details were made public following a meeting that concluded today between the four Atlantic Premiers – Stephen McNeil, Brian Gallant, Wade MacLauchlan and Dwight Ball – and federal Ministers Lawrence MacAulay, John McCallum, Scott Brison, Dominic LeBlanc, Navdeep Bains, and Judy Foote.

The Atlantic Growth Strategy is intended to drive economic growth in the region by implementing targeted, evidence-based actions under the following five priority areas:

- **Skilled workforce/immigration**
Enhance the region's capacity to develop, deploy and retain a skilled workforce by addressing persistent and emerging labour market needs and making Atlantic Canada a destination of choice for immigrants.
- **Innovation**
Foster greater business innovation by supporting the scaling up of small firms, technology transfer, the commercialization of research, and the generation of new breakthrough ideas in areas such as bioscience, aquaculture, ocean technology and renewable energy, while also spurring value-added opportunities in established industries like the fisheries, agriculture and forestry which are the foundation of Atlantic Canada's economy.
- **Clean growth and climate change**
Stimulate economic growth, creation of clean jobs, and innovation in the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- **Trade and investment**
Expand business activities between Atlantic Canada and international markets, and strategically market the region as a whole by displaying the best Atlantic Canada has to offer the world to attract new investments and grow tourism.
- **Infrastructure**
Invest in regionally significant infrastructure projects, including broadband connectivity, that support long-term growth in Atlantic Canada and position the region to capitalize on global trade opportunities by attracting investment and enhancing productivity.

Ministers and Premiers unveiled a two-year action plan that will guide short-term actions to be implemented under the Atlantic Growth Strategy. The first area of action focusses on skilled workforce and immigration with the introduction of a new three-year immigration pilot project aimed at addressing the unique labour market challenges in Atlantic Canada. When in place, the pilot project will help to better match the needs of local employers with the skill sets of immigrants while helping to improve the attraction and retention of newcomers in Atlantic Canada.

Through this project the Government will admit up to 2,000 immigrants and accompanying families in 2017, with rising numbers in the following years depending on performance. This is a substantial increase, amounting to almost half the current number of provincial nominees in Atlantic Canada. The federal and provincial governments will continue to undertake cooperative actions that will bring stable and long-term economic prosperity in Atlantic Canada and additional joint actions will be unveiled over the coming months.

Ministers and Premiers have formed a Leadership Committee to oversee the implementation of targeted actions, provide policy direction, review the broad range of factors that affect the Atlantic Canadian economy, and, ultimately, drive results that will lead to economic growth in the region. The efforts of the Leadership Committee will be supported by an Advisory Group.

Quotes

“The Government of Canada is focussed on growing the economy and strengthening the middle class. Working jointly with the Atlantic Premiers, we will make the strategic investments and take the actions needed to generate long-term clean and inclusive growth, create jobs and position Atlantic Canada as a thriving, knowledge-driven economy.”

– The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)

“This is a major initiative that addresses a top priority of provincial governments and will lay the foundation for sustainable economic growth. Accommodating a variety of skill levels, provincial governments and employers will recruit and settle immigrants depending on the economic needs of the provinces.”

– The Honourable John McCallum, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

“To build on our successes and create sustained prosperity for Prince Edward Island, we must grow our workforce and continue to foster an environment of innovation and entrepreneurship. Working together with our Atlantic, federal and community partners, we will grow our population and create economic opportunities for all Islanders and for the Atlantic Region.”

– The Honourable Wade MacLauchlan, Premier of Prince Edward Island

Related products

- Backgrounder – Atlantic Immigration Pilot
- Backgrounder – Atlantic Growth Strategy: Action Plan
- Backgrounder – Atlantic Growth Strategy: Leadership Committee Terms of Reference

Associated links

<http://www.acoa-apecca.gc.ca/ags-sca/eng/>

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ATLANTIC IMMIGRATION PILOT

Purpose/Objective

The three-year pilot project is intended to be an employer-driven immigration program to help address labour market needs in the four Atlantic provinces. The goal is to develop approaches for immigration that will enhance retention of immigrant workers in the Atlantic provinces in support of the Atlantic Growth Strategy.

Through this project the Government of Canada will admit up to 2,000 immigrants and accompanying families in 2017, with rising numbers in the following years depending on performance. This is a substantial increase, amounting to almost half the current number of provincial nominees in Atlantic Canada.

Pilot Principles

The pilot will be designed to test innovative approaches that will help to enhance retention and that potentially could be replicated to other provinces and territories depending on results. Key aspects of this innovative approach include:

- **Better Coordination:** All key actors (federal government, provincial government, employers, educational institutions, communities and settlement agencies) would work closely together in an effort to ensure that all of the factors that will lead to increased retention rates are addressed as part of the pilot. Examples of this coordinated approach could include: working closely with partners to identify labour market needs, building better pathways to credential recognition, and cooperation on the provision of settlement supports (e.g. in rural areas).
- **Enhanced Employer Engagement:** Provinces would engage with employers to develop a retention-focused, wrap-around settlement approach. Employers would play an active role in the recruitment of candidates, providing support to immigrants and their families (e.g., language training, transportation, housing, job certification, etc), that will help facilitate the integration process.
- **Enhanced Flexibility:** This pilot would provide Atlantic provinces with the flexibility to focus on current labour market challenges in priority sectors. Recognizing that each province has unique needs, there would be an opportunity for each province to tailor the program to meet its needs. The pilot would include occupations with varying skill levels.

- **Speed and Space:** The pilot would include priority processing in order to ensure that identified labour market needs and shortages are addressed in a timely manner. It would also provide provinces with a significant number of additional nominations outside of the current Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) allocation.
- **Robust Measurement/Reporting:** There would be a particular emphasis on measurement of key indicators (e.g. retention, employer participation) and quarterly reporting in order to ensure that the pilot is working as designed and achieving results.

Scope

The pilot would be launched in early 2017 and run for three years.

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ATLANTIC GROWTH STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN

The following action plan outlines short-term and longer-term actions and announcements related to the Atlantic Growth Strategy, to be reviewed, validated, and adjusted through consultations and measurement of progress.

1. LAUNCH (July 4, 2016)

- Meeting of Leadership Committee.
- Public announcement of:
 - Atlantic Growth Strategy.
 - Plan to create Atlantic Growth Advisory Group.
 - Development of three year immigration pilot.

2. PHASE 1 – IMPLEMENTATION – SHORT-TERM ACTIONS (July - December 2016)

- Atlantic Growth Advisory Group to identify and validate short-term regional opportunities, plan engagement for early 2017, and provide advice on objectives and goals.
- Premiers and Ministers to meet with Atlantic Growth Advisory Group.
- Development of benchmarks and indicators.
- Focus on early areas of collaborative action
 - Implement a three-year immigration pilot.
 - Develop and implement initiatives to attract and retain international students in Atlantic Canada (e.g., mission to Asia with University Presidents).
 - Support business incubators and accelerators to help launch and grow new start-ups.
 - Promote technology transfer, the commercialization of research and value-added in both emerging and traditional sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry.
 - Develop a clean energy plan for Atlantic Canada.
 - Develop a strategic and collaborative approach to tourism.
 - Develop multi-year international business development strategy.
 - Implement Phase 1 of Federal Infrastructure Plan, including Post-Secondary Education Strategic Infrastructure Fund.
- Regular public announcements as joint areas of action are completed.

3. TRACK PROGRESS (December 2016)

- Report on results of early actions to the Leadership Committee.
- Adjust plan based on advice from Atlantic Growth Advisory Group, consultations, and progress.
- Meeting of Leadership Committee.

4. PHASE 2 – IMPLEMENTATION - MEDIUM/LONG-TERM ACTIONS (January - July 2017)

- Atlantic Growth Advisory Group to conduct engagement sessions/roundtables.
- Premiers and Ministers to meet with Atlantic Growth Advisory Group.
- Initiate medium to longer-term areas of collaborative action, such as:
 - Strengthen work-integrated learning in education and training facilities.
 - Improve the alignment of federal and provincial skills training investments
 - Develop Indigenous businesses.
 - Support research and innovation in areas such as biosciences, aquaculture, ocean technology, renewable energy, fisheries, agriculture and forestry.
 - Better coordinate support for high-impact firms and innovation clusters.
 - Support regional electricity grids and renewable power generation, and the ongoing work of the Atlantic Energy Gateway.
 - Support SME exporters through greater export awareness, better market planning, enhanced trade training, and more targeted trade missions.
- Regular public announcements as joint actions are launched and implemented.

5. YEAR 1 REPORT (July 2017)

- Benchmarking report.
- Meeting of Leadership Committee.

6. PHASE 3 – IMPLEMENTATION – REASSESS ACTIONS (July - December 2017)

- Adjust actions as required, based on benchmarking report.

7. TRACK PROGRESS (December 2017)

- Meeting of Leadership Committee.

8. PHASE 4 – IMPLEMENTATION (January – July 2018)

- Adjust actions as required.

9. YEAR 2 REPORT (June 2018)

- Meeting of Leadership Committee.

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ATLANTIC GROWTH STRATEGY: LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Atlantic Premiers and federal Ministers have agreed to work together as a Leadership Committee on an Atlantic Growth Strategy – an approach and actions to advance inclusive growth in Atlantic Canada through enhanced federal and provincial collaboration.

Principles of the Atlantic Growth Strategy

Collaboration – Support a coordinated and collaborative approach among the federal and four provincial governments that increases the impact of key interventions.

Pan-Atlantic – Emphasize region-wide approaches.

Alignment – Ensure actions align with national priorities/strategies and the priorities of each Atlantic province.

Engagement – Engage and consult with regional stakeholders in Atlantic Canada.

Inclusiveness – Foster economic growth, improve living standards and share the benefits of increased prosperity more evenly across social groups, including women and Indigenous peoples.

Outcome-driven – Identify clear and realistic outcomes.

Accountability – Report on results in 2017 and on an ongoing basis.

Mandate

Building on existing federal and provincial priorities and initiatives, the Atlantic Growth Strategy is based on the following five pillars of action:

- *Skilled workforce/immigration* – Enhance the region's capacity to develop, deploy and retain a skilled labour force and make Atlantic Canada a destination of choice for immigrants, while also supporting labour market participation for unemployed and underemployed Canadians, including under-represented groups such as Indigenous peoples, older workers, and persons with disabilities; support the Forum of Labour Market Ministers to address persistent and emerging labour market needs.
- *Innovation* – Foster greater business innovation by scaling up small firms, promoting technology transfer, commercialization of research and value-added in both emerging and traditional sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and forestry.
- *Clean growth and climate change* – Stimulate economic growth, create clean jobs and drive innovation in the transition to a low-carbon economy.
- *Trade and investment* – Expand tourism, trade and investment between Atlantic Canada and international markets.
- *Infrastructure* – Invest in regionally significant infrastructure projects that support long-term growth in Atlantic Canada and position the region to capitalize on global trade opportunities, enhance productivity, and attract foreign investment.

Scope of Work

The Leadership Committee will:

- Identify shared economic priorities and collaborate on the design and implementation of actions that advance the Atlantic Growth Strategy.
- Provide direction to their respective officials for implementation of the Strategy through a collaborative approach.
- Ensure input into the process by Indigenous peoples and stakeholders.
- Monitor progress and report publicly on results in 2017 and on an ongoing basis.

Governance

Federal-Provincial Governance: The Leadership Committee will be supported by a Committee of Federal-Provincial Senior Officials.

Atlantic Growth Advisory Group: A committee of business and other leaders will provide strategic advice to the Leadership Committee.

Membership

Members of the Leadership Committee include:

- Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil
- New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant
- Prince Edward Island Premier Wade MacLauchlan
- Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Dwight Ball
- Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lawrence MacAulay
- President of the Treasury Board, Scott Brison
- Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Dominic LeBlanc
- Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Navdeep Bains
- Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Judy Foote

* Note: Other federal Ministers with responsibilities for work which is aligned with the five pillars of the approach may be involved on an ad hoc basis.

Frequency and Location of Meetings

Meetings will take place twice annually and will rotate location.