

Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Business Plan
2023-2024

President's Message

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the employees of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) I am pleased to present the Corporation's 2023-2024 Business Plan. This document gives an overview of our organization and of *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan (OPT3) 2020-2025*. Included in this Business Plan are the main initiatives, the nine Priority Actions and their status, as well as an overview of the Community Inclusion Networks.

Fiscal year 2023-2024 will be the fourth year of OPT3 five-year plan. The plan includes nine priority actions that were developed following a successful public engagement process that took place across the province in the winter and spring 2019.

In the coming fiscal year:

- While work will continue on all nine OPT3 Priority Actions (as presented in the table on page 8), the following Priority Actions will be given specific attention:
 - **Priority Action #7:** *Develop and implement regional transportation plans to increase accessibility, affordability, and availability of transportation services.*
 - ESIC will work with government, regional service commissions and community partners to increase community transportation solutions in all communities.
 - **Priority Action #9:** *Support children and youth by ensuring there are school food programs in all New Brunswick Schools.*
 - ESIC will work with GNB's Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to develop a permanent province-wide school food program to increase the % of schools with a food program.
- ESIC will work with Social Development to develop any needed revisions to the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*, which has not been substantively reviewed or updated since its proclamation in 2010.
- Continue supporting the Community Inclusion Networks (CINs) in the development and implementation of their respective regional plans. Funding will continue to be made available to the CINs for the implementation of their community development projects, which are geared towards economic and social inclusion, as well as poverty reduction.
- Planning work in and public consultations preparation for the renewal of OPT3.

On January 1st, 2023, the 12 Community Inclusion Networks completed their transition to their respective Regional Service Commissions (RSCs), as part of the expanded mandate of the RSCs as prescribed in the Reform on Local Governance. ESIC continues to play a crucial role in the development of mechanisms to help RSCs across the province build their capacities around community development and transportation services.

ESIC will continue to closely monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of New Brunswickers and adjust its efforts based on this everchanging situation, as well as related data and evidence as it becomes available. ESIC believes New Brunswick will emerge stronger from the pandemic, thanks to the resilience of all New Brunswickers.

I am looking forward to seeing ESIC continuing to be a leader in community development in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Jim Mehan
President
Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation

Mandate

The prevention and reduction of poverty in New Brunswick is complex. The causes and effects are many, and not one solution is universal in preventing or eradicating poverty. It is important that all members of our society work together to provide opportunities for all New Brunswickers to reach their potential.

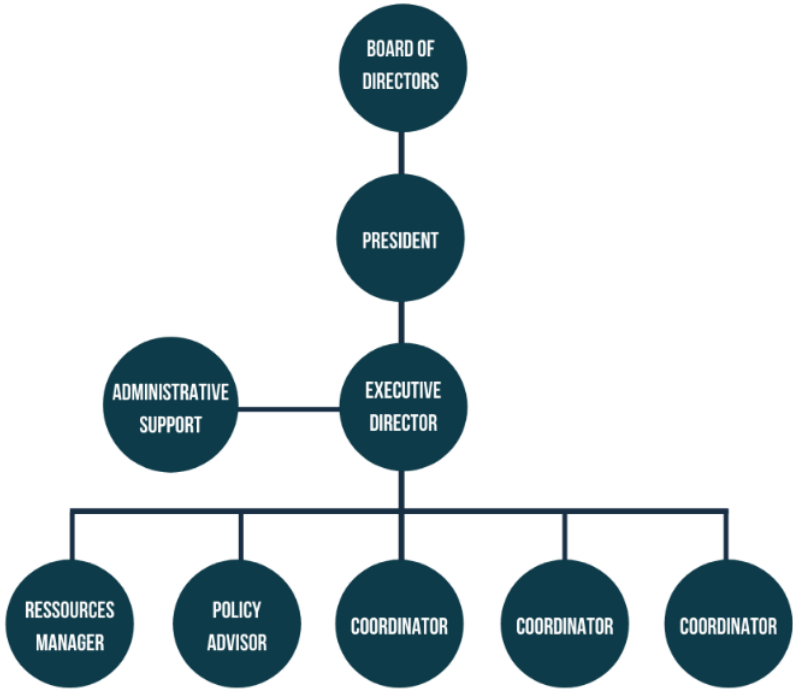
Following an extensive engagement process based on public dialogue with New Brunswickers from all walks of life, the province's first poverty reduction plan, *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan, 2009-2014 (OPT1)* was developed.

Under the ***Economic and Social Inclusion Act***, the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) was established to implement and manage this unique approach to addressing the issue of poverty in New Brunswick.

ESIC was established to:

- Ensure the implementation of OPT and development and adoption of any other economic and social inclusion plan.
- Co-ordinate and support the Community Inclusion Networks (CINs) in developing their plans and in reaching objectives of the provincial plan set out in their regional plans.
- Administer the Economic and Social Inclusion Fund established under section 29 of the Economic and Social Inclusion Act, and
- Exercise the other functions or activities authorized or required by this act or the regulations or as directed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

ESIC is governed by a board of directors. Under the *Economic and Social Inclusion Act*, the board administered the business and affairs of the corporation, including financial, operational, setting policies, and monitoring the progress of OPT.



Historical Background

In 2008, the provincial government undertook a public engagement initiative that gave New Brunswickers the opportunity to become involved in reducing and preventing poverty. It was decided that everyone should be included in finding solutions to the economic and social problems related to poverty.

After a comprehensive consultation process that included almost 2,500 participants, including people living in or who have experienced poverty, representatives from the non-profit community, the business community, the provincial government and the official Opposition, Overcoming Poverty Together (OPT1) was developed and adopted.

The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) was created to incubate, foster, and drive the plan. *The Economic and Social Inclusion Act* was adopted at the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick to support the plan and the corporation's efforts in its implementation.

The act stipulates that the plan must be renewed every five years through a public engagement process.

OPT1 and OPT2

Through the collaboration of governments, business and non-profit sectors, persons living in poverty and individuals – all men, women and children in New Brunswick – shall have the necessary resources to meet their basic needs and to live with dignity, security and good health. Furthermore, all New Brunswickers shall be included as full citizens through opportunities for employment, personal development, and community engagement.

Another public engagement process took place in the spring of 2019, leading to the creation of the third plan: Overcoming Poverty Together 2019-2020 (OPT3). This third plan, which has a new vision, was presented to New Brunswickers on March 5, 2020, just prior to the pandemic arriving.

OPT3

Everyone living in New Brunswick has the opportunities, resources, and security to thrive and actively participate in community life.

Delivery and accountability

The success of the poverty reduction initiative has its roots in the recognition that all individuals and sectors of society play a key role in the reduction of poverty. There is an ongoing commitment to continue this partnership in a governance model with the following components:

1. A provincial board of directors consisting of representatives from four sectors: government, non-profit, business, and people living or having lived in poverty. The board has four co-chairs, one from each sector.
2. A central unit providing coordination and administrative support to the board and Community Inclusion Networks.
3. Community Inclusion Networks, now integrated with the Regional Services Commissions and their expanded mandate.

OPT3 places emphasis on community capacity building. It recognizes that each individual and community has a role to play in fostering economic and social inclusion and suggests that communities be empowered to tackle poverty reduction and other issues in New Brunswick.

Global Objective

In alignment with Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy and the United Nations 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, the global objective of the OPT3 Plan is to reduce income poverty by at least 50% by 2030. A 50% reduction in the Market Basket Measure for New Brunswick would decrease it from 14% to 7% in 2030. Achieving this target would mean lifting 50 000 New Brunswickers out of income poverty.

Priority actions

OPT3 includes 9 priority actions, grouped in three pillars:



1. Income Security

Supporting New Brunswickers to move through the income security continuum and providing adequate income support to those who cannot work.



2. Coordination of Programs and Services

Helping New Brunswickers access the programs and services they need.



3. Inclusion and Healthy Communities

Helping New Brunswickers live with dignity.

The 9 priority actions are listed in the table on page 8.

Community Inclusion Networks

The Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation oversees 12 Community Inclusion Networks (CINs) across the province. Since 2011, the CINs have been a component of *Overcoming Poverty Together: The New Brunswick Economic and Social Inclusion Plan*.



The CINs have now been integrated into their respective Regional Service Commissions (RSCs), under local governance reforms that took effect Jan. 1, 2023. The RSCs are now responsible for regional leadership on matters such as community development and transportation. The CINs' focus and objectives remain the same: to identify, through a collaborative process, regional poverty issues and priorities; and to develop and implement a regional poverty reduction plan that aligns with the OPT plan.

The CINs are at the heart of building community capacity and raising the level of engagement through collective and collaborative impact. They play a coordination role with local organizations and support them in the development and implementation of diverse community projects that promote economic and social inclusion with the aim of reducing poverty. The CINs provide a new model for economic and social inclusion. Rather than relying on the various levels of government to eradicate poverty, ESIC in partnerships with the CINs have empowered communities and individuals to participate and contribute collectively.

Projects funded by ESIC generate community engagement that comes in various ways: financial contribution, in-kind donations, and volunteer time. The percentage of community investment per project is a representation of this community engagement.

About 80% of ESIC's budget is invested into communities. For the 11 years ending in March 2022, ESIC has invested over \$10 million in community projects.

This ESIC investment has also generated leveraged contributions from community partners of another \$34.4 million, for a total impact of \$44.4 million. So, every dollar invested by ESIC generates a financial impact of \$4.41 at the community level.

The CINs have demonstrated a high level of resilience and adaptability in maintaining services to communities. They have worked continuously to develop, maintain, and expand their services, particularly those related to transportation where some regions have even gone so far as to develop and add a delivery component to existing services. While ESIC funds have been directed to these essential transportation services, additional efforts have been made by the CINs to seek funding from many external organizations to ensure the continuation of various programs, such as food security.

There are currently 12 community transportation services in New Brunswick. Funds have been granted to the CINs by ESIC via different programs to ensure the viability of transportation services that became essential, not only during the pandemic, but in everyday life of many New Brunswickers.

Large numbers of participants and volunteers have contributed to the transportation services throughout N.B. These participants ensured that services like the delivery of food and other goods to households without transport were maintained and carried out safely and efficiently. These people brought support to community transportation and the delivery of essential goods in a time when New Brunswickers needed it most. This helped to ensure communities could keep access to needed services, during different lockdown phases of the pandemic. In 2021-2022, close to 10,000 New Brunswickers benefited from services linked to CIN community transportation programs and the delivery of goods.

9 Priority Action Progress

Overcoming Poverty Together 3

OPT3 is not a government plan or a business plan or a non-profit plan or a citizen's plan. It is the New Brunswick poverty reduction plan, created by New Brunswick, for New Brunswick.

The objective of OPT3 is to reduce New Brunswick income poverty by at least 50% by 2030. As measured by the Market Basket Measure this is a decrease from 14% to 7% in 2030. Achieving this target means lifting 50,000 New Brunswickers out of income poverty. And progress is being made.

Under the Government of New Brunswick Local Governance Reform that took effect January 1st, 2023, enhanced Regional Service Commissions (RSCs) are now mandated responsibility for regional transportation programs and community development. As a result, ESIC is working closely with the 12 RSCs and Community Inclusion Networks to help with the transition.

This collaboration will support improved community development outcomes within each RSC and includes building and improving community and regional transportation services.

OPT3 Priority Actions	Lead	Comments	Next Steps 2023-2024	KPI
<p>1. Conduct a social assistance reform to remove barriers to employment for employable clients and provide adequate income support for multi-barriered clients who do not have the capacity to work.</p>	<p>SD</p>	<p>SD is making ongoing improvements to Social Assistance. Since October 1, 2021, social assistance recipients are eligible to receive more income as a result of facing fewer deductions and having their assistance rates indexed annually to the change in NB-Consumer Price Index. Changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benefits no longer reduced if clients also receiving child support payments, the Can-NB Housing Benefit or compensatory money re personal injury. - Wage exemption increased, allowing clients to keep up to \$500 of income earned each month, plus 50 cents of each dollar earned over \$500. - Clients no longer have social assistance reduced if living with parents or spending less than 25% of monthly assistance on housing. - Updated definition of deaf in SA programs, as per stakeholders. - Nurse practitioners authorized to sign medical forms for SA clients applying for disability designation. - Indexing of all SA rates to annual inflation - Reforming the definition of Economic Unit / Household income policy to increase housing options for recipients. - The first \$200 of CPP (monthly, per case) is now exempt for clients on SA 	<p>A task force was established in 2021-2022 to review disability support services and programs offered by SD, including income supports.</p> <p>Task force includes reps from primary and allied health care, Premier's Council on Disabilities and the New Brunswick Disability Executives Network, individuals, and family with first-hand experience with disability support services and programs.</p>	<p>The task force has been launched by SD and will provide advice to SD on enhancing support services for persons living with a disability and opportunities to better co-ordinate the delivery of these services.</p> <p>ESIC continues to monitor SD's progress.</p>
<p>2. Consult on changes to the <i>Employment Standards Act</i> to better support low-income workers by addressing the overtime rate, improving sick leave provisions,</p>	<p>PETL</p>	<p>PETL senior leaders are reviewing a draft plan for consultation on the <i>ESA</i>.</p> <p>Current minimum wage: April 1, 2022 – increased to \$12.75 per hour October 1, 2022 – increased to \$13.75 per hour April 1, 2023 – increased to \$14.75 per hour</p>	<p>In 2023, GNB will return to increasing the minimum wage rate by the increase in the New Brunswick CPI.</p> <p>There will be special minimum wage rates for certain categories of employees in government construction work (road, bridge, and building construction), and counselors</p>	<p>This work was launched by PETL in 2021-2022.</p> <p>ESIC continues to monitor PETL's progress.</p>

OPT3 Priority Actions	Lead	Comments	Next Steps 2023-2024	KPI
<p>repealing the exemption of domestic workers, and benchmarking the minimum wage to the Atlantic average by 2021, which would continue to be indexed annually.</p>		<p>The minimum overtime wage rate to increase from \$17.63 per hour to \$19.13 per hour as of April 1, 2022, and to \$20.63 per hour as of October 1, 2022.</p> <p>The minimum wage has been annually indexed to the NB CPI since March 28, 2019, and is set automatically on April 1 of each year.</p>	<p>and program staff at residential summer camps.</p>	
<p>3. Make investments through a new social finance fund to increase the capacity and sustainability of social enterprises within non-profit organizations in New Brunswick.</p>	<p>ESIC</p>	<p>Access to GNB supports for SE development in NB has been established.</p> <p>Four meetings of the new NB SE Advisory Committee have occurred with positive results.</p> <p><u>Partnerships</u> Pond-Deshpande Centre (PDC): Delivers training, assistance, website and provides support to Advisory Committee</p> <p>CBDC Chaleur: Manages the Social Enterprise Investment and Development Fund provided by ESIC – Special project</p> <p>Launched an SE training platform for non-profit organizations.</p>	<p>Next steps are based upon advice flowing from the NB SE Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Convene 4 sessions of the NB SD Advisory Committee.</p> <p>Monitoring and support to the partnerships (PDC & CBDC)</p>	<p>The new social finance fund and related support activities have been launched by ESIC and our partners.</p> <p>Increased # of projects funded (5 from January to March 2023)</p>
<p>4. Conduct a review of government programs, services and tax policies targeted to low-income individuals and families to eliminate areas of duplication, simplify complex application requirements, and ensure program effectiveness to better support</p>	<p>FTB</p>	<p>A complete review of GNB programs, services and tax policies targeted to low-income individuals and families can only be fully undertaken after the pandemic ends.</p> <p>For the 2022 taxation year, the basic personal amount increased from \$10,817 to \$11,720 and the Low-Income Tax Reduction threshold from \$18,268 to \$19,177.</p> <p>As a result, a single tax filer with income up to \$19,177 will not pay provincial personal income tax for 2022. For families, the income</p>	<p>Annually, the department updates its tax expenditure program summary, which includes programs that benefit low-income New Brunswickers and families.</p>	<p>ESIC continues to monitor FTB's progress.</p>

OPT3 Priority Actions	Lead	Comments	Next Steps 2023-2024	KPI
New Brunswick residents.		threshold where no provincial income tax is paid is higher than a single individual. The LITR is phased out, so it benefits other lower-income New Brunswickers as well.		
5. Implement a One-Stop-Shop to help New Brunswickers access information and navigate government and community programs and services they need more easily.	SD	Provincial 211 Service launched Oct 15, 2020. This service is operational 24/7 and 365 days per year.	<p>ESIC will continue to provide support and advice to the NB 211 service as it develops and grows.</p> <p>ESIC will provide funding of \$345,000 for the operation of 211NB.</p> <p>ESIC continues to monitor and support this initiative.</p>	<p>Implementation completed by ESIC in 2020-2021.</p> <p>Increased # of requests for information (+16,600 in 2022-2023)</p>
6. Improve access to mental health and addictions services and reduce wait times.	Health	<p>All data suggests the need for supports and services will continue to climb.</p> <p>On Nov. 17, 2021, GNB released the Inter-departmental Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan Priority Areas for 2021-2025.</p> <p>This plan is based on a client-centric stepped care model that moves along a continuum from promotion of population health and prevention services, up to higher intensity specialized services.</p> <p>ESIC supports the provincial strategy by funding projects and initiatives at the local and regional levels.</p>	CINs provide support to local organizations who wish to apply for a grant under the Community Action Grants for initiatives on mental health.	<p>This effort was launched in 2021-2022 by Dept. of Health.</p> <p>ESIC continues to monitor the impact of its support to local initiatives through their 6-months and 12-months reports.</p>
7. Develop and implement regional transportation plans to increase accessibility, affordability, and availability of transportation services.	ESIC	<p>ESIC provides leadership, financial resources, operational support, and strategic advice to regional community transportation service providers around NB. ESIC continues to develop and support regional transportation plans to increase accessibility, affordability, and availability of community transportation services.</p> <p>The 12 CINs have been transferred to their respective RSCs, including the transportation services.</p>	In 2023-2024 ESIC plans to continue to work with key stakeholders, RSCs and local governments to grow and improve community transportation programs around NB. Support and financial resources will be provided by ESIC.	Community transportation services around NB will be expanded and improved in partnership with the RSC's and other key partners.

OPT3 Priority Actions	Lead	Comments	Next Steps 2023-2024	KPI
		<p>The RSC's will bring stakeholders and local governments together, in collaboration with ESIC, to develop and implement transportation strategies to better serve residents.</p> <p>150 people participated in a symposium on transportation organized by ESIC in March 2023. Best practices from across Canada were presented.</p> <p>The objective was the creation of integrated regional transportation strategies linked to the local governance reform and OPT3.</p>		
<p>8. Leverage partners to provide inclusive opportunities for sport, recreation, and leisure activities for low income New Brunswickers.</p>	<p>Coord. by ESIC</p>	<p>The Working Group meets on a regular basis.</p> <p>The research team has completed their community engagement in Charlotte County and in Restigouche through a prototype project.</p> <p>ESIC provided funding to an initiative sponsored by the NB Public Library Service (NBPLS). Public libraries will be able to loan sport, recreation, and leisure equipment to New Brunswickers and newcomers who may only need it occasionally or want to try something new.</p>	<p>After the prototype, a pilot will take place in Charlotte and Restigouche. This will then lead to a scale up across NB.</p> <p>ESIC continues monitoring the project.</p>	<p>The sport, recreation and leisure equipment loan initiative is expected to be operational through NB Public Libraries during fiscal 2023-2024.</p> <p>Purchase and distribution of sports/recreation/leisure equipment has been completed.</p> <p>Increase # of borrowed items in libraries (889 in 2022-2023)</p>
<p>9. Support children and youth by ensuring there are school food programs in all New Brunswick Schools.</p>	<p>Coord. by ESIC</p>	<p>This is a GNB commitment from the 2020 Provincial Election.</p> <p>An initial pilot project has concluded with no further action to be undertaken from this work.</p> <p>The Community Inclusion Networks are now working to develop ways to meet the need for school food</p>	<p>ESIC works with EECD and Food Depot Alimentaire to identify new locations to implement program, with input from the CINs/RSC's.</p>	<p>ESIC will continue to work with EECD to develop a permanent province-wide school food program and to increase the number of schools with a food program.</p> <p>ESIC will continue to monitor progress</p>

OPT3 Priority Actions	Lead	Comments	Next Steps 2023-2024	KPI
		<p>programs</p> <p>A project called Food for All NB is underway, led by the organization Nourishing Minds. This project is to consult key stakeholders; identify current assets, resources, and requirements to support healthy school food environments; and create an online resource hub for community school partners delivering school food programs.</p> <p>Along with the above initiatives, a new working group of stakeholders call the Coalition for Healthy School Food has been formed to contribute on this project.</p> <p>ESIC has been collaborating closely with different GNB departments to ensure coordination of the food security in the schools.</p> <p>ESIC collaborates with GNB’s Regional Resiliency team for food security.</p> <p>CINs are taking part of the regional resiliency team’s table in their respective communities to elaborate regional approach and strategies in the food security files of their regions.</p> <p>CINs helped their community partners accessing different sources of funding to address the food security needs.</p> <p>ESIC is working in collaboration with Food Depot Alimentaire, for the distribution of the food in certain areas, as they have been provided with up to \$550,000 from Childhood Development to give more students in need better access to healthy foods.</p>		

OPT3 Priority Actions	Lead	Comments	Next Steps 2023-2024	KPI
		<p>A partnership between ESIC, Food for All New-Brunswick and Nourishing Mind is currently taking place to gather the different actors in food security of New-Brunswick. The goal of this collaboration is to consult with key stakeholders to identify current assets, resources, and required resources to support healthy school food environment... to create a resource hub for community school partners developing and delivering school food programs"; and to promote the priorities of the Overcoming Poverty Together Plan 3 of the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation to " support children and youth by ensuring that there are school food programs in all New Brunswick Schools".</p> <p>ESIC has been an active board member of Food for All NB for the last 6 years. The mandate as a board member has terminated as of June 2022.</p> <p>ESIC is an active member of the local food and beverage strategy of GNB.</p> <p>Training and support are being delivered by the ESIC staff to the CINs to assure the advancement of OPT3 priority actions related to food security.</p>		

Financial Information

ESIC Budget Summary Plan

ESIC / SIES	
	2023-2024
Revenue/Revenus	
Funding from GNB / Financement de GNB	\$2 834 200
Total Revenue / Totale des recettes	\$2 834 200
Expenses/Dépenses	
Community Funding / Financement communautaire	\$2 057 032
Board expenses/ Dépenses du conseil d'administration	\$20 000
Priority Actions / Mesures Prioritaire	\$819 110
Total Community Funding / Totale financement communautaire	\$2 896 142
Operating Expenses / Dépenses d'exploitation	
Salaries and Benefits / Salaires et avantages	\$595 000
Services	\$289 300
Financial Literacy	\$100 000
Total Operating Expenses / Dépenses totales de fonctionnement	\$984 300
Total Expenses / Dépenses totales*	\$3 880 442