



# Events East

## 2023-24 Business Plan

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# A Message from the President & CEO

We look to the upcoming years with confidence, optimism, and excitement for the many opportunities we've secured and those on the horizon.

As we celebrate the fifth year of hosting memorable events in our new Centre, it is incredible to look back on the countless experiences we have helped create together with our clients, partners and community. And we're just getting started.

Our business and industry are thriving with a diverse mix of events, including national and international conventions, that position the strengths of our province in academia, research and innovation. These clients are continuing to choose our province and Centre to host their events and we know our community is ready to welcome them.

The anticipation of hosting an event in Nova Scotia is felt not only by attendees but by our clients who have heard about or experienced the unmatched hospitality of our local community and our willingness as a partner and industry to help them create a successful event.

With a strong calendar of convention activity secured, we are also focused on hosting important community conversations and celebrations that create opportunities for us to come together.

Our team is passionate and committed to showcasing the best of our local flavours and culture, looking for new ways to enhance the experiences within our venue while also inspiring our guests to step outside and experience the best of our province for themselves.

We have seen firsthand the impact events can have on our community, economy and the vibrancy of our streets and spaces. Now more than ever, we are committed to ensuring those impacts are felt across our province for many years to come. Through strategic partnerships, programs and new opportunities, we will continue to attract events and create experiences to generate the community pride that makes Nova Scotia the best place to live, explore and connect.



**Carrie Cussons**  
*President & CEO*  
*Events East*

# Mandate

## WHO WE ARE

*Events East Group is a special purpose government agency that manages and operates the Halifax Convention Centre, Scotiabank Centre, and Ticket Atlantic.*

*We are known for attracting and hosting the best events in the region through our commitment to event excellence. Our facilities allow us to attract new visitors and opportunities to Nova Scotia, connecting us to the world.*

*We were created as part of a government partnership between the Province of Nova Scotia and Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and we work in collaboration with them to manage our business in a responsible and transparent manner.*

*We were created in 2014 through the Halifax Convention Centre Act to operate, maintain and manage the activities of the Halifax Convention Centre in a manner that will promote and develop economic development, tourism, and industry in the province generally, and the municipality.*

*In April 2017, our mandate expanded to include the continued management and operations of Scotiabank Centre and Ticket Atlantic.*

# Planning Context

This business plan is presented for the management and operations of the Halifax Convention Centre, which is jointly owned by the Province of Nova Scotia and HRM. At the Halifax Convention Centre, we attract and host meetings, conferences, and conventions, with an emphasis on national and international event activity. Our focus is on events that promote economic development and tourism, driving positive impact and vibrancy for Nova Scotia.

Through the events we host, our venue provides the backdrop for important conversations and celebrations on a local, national, and international level. As we look to the year ahead, we will continue to showcase and leverage the impact of these events for our community, industry, and province.

Event organizers are committed to live, in-person events and continue to choose Halifax and our convention centre to host them, now and well into the future.

With historical event volume and mix restored post-pandemic, our sales and marketing efforts will be focused on ensuring we maintain and grow our presence in key national and international event markets to drive business for future years.

Working in partnership with our clients, we will continue to design and deliver services that create memorable event experiences for our guests. This includes applying key learnings from the past year while also anticipating new, emerging trends in our industry that reinforce

our venue and province as an ideal event destination.

Feedback from our clients coupled with implementation of a comprehensive research program, will allow us to respond to and anticipate clients' evolving needs, positioning us as a leader in our industry.

Continued partnership with our community and local suppliers remains critical in creating authentic Nova Scotian event experiences that differentiate us as an event destination and drive community impact, pride and vibrancy. This year we will look for new, enhanced ways to showcase Nova Scotia's unique culture while also expanding the impact of our business and the events we host. This includes continued partnership with Craft Nova Scotia and Taste of Nova Scotia, along with 70+ local suppliers who support the delivery of our Local Program and menu offerings.

Our people are our strength and we are focused on nurturing a diverse, engaged workforce that is committed to delivering amazing events for our guests. Building on the success of our resourcing and retention strategy, we will look to solidify industry and community partnerships that allow us to expand our talent pool and the diversity of our workforce. At the same time, feedback from our employees will help us prioritize for the future as we continue to foster a culture of engagement and pride within our workplace.

# Strategic Priorities & Activities

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## BUSINESS GROWTH

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With a strong mix of events secured for the current year, our efforts are focused on meeting our national and international event targets for future years, with bookings focused on 2025 and beyond. Recognizing that our industry has now stabilized, we will evolve our sales and marketing strategy to meet the changing needs of our current and prospective clients based on key learnings from our research and feedback. This includes assessing changes to key drivers of decision-making and identifying new emerging event opportunities, while also maintaining a strong presence and key relationships in established event markets. Together with our partners, we will continue to identify and attract events that showcase and align with Nova Scotia's strengths in strategic sectors including oceans and life sciences.

**Activities/Initiatives:**

- Meet long-term national and international event targets, including assessment of existing and emerging markets.
- Develop new sales and marketing strategy focused on national and international event attraction, rooted in insights from client feedback program and aligned with our long-term targets.

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## GUEST EXPERIENCE

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This year we will continue our focus on delivering our diverse calendar of meetings, conventions, trade shows and community celebrations for our local, national and international clients and guests. Through insights from customers, we will identify opportunities to enhance our services and ensure we can continue to meet and exceed client expectations. This includes updating our menu offerings, implementing an updated customer feedback program, and refining the operational processes required to create a seamless experience for our clients at every step along their journey with us.

**Activities/Initiatives:**

- Implement enhanced customer feedback program.
- Identify and design service standards and programs to deliver our long-term service vision, including client-focused programs and a tailored service delivery model for local events.

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## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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We are committed to ensuring the impact of our business and the events we host can be felt across Nova Scotia. Through our Local Program, we showcase authentic Nova Scotia flavours and culture, creating a lasting impression on our guests from near and far. This year, we will look for new ways to enhance our program and create compelling options for our clients to choose local options for their events.

Further, we will find new, innovative ways to demonstrate the impact of our programs, events and industry across the province, creating a sense of community pride and optimism for the opportunities that lie ahead. We will do this through new and existing partnerships within our diverse community, implementing the first year of our organizational Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. This will include defining measures of success and continued engagement with our community to foster inclusive experiences within our venues.

### **Activities/Initiatives:**

- Continue to enhance and deliver Local Program with a focus on client marketing strategies as well as expanded partnerships and reach.
- Implement community engagement strategy to reinforce the value and impact of our business for Nova Scotia and celebrate the events we host with our community.
- Implement year 1 of our organizational Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework including establishing key measures of success and ongoing community engagement.

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## TALENT & CULTURE

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Building on key learnings from our resourcing strategy in the prior year, this year we will solidify our long-term approach. This includes reviewing our recruitment and onboarding needs and creating a formalized training program that will help us foster a culture and workplace where employees can stay and grow. Through insights gained from our employee engagement survey, we will adapt our internal communications and recognition programs to align with employee expectations and create new opportunities to celebrate and engage our diverse workforce.

### **Activities/Initiatives:**

- Design and implement long-term resourcing and retention strategy, including defining the framework, processes and training programs.
- Celebrate and nurture our diverse workforce in line with our organizational Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy and vision through organization-wide education program and updated policies and processes.
- Conduct organization-wide employee satisfaction survey to assess engagement among our workforce and identify opportunities for enhancement.

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## ACCOUNTABILITY & SUSTAINED PERFORMANCE

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Together with our shareholders, the Province and HRM, we will continue to operate our business in alignment with the priorities and expectations of our stakeholders and community, while also planning for the future. We will focus on building strategies and programs that ensure we can continue to provide leadership and meaningful impact for our community and industry for years to come.

***Activities/Initiatives:***

- Develop multi-year accessibility plan for the Halifax Convention Centre in conjunction with Nova Scotia's Accessibility Act.
- Identify focus areas for long-term venue sustainability program, including audit of current and best practices.

# Core Outcomes & Measures

In 2023-24, we will monitor and measure our performance in the following areas, aligned with our long-term strategy:

Priority	Measure	2023-24 Target
<b>Business Growth</b>	Total direct spending and economic benefit	Through the conventions and events we host at the Halifax Convention Centre, generate annual direct spending of approximately \$60M.*
<b>Business Growth</b>	Number of events attracted and hosted at the Halifax Convention Centre	Host approximately 150 events with 80,000 delegates, including 35 national and international events.  Secure a cumulative total of 100 national and international events with approximately 75,000 delegates for 2024-25 and beyond.
<b>Guest Experience</b>	Client feedback	Customer feedback program successfully implemented with benchmarks established.
<b>Community Connection</b>	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy	Successful implementation of year 1 activities; key measures established for future years.
<b>Talent &amp; Culture</b>		
<b>Talent &amp; Culture</b>	Employee feedback	Complete employee engagement survey and maintain an average employee engagement score of approximately 80% for core employees.
<b>Accountability &amp; Sustained Performance</b>	Financial performance	Meet approved budget targets.
<b>Accountability &amp; Sustained Performance</b>	Sustainability and accessibility frameworks	Approved frameworks in place to support long-term accessibility and sustainability programs.

*\*Direct expenditures measure the estimated impact of the events we host, using a methodology and calculation developed through analysis of historical and average attendee, exhibitor, and event planner spending.*

*The calculation used to estimate direct expenditures was updated in January 2023 to reflect inflationary factors following an analysis conducted by [HLT Advisory](#), which included a review of regional market data and Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index data. As such, this updated calculation has been applied to the economic impact target and performance analyses.*



# Economic Impact & Budget Context

The Halifax Convention Centre is mandated to attract and host events that create economic and community benefits for Nova Scotia. As such, our business and success are reflected not only in the mix of events and number of attendees, but through the economic impact generated. Economic impact measures the benefit of new money being spent in the Nova Scotia economy as a result of the events we host. Estimated direct expenditures for 2023-24 generated by the Halifax Convention Centre is \$60M, as noted in the Core Outcomes & Measures.

The 2023-24 budget assumes that event level and event mix will continue at historical levels. Based on current event bookings and client intentions at the time of writing, we do not expect economic uncertainty to have an impact on our business in the coming year.

Operations, before building costs and property taxes, have historically been funded through event activity. A diverse event mix with national/international clients is critical to generating higher revenue and driving economic impact.

For 2023-24, Events East is estimating \$12.2M in revenues, resulting in a budgeted break-even operating income before building costs, property taxes and depreciation. The budgeted joint shareholder investment is \$6.5M, compared to the \$7.5M budgeted in 2022-23 and 2021-22 actuals of \$8.3M. Property taxes of \$2.4M are included, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Province of Nova Scotia and HRM.

## Economic Impact Summary

	Target 2023-24	Forecast 2022-23	Target 2022-23
Total Events	150	150	120
Total Attendees	80,000	80,000	80,000
Total Direct Expenditures*	\$60M	\$52M	\$50M

*\*Direct expenditures measure the estimated impact of the events we host, using a methodology and calculation developed through analysis of historical and average attendee, exhibitor, and event planner spending.*

*The calculation used to estimate direct expenditures was updated in January 2023 to reflect inflationary factors following an analysis conducted by [HLT Advisory](#), which included a review of regional market data and Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index data. As such, this updated calculation has been applied to the direct expenditure target for 2022-23 with the revised target stated above. Additionally, all direct expenditure targets and results moving forward incorporate this new calculation.*

# Operating Budget Summary

(For the year ended March 31)

	Budget 2023-24 (\$)	Forecast 2022-23 (\$) Note 1	Budget 2022-23 (\$)
<b>Revenues</b>	12,230,000	13,242,000	8,850,000
<b>Expenses</b>			
Event Operations – Fixed Costs	2,061,000	2,040,000	1,911,000
Event Operations – Variable Costs	4,937,000	5,480,000	3,899,000
Salaries and Benefits	3,802,000	3,111,000	3,111,000
General Operations	1,430,000	1,938,000	1,519,000
Total Expenses	12,230,000	12,569,000	10,440,000
<b>Operating Loss Before Building Costs, Property Taxes and Depreciation</b>	–	<b>\$673,000</b>	<b>(\$1,590,000)</b>
Building Operating Costs (Note 2)	3,880,000	3,784,000	3,480,000
<b>Operating Loss before Property Taxes and Depreciation</b>	<b>(3,880,000)</b>	<b>(3,111,000)</b>	<b>(5,070,000)</b>
Property Taxes (Note 3)	2,420,000	2,179,000	2,080,000
<b>Operating Loss Before Depreciation</b>	<b>(6,300,000)</b>	<b>(5,290,000)</b>	<b>(7,150,000)</b>
Depreciation	200,000	249,000	300,000
<b>Estimated Shareholder Investment</b>	<b>\$6,500,000</b>	<b>\$5,539,000</b>	<b>\$7,450,000</b>
<b>Investment Required from Shareholder – HRM</b>	<b>\$3,250,000</b>	<b>\$2,769,500</b>	<b>\$3,725,000</b>
<b>Investment Required from Shareholder – PNS</b>	<b>\$3,475,000</b>	<b>\$2,707,500</b>	<b>\$3,637,500</b>

**Note 1:** Figures reflect the latest approved forecast which was completed in Fall 2022.

**Note 2:** Halifax Convention Centre building operating costs include the contractual lease operating costs related to the Nova Centre. The annual contractual lease payment is the responsibility of the Province of Nova Scotia and is not reflected in the above values.

**Note 3:** Property taxes are calculated pursuant to the MOU between the Province of Nova Scotia and HRM.

**Note 4:** Revenues and expenses for Scotiabank Centre are not reflected in the values noted above. Scotiabank Centre is a facility owned by HRM. Events East operates the facility on behalf of HRM under an operating agreement. All operating income or losses generated by the facility accrue to HRM, and all capital improvements are funded by the municipality.