



CLIMAtlantic

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2029



Strategic Plan 2026-2029

- CLIMAtlantic helps people across Atlantic Canada reduce the impacts of climate change by delivering tailored climate information, supporting actions, and simplifying access to data, tools, and expertise.
 - CLIMAtlantic makes adaptation impactful, approachable, and relevant so people across Atlantic Canada can help themselves, their communities, their sectors, and the ecosystems around them thrive in the face of risk and uncertainty.
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Background

CLIMAtlantic was created through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the 4 Atlantic Provinces and the federal government in 2021, with a core mandate to provide free, publicly available, locally-relevant climate services across the Atlantic region. Floods and extreme storms were already impacting public safety and adding pressure to disaster relief, while rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns were impacting the livelihoods and competitiveness of key primary economic sectors – such as agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, and forestry. It was clear that regional resilience and competitiveness was limited by the speed and effectiveness of adaptation actions and investments on the ground.

The organization's inaugural Strategic Plan 2023-2026 sought to answer the questions "What needs and gaps exist and how can CLIMAtlantic help?". The plan guided the establishment and expansion of the organization's efforts to deliver services, cultivate collaborative relationships, and increase regional, provincial, and local adaptation capacity. Across the Atlantic region, significant progress has been made to anticipate climate change impacts; understand their effects on communities, ecosystems, and sectors; and to upskill the workforce to take action. As a result, the region has grown in capacity, capability, and future opportunities. The MOU was renewed in 2024 and runs until 2028.



As climate change progresses and the impacts intensify, commensurate efforts to adapt are necessary to reduce the risks and limitations climate change places on regional stability and resilience. Three key lessons have emerged over the past four years:

- 1 Adaptation is not a special interest nor competing priority. It is a necessary part of achieving social, economic, and environmental goals as the climate changes.** Robust adaptation recognizes that climate risks do not exist in isolation. Efforts must also address socioeconomic barriers to adaptation and meet environmental needs. This requires approaches and partnerships that are aligned.
- 2 Adaptation is not a one-time decision or action. It is a continuous series of decisions and actions, big and small, to protect and rethink how we live, work, and thrive together.** It is choosing where to put infrastructure, how to build housing, which crops to plant, and how to finance necessary actions to reduce risks, strengthen supply chains, and invest in wellbeing, safety, security, livelihoods, communities, and sectors.
- 3 Adaptation requires place-based data, evidence, and knowledge, which evolves constantly.** Canada's capacity through the Canadian Centre for Climate Services to generate trusted, publicly available climate projections and support for regional adaptation services across the country is bolstering the competitiveness of sectors and resilience of communities. CLIMAtlantic leverages this expertise to provide place-based adaptation services to Atlantic Canadians.

So the question for this Strategic Plan is "What role should CLIMAtlantic play to help create the capacity and conditions for the continued and sustained decision making and actions needed to advance adaptation and resilience; align multiple needs and priorities; and maximize the impact and legacy of adaptation investments in communities and sectors?"



CLIMAtlantic's Role in Adaptation

Climate change adaptation is an ongoing process of anticipating climate change impacts, understanding the risks they pose, identifying different approaches to address the risks, acting on the chosen approaches, monitoring how the approaches are working, and restarting the process when the approaches no longer work or there are changes to impacts and risks. This continuous process of adaptation is often defined in different stages (see **Figure 1**).



Figure 1: Adaptation planning cycle

(Adapted from: climatedata.ca/news/harnessing-climate-data-for-resilient-asset-management/)

CLIMAtlantic has been supporting people, communities, sectors, and organizations across Atlantic Canada with free services to help guide them through each stage of the adaptation cycle. What makes CLIMAtlantic a trusted climate service provider is its approach to adaptation that centers values, relationships, co-development, and on-the-ground delivery. The organization also connects policymakers, and elected officials with information, knowledge, networks, lessons, and successes from its work to support their decision making.

As the organization and its offerings mature and the needs of the region evolve, CLIMAtlantic adjusts its approach and its role in fostering adaptation in the region. This strategic plan outlines the adjustments CLIMAtlantic will make over the next few years.

Mandate, Mission, and Values

Mandate

As a climate services organization, we deliver tailored climate information for adaptation needs. We provide services that enable people to make informed decisions which will reduce the impacts of climate change. CLIMAtlantic facilitates access to information, data and tools that enable those in Atlantic Canada (referred to as users throughout) to support adaptation decision-making.

Mission

Through high quality, evidence-based, and place-based programming and services, as well as collaborative and networked relationships, CLIMAtlantic supports users in accessing the necessary data, information, tools, resources, training, and collaboration opportunities so they can take action to meaningfully address the dynamic, persistent, and inequitable nature of climate change impacts. CLIMAtlantic supports users so they can help themselves, their communities, their sectors and the ecosystems around them thrive in the face of risk and uncertainty.

Values

Humility: While we are knowledge holders and guides, we are also learners and followers. We support others in adaptation problem solving but recognize not every issue is ours to solve. We also respect the range of multi-faceted needs of partners, collaborators, and users beyond adaptation and will work with those realities.

Ethical relationships: We prioritize trust, honesty, and care in our relationships and will not sacrifice them to secure funding or complete deliverables.

Reciprocity: We recognize the many ways nature supports adaptation and strive to support it in our work. We also create opportunities for knowledge exchange and collective growth with one another.

Honesty: We are truthful about the opportunities, challenges, capabilities, and limitations of adaptation and creating time and a forum for difficult conversations.

Collaboration: We choose partnership over competition, prioritizing the region's capacity and success over our own. We will collaborate and partner with a full range of rightsholders, stakeholders, communities, organizations, individuals, and other regional climate service organizations.



Guiding Principles

CLIMAtlantic will:

As climate change progresses and the impacts intensify, commensurate efforts to adapt are necessary to reduce the risks and limitations climate change places on regional stability and resilience. Three key lessons have emerged over the past four years:

- 1 Advance regional efforts on climate resilience through awareness raising, knowledge mobilization, practice, and innovation.
- 2 Use and co-develop robust, place-based, knowledge-based, and evidence-based approaches in the design, delivery and continuous improvement of our programs and services.
- 3 Be responsive to the needs of partners, collaborators, and users by considering operational realities and addressing multi-faceted environmental, social, and economic challenges through adaptation efforts.
- 4 Collaborate and partner with a full range of rightsholders, stakeholders, communities, organizations, individuals, and other regional climate service organizations to deliver programs and services that respect nature, amplify different knowledges and ways of knowing, and expand the scope of conventional adaptation to enhance relevance and impact.



Organizational Funding and Structure

Funding

CLIMAtlantic receives core funding from the four Atlantic provincial governments and the federal government to provide climate services across the region. This current commitment, which represents less than 33% of the projected annual budget, ends March 31, 2028.

Since inception, CLIMAtlantic has successfully applied as lead and collaborator for multi-year national, regional, and provincial projects. This funding allowed its programming and services to expand and its team to grow. From 2021 to 2024, the team grew from seven to 21, completed services requests rose from 67 to 530, and the annual operating budget increased from \$0.67M to \$3M. Project-based funding increased from \$500,000 for 6 projects (2023-2024) to \$2.5 million for more than 11 projects. In addition, the organization pursued charitable status to further diversify its funding streams, which was granted in 2025.

The rate of growth in its early years is unlikely to be replicated as the organization matures. Although demands for CLIMAtlantic's programming and services continue to increase, the funding landscape is expected to change given economic uncertainties and the limited commitments in current federal budgets. Therefore, the organization needs to carefully consider where areas of growth, maintenance, and decline are, so it does not extend beyond its recently added capacity.

CLIMAtlantic will continue to primarily provide free services and resources across the Atlantic region while looking at potential for revenue generating activities and services. It looks to build financial and organizational longevity and sustainability by continuing to seek project funding, considering fee-for-service contracts, and raising charitable donations. CLIMAtlantic's core funding is expected to continue to be of essential strategic and operational importance. Strategically, being funded through all four provincial governments and the federal government highlights both the importance of adaptation in the region and the organization's reputation for delivering key services in the region – to funders, users, and elected officials. Operationally, the core funding helps to leverage additional funding to the organization and the region, offers flexibility and stability through cash flow, and enables in-kind contributions for collaborative projects, big and small.



Structure

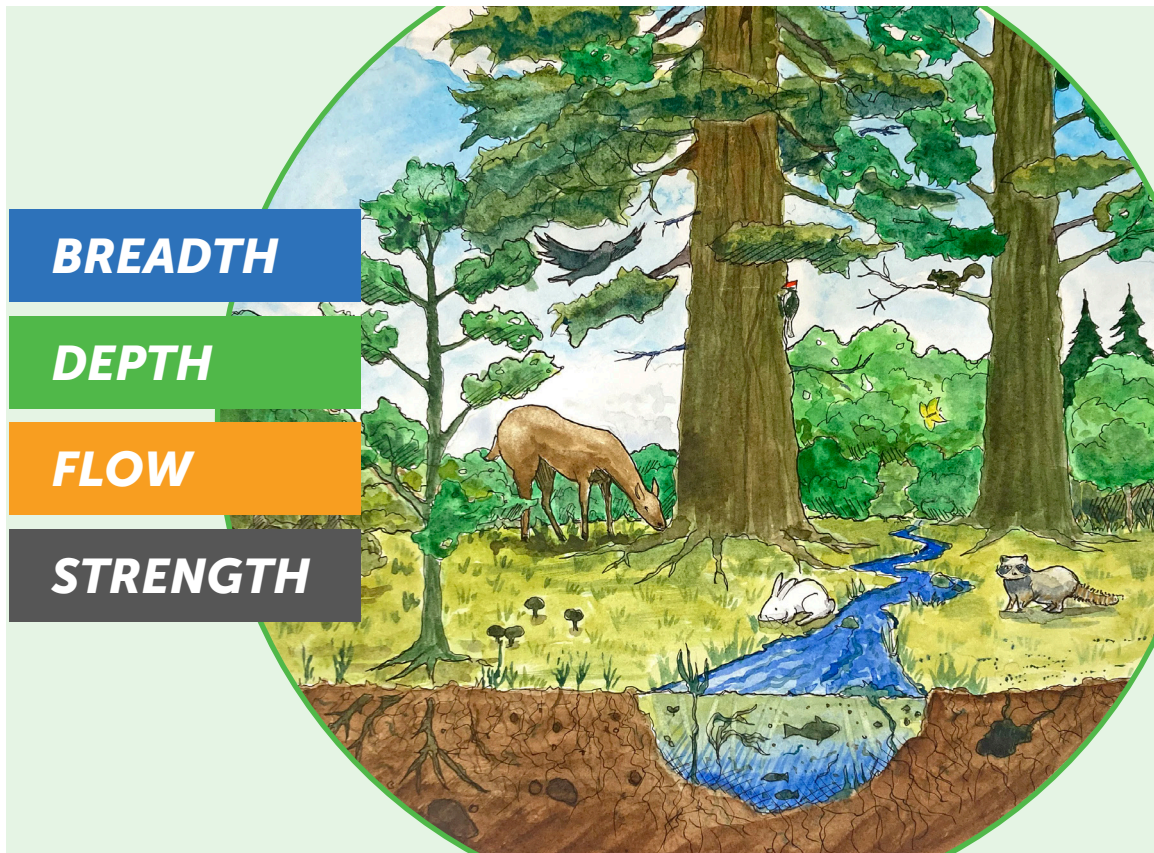
CLIMAtlantic's board consists of ten Indigenous and non-Indigenous directors active in the non-profit sector, private sector, provincial and federal government (core funders), and academia. The board is responsible for overseeing the governance of the organization; recruiting, hiring, and retaining the Executive Director; and providing strategic guidance.

The 20-25 members of the Advisory Committee support the organization by informing it of the evolving needs, trends, operational realities, and emerging threats facing Atlantic communities, ecosystems, and sectors. These cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary connections and insights enable CLIMAtlantic to expand its reach and tailor its programs and services to best assist all users and decision makers.

The CLIMAtlantic staff members work remotely but are all physically located across the Atlantic region. Full team, in-person meetings take place at least twice a year, with additional function-based (e.g., managers, projects) and geography-based in-person meetings happening on a semi-regular basis. The organization structure is a hybrid of two models. The staff follows a conventional organizational chart for human resource purposes (e.g., workplan oversight, vacation approvals, performance evaluation). The staff are also grouped by teams (e.g., provincial services, community resilience, science and innovation, training, engagement), with each staff member serving on multiple teams. This enables CLIMAtlantic to leverage the diversity of knowledge, experiences, perspectives, and relationships of the team members across different external and internal functions. This also creates opportunities for professional development and cross-team collaboration and innovation.



Strategic Priorities



CLIMAtlantic’s strategic priorities for 2026 to 2029 leverage the groundwork the organization has done since its inception. Its early work of offering tailored services and programming, increasing regional capacity, and building collaborative and productive relationships has helped to attract funding to the region, resulting in more innovation and projects across various sectors and at different scales. As the need for adaptation accelerates and new practitioners and users engage with adaptation work, CLIMAtlantic must evolve and grow its efforts to remain effective.

One of the defining characteristics of the Atlantic region is its ability to consistently “punch above its weight”. This has been rooted in the tradition and practice of leveraging multi-generational relationships, informal networks, and community cohesion to meet individual and community needs and uncover new ways to address resource gaps. CLIMAtlantic recognizes the importance of networks and relationships in building lasting resilience and capacity at the community-, ecosystem-, watershed-, sector-, provincial-, and regional-levels.



BREADTH



New users are continuing to engage with CLIMAtlantic. To build on this, it is important to increase the reach of CLIMAtlantic's services, particularly to underserved sectors and communities within the region. There are several ways to do this. Adaptation work can be made easier to understand and more relevant by helping people see how it connects to their own lives and work. Communications and offerings can be adjusted to better reach communities, organizations, and sectors that have not been reached before. In addition, creating welcoming entry points through partner networks can help support new relationships, connections and collaborations.

What this means:

- Make adaptation approachable. Help users see that this is not a journey they need to take on their own, their place-based knowledge is needed in adaptation work, and adaptation can help them achieve their mandates while addressing climate risk.
- Make CLIMAtlantic approachable. Highlight that we have dedicated staff who offer free services, welcome questions, listen to needs, share tailored resources and offerings, and are connected with many experts and knowledge holders who are just as eager to help.
- Understand the needs and realities of underserved users, sectors, and communities. Explore what equitable and just adaptation means and reflect this in CLIMAtlantic's work.
- Leverage the relationships our networks hold. There are opportunities to extend CLIMAtlantic's reach within networks that may already be available to us. Learn from our existing relationships on how to support the needs of new-to-us users and partners.
- Develop new relationships nationally as our local and regional networks expand to pursue complementary opportunities.
- Provide low-barrier relationship building opportunities across the region. Invite national partners and stakeholders to these events.

DEPTH



More users find themselves needing to dive deeper into more challenging adaptation work. CLIMAtlantic will offer climate services across different scales, sectors, scopes, and stages of readiness. There are different ways to dive deeper into adaptation work. It may be working more intimately with users and partners through repeated interactions or co-leading projects with them. It may be supporting different ways for adaptation to connect to other work, multi-solving for climate and non-climate risks (e.g., social, economic, regulatory). It may be working at different scales and boundaries, crossing jurisdictions, disciplines, locations, and timelines.

What this means:

- Approach service requests, partnership opportunities, and program design with available options at levels of need.
- Position adaptation as a process, rather than a single decision or project. Help new and experienced users understand that there are different layers, stages, scales, and scopes of adaptation work. Make each of them welcoming.
- Continuously develop capacity internally and relationships externally to enhance CLIMAtlantic's ability to support deeper engagement in different situations and sectors.
- Leverage more in-depth and diverse approaches, knowledge, experiences, and relationships to meet more advanced needs.
- Actively seek to understand the ongoing and evolving needs of users and collaborators at different layers, stages, scales, and scopes. Work with funders and other national partners to design and deliver diverse, relevant, and impactful opportunities for the Atlantic region.

FLOW

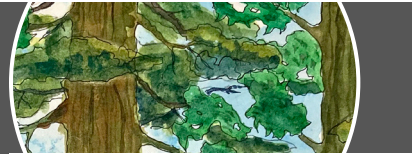


As more organizations participate and lead adaptation work, the sharing of data, information, resources, tools, ideas, innovations, and connections flow through networks. There are different ways to enhance their flow across the Atlantic region. It may be tailoring resources and support to better serve sectors and provinces. It may be working with local, provincial, regional, and national partners to improve knowledge mobilization and update at different scales. It may be acting as a liaison, sensemaker, and navigator among practitioners, academia, and governments. It may be building enabling conditions and easing barriers to accessing the necessary information and resources to advance adaptation.

What this means:

- Uncover different ways to make information and help easy to access. Identify different types of enabling conditions and barriers that may be unique to different groups, sectors, and places. They may exist at the interpersonal, institutional, or systemic levels.
- Be responsive to gaps in information and resource flows. Act on them and/or share those with data and information providers.
- Find or develop new user-centered channels for information to be accessed.
- Replicate successful flows of information at different scales, testing and adjusting as appropriate.
- Utilize and mobilize data and resources produced by the Canadian Centre for Climate Services and other data providers.
- Leverage two-way communications among local, provincial, regional, and national relationships.
- Practice and trial transdisciplinary, cross-functional work internally, bringing outward successful practices through service and program delivery as well as engagement opportunities.

STRENGTH



A strong network is diverse, self corrects, consists of trusting relationships, and is decentralized, with no single piece holding the network together. CLIMAtlantic will understand and leverage different perspectives, and build new common ground and partnerships across communities, sectors, organizations, goals, and values. There are different ways to strengthen the Atlantic adaptation and resilience network. It may be increasing cohesion within the network and its efforts by aligning values and goals. It may be connecting adaptation to related resilience work to create new opportunities and share redundancies. It may be unearthing new ways of working together and working differently to nourish hope. It may be building confidence to innovate and fail forward, developing partnerships, trust, and knowledge along the way.

What this means:

- Help those in the region be more connected, engaged, informed, and empowered.
- Be intentional not only in what the organization does but also how it does it.
- Share relationships, approaches, ideas, and questions.
- Be attentive and responsive to relationship and network needs.
- Nurture and share the credibility and trust of our work with our partners
- Collaborate with other regional climate service hubs and national organizations on large-scale projects and bring forward the needs and contributions of the Atlantic region.



Table 1: Expected Results by Strategic Priority

<p>BREADTH <i>Expanding reach of services</i></p>	<p>DEPTH <i>Multiple layers of readiness and practice</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More equitable access to support for adaptation across geographies and demographics. • Diverse actors are embedded in shared adaptation initiatives, creating better connections among different groups and initiatives. • New sectors bring fresh narratives, reshaping regional adaptation discourse and priorities. • Place-based and cultural perspectives diversify the myths and metaphors guiding adaptation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners in all sectors have the skills to connect adaptation to broader resilience work. • Stronger relationships and flows of information within and between sectors, jurisdictions, and communities. • Communities shift from reacting to climate impacts to redesigning systems for resilience. • Adaptation is viewed not as a project but as an ongoing, evolving process embedded in community identity.
<p>FLOW <i>Connecting and mobilizing knowledge and resources</i></p>	<p>STRENGTH <i>Building resilient, self-sustaining networks</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners see tangible benefits from adaptation engagement, increasing participation and leadership. • Adaptive learning cycles and responsive systems replace siloed, one-way information transfer. • Resource flows shift from sporadic project-based funding to sustained, core funding from additional sources. • Adaptation is understood as a living, interdependent system, not a linear transaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities and sectors lead adaptation initiatives independently, drawing on shared network resources. • Structural and transformative changes create a decentralized, adaptive network. • Regional adaptation practice shifts from isolated interventions to a shared, long-term resilience vision. • The dominant story of adaptation in Atlantic Canada becomes one of interconnected stewardship and collective flourishing.

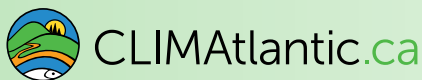
Looking Ahead

By 2028, CLIMAtlantic will have evolved from a trusted provider of climate services to a systems enabler, sustaining an interconnected network of relationships, knowledge, and resources that nourish climate adaptation and resilience. It will be a visible and important part of the diversity of resilience work across the region. This work will benefit and connect Indigenous communities, agricultural producers, municipalities, fisheries, coastal communities, non-profits, private industry, academic institutions, and government agencies.

This strategic plan and the work of CLIMAtlantic over the next three years will add to the existing foundation and bring the Atlantic region closer to these legacy outcomes:

- A place-based adaptation network with distributed leadership spanning Indigenous, municipal, sectoral, academic, and community actors.
- Increased adaptation capacity embedded in institutions, community practice, and regional governance.
- A sustained culture of collaboration, trust, and shared problem-solving that continues beyond individual interests, projects, or funding cycles.
- Atlantic Canada is recognized nationally for inclusive, network-based, systems-level adaptation that nourishes both people and the ecosystems they depend on.





CLIMAtlantic is an organization built on collaboration and partnerships. Created out of a federal initiative to establish regional climate services organizations across Canada, our core work is supported by all four Atlantic provinces and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

This project was undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été réalisé avec l'appui financier de :



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada



With much appreciated additional project funding thanks to Natural Resources Canada, the RBC Foundation, FCM's Green Municipal Fund, the Clean Foundation as well as the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador, we have been able to expand our work.

We work closely with partners across the region to connect people with trusted experts and practical information so you can make informed decisions about adapting to our changing climate.

CLIMAtlantic works in Atlantic Canada, which is situated on the unceded and unsurrendered homelands of many Indigenous Peoples, including the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, and Peskotomuhkatyik who are all members of the Wabanaki Confederacy (which also includes Panawahpskewi and Abenaki), as well as the Beothuk, Innu, and Inuit.

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