



**NOVA SCOTIA
UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD**

Strategic Plan 2023

Final

2023-06-19

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction and Overview	1
2. Vision, Mission, and Values.....	2
3. Strategic Priorities, Goals and Objectives	3



1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board's (UARB) previous strategic plan was developed in 2015/2016 with a five-year horizon. With much of that plan's objectives having been accomplished development of a new plan was initiated with a view to enabling the Board to address some of the current challenges facing the province including climate change, achieving a carbon neutral status and decommissioning coal plants, to name a few.

While the vision, mission, and values were considered in detail and defined during the previous planning process, it was recognised that review, potentially some adjustment, and reconfirmation of these was needed within the context of this new plan. Of course, this review recognised that the mandate of the UARB is enshrined in legislation, thereby offering limited opportunity to make any significant changes.

The previous planning process included an external focus that built greater public awareness and confidence in the work of the UARB. This focus is maintained within this plan but also considers possible service enhancements to benefit users of the system. This updated plan also examines internal structures and processes to create a post-pandemic appropriate work environment.

Development of this plan has been based on a collegial process through which members and staff have been directly involved in shaping its direction and objectives, including through a series of focus groups in which all members and staff were invited to participate. In addition, external stakeholders have been consulted, particularly those who have regular interaction with the board. An environmental scan of other Canadian regulators was undertaken to identify effective practices and performance, particularly within the context of changing mandates, transitions to new climate realities and achieving net zero emissions.

The overall purpose of this project was to guide and support the Members and staff of the UARB in developing a new strategic plan that will provide direction for the organisation over the next five years.



2. VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

Vision

To be widely recognized as a trusted, leading adjudicative and regulatory tribunal; and,
To be a resource for informing public policy.

Mission

To serve Nova Scotians by fairly and independently resolving matters in an efficient and effective manner.

Values

<p>We are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethical and act with integrity• Respectful of others and the environment• Responsive, dedicated, and knowledgeable	<p>Our decisions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impartial and objective• Consistent and timely• Well-reasoned and easily understood
<p>The way we operate is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fair and independent• Accessible and accountable• Efficient and cost effective	<p>Our workplace is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional and team oriented• Collaborative and collegial• Committed to delivering high quality services
<p>Our communication with our stakeholders, the public and each other is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timely and understandable• Open and transparent• Respectful and courteous	<p>We aspire to the principles of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental sustainability• Social responsibility• Good governance



3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The graphic below provides an overview of the strategic priorities and goals. The table following also includes the objectives.

1) Increase public understanding of the UARB and how to access its processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase public outreach with a view to: targeting those who could or should engage with the UARB; and creating greater opportunities for equitable access
2) Heighten the efficiency and effectiveness of the UARB
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain a culture of continuous improvement
3) Maintain a healthy and positive workplace culture that strives to achieve excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review & sharpen internal communications and engagement• Ensure that the workplace is diverse, equitable, inclusive, accessible and safe
4) Strengthen the UARB's capacity to innovate and inform public policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continually advance our knowledge about best practices and technologies; local, national and international trends and events; and how they impact matters and sectors within the Board's jurisdiction with a focus on the energy transition• Increase engagement with policy decision-makers and stakeholders• Provide training, education and professional development to all members and employees to ensure they have the required skills, knowledge and understanding to effectively respond to changing regulatory and adjudicative environments
5) Increase our knowledge and understanding of environmental, social and governance (ESG) best practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn about what other regulatory bodies in Canada are doing in the ESG realm



Strategic Priorities and Goals	Objectives
<p>1. Priority</p> <p>Increase public understanding of the UARB and how to access its processes</p> <hr/> <p>Goal</p> <p>Increase public outreach with a view to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – targeting those who could or should engage with the UARB; and, – creating greater opportunities for equitable access <hr/> <p>Tactics Suggested by Staff Break-out Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update, resource and execute the communications plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Educate the public about the Board’s roles, mandates, independence, funding, board member appointments, processes and decisions – Reach out to stakeholders and the public through a variety of community-based organisations and events – Target communications and outreach to affected groups and individuals in relation to particular matters – Assist self-represented parties (appellants and intervenors) in their participation before the Board through accessible education, tools and information – Use plain language in decisions, on the website and in all communications – Prepare summaries of all significant decisions – Continue to inform public policy as appropriate • Measure impact of the communications initiatives using omnibus surveys, tracking incoming calls, and other methods to promote continuing improvement • Monitor complaint calls to help inform external communications <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct information sessions at hearing conclusions to explain decisions / outcomes • Use media interviews, advertisements, social media, podcasts, etc. to expand reach of the decision information sessions



Strategic Priorities and Goals		Objectives
2. Priority		
Heighten the efficiency and effectiveness of the UARB		
Goal		
Maintain a culture of continuous improvement		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address issues of jurisdictional authority early in the process and restrict discussion about irrelevant issues• Strive to improve processing times where possible• Conduct cross-functional training to ensure consistent and high-quality service in relevant areas• Capture precedent materials and preserve corporate knowledge more effectively• Explore data mining tools as new technology emerges• Become proficient at conducting hybrid hearings and meetings by ensuring trained and knowledgeable staff are available to support seamless communication between in-person and virtual participants• Seek solutions for scheduling issues• Continue to maintain and improve technology by seeking out the most appropriate solutions to support greater effectiveness and efficiencies• Seek to balance regulatory burden with public interest appropriately
Tactics Suggested by Staff Break-out Groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess staff roles and internal processes to promote service effectiveness and efficiencies.• Establish, track and communicate appropriate metrics, and conduct internal performance assessments to track progress towards processing time improvement objectives.



Strategic Priorities and Goals	Objectives
<p>3. Priority</p> <p>Maintain a healthy and positive workplace culture in a hybrid work model that strives to achieve excellence</p> <hr/> <p>Goal #1</p> <p>Review & sharpen internal communications and engagement</p> <hr/> <p>Goal #2</p> <p>Ensure that the workplace is diverse, equitable, inclusive, accessible and safe</p> <hr/> <p>Tactics Suggested by Staff Break-out Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek solutions to achieving effective internal communications through staff consultation and engagement • Become proficient at engaging staff in a hybrid work model, while remaining mindful of operational needs • Promote cross-organisational relationship building and mentoring at all levels to achieve greater team collaboration, professional development and success • Hold orientation and planning meetings on significant files that include all team members <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote respectful workplace relationships across the organisation • Examine and adjust recruitment practices to attract a diverse workforce <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden cross-training for staff taking on new mandates • Establish a check-in process for team members on files to identify issues / problems
<p>4. Priority</p> <p>Strengthen the UARB's capacity to innovate and inform public policy</p> <hr/> <p>Goal #1</p> <p>Continually advance our knowledge about best practices and technologies; local, national, and international trends and events; and how they impact matters and sectors within the Board's</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend relevant conferences and presentations by experts • Promote internal knowledge sharing • Develop a process for internalizing relevant information and knowledge



Strategic Priorities and Goals	Objectives
jurisdiction with a focus on the energy transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate on pertinent national and international committees
Goal #2 Increase engagement with policy decision-makers and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen existing and develop new relationships to promote better understanding of the Board's work Identify opportunities for collaboration to stay abreast of changing perspectives
Goal #3 Provide training, education and professional development to all members and employees to ensure they have the required skills, knowledge and understanding to effectively respond to changing regulatory and adjudicative environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure knowledge transfer is a priority as new employees join the organisation Conduct employee education sessions about industry / sector changes and trends in the regulatory and adjudicative environments
Tactics Suggested by Staff Break-out Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and enhance internal training including core competency training and new employee orientation
5. Priority Increase our knowledge of environmental, social and governance (ESG) best practices	
Goal Learn about what other regulatory bodies in Canada are doing in the ESG realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess current internal practices and identify opportunities for improvement Develop a plan for moving forward and evaluate outcomes
Tactics Suggested by Staff Break-out Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No tactics were identified