

Economic Diversification and Growth Enterprises Board

Annual Report 2023-24

Message from the Chairperson

As Chairperson of the Economic Diversification and Growth Enterprises (EDGE) Board, I am pleased to present the Board's annual report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. The EDGE Board is classified as a category three entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. Therefore, the Board must prepare an annual report that clearly outlines the activities it has undertaken within its mandate for the preceding fiscal year.

Bill 70 (the **Economic Diversification and Growth Enterprises Repeal Act**) was introduced in the House of Assembly in March 2024, and subsequently passed. This will result in the discontinuation of the EDGE Program, and dissolution of the Board. Accordingly, the Board anticipates the 2023-24 Annual Report will be its last. Any companies that had previously been designated as an EDGE Corporation will continue to receive the associated benefits until the contract expires, or its designation as an EDGE Corporation is otherwise revoked.

The report was prepared under the direction of the Board, which is accountable for the results reported herein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fred Drover".

Fred Drover
Chairperson

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Entity Overview

The Economic Diversification and Growth Enterprises (EDGE) program was established on December 16, 1994 under the authority of the **Economic Diversification and Growth Enterprises Act** (EDGE Act). The program was designed as an economic development and marketing tool to encourage new business investment in the province. It helps diversify the economy and stimulate private sector job creation through a number of tax-related and other economic incentives. EDGE is available to national and international companies that wish to establish a new enterprise in the province, local companies that want to expand, and local entrepreneurs who are interested in new business start-ups. To be considered for EDGE status, a company must demonstrate that it is a new or expanding business activity that:

- has the potential for new capital investment of at least \$300,000, or incremental sales of at least \$500,000;
- has the potential to create and maintain at least 10 new permanent jobs in the province;
- would not take place in the province in the absence of the EDGE incentives, in preference to another location or at the time when it is proposed to do so;
- has a substantial net economic benefit to the province; and,
- would not result in the company having a direct competitive advantage over other businesses already established in the province, if provided EDGE status.

Companies that are granted designation as an EDGE Corporation and enter into a contract with the Provincial Government must reach and maintain these eligibility criteria, in order to receive EDGE benefits, unless extenuating temporary circumstances exist for which the Lieutenant-Governor in Council (LGIC) may give a temporary reprieve and continue the benefits. EDGE contracts may be amended or revoked at any time if the company fails to comply with the terms of the contract.

EDGE designated companies are eligible to receive:

- 100 per cent rebate/remission on provincial corporate income tax and the provincial health and post-secondary education (payroll) tax. The tax “holiday” for eligible companies is 10 years on the Northeast Avalon and 15 years outside the Northeast Avalon, as defined in the EDGE Act;
- 50 per cent rebate, paid by the province, on federal corporate income tax for the periods referenced above;
- a further five-year even phase-out period of partial rebates on the provincial and federal taxes referenced above;
- 100 per cent rebate on municipal property and/or municipal business taxes for 10 or 15 years, followed by a five-year phase-out of such rebates, where individual municipalities elect to participate in the EDGE program; and
- access to un-serviced Crown land for \$1 where such land is required to implement the company’s business plan.

The EDGE Board does not have a budget and is therefore not required to provide audited financial statements.

Board of Directors

Applications for designation as an EDGE Corporation are evaluated by an independent Board appointed by the LGIC. The Board does not have its own staff; the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology provides administrative support.

Mandate

The mandate of the Board is to evaluate applications for designation as an EDGE Corporation and to make recommendations to the LGIC through the Minister of IET.

Report on Performance

In consideration of the mandate and financial resources of the Board of Directors of the EDGE program, the Board reports on the objective and indicators below, through its activity reports, for each fiscal year of its 2023-26 Activity Plan.

2023-24 Objective

By March 31, 2024, the Board will have evaluated and made recommendation on all EDGE program applications made within the fiscal year that were ready for review by the Board.

Indicators:

- **Number of applications evaluated (that were made within the fiscal year and ready for the Board's review).**

In 2023-24, there were no applications received or evaluated by the EDGE Board.

- **Number of recommendations made.**

No recommendations were made in 2023-24.

