



Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

2021–22 Departmental Results Report

**Immigration and Refugee Board of
Canada**

The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and
Citizenship

The original version was signed by The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

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For more information, contact

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Minto Place, Canada Building
344 Slater Street, 12th floor
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0K1
irb-cisr.gc.ca

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From the Chairperson

I am pleased to present the 2021–22 Departmental Results Report for the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB or the Board).

The IRB was created more than 30 years ago with a mandate to adjudicate a range of immigration and refugee cases fairly and efficiently. It is Canada’s largest administrative tribunal and our adjudicative decisions are of particular importance to those who appear before us. That is why we keep our strategic outcomes – improving access to justice and public confidence in immigration and refugee determination systems – at the core of our work.



During the 2021–22 fiscal year, the Board implemented the third year of its ***Growth and Transformation Agenda***, which has driven notable results. We continued to grow our workforce to meet the Board’s challenging operating context and increasing volume of cases. We improved productivity and reduced inventories and wait times by sustaining a focus on operational awareness and performance; we continued our emphasis on quality and consistency in decision-making through our recently designed Quality Assurance Framework, strengthening our approach to gender-related claims and advancing new adjudicative policies and practices; and we strengthened our management practices by implementing the Board’s digital agenda and advancing organizational culture.

Despite the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board achieved significant results as it finalized some 70,000 cases across all four divisions and reduced its case inventories and wait times to their lowest levels in years:

- The **Refugee Protection Division** finalized over 48,000 claims – the most claims ever finalized in the history of the Division. This decreased the Division’s inventory by 23% and reduced wait times for new claimants by 50%. New claims could expect to be heard within 12 months of being referred to the IRB by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada or the Canada Border Services Agency.
- The **Refugee Appeal Division** finalized over 11,000 appeals. This set a record for the most appeals finalized since the Division was established in 2012. As a result, the inventory is down by 5%, and processing wait times have been reduced by 50% from 12 months in 2020–21 to six months in 2021–22.
- The **Immigration Division** finalized 1,200 admissibility hearings, decreasing this inventory by 20% over the course of the fiscal year to under 400. It also undertook more than 6,300 detention reviews and met its regulated time limits 98% of the time.
- The **Immigration Appeal Division** also decreased its inventory by 24% by finalizing more than 3,100 appeals and decreased its wait time for all appeals to 9 months as of March 2022, down from 13 months at the end of 2020–21. In March 2022, the inventory was 2,100 appeals, the lowest since 1993.

The Board continued to accelerate its efforts to becoming a digital organization. We completed the digitization of all new and existing case files across the four divisions, including close to 40,000 files for the Refugee Protection Division. The digitization of our case files, coupled with the adoption of a virtual-by-default hearings operating model, allowed the Board to remain fully operational during the pandemic, assign files more effectively to where capacity existed across the country and provide increased access to justice for those appearing before the Board.

I am particularly pleased that, in 2021–22, we continued to build an organizational culture that is high performing, results oriented, and based on our values of civility, respect, diversity, and inclusion. Ensuring equal and just opportunities for all employees remains an IRB commitment. In support of this, the IRB developed and began implementing its first *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*.

We also finalized the performance measurement framework for the *Strategy for Psychological Safety and Mental Health in the IRB Workplace*, which defines clear goals and objectives for the Board and reported the Strategy's results in our first *Workplace Wellness Annual Report*.

I am sincerely proud of the Board's accomplishments as well as the resilience and commitment of our employees and confident that they will position us well for the fiscal year ahead.

Richard Wex
Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

Results at a glance

As Canada’s largest independent administrative tribunal, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canadaⁱ (IRB or the Board) is responsible for making well-reasoned decisions on immigration and refugee matters efficiently, fairly, and in accordance with the law.

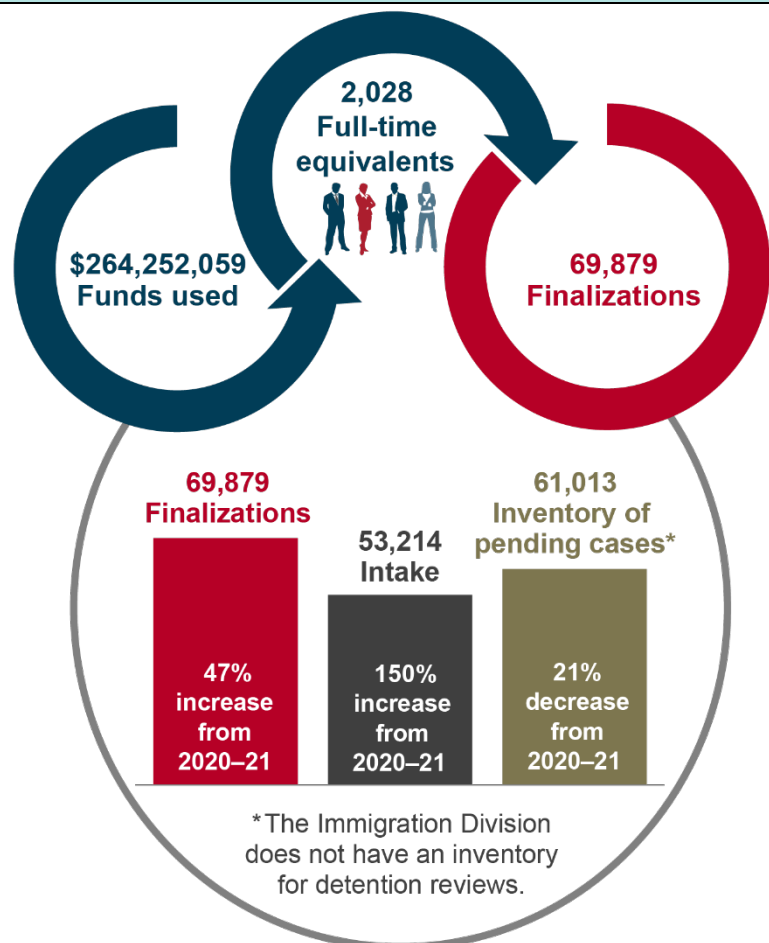
In 2021–22, despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the IRB continued to make significant progress against its multi-year *Growth and Transformation Agenda*. The Board leveraged opportunities presented by the pandemic and its evolving operational realities to accelerate its shift to a digital organisation in support of improving productivity, enhancing quality and consistency in decision-making, and strengthening management practices. The Agenda’s strategic outcomes to improve access to justice and public confidence in immigration and refugee determination systems remained the same.

Did you know?

The IRB consists of four divisions, each rendering different kinds of decisions in support of the Board’s mandate: the Refugee Protection Division,ⁱⁱ the Refugee Appeal Division,ⁱⁱⁱ the Immigration Division^{iv} and the Immigration Appeal Division.^v

Growing the IRB’s workforce

Despite the challenges of hiring during a pandemic, and onboarding many of the new employees to a remote work setting, the Board onboarded a total of 636 new personnel. This included 107 new decision-makers, of whom 87 were public servants and 20 were Governor-in-Council appointees. As a result, the Board was comprised of 2,028 full-time equivalents in 2021–22 compared to 1,778 in 2020–21. This resulted in an increased capacity in the Refugee Protection Division, the registry offices, and across internal services.



Sustained and improved productivity

The four divisions collectively issued almost 70,000 finalizations. The Refugee Protection Division finalized the most claims in

one year in the IRB’s history, decreasing its inventory and its wait times for new claimants. The Refugee Appeal Division finalized the most appeals in one year since the Division’s inception in 2012, which decreased the inventory and the wait times for a decision to be rendered.

The Immigration Division decreased its inventory of admissibility reviews and met legislated time limits 98% of the time for detention reviews. The Immigration Appeal Division also decreased its inventory by exceeding its target for the number of appeals to finalize. This resulted in the lowest inventory since 1993.

Enhanced quality of and consistency in decision-making

The Board continued its focus on high-quality and consistent decision-making. Advancements were made on elements of the Quality Assurance Framework for Decision-Making,^{vi} including the renewal of Chairperson’s *Guideline 4: Women Refugee Claimants Fearing Gender-Related Persecution* (which was renamed to Chairperson’s *Guideline 4: Gender Considerations in Proceedings before the IRB*)^{vii} and Chairperson’s *Guideline 9: Proceedings Before the IRB Involving Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics*,^{viii} and the implementation of the Chairperson’s *Guideline 2: Detention*.^{ix} Work also advanced on other guidelines, including reviews of the Chairperson’s *Guideline 3 – Child Refugee Claimants*^x and the Chairperson’s *Guideline 8: Procedures with Respect to Vulnerable Persons Appearing Before the Board*.^{xi} In support of the gender-related policy work, the Gender-Related Task Force,^{xii} a specialized team handling gender-related refugee claims, helped inform the revisions to the Board’s gender guidelines.

Quality centres were established at both the Refugee Protection Division and the Refugee Appeal Division to further the Board’s commitment to fair adjudication.

Strengthened management, with a focus on people management

One of the Board’s most significant accomplishments has been its success in becoming a predominantly digital organization. Significant efforts across all parts of the organization enabled most employees to work from home and conduct hearings and render decisions remotely. This combination of personnel working remotely and those who were required to be on site to support limited in-person hearings, made it possible for the IRB to effectively carry out its mandate in the face of truly exceptional circumstances.

The Board maintained the focus of its organizational culture to be high performing and results oriented, based on the values of civility, respect, diversity, and inclusion. Through its first *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*, challenges faced by IRB employees were identified and the foundation was developed to realize the vision of a more diverse and inclusive organization. To address systemic issues in a purposeful way and with efforts sustained over time, this Plan will be monitored and reviewed regularly and updated to ensure it remains relevant and momentum is maintained.

For more information on the IRB’s plans, priorities and results achieved, see the “Results: what we achieved” section of this report.

Results: what we achieved

Core responsibility: Adjudication of immigration and refugee cases

Description

The IRB¹ renders quality decisions and resolves cases in a timely manner regarding immigration and refugee protection cases. This includes determining refugee protection claims and appeals and applications to vacate or cease refugee protection. It also includes making decisions in admissibility hearings and detention reviews, and on appeals on certain immigration cases (e.g., family sponsorship, applications, certain removal orders, applications based on meeting residency obligations and admissibility hearings).

Results

Fiscal year 2021–22 marked the third full year of the IRB's *Growth and Transformation Agenda*. In response to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board continued its virtual hearings model with limited in-person hearings. In-person hearings responded to specific access to justice considerations, with urgent and particularly sensitive cases considered on a case-by-case basis. The Board's approach to virtual hearings was confirmed to be highly effective by third-party reviews, stakeholder feedback, and post-hearing surveys.

The IRB continued to meet its dual objectives of maintaining access to justice while safeguarding the health and safety of employees and those who appear before it. These principles were the drivers behind the development of the Board's future work model, which is expected to be based on a hybrid hearing operating model and a hybrid workplace model.

The IRB undertook initiatives to sustain and improve productivity and to better monitor performance in support of access to justice:

In 2021–22, the Board achieved significant results from a productivity perspective. The IRB remained committed to maintaining and deepening the culture of performance and operational awareness it developed in recent years. The Board's adoption of a virtual hearings model continued to be successful in increasing the IRB's productivity and providing access to justice to the greatest extent possible. Work also continued to enhance the Board's monitoring and reporting on productivity results against operational plans and performance targets for each division. This included discussions on productivity challenges and adjusting practices, as required, based on mitigation strategies. A hearing postponement monitoring framework was implemented to capture up-to-date information on postponement rates to identify and implement ways to address issues as they occur.

During the first half of fiscal year 2020–21, hearings were suspended as result of the pandemic, leading to aging inventories for refugee protection cases and immigration admissibility cases. In the interest of fairness and access to justice, the IRB suspended its departmental indicator pertaining to timeliness to focus on its older cases. The retained program-level indicators and targets are included in the following table.

Case Type	Projected Decisions	Legislated or Internal Time Standards	Target	Results
Refugee protection claims	50,000	Internal: 24 months from the date of referral	At least 50% ¹	43% (of 48,041 total decisions)
Refugee appeals	13,500	Internal: 12 months from the date the appeal is perfected	At least 80%	90% (of 11,124 total decisions)
Immigration appeals	3,000	Internal: 12 months from the date the appeal is filed	At least 80%	76% (of 3,162 total decisions)
Admissibility hearings	1,700	Internal: 12 months from the date of referral	At least 80%	90% (of 1,200 total decisions)
Detention reviews	11,500	Legislated: 48 hours, 7 days, 30 days	At least 96%	98% (of 6,352 total decisions)

¹ The lower target reflects the temporary suspension of Refugee Protection Division hearings during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2020–21, which resulted in the aging of the existing inventory of claims. Given the volume and age of the inventory, this was a stretch target for 2021–22.

The Refugee Protection Division came close but ultimately fell short of its internally identified “stretch” service standard to process 50% of its decisions within 24 months of referral. However, the Division prioritized the oldest claims in its inventory and finalized more than 48,000 protection claims. This is the most claims ever finalized in one year, in the history of the IRB, which decreased the Division’s inventory by 23%. This led to shorter wait times for new claimants at the end of fiscal year 2021–22 who can now expect to be heard within approximately 12 months of referral. The Refugee Appeal Division also made history by finalizing the most appeals in one year since the Division’s inception in 2012. This resulted in wait times being reduced to approximately six months for a decision to be rendered.

Over the course of the fiscal year, the Immigration Division decreased its admissibility hearings inventory by 20%. The Immigration Appeal Division decreased its inventory by 24% which resulted in its lowest inventory since 1993.

Did you know?

The IRB’s Task Force on Less Complex Claims identifies and processes refugee claims which may be decided without a hearing through the file-review process or with a short hearing if the claim does not appear to present complex legal or factual issues. In 2021-22, the IRB’s Task Force on Less Complex Claims finalized 6,725 claims (some 15% of all claims finalized by the Refugee Protection Division in fiscal year 2021–22). The processing time for less complex claims was 11 months, compared with 22 months for other claims over the same period.

The IRB continued to support a systems-wide approach to triaging with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada^{xiii} and the Canada Border Services Agency^{xiv} through the Integrated Claims Analysis Centre pilot project. The Centre prepares hearing-ready files for the Refugee Protection Division. The pilot focusses on streamlining practices and finding efficiencies within the current processes. This pilot project, which began in 2018, has been extended to the end of 2022–23.

In 2021–22, progress was made on the use of data insights to help improve triaging of case files. This included experimentation with machine learning as well as exploratory work on automating components of the triage and scheduling process. This information will help inform the continued work in 2022–23 on advanced analytical and assistive tools for members.

In 2020–21, productivity models were developed as an online tool to help divisions maximize performance, allocate a balanced workload, and enhance planning capabilities. The use of these models differs among the divisions depending on their case management and business processes. For example, in 2021–22, the Refugee Protection Division began to incorporate them into its members' work objectives, file allocation, and the scheduling of cases. Further to this, the Board continues to enhance its business intelligence monitoring and reporting capabilities with the implementation of self-service analysis with daily, weekly, and monthly reports that support the review of and adjustments to divisional operational plans.

To complement the focus on productivity, the Board put a continued focus on the quality of and consistency in decision-making:

The IRB's Quality Assurance Framework for Decision-Making^{vi} provides an overview of the activities, processes, strategies, and structures that contribute to quality adjudicative decision-making at the Board. It provides a comprehensive range of initiatives that the Board has identified and will, over time, individually strengthen as part of a strategic approach to support quality adjudicative decision-making. Fiscal year 2020–21 marked the first iteration of the Framework and focused on the Refugee Protection Division and the Refugee Appeal Division. In 2021–22, work was completed to review the Framework and expand it to include the Immigration Division and the Immigration Appeal Division. The revised framework will be published in 2022–23. The Framework will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued alignment with quality assurance activities at the Board, as well as to identify areas which should be strengthened.

During the reporting period, the Board put particular emphasis on three areas of its quality framework: strengthening the approach to gender-based claims, enhancing adjudicative strategies, policies, and practices, and supporting access to justice.

1. Strengthened approach to gender-based claims

The Refugee Protection Division's Gender-Related Task Force,^{xii} which was created in October 2020, is a dedicated team that takes a specialized trauma-informed approach to hearing and deciding gender-related refugee claims. The Gender-Related Task Force received in-depth training from leading external subject matter experts, with a focus on trauma-informed adjudication in dealing with victims of domestic violence and other forms of gender-related harm. Most of these claims are identified by the Division through its triage stage, however, they can also be identified at later stages based on new evidence or allegations. Between October 2020 and February 2022, a total of approximately 10,000 task force claims were finalized, some 5,000 of which were finalized in 2021–22. Further, the work done by the Task Force helped inform revisions to the Chairperson's Guidelines related to gender-related claims and increased member awareness of the different aspects of gender-related violence.

In December 2021, after extensive consultation with stakeholders, subject-matter experts, and

IRB employees, the revised Chairperson’s *Guideline 9: Proceedings Before the IRB Involving Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics*^{viii} was published. It provides enhanced guidance to decision-makers on refugee and immigration cases involving sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics, through updated terminology and interpretative changes. As a result, members can better identify their own biases and assumptions and are more able to assess the credibility of persons appearing before the Board. Extensive training on the updates to the Guideline also took place to ensure a more thorough understanding in this area.

Substantial work was also completed on a new Chairperson’s *Guideline 4*,^{vii} related to gender. The guideline was updated in fiscal year 2021–22 and published in July 2022 after the completion of Board-wide training. The revised Guideline includes a broadened gender-inclusive scope and is applicable to all divisions. It also incorporates the Board’s already established best practices and reflects expert advice, evidence-based developments in social science, and developments in law since the Guideline was first published in the 1990s.

2. Strengthened adjudicative strategies, policies, and practices

The Board took a significant step forward by establishing quality centres in the Refugee Protection Division and the Refugee Appeal Division. These centres monitor trends, identify and address areas requiring attention, and coordinate quality-related initiatives. In addition, the Board began to review and update its approach to the monitoring of hearings and the quality of decisions across all the divisions. This included the Refugee Protection Division and the Refugee Appeal Division enhancing performance management assessments for members as well as support tools and training for managers. The Refugee Appeal Division also advanced work related to monitoring appeals overturned by the Federal Court. The Division developed an approach to gathering data, systematically reviewed Federal Court returns over the period and will continue to enhance its ability to monitor returns in real time as they are received.

In 2021–22, with the goal of enhancing its training programs, the Refugee Protection Division reviewed quantitative and qualitative performance data and training feedback to assess needs. As a result, the Division redefined its governance structure, roles, and feedback mechanisms for its new member training and professional development programs. Work will continue on enhancing training initiatives in fiscal year 2022–23 and strengthening the Division’s national Mentorship Program. Ongoing trend identification, changing country conditions, jurisprudence monitoring and tracking of judicial reviews and appeals granted by the Refugee Appeal Division provided content and direction for training.

The Immigration Division began to implement enhancements to improve its member performance assessment and is expected to complete this work in 2022–23. The Immigration Appeal Division reviewed its member performance assessment and confirmed a consistent approach had been taken across all regions with regards to assessing member performance. As a result of the review, the Division made some updates to its member work objectives and assessment criteria for Governor-in-Council appointees.

The process of revising the *Immigration Appeal Division Rules* continued to advance in preparation for publication in the Canada Gazette for public comment in June 2022. The new proposed *Rules* intend to ensure fair and efficient decision-making, by increasing efficiency and

reducing the overall time to finalize immigration appeals; enhancing access to justice for those involved in immigration processes; and, providing consistency in procedures and requirements in proceedings that are common to all IRB divisions, where appropriate.

Designated representatives^{xv} and interpreters^{xvi} help maintain access to justice by advancing the interests of individuals who appear before the Board. A designated representative is someone (e.g., parent, family member, contracted designated representative^{xvii}) who represents the interest of a person who is unable to represent themselves before the Board. In 2021–22, the IRB published documentation to better support designated representatives in understanding their role and responsibilities, with a view to supporting quality hearings. The IRB is updating its orientation material for these individuals and developing quality control measures. The IRB also updated tools and resources to support interpreters. This work will continue into 2022–23 and will include updating material to ensure that quality control measures related to the quality of interpretation are in place.

3. Supporting access to justice

The quality of hearings is an important element in supporting access to justice for those appearing before the Board. To that end, the IRB’s Immigration Division continued to work with the Canada Border Services Agency^{xiv} and provincial correctional authorities to ensure a fair hearing process for individuals in detention. The Division also collaborated with legal aid organizations in support of access to legal representation for detained individuals. In Ontario, the Division continued its engagement with the Refugee Law Office to support the continuation of its immigration and detention representation program for immigration detainees in Ontario.

There is no legal requirement that an appellant before the Board be represented by counsel. The IRB remains committed to fairness in its dealings, regardless of whether a party is unrepresented, self-represented or represented by counsel. In support of this, in 2021–22 the Immigration Appeal Division continued implementing recommendations from a 2020 review of the level of support offered to self-represented appellants. This included beginning to update and rewrite web content in plain language and providing training to Immigration Appeal Division members to adopt plain language writing techniques in written reasons.

Gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) Highlights

In 2021–22, the IRB continued to implement GBA Plus in its policies and operations as part of its ongoing commitment to gender equity, diversity, and access to justice. Highlights include:

- Publishing the IRB’s GBA Plus policy statement^{xviii} in March 2022.
- Revising the Chairperson’s *Guideline 4: Women Refugee Claimants Fearing Gender-Related Persecution* (renamed to *Guideline 4: Gender Considerations in Proceedings before the Immigration and Refugee Board*^{xvii}) and the Chairperson’s *Guideline 9: Proceedings Before the IRB Involving Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics*.^{xviii}

Please see the 2021–22 Departmental Results Report’s Gender-based analysis plus^{xix} for more information.

Experimentation

Innovation is vital in supporting the IRB in achieving and maintaining its high level of productivity. In 2021–22, the Board implemented an innovation program to promote and sustain innovation. Three experiments were successfully launched to test the automation of components of the triage and scheduling process. A proof of concept, which helps verify that an idea will function as envisioned, was carried out to improve members' access to critical information. The results of these activities will help inform work in 2022–23.

Robotic Process Automation, which is a software technology, was implemented in eight operational and administrative processes to achieve efficiencies. For example, automated robots were developed to convert tribunal recordings to a file format accepted by the IRB's case management system. A process that used to take one hour can now be carried out in six minutes, eliminating thousands of hours of manual work. As of March 31, 2022, over 56,000 hearing recordings had been converted and saved using automation.

The Board will continue to strengthen its capacity to apply process automation and assistive tools to support decision-making and use innovation and experimentation to modernize processes, technology, and solutions.

Key risks

Throughout the fiscal year, the Board kept sight of its *Growth and Transformation Agenda's* strategic outcome of maximizing access to justice and did so in a way that prioritized the health and safety of employees and those appearing before it. The Board continued to monitor risks identified in the 2021–22 Departmental Plan. Further to a review of pandemic-related risks undertaken in the fall of 2020, in the spring of 2021, these risks were again reviewed and rated internally by senior management. The results of the review and actions taken indicated that the mitigation strategies were successful in reducing the impact of pandemic-related risks and emerging issues on the Board.

There was a continued risk throughout the fiscal year that if the sustained growth in resources was impeded, it could result in the Board not effectively meeting its operational targets. However, this risk was mitigated through the temporary investments provided through to the end of 2022–23. Stabilizing its budget and workforce remains a priority of the Board to meet its operational targets.

Results achieved

The following table shows, for adjudication of immigration and refugee cases, the results achieved, the performance indicators, the targets and the target dates for 2021–22, and the actual results for the three most recent fiscal years for which actual results are available.

Departmental results	Performance indicators	Target	Date to achieve target	2019–20 actual results	2020–21 actual results	2021–22 actual results
Fair and timely adjudication of immigration and refugee cases	Percentage of cases that meet quality standards	At least 75%	March 2022	Not available ¹	92%	Not available ²
	Percentage of decisions overturned by the Federal Court	At most 1%	March 2022	0.4%	0.8%	0.5%
	Percentage of cases that meet legislated or internal timelines	Suspended ³	Not applicable	52%	17%	Suspended ³

¹ Actual results are not available for 2019–20 as the performance indicator was introduced in 2020–21.

² Actual results are not available for 2021–22. The focus of the quality review shifted following the move from in-person hearings to virtual hearings and included an Access to Justice Review of Virtual Hearings which concluded that a strong majority of stakeholders had an overall positive experience with virtual hearings. The Board is further evolving its virtual hearings processes based on the results of this review.

³ The IRB suspended this indicator for 2021–22 to allow the Board to focus on aging inventories for refugee protection cases and immigration admissibility cases, to ensure fairness and access to justice.

Financial, human resources and performance information for the IRB's Program Inventory is available in GC InfoBase.^{xx}

Budgetary financial resources (dollars)

The following table shows, for adjudication of immigration and refugee cases, budgetary spending for 2021–22, as well as actual spending for that year.

2021–22 Main Estimates	2021–22 planned spending	2021–22 total authorities available for use	2021–22 actual spending (authorities used)	2021–22 difference (actual spending minus planned spending)
\$220,363,372	\$220,363,372	\$222,001,894	\$189,825,352	(\$30,538,020)

Lower than planned spending is mainly due to the IRB's difficulty in acquiring additional capacity to process the continued growth in volume of refugee protection claims and appeals

being finalized. Consequently, the IRB proactively identified funds that would otherwise not be spent, and reprofiled them to 2022–23.

Financial, human resources and performance information for the IRB’s Program Inventory is available in GC InfoBase.^{xx}

Human resources (full-time equivalents)

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents, the human resources the department needed to fulfill this core responsibility for 2021–22.

2021–22 planned full-time equivalents	2021–22 actual full-time equivalents	2021–22 difference (actual full-time equivalents minus planned full-time equivalents)
1,637	1,557	(80)

Financial, human resources and performance information for the IRB’s Program Inventory is available in GC InfoBase.^{xx}

Internal Services

Description

Internal services are those groups of related activities and resources that the federal government considers to be services in support of programs and/or required to meet corporate obligations of an organization. Internal services refers to the activities and resources of the 10 distinct service categories that support program delivery in the organization, regardless of the internal services delivery model in a department. The 10 service categories are: acquisition management services; communication services; financial management services; human resources management services; information management services; information technology services; legal services; material management services; management and oversight services; and real property management services.

Results achieved

In 2021–22, the IRB’s internal services priorities, including those described below, played a key supporting role in the Board achieving its mandate. These priorities also supported the Board’s continued focus on delivering client-centric services that are accessible, effective, and responsive to clients' needs and supported by clear service standards.

Strengthened management, with a focus on people management.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly accelerated the IRB’s adoption of its digital agenda, a component of the *Growth and Transformation Agenda*. The IRB’s Digital Strategy focuses on user-centred technology solutions that will allow the Board to meet the needs of its employees and persons appearing before it. In just under two years, the Board has successfully pivoted from

a largely paper-based tribunal to a predominantly digital tribunal. This enabled the Board to further optimize the use of public resources, providing efficient and effective access to justice on a national level. This involved digitizing all new and existing case files across the divisions, including close to 40,000 files for the Refugee Protection Division. In addition, with the absence of paper files, hearing rooms were reconfigured to support the use of digital copies of case files for conducting hearings. Work also progressed on the My Case portal^{xxi} to allow counsel to submit to and receive documents from the Board. The My Case portal will continue to evolve to further enhance this electronic exchange of information platform. In 2021–22, the Board continued to work to improve information and document sharing with portfolio organizations and enhanced its hearing room capability for all participants to improve the user experience.

The IRB implemented a new organizational model to strengthen its regional governance and operations. This was in response to the need for greater accountability for regional affairs and increased administrative support in the regions. Work to develop the operating model, service standards, and enhanced governance, and to review job descriptions, will continue in 2022–23.

In year two of the *Strategy for Psychological Safety and Mental Health in the IRB Workplace*, the IRB finalized the associated performance measurement framework, which sets out Board-wide objectives and targets. The Board also developed and released its Workplace Wellness Annual Report to help advance workplace mental health in alignment with the Strategy. As part of the tools and resources it provides to IRB members and employees, the Board renewed its corporate license for a mindfulness and meditation mobile application.

The Board remains committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive organizational culture. To promote this, in 2021–22, the IRB launched its first *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*. The Plan focusses on building a diverse and inclusive workforce and embedding diversity and inclusion in IRB policies and programs. Progress against the Plan will be monitored to ensure that it remains relevant and to maintain its momentum. The IRB diversity and inclusiveness commitments, which were regular discussion items at senior management meetings and with bargaining agents, will continue in 2022–23.

To help remove systemic barriers in its staffing tools, the IRB completed its first phase of statistical analysis of past staffing processes. Diversity targets were set to address gaps between the Board's workforce representation and workforce availability (share of the Canadian workforce that is eligible for federal public service work), and reductions of gaps resulted.

Additionally, new mandatory training on unconscious bias, harassment prevention, and microaggressions was provided to all executives and managers across the organization. In 2022–23, the Board will develop an awareness tool for managers and employees on how to best handle microaggressions within the workplace.

Addressing employee pay issues continued to be a priority for the IRB. The Board found innovative ways to use automation to facilitate the submission and processing of pay and staffing transactions. Senior management will continue to monitor results under this corporate commitment.

Did you know?

In March 2022, under the Green Globes Eco-Rating Program, the IRB received a Green Globes Certification for the development of new office space and hearing rooms at the Montreal office (800 René-Lévesque Blvd West). The office space was evaluated against seven criteria, including energy, water, and emissions. This designation indicates the IRB's leadership in terms of energy and environmental design practices and commitment to continuous improvement.

Budgetary financial resources (dollars)

The following table shows, for internal services, budgetary spending for 2021–22, as well as spending for that year.

2021–22 Main Estimates	2021–22 planned spending	2021–22 total authorities available for use	2021–22 actual spending (authorities used)	2021–22 difference (actual spending minus planned spending)
\$62,360,680	\$62,360,680	\$74,000,631	\$74,426,707	\$12,066,027

Higher-than-planned spending in internal services is mainly due to continued investments in information technology to implement virtual hearings, digital tools, equipment to better support remote work, and leasehold improvements.

Human resources (full-time equivalents)

The following table shows, in full-time equivalents, the human resources the department needed to carry out its internal services for 2021–22.

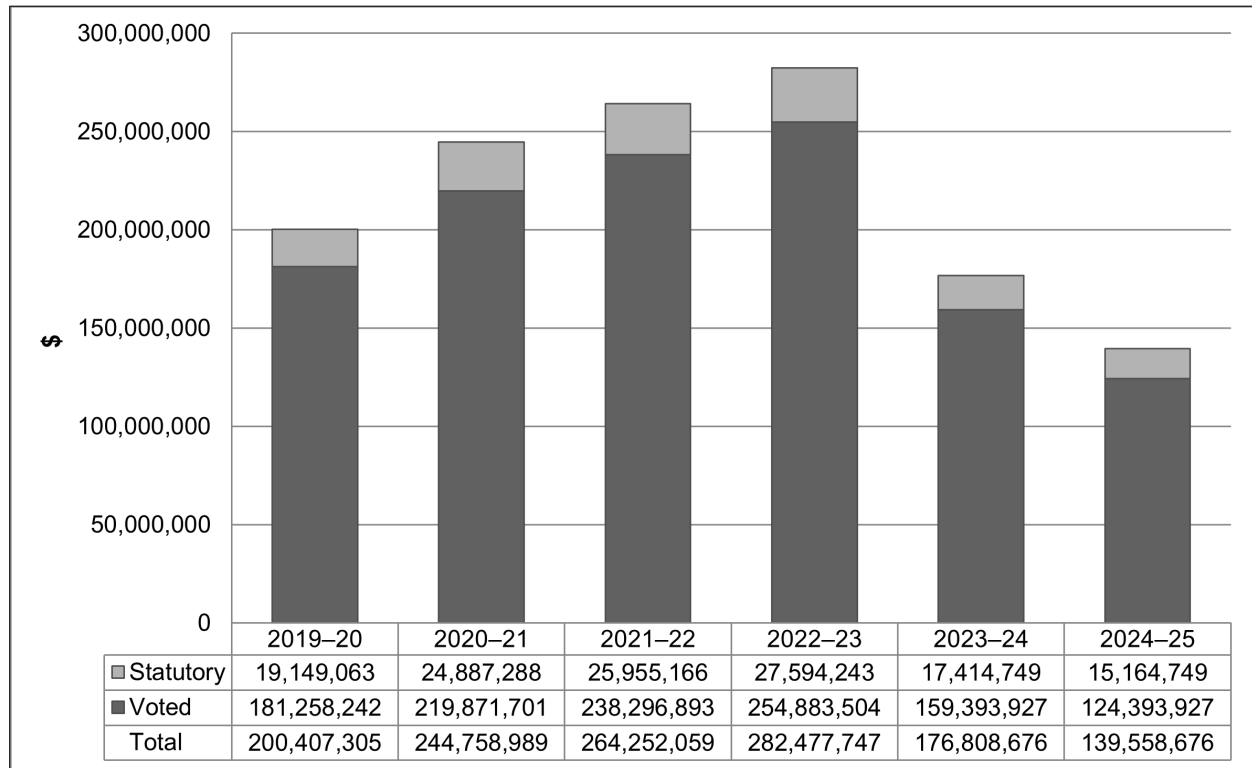
2021–22 planned full-time equivalents	2021–22 actual full-time equivalents	2021–22 difference (actual full-time equivalents minus planned full-time equivalents)
458	471	13

Spending and human resources

Spending

Spending 2019–20 to 2024–25

The following graph presents planned (voted and statutory spending) over time.



The IRB continued to experience a significant rise in refugee protection claims from 2019–20 to 2021–22. The planned spending in 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25 will increase following parliamentary approval of the new funding in Budget 2022,^{xxii} which was announced on April 7, 2022.

Budgetary performance summary for the core responsibility and internal services (dollars)

The “Budgetary performance summary for the core responsibility and internal services” table presents the budgetary financial resources allocated for the IRB’s core responsibility and for internal services.

Core responsibilities and internal services	2021–22 Main Estimates	2021–22 planned spending	2022–23 planned spending	2023–24 planned spending	2021–22 total authorities available for use	2019–20 actual spending (authorities used)	2020–21 actual spending (authorities used)	2021–22 actual spending (authorities used)
Adjudication of immigration and refugee cases	\$220,363,372	\$220,363,372	\$223,559,271	\$141,352,119	\$222,001,894	\$139,232,235	\$158,302,185	\$189,825,352
Subtotal	\$220,363,372	\$220,363,372	\$223,559,271	\$141,352,119	\$222,001,894	\$139,232,235	\$158,302,185	\$189,825,352
Internal Services	\$62,360,680	\$62,360,680	\$58,918,476	\$35,456,557	\$74,000,631	\$61,175,070	\$86,456,804	\$74,426,707
Total	\$282,724,052	\$282,724,052	\$282,477,747	\$176,808,676	\$296,002,525	\$200,407,305	\$244,758,989	\$264,252,059

The increase in expenditures in 2021–22 was due to costs incurred to add capacity to increase the number of refugee protection claims and appeals being finalized following the resumption of in-person hearings. This also included investments in digitization to implement virtual hearings, digital tools, equipment to better support remote work, and leasehold improvements (expenditures related to the alteration or modernization of a leased asset). This increase in expenditures was funded by the Government’s temporary investments in the refugee protection system. Budget 2022 announced a permanent increase to the IRB’s funding beyond 2022–23 to coincide with the continued growth in refugee protection claims. As such, planned spending in 2022–23 and 2023–24 will be adjusted following parliamentary approval.

Human resources

The “Human resources summary for core responsibilities and internal services” table presents the full-time equivalents allocated to each of the IRB’s core responsibility and to internal services.

Human resources summary for the core responsibility and internal services

Core responsibility and internal services	2019–20 actual full-time equivalents	2020–21 actual full-time equivalents	2021–22 planned full-time equivalents	2021–22 actual full-time equivalents	2022–23 planned full-time equivalents	2023–24 planned full-time equivalents
Adjudication of immigration and refugee cases	1,195	1,326	1,637	1,557	1,655	993
Subtotal	1,195	1,326	1,637	1,557	1,655	993
Internal Services	382	452	458	471	458	300
Total	1,577	1,778	2,095	2,028	2,113	1,293

The increase in full-time equivalents through 2021–22 was due to the hiring of temporary decision-makers and support staff to increase the number of refugee protection claims and

appeals being finalized. This additional capacity has been funded by the Government's temporary investments in the refugee protection system. Budget 2022 announced a permanent increase to the IRB's funding beyond 2022–23 to coincide with the continued growth in refugee protection claims. As such, planned full-time equivalents are expected to increase in 2023–24, following parliamentary approval of the new funding.

Expenditures by vote

For information on the IRB's organizational voted and statutory expenditures, consult the Public Accounts of Canada 2021.^{xxiii}

Government of Canada spending and activities

Information on the alignment of the IRB's spending with Government of Canada's spending and activities is available in GC InfoBase.^{xx}

Financial statements and financial statements highlights

Financial Statements

The IRB's financial statements^{xxiv} (unaudited) for the year ended March 31, 2022, are available on the departmental website.

Financial statement highlights

Condensed Statement of Operations (unaudited) for the year ended March 31, 2022 (dollars)

Financial information	2021–22 planned results	2021–22 actual results	2020–21 actual results	Difference (2021–22 actual results minus 2021–22 planned results)	Difference (2021–22 actual results minus 2020–21 actual results)
Total expenses	\$315,246,214	\$288,723,765	\$274,760,888	(\$26,522,449)	\$13,962,877
Total revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	\$315,246,214	\$288,723,765	\$274,760,888	(\$26,522,449)	\$13,962,877

Total expenses increased compared to previous fiscal year primarily due to costs incurred to augment capacity to finalize more refugee protection claims and appeals. However, total expenses were lower than planned due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the IRB's efforts to recruit additional resources.

Condensed Statement of Financial (unaudited) as of March 31, 2022 (dollars)

Financial information	2021–22	2020–21	Difference (2021–22 minus 2020–21)
Total net liabilities	\$37,311,113	\$42,801,983	(\$5,490,870)
Total net financial assets	\$22,672,155	\$26,659,313	(\$3,987,158)
Departmental net debt	\$14,638,958	\$16,142,669	(\$1,503,711)
Total non-financial assets	\$27,317,113	\$17,801,513	\$9,515,600
Departmental net financial position	\$12,678,155	\$1,658,844	\$11,019,311

Departmental net financial position improved due to reduced Other Government Departments accounts payable at year-end and an increase to investments in tangible capital assets.

The 2021–22 planned results information is provided in the IRB’s Future-Oriented Statement of Operations and Notes 2021–22.

Corporate information

Organizational profile

Appropriate minister: The Honourable Sean Fraser

Institutional head: Richard Wex, Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

Ministerial portfolio: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Enabling instrument: *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*^{xxv}

Year of incorporation / commencement: 1989

Raison d'être, mandate, and role: who we are and what we do

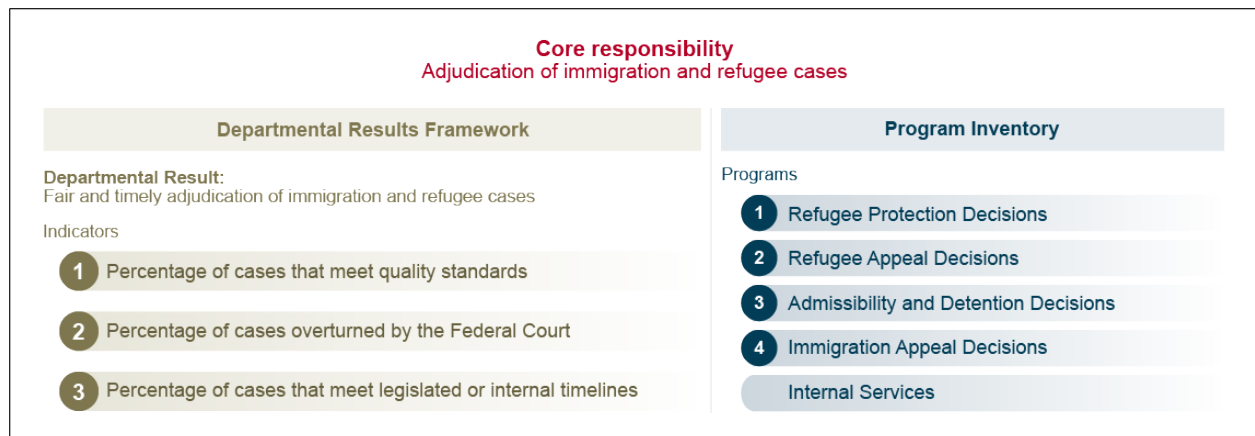
“Raison d'être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do”^{xxvi} is available on the IRB's website.

Operating context

Information on the operating context^{xxvii} is available on the IRB's website.

Reporting framework

The IRB's Departmental Results Framework and Program Inventory of record for 2021–22 are shown below.



Supporting information on the program inventory

Financial, human resources and performance information for the IRB's Program Inventory is available in GC InfoBase.^{xx}

Supplementary information tables

The following supplementary information tables are available on the IRB's website:

Reporting on Green Procurement^{xxviii}

Gender-based analysis plus^{xix}

Response to parliamentary committees and external audits^{xxix}

Federal tax expenditures

The tax system can be used to achieve public policy objectives through the application of special measures such as low tax rates, exemptions, deductions, deferrals, and credits. The Department of Finance Canada publishes cost estimates and projections for these measures each year in the Report on Federal Tax Expenditures.^{xxx} This report also provides detailed background information on tax expenditures, including descriptions, objectives, historical information, and references to related federal spending programs as well as evaluations and GBA Plus of tax expenditures.

Organizational contact information

Mailing address

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Minto Place, Canada Building
344 Slater Street, 12th floor
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada
K1A 0K1

For more contact information, visit Contact Us.^{xxxi}

Follow us on Twitter,^{xxxii} Facebook,^{xxxiii} or LinkedIn.^{xxxiv}

Appendix: definitions

appropriation (*crédit*)

Any authority of Parliament to pay money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

budgetary expenditures (*dépenses budgétaires*)

Operating and capital expenditures; transfer payments to other levels of government, organizations or individuals; and payments to Crown corporations.

core responsibility (*responsabilité essentielle*)

An enduring function or role performed by a department. The intentions of the department with respect to a core responsibility are reflected in one or more related departmental results that the department seeks to contribute to or influence.

Departmental Plan (*plan ministériel*)

A report on the plans and expected performance of an appropriated department over a 3-year period. Departmental Plans are usually tabled in Parliament each spring.

departmental priority (*priorité*)

A plan or project that a department has chosen to focus and report on during the planning period. Priorities represent the things that are most important or what must be done first to support the achievement of the desired departmental results.

departmental result (*résultat ministériel*)

A consequence or outcome that a department seeks to achieve. A departmental result is often outside departments' immediate control, but it should be influenced by program-level outcomes.

departmental result indicator (*indicateur de résultat ministériel*)

A quantitative measure of progress on a departmental result.

departmental results framework (*cadre ministériel des résultats*)

A framework that connects the department's core responsibilities to its departmental results and departmental result indicators.

Departmental Results Report (*rapport sur les résultats ministériels*)

A report on a department's actual accomplishments against the plans, priorities and expected results set out in the corresponding Departmental Plan.

experimentation (*expérimentation*)

The conducting of activities that seek to first explore, then test and compare the effects and impacts of policies and interventions in order to inform evidence-based decision-making, and improve outcomes for Canadians, by learning what works, for whom and in what circumstances. Experimentation is related to, but distinct from innovation (the trying of new things), because it involves a rigorous comparison of results. For example, using a new website to communicate with Canadians can be an innovation; systematically testing the new website against existing outreach tools or an old website to see which one leads to more engagement, is experimentation.

full-time equivalent (*équivalent temps plein*)

A measure of the extent to which an employee represents a full person-year charge against a departmental budget. For a particular position, the full-time equivalent figure is the ratio of number of hours the person actually works divided by the standard number of hours set out in the person's collective agreement.

gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) (*analyse comparative entre les sexes plus [ACS Plus]*)

An analytical tool used to support the development of responsive and inclusive policies, programs and other initiatives; and understand how factors such as sex, race, national and ethnic origin, Indigenous origin or identity, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic conditions, geography, culture and disability, impact experiences and outcomes, and can affect access to and experience of government programs.

government-wide priorities (*priorités pangouvernementales*)

For the purpose of the 2021–22 Departmental Results Report, government-wide priorities refers to those high-level themes outlining the government's agenda in the 2020 Speech from the Throne, namely: Protecting Canadians from COVID-19; Helping Canadians through the pandemic; Building back better – a resiliency agenda for the middle class; The Canada we're fighting for.

horizontal initiative (*initiative horizontale*)

An initiative where two or more federal organizations are given funding to pursue a shared outcome, often linked to a government priority.

non-budgetary expenditures (*dépenses non budgétaires*)

Net outlays and receipts related to loans, investments and advances, which change the composition of the financial assets of the Government of Canada.

performance (*rendement*)

What an organization did with its resources to achieve its results, how well those results compare to what the organization intended to achieve, and how well lessons learned have been identified.

performance indicator (*indicateur de rendement*)

A qualitative or quantitative means of measuring an output or outcome, with the intention of gauging the performance of an organization, program, policy or initiative respecting expected results.

performance reporting (*production de rapports sur le rendement*)

The process of communicating evidence-based performance information. Performance reporting supports decision-making, accountability and transparency.

plan (*plan*)

The articulation of strategic choices, which provides information on how an organization intends to achieve its priorities and associated results. Generally, a plan will explain the logic behind the strategies chosen and tend to focus on actions that lead to the expected result.

planned spending (*dépenses prévues*)

For Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports, planned spending refers to those amounts presented in Main Estimates.

A department is expected to be aware of the authorities that it has sought and received. The determination of planned spending is a departmental responsibility, and departments must be able to defend the expenditure and accrual numbers presented in their Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports.

program (*programme*)

Individual or groups of services, activities or combinations thereof that are managed together within the department and focus on a specific set of outputs, outcomes or service levels.

program inventory (*répertoire des programmes*)

Identifies all the department's programs and describes how resources are organized to contribute to the department's core responsibilities and results.

result (*résultat*)

A consequence attributed, in part, to an organization, policy, program or initiative. Results are not within the control of a single organization, policy, program or initiative; instead they are within the area of the organization's influence.

statutory expenditures (*dépenses législatives*)

Expenditures that Parliament has approved through legislation other than appropriation acts. The legislation sets out the purpose of the expenditures and the terms and conditions under which they may be made.

target (*cible*)

A measurable performance or success level that an organization, program or initiative plans to achieve within a specified time period. Targets can be either quantitative or qualitative.

voted expenditures (*dépenses votées*)

Expenditures that Parliament approves annually through an appropriation act. The vote wording becomes the governing conditions under which these expenditures may be made.

Endnotes

- ⁱ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/Pages/index.aspx>
- ⁱⁱ Refugee Protection Division: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/refugee-claims/pages/index.aspx>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Refugee Appeal Division: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/refugee-appeals/pages/index.aspx>
- ^{iv} Immigration Division: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/hearings-reviews/pages/index.aspx>
- ^v Immigration Appeal Division: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/immigration-appeals/pages/index.aspx>
- ^{vi} Quality Assurance Framework for Decision-Making: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/transparency/qa-aq/Pages/qaq-caq.aspx>
- ^{vii} Chairperson’s Guideline 4: Gender Considerations in Proceedings before the IRB: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/policies/Pages/GuideDir04.aspx>
- ^{viii} Chairperson’s Guideline 9: Proceedings Before the IRB Involving Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/policies/Pages/GuideDir09.aspx>
- ^{ix} Chairperson’s Guideline 2: Detention: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/policies/Pages/GuideDir02.aspx>
- ^x Chairperson’s Guideline 3 – Child Refugee Claimants: <https://irb.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/policies/Pages/GuideDir03.aspx>
- ^{xi} Chairperson’s Guideline 8: Procedures with Respect to Vulnerable Persons Appearing Before the Board: <https://irb.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/policies/Pages/GuideDir08.aspx>
- ^{xii} Gender-Related Task Force: <https://irb.gc.ca/en/refugee-claims/Pages/gender-related-task-force-rpd.aspx>
- ^{xiii} Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship.html>
- ^{xiv} Canada Border Services Agency: <https://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html>
- ^{xv} Designated representatives: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/designated-representant/pages/index.aspx>
- ^{xvi} interpreters: <https://irb.gc.ca/en/interpreters/Pages/index.aspx>
- ^{xvii} contracted designated representative: <https://irb.gc.ca/en/designated-representant/Pages/contracted-designated-representatives.aspx>
- ^{xviii} GBA Plus policy statement: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/legal-policy/policies/Pages/gba-plus.aspx>
- ^{xix} 2021–22 Departmental Results Report’s Gender-based analysis plus: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/reports-publications/planning-performance/Pages/2122-gender-based-analysis-plus.aspx>
- ^{xx} GC InfoBase: <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html>
- ^{xxi} My Case portal: <https://my-case-mon-dossier.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en-US/>
- ^{xxii} Budget 2022: <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2022/home-accueil-en.html>
- ^{xxiii} Public Accounts of Canada 2021: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/cpc-pac/index-eng.html>
- ^{xxiv} financial statements: <https://irb.gc.ca/en/reports-publications/finance/Pages/index.aspx>
- ^{xxv} Immigration and Refugee Protection Act: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-2.5/index.html>
- ^{xxvi} Raison d’être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/reports-publications/planning-performance/Pages/2122-mandate.aspx>
- ^{xxvii} operating context: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/reports-publications/planning-performance/Pages/2122-operating-context.aspx>
- ^{xxviii} Reporting on Green Procurement: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/reports-publications/planning-performance/Pages/2122-reporting-green-procurement.aspx>
- ^{xxix} Response to parliamentary committees and external audits: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/reports-publications/planning-performance/Pages/2122-response-parliamentary-committees-external-audits.aspx>
- ^{xxx} Report on Federal Tax Expenditures: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/services/publications/federal-tax-expenditures.html>
- ^{xxxi} Contact Us: <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/contact/Pages/index.aspx>
- ^{xxxii} Twitter: https://twitter.com/IRB_Canada
- ^{xxxiii} Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IRBCanada/>
- ^{xxxiv} LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/irb-cisr/>