



The Atlantic Immigration Pilot – An innovative approach for long-term retention of newcomers

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Atlantic Pilot

An Innovative Immigration Program

Key Initiative under the **Atlantic Growth Strategy** to drive economic growth and support the labour force

What sets it apart:



Priority processing

Program for High Skilled, Intermediate Skilled and International Students with commitment to process permanent residence applications in less than 6 months (in the majority of cases)



Partnership model focused on long-term retention

Employers select candidates most likely to stay in the region, applicants provided comprehensive settlement supports offered in partnership with provinces and settlement service providers.



Flexible criteria

Basic language (benchmark level 4), lower education criteria (high-school or 2-year diploma for students) and less work experience required (one-year for skilled worker categories, none for international grads).

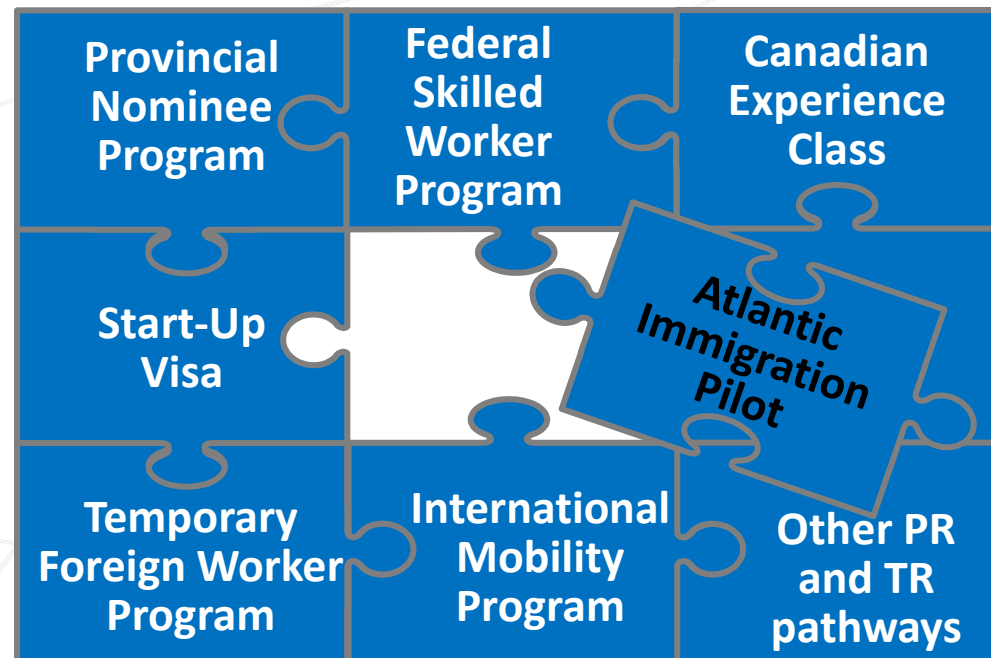
(See Annex A for more details)

AIP Meeting Unique Needs & Complementing Existing Programming

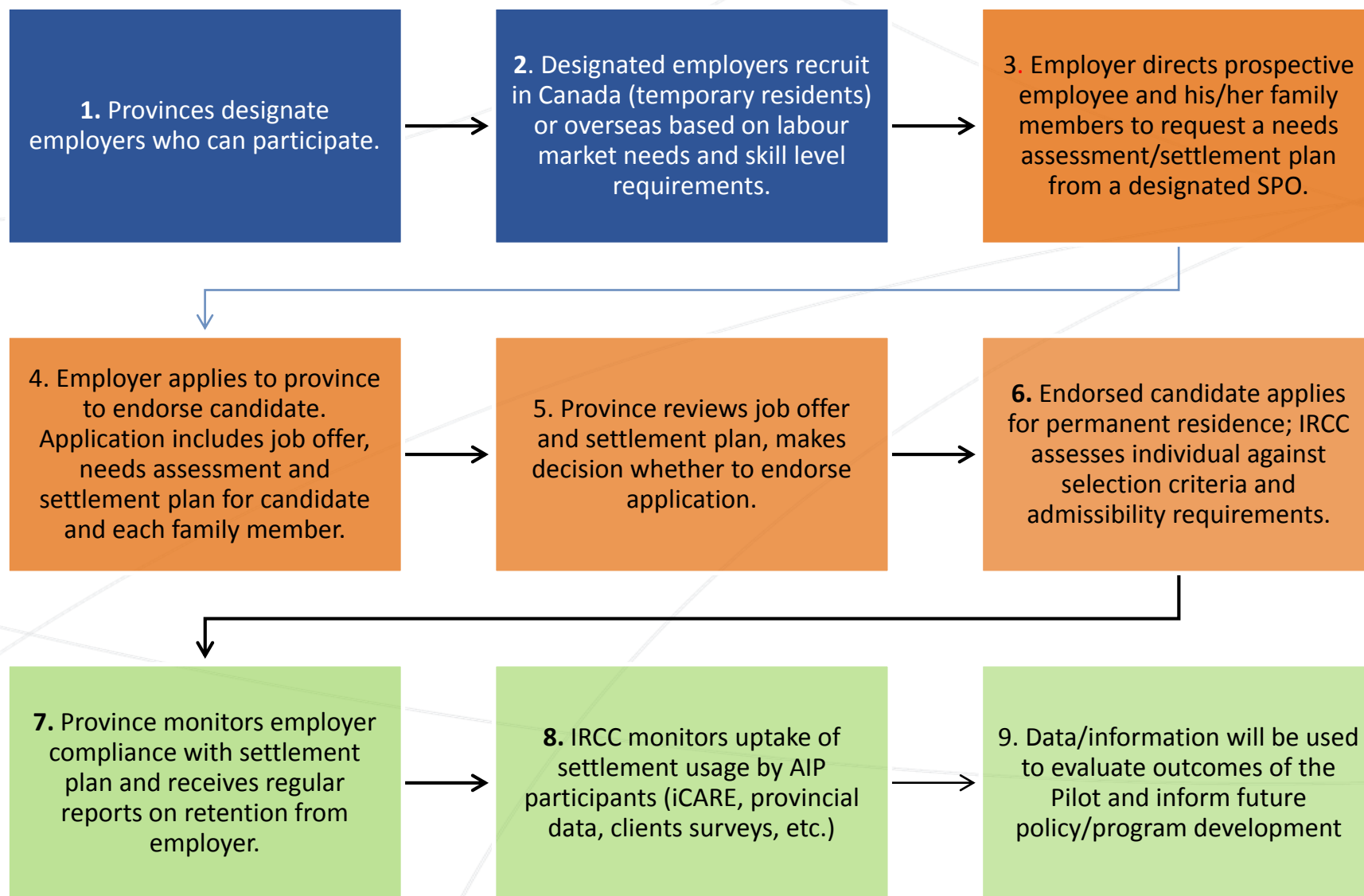
The Atlantic Immigration Pilot is unique in its flexibility, speed and partnership model.

Complements existing suite of immigration programs:

- Over 8,000 permanent residents came to the region and over 20,000 temporary work permits were issued in Atlantic Canada in 2015 under other programs



AIP Immigration Process



Role of Service Provider Organizations

IRCC and provincial governments have engaged service provider organizations throughout various stages of the Pilot: from informing the early **design** stages; to helping ensure smooth **implementation**; to providing regular **operational feedback**.

Designation Process

- SPOs provide employers with information on settlement supports and possible challenges (e.g., affordable housing shortages; potential waitlists for language training, etc.).

Endorsement Stage

- Designated SPOs will conduct the needs assessments (in-person or by distance) and provide a settlement plan to prospective employees and their family members.

Post-Arrival Support

- SPOs offer their existing suite of IRCC-funded services to AIP participants once they become permanent residents (PRs).
- SPOs can offer provincially-funded services to AIP clients based on existing funding arrangements and eligibility criteria (e.g., services to temporary residents).

Role of Employers

Throughout the AIP process, employers are gaining **awareness of the settlement needs** of their newcomer workers and the resources in their community to support long term **retention**.

Designation Process

- Employers must indicate that they have contacted a local settlement service provider and are committed to creating a welcoming workplace.

Endorsement Stage

- Employers must commit to support specific settlement needs of their prospective employees and their family members.

Post-Arrival Support

- Employers help their new employees and family members transition into their new community, such as providing early transportation and housing assistance; and,
- Connect newcomers with SPOs; increase awareness and use of existing services.

Innovative Policy Approach

New Partners in Settlement

- Employers more aware of settlement needs and existing network of services in their community; replicate existing best practices among employers

Increase uptake of settlement services

- Mandatory needs assessment will increase awareness and (ideally) uptake of existing settlement services
- To date: more than 850 needs assessments and settlement plans have been completed

Testing new models

- Pilot will contribute to our knowledge of the relationship between settlement services and retention; IRCC will examine the relationship between the usage of settlement services and retention outcomes

Continuously Improving to Respond to Needs

Targeted outreach: Conducted with key stakeholders to understand their experiences and challenges with AIP.

AIP Reference Group: Comprised of representatives from federal and provincial governments, local service provider organizations, employers and academia.

What we Heard	How We Addressed Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to ensure individual employers were aware of pilot and clearly understood how it could work for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Increased promotion and awareness activities (federal and provincial)✓ Communication tools and resources have been expanded (created of video tutorials and improved/refined products).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employers lacking a federal resource dedicated to providing assistance in completing applications and navigating online immigration resources and systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Implementation of the AIP Dedicated Service Channel to provide information and system navigation guidance to employers✓ Improved web content
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to reach regional key influencers (such as business councils) and key employers not already participating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Partnership with Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency✓ Continued promotion and support by Employer Liaison Network to individual employers and key influencers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lengthy processing times for temporary work permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Implemented expedited processing of temporary work permits (to match e-Application processing standard)

Discussion Questions

- From your unique perspective and experience, how can government and non-government actors support immigrant retention?
- What are best practices for retention and integration in rural areas and small centres?
- What is happening in your community that could benefit the Atlantic communities receiving immigrants through the AIP?
- How can we better support employers who are welcoming newcomers through the AIP?

Thank you

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Annex A: Minimum Selection Criteria

	Atlantic High-Skilled Class (NOC 0, A, B)	Atlantic Intermediate-Skilled Class (NOC C)	Atlantic International Graduate Class
Language	CLB 4 Mandatory Testing	CLB 4 Mandatory Testing	CLB 4 Mandatory Testing
Education	High School Educational Credential Assessment (ECA)	High School Educational Credential Assessment (ECA)	2 yr. diploma from publicly funded institution in Atlantic region
Work Experience	1 yr. in occupation related to job offer	1 yr. in occupation related to job offer	None required
Job Offer	Full-time, one-year contract in NOC O, A, B occupation	Full-time, indeterminate in NOC O, A, B, C occupation	Full-time, one-year contract in NOC O, A, B, C occupation
Settlement Supports	Customized	Customized	Customized