

Office of Acadian Affairs
Business Plan
2006-2007

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A. Message from the Minister and CEO

Since the proclamation of the French-language Services Act, the role of the Office of Acadian Affairs has evolved from one of community initiatives support to that of a central support agency for all of government with regards to French-language services. With the successful negotiation of the Canada-Nova Scotia Agreement of French-language Services (\$5 million over 4 years), the Government of Nova Scotia is poised to increase its capacity to provide services in French.

The Office of Acadian Affairs views the process of developing French-language services as one of collaboration and cooperation. In keeping with that philosophy, the Office has been working with the inter-departmental French-language Services Coordinating Committee to develop plans to increase services in French. 2005-2006 was a year of progress for the delivery of French-language government services in Nova Scotia; some departments took their first steps in French-language service delivery, a host of new services in French were made available directly to the public, and public servants were able to take French language training.

Upon receipt of the first set of French-language services plans from the various departments, offices and agencies represented on the coordinating committee, Acadian Affairs was able to assess critical areas for development over the four years of the Agreement. This year marks the first time the Office has submitted a Business Plan. In this plan we have detailed some of the major initiatives to be continued or undertaken in order to enable us to continue working with our partners on the creation of a sustainable framework to support the French-language Services Act.

The participation of the Acadian and francophone community remains critical as we strengthen the dialogue between government and the community to see that their needs are met. A key focus then, in the first part of the year, will include consultation work for the development of regulations for the French-language Services Act.

We will continue to provide funding support to departments and offices, provide project assistance to advance community development, as well as promote the translation and communications services we are now able to offer across government. This in turn will help government develop services and enhance its capacity to deliver services in French to Nova Scotia's Acadian and francophone community.

Chris d'Entremont
Minister of Acadian Affairs

Vaughne Madden
Chief Executive Officer

B. Mission

The mission of the Office of Acadian Affairs is to offer advice and support to departments, agencies, and Crown corporations so they can develop and adapt policies, programs, and services that reflect the needs of the Acadian and francophone community of Nova Scotia.

C. Vision

The Office of Acadian Affairs envisions a vibrant Acadian and francophone community that enjoys significant support from the Province of Nova Scotia, thus enabling its members to grow and develop as a people.

D. Mandate

The objects and purposes of the Office of Acadian Affairs as stated in the French-language Services Act is to:

- (a) ensure that the Government is aware of the needs of the Acadian and francophone community;
- (b) offer advice and support to departments, offices and agencies of Government and to Crown corporations for the purpose of developing and adopting or providing programs, policies and services that reflect the needs of the Acadian and francophone community;
- (c) serve as a central support agency for other departments for French-language services within the Government;
- (d) develop partnerships with Acadian and francophone agencies at provincial, national and international levels;
- (e) ensure that Acadian and francophone needs are addressed in the development of programs, policies and services; and
- (f) recognize the contribution of the Acadian and francophone community.

E. Planning Context

The history of the Office of Acadian Affairs within the Government of Nova Scotia dates back to 1985 when the position of Advisor for Acadian Affairs under the Cabinet Secretariat was created. From humble beginnings, the Office of Acadian Affairs has forged a strong and positive relationship with the Acadian and francophone community and has grown to meet its needs and new challenges.

During the past 20 years, the Acadian and francophone population of Nova Scotia has developed a sophisticated associative network to respond to its community development needs. With federal and provincial government support they have created an infrastructure which includes a French first-language education system, a global development plan, a provincial weekly newspaper and other communications vehicles, and as such have become engaged citizens in public policy development. During the past few years, the Acadian and francophone population of the province has persistently requested an increase in services responding to their linguistic and developmental needs from the provincial government.

It has been 20 years since the Federal Official Languages Act was proclaimed and bilingualism is now synonymous with Canada. The number of students enrolled in French or immersion schools is growing steadily and is an indication of the level of acceptance by the general population of the notion of two official languages in our country.

The Government of New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual provincial government in Canada but the provinces of Prince Edward Island, Ontario and Manitoba have policies or laws which mandate their provincial governments to offer French-language services to their francophone populations.

Work on the first strategic plan of the Office of Acadian Affairs began in 2003. The main purpose of the plan was to define and clarify the role played by the Office of Acadian Affairs in the delivery of government services.

In April of 2003, the Office of Acadian Affairs formed a French-language Services Coordinators Committee made up of 13 department representatives to assist the Office of Acadian Affairs in developing and implementing its corporate objectives. In the initial Terms of Reference of the Coordinators Committee, its mission was to increase the level of French-language government services available to Acadians and French-speaking Nova Scotians. Today, 17 departments and offices are part of the Coordinating Committee and work on an ongoing basis with the Office of Acadian Affairs to set clear priorities and target resources that will best meet the Acadian and francophone community needs.

In December of 2004, the *French-Language Services Act - An Act Respecting the Office of Acadian Affairs and the Delivery of French-language Services by the Public Service* was proclaimed and gave the Office of Acadian Affairs official status in the *Public Service Act*, confirming the Province of Nova Scotia's commitment to *promoting the development of its*

Acadian and francophone community and maintaining for future generations the French language, which contributes to the enhancement of life in Nova Scotia.¹

Since 2003, the strategies identified in the original Strategic Plan have guided the activities of the Office of Acadian Affairs. The work is supported by the Minister's Advisory Committee, a Deputy Ministers' Advisory Committee, and the French-language Services Coordinating Committee.

The signing of the Canada/Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services has provided the Province and the Office of Acadian Affairs with financial resources which will be used to implement the changes needed in the public service in order to increase French-language services. The Office of Acadian Affairs is responsible for this agreement on behalf of the province of Nova Scotia and will consult with departments and offices across government to develop a multi-year strategy that is prudent, cost-effective and sensible.

The Office of Acadian Affairs must also manage expectations of both the community as well as of the public service. Implementing this government-wide initiative is a process that will take time and must be done in a collaborative manner by fostering relationships, finding common ground and recognizing limitations.

The mission of the Office of Acadian Affairs remains to offer advice and support to departments, offices of government, agencies, and Crown corporations so they can develop and adapt policies, programs, and services that reflect the needs of the Acadian and francophone community of Nova Scotia.

This is the basis of this first official Business Plan of the Office of Acadian Affairs.

¹French-language Services Act

F. Strategic Goals

- Create a sustainable framework within government including regulations, policies and guidelines to support the French-language Services Act.
- Increase the amount of direct services offered to government in order to help it provide services in French to the Acadian and francophone community; these include advice, translation services, and communications support.
- Insure that the needs of the Acadian and francophone community are considered in government initiatives, programs, policies, and services.
- Increase government's capacity to provide services in French.

G. Core Business Areas

The Office of Acadian Affairs carries out its responsibilities through the following core business areas:

1. Reinforcement of the legislative framework for French-language Services.

Reinforcing the legislative framework is key to increasing government's capacity to offer French-language services. The Office of Acadian Affairs will work with government to ensure that departments and designated public service entities comply with the French-language Services Act.

The French-language Services Act, proclaimed in December 2004, stipulates that a regulation will be made by the Governor in Council by December 31, 2006 and may be made:

- (a) respecting the development of plans for the provision of French-language services in any part of the Province;
- (b) designating the departments, offices, agencies of Government, Crown corporations and public institutions that have an obligation to provide French-language services;
- (c) respecting the provision by departments, offices, agencies of Government, Crown corporations and public institutions of French-language services in any part of the Province;
- (d) respecting standards of French-language service;
- (e) assigning duties to the Minister respecting French-language services;
- (f) respecting responsibilities of members of the Executive Council for the delivery of French-language services;
- (g) defining any word or expression used but not defined in this Act;
- (h) respecting any other matter the Governor in Council considers necessary or advisable to carry out effectively the intent and purpose of this Act.

The development and consultation work required for the preparation of regulation(s) started in 2005-2006 will be a key focus for the Office of Acadian Affairs in the first part of the year.

Once regulations are in place, departments, offices, and other public service entities will be better equipped to make any policy changes necessary within their organizations.

As required by the Act, an annual report on French-language services initiatives and programs undertaken and services provided will be presented to the Legislature in the Fall.

2. Interdepartmental relations

The Office of Acadian Affairs views the process of developing French-language services as one of collaboration and cooperation. The Office of Acadian Affairs provides support services to departments and offices in order to help them develop and implement their French-language services. These support services include a translation service, French communications advice, policy interpretation, and funding assistance. The Office of Acadian Affairs can also help facilitate communications between the Acadian and francophone community and government.

The French-language Services Act constitutes the French-language Services Coordinating Committee whose official role is to assist and advise the Minister on the implementation of the Act. According to the Act, the Coordinating Committee is composed of a French-language services coordinator from each department and office and is chaired by the CEO of the Office of Acadian Affairs.

Under the leadership of the Office of Acadian Affairs, the French-language Services Coordinating Committee will identify and pursue joint initiatives and opportunities for increasing the level of French-language services available from the Government of Nova Scotia. Priority will be given to projects or initiatives that increase services available in French to youth, families, and communities including the development of infrastructure, and therefore contribute to the preservation and growth of the Acadian and francophone community.

The Office of Acadian Affairs encourages a coordinated approach in developing policies affecting all departments and offices, for example, working with the Public Service Commission to develop policies regarding the recruitment of bilingual employees or regarding French language training, and working with Communications Nova Scotia regarding communications guidelines.

The Office of Acadian Affairs also takes part in initiatives led by other departments and offices such as the Diversity Task Force of the Public Service Commission and the Community Development Advisory Group of the Office of Economic Development in order to ensure that the needs of the Acadian and francophone community are considered.

3. Intergovernmental relations

The Office of Acadian Affairs has developed relationships on interprovincial, national, and international levels in order to move forward with the delivery of French-language services by the Government of Nova Scotia and to contribute to the growth of its Acadian and francophone community.

The federal Department of Canadian Heritage is a key partner in the delivery of services in French by provinces with French-speaking populations living in minority situations. Through an agreement signed by Minister d'Entremont in December 2005 on behalf of Nova Scotia,

Canadian Heritage will be providing \$ 5.0 Million over four years (2005-2006 to 2008-2009) to help Nova Scotia provide French-language services to its Acadian and francophone population. A Strategic Plan has been developed which defines the objectives and the types of activities to be undertaken over the four years of the agreement.

The Office of Acadian Affairs has also developed a relationship with Secrétariat des affaires intergouvernementales (SAIC) of the province of Quebec. An Agreement of Cooperation and Exchange was signed between the two provinces in September 2002. This agreement encourages cooperation through French-language activities and exchanges in the areas of education, culture, communications, youth, the French language, health, economy, and tourism.

The Office of Acadian Affairs is also the lead on the Memorandum of Understanding with the state of Louisiana. Areas which could benefit from this M.O.U. include culture, tourism, heritage, economic development, energy, and education. Departments with an interest in developing a formal relationship with the State of Louisiana will produce an action plan to determine future steps.

The Office of Acadian Affairs participates in the Intergovernmental Network of Francophone Affairs (Réseau intergouvernemental des affaires francophones). This network of francophone affairs offices from all provinces and territories works on strategic projects aimed at increasing and promoting services in French from governments across Canada.

On the national and international scale, the Office of Acadian Affairs provides support to the Nova Scotia section of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, an organization of French-speaking parliamentarians.

The Office of Acadian Affairs will continue to pursue initiatives with other French speaking governments.

4. Citizen engagement by the Acadian and francophone community

The strength and solidarity of the Acadian and francophone community has been a key factor in the development of an environment where government services are available in French. The relationship which exists between government and the Acadian and francophone community must be nurtured.

Incorporated in October 1968, the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE) is the oldest provincial association serving Acadians in the province and it represents the interest of all Nova Scotia Acadians and French-speaking citizens. Its current structure ensures participation by 25 member organizations representing geographic regions, provincial organizations, and institutions. The members advise the provincial federation on the goals and priorities of the Acadian community. FANE has lobbied for many years on behalf of its members and French-speaking citizens.

Consideration of the needs of the Acadian and francophone community of Nova Scotia is key to all initiatives by the Office of Acadian Affairs. For example, the first strategic plan for the Office of Acadian Affairs, published in September 2004, was based on input from the community members on the Minister's Advisory Committee.

The Acadian and francophone community has also defined priority sectors for French-language services such as health and well-being. The Office of Acadian Affairs will work with government to enhance services available in French in the areas of health, health promotion and protection.

The Office of Acadian Affairs will continue to seek input from FANE and its members on the delivery of French-language services in all priority sectors.

The nearly 37,000² Nova Scotians who declare French is their mother tongue and a language they still understand are potential clients of French-language services. However, over 91,000³ Nova Scotians can speak French and must also be considered in the development of services.

Immigration may also increase the number of Nova Scotians desiring services in French. The Acadian and francophone community in Nova Scotia has recently embraced the concept of becoming a welcoming community for immigrants and it is actively pursuing activities related to attracting French-speaking immigrants. The availability of French-language services from the provincial government will be key in making the decision to choose Nova Scotia as their new home.

The Office of Acadian Affairs will continue to work with the community all the while encouraging the community to make their needs known to government. The Office will also encourage the community to get involved when citizen engagement opportunities are presented and will work to ensure government facilitates the participation of French-speaking individuals in public policy making.

H. Priorities

²2001 Census of Canada, Mother Tongue (34,025 French only, 2560 French and English)

³Ibid. Knowledge of Official Languages (90,265 French and English, 790 French only)

Core Business Area 1: *Reinforcing the legislative framework for French-language services*

Reinforcing the legislative framework is key to increasing government's capacity to offer French-language services. The Office of Acadian Affairs will work with government to ensure that departments and designated public service entities comply with the French-language Services Act.

Priority activities within this Core Business Area for 2006-2007 are:

- Lead a process for the development and implementation of regulations as required by the French-language Services Act. A special project negotiated under the Canada-Nova Agreement on French-language Services will provide resources for this project.
- Develop an accountability framework in order to clarify roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the process of developing French-language services.
- Actively participate in the government's annual business planning cycle to ensure that government takes into consideration the Acadian and francophone community's needs.
- Prepare an annual report on French-language services in order to inform the government and the Acadian and francophone community of progress made and results achieved.
- Define and formalize planning and reporting procedures on French-language services delivery.

Core Business Area 2: *Interdepartmental Relations*

The Office of Acadian Affairs views the process of developing French-language services as one of collaboration and cooperation. The Office of Acadian Affairs provides support services to departments and offices in order to help them develop and implement their French-language services. These support services include a translation service, French communications advice, policy interpretation, and funding assistance. The Office of Acadian Affairs can also help facilitate communications between the Acadian and francophone community and government.

Priority activities within this Core Business Area for 2006-2007 are:

- Expand and promote translation services offered to government by the Office of Acadian Affairs.
- Provide leadership and support to the French-language Services Coordinating committee so that the coordinators will be equipped and able to contribute to the development of French-language services in their respective departments and offices.
- Work with the Public Service Commission to increase the capacity of the public service to provide services in French through means such as recruitment, competency testing, language skill development, and making policy changes if needed. Services in both Official languages is a component of Nova Scotia's Corporate Human Resource Plan 2005-2010.
- Actively participate in government-wide initiatives to ensure the needs of the Acadians

and francophones of Nova Scotia are considered in the development of policy and the provision of services..

- Hold regular awareness meetings with ministers, senior officials, and government leaders, to inform them of the role of the Office of Acadian Affairs and its strategies for French-language services.

Core Business Area 3: Intergovernmental Relations

The Office of Acadian Affairs has developed relationships on interprovincial, national, and international levels in order to move forward with the delivery of French-language services by the Government of Nova Scotia and to contribute to the growth of its Acadian and francophone community.

Priority activities within this Core Business Area for 2006-2007 are:

- Administer the Canada/Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services ensuring that important French-language services are funded and developed.
- Expand the number of joint activities under the Cooperation and Exchange Agreement between the Government of Quebec and the Government of Nova Scotia.
- Contribute to the strategic planning undertaken by the Intergovernmental Network of Francophone Affairs / Réseau intergouvernemental des affaires francophones.
- Investigate partnerships with other provincial governments in respect to French-language services.
- Develop relationships with federal government departments and explore areas for cooperation.
- Explore opportunities for joint initiatives between the Province of Nova Scotia and the State of Louisiana via the Memorandum of Understanding.

Core Business Area 4: Citizen engagement by the Acadian and francophone community

The strength and solidarity of the Acadian and francophone community has been a key factor in the development of an environment where government services are available in French. The relationship which exists between government and the Acadian and francophone community must be nurtured.

Priority activities within this Core Business Area for 2006-2007 are:

- Develop and introduce a visible identity program for the active offer of French-language services by the public service.
- Ensure that the Acadian and francophone community needs are considered in the development of regulations for the French-language Services Act.
- Strengthen dialogue between government and the Acadian and francophone community

- of Nova Scotia.
- Support the development of relationships, partnerships, and joint initiatives amongst the various stakeholders in the community and in government.
 - Work to ensure that the planning for any citizen engagement process undertaken by the province considers the needs of French-speaking citizens.

I. Human Resource Strategy

While the Office Acadian Affairs has been part of the government since 1985, it was not until the proclamation of the French-language Services Act in 2004 that it received permanent status in the Public Service Act and was provided with additional resources for staffing and administration.

As of April 1, 2006, the Office of Acadian Affairs has five full-time bilingual employees. All five employees are women and the average age is just under 41.

Three additional positions will be filled in 2006-2007. A second full-time translator will allow the expansion of the translation services offered to government, a new senior policy analyst will allow the Office to provide additional advice to departments and offices, and a new secretary-receptionist will assist the C.E.O. and Executive Secretary with administrative duties.

Four positions are federally funded through the Canada/Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services, including the services of a communications advisor arranged through Communications Nova Scotia.

The Minister of Acadian Affairs currently has an Executive Assistant to assist him with Acadian Affairs related business.

All positions posted for the Office of Acadian Affairs have bilingualism (French and English) as a necessary qualification. Employees must be fluent in both official languages in order to answer to needs of the Acadian and francophone population of Nova Scotia and work within government to fulfil its mandate.

During 2005-2006, the Office of Acadian Affairs has undergone changes in senior management and structure. This, combined with the fact that the Office of Acadian Affairs is a relatively new government office, has left little time for human resources planning. This will be a priority for the Office of Acadian Affairs during the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

The ultimate goal of the Human Resources Strategy will be to contribute to the effectiveness of the Office of Acadian Affairs by supporting the efforts of the employees and fostering an environment that makes the office a preferred place to work.

Key elements of the human resources strategy will include:

- Filling vacant positions and succession management planning;
- Developing an orientation package for new employees;
- Conducting performance management appraisals based on business plan outcomes;
- Building leadership capacity through career planning and training; and
- Developing a health and safety program to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

J. Budget Context

Acadian Affairs			
	2005-2006 Estimate	2005-2006 Forecast	2006-2007 Estimate
	(\$ thousands)	(\$ thousands)	(\$ thousands)
Gross Expenses	1780	1837	2072
Net Expenses	641	641	642
Salaries and Employee Benefits	417	264	476
Gross Funded Staff (FTEs)	7.0	4.4	8.0
Net Funded Staff (FTEs)	4.0	1.5	4.0

K. Financial Management, Information Technology and Communications

Financial management:

A focus this year for the Office of Acadian Affairs will be to finalize and formalize the process whereby departments and other government entities can apply for funding under the Canada/Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services.

Information technology:

Special consideration is given to the fact that the Office operates primarily in French. Staff members require French keyboards and French versions of business software. In addition, special software is required for staff translators.

Additional computer equipment will be purchased as vacant positions are filled. Equipment will be upgraded as needed according to government's IT policies.

The Office of Acadian Affairs' website will be upgraded in 2006-2007. Communications Nova Scotia will be consulted to ensure compliance with the Brand Nova Scotia initiative.

Communications:

Communications activities play an important role in helping the Office of Acadian Affairs reach its strategic goals.

The communications work plan includes:

- Creating increased awareness within government of the Office's role as a central support agency;
- Creating increased awareness within the Acadian and francophone community of government's progress in delivering French-language services and communicating the availability of such new services, through joint news releases, advertising, or other promotional means;
- Increasing awareness of Acadian and francophone issues within government; and
- Assisting other departments in improving French-language services plans by producing a framework document.

L. Performance Measures by Core Business Area

Performance Measures				
Core Business Area 1 - Reinforcing the legislative framework for French-language services				
OUTCOME (immediate or inter- mediate)	MEASURE	DATA Base Year	TARGET Year	Strategic Actions to achieve target
Government understands the scope of French-language services provided by departments and offices and the progress made in enhancing the availability of French-language services.	Inventory of French-language services.	The annual report for 2005-2006 will be baseline inventory.	First report due in 2006-2007 and then annually thereafter	Publish annual report with baseline information and progress to-date.

Performance Measures

Core Business Area 2 - Interdepartmental Relations

OUTCOME (immediate or inter- mediate)	MEASURE	DATA Base Year	TARGET Year	Strategic Actions to achieve target
More government information is available in French	# of words translated # of departments using services	2005-06 Approx 400,000 words translated	2006-2007 800,000 words	- expand translation service - promote translation service
Increased government capacity to offer services in French due to improved French-language skills of public servants	# of public servants who have taken French classes	2005-2006 150 participants	2006-2007 200 participants	- assist PSC in developing RFP for delivery of French-language training - promote available training
Departments and offices consider the needs of the Acadian and francophone community in the development of programs, policies, services.	Policies, programs or services developed including projects funded by Canada/ Nova Scotia Agreement on French-language Services	The annual report for 2005-2006 will be baseline inventory of French-language services available	First report due in 2006-2007 and then annually thereafter	- participate in government-wide initiatives - make presentations to departments to promote the strategic plan for French-language services - promote the availability of services available from the Office of Acadian Affairs

Performance Measures

Core Business Area 3 - Intergovernmental Relations

OUTCOME (immediate or inter- mediate)	MEASURE	DATA Base Year	TARGET Year	Strategic Actions to achieve target
Nova Scotia gains from knowledge and expertise of Québec government	# of departments making use of Cooperation and Exchanges Agreement with Québec	2005-2006 - one department (Education) making use of Agreement	2006-2007 increase the number of departments or offices collaborating with Quebec	- Identify common initiatives - Exploratory mission to Québec
Nova Scotia and Louisiana benefit from the MOU	Areas of joint cooperation are defined in action plan	This is a new initiative in 2006-2007	2006-2007 Identification of areas of common interest	- Interdepartmental meetings and discussion - Signing of MOU - Louisiana/Nova Scotia joint committee meeting

Performance Measures

Core Business Area 4 - Citizen engagement of the Acadian and francophone community

OUTCOME (immediate or inter- mediate)	MEASURE	DATA Base Year	TARGET Year	Strategic Actions to achieve target
The Acadian and francophone community has the opportunity to make its needs and opinions known to government	# of government initiatives in which Acadian and francophone community provides input	In 2005-2006, the Acadian and francophone community engaged in four major initiatives - early learning and childcare, immigration strategy, consultation on heritage, and French-language services.	To engage Acadian and francophone community in important initiatives in 2006-2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote citizen engagement opportunities - Develop a model for consulting Acadian and francophone community - Facilitate opportunities for Acadian and francophones to participate in government consultations - Actively participate in community forums or meetings where appropriate