



Government of the Northwest Territories  
Response to Recommendations from the

*Evaluation of Strategic Plan  
on French Language Communications  
and Services*

Government of  
Northwest Territories

## INTRODUCTION

In 1984, the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) adopted the *Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories* (OLA). The OLA recognizes official language rights in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and provides official language status to English, French, and nine Indigenous languages of the NWT.

Following complaints from the *Fédération franco-ténoise* (FFT) in October 2005, a trial was held at the Supreme Court of the NWT regarding French languages services in the NWT. In April 2006, Madame Justice M.T. Moreau of the Supreme Court of the NWT issued a ruling on the case. The Court's decision concluded that the OLA requires most GNWT institutions to provide services to the public in French. Madame Justice M.T. Moreau also issued several orders with which the GNWT and the Legislative Assembly must comply.

In 2006, the GNWT appealed the Supreme Court ruling. The NWT Court of Appeal rendered its decision in 2008. In 2008, the GNWT and FFT filed applications for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC). On March 5, 2009, the SCC decided that it would not hear the appeal of the GNWT and the FFT.

As a result of the SCC's decision, the GNWT started the implementation of the orders that were issued by Justice M.T. Moreau, as modified by the NWT Court of Appeal which included the drafting of a comprehensive implementation plan for French language communications and services under the OLA in all government institutions.

In 2010, the GNWT and the FFT established the Comprehensive Plan Consultation and Co-operation Committee (the Committee). The mandate of the Committee is to facilitate consultation with the community on the GNWT's drafting, implementation, administration and promotion of a strategic plan. Terms of Reference were signed by both parties.

The GNWT developed the GNWT Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services (Strategic Plan) as a means to improve communications and services delivery to the public in French across the Government, including all GNWT institutions as outlined in the Government Institution Regulations. The Plan outlines three broad frameworks for implementation, namely the legislative and regulatory framework, the administrative framework, and the operational framework. The Strategic Plan was approved by the Cabinet in 2012. Since 2012, the Committee has focused their meetings on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The operational framework calls for the development of multi-year and annual plans as well as processes for developing, approving, implementing and monitoring the plans. The legislative and regulatory framework is in place under the existing OLA. Regulations around "significant demand" and "nature of the office" were developed and approved by the GNWT in 2013. Also in 2013, the GNWT approved the Standards for French Communications and Services (the Standards) after consulting with the FFT, providing a further guide to departments and institutions

designated under the Government Institution Regulations outlining expectations on minimum requirements and consistent standards across the GNWT.

The Strategic Plan indicates the quality and adequacy of Government policies, plans and actions with respect to French language communications and services and progress towards planned goals and objectives were required to be evaluated during the final year of the Plan (2017-2018). The results of the evaluation are required to be made public. The Strategic Plan also included the requirement for systematic audits of French language communications and services.

In 2015, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat developed a Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability (MEA) Plan for the Strategic Plan that directed the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. The MEA Plan's purpose was twofold. First, the MEA Plan established a strong accountability structure between funding bodies and recipients. The accountability requirements of the GNWT are fulfilled

within the data collection and reporting guidelines of the MEA Plan. Second, the MEA Plan provided a platform for the GNWT to identify and showcase successes in French language communications and services. Ultimately, the MEA Plan contributed to the on-going improvement of French language services in the NWT.

In 2016, the GNWT engaged a firm to conduct a stakeholder assessment with Francophone community representatives to identify and prioritize opportunities for improvement to further enhance French programs and services. The report **GNWT French Stakeholder Assessment- March 7, 2016** was completed in March 2016.

As of the 2017-2018 fiscal year, all GNWT Departments, the Legislative Assembly, boards and agencies (including School Authorities and Aurora College) have developed their multi-year (5 year) Operating Plans to implement the Strategic Plan.

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

### **1. How effective were leaders at all levels of the GNWT in promoting and supporting the vision of the Strategic Plan throughout their government institutions?**

- While strong leadership was provided to employees by leaders at all levels, effectiveness could be improved in the areas of strengthening the role of FLSCs and enhancing partnerships with service providers.

### **2. How strong is the capacity of the GNWT to implement the Strategic Plan?**

- There is consensus that French language communications and services capacity has increased since the implementation of the Strategic Plan. There is a high employee satisfaction rate with the Secretariat. However, capacity is constrained due to the factors listed above.

### **3. How valuable was the Strategic Plan to the Francophone community?**

- There has been significant improvement in the delivery of French language Communications and services since the development of the Strategic Plan. However, there are still variations in departmental performance that would be best resolved by the strategic allocation of resources.

### **4. To what extent has the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability (MEA) plan been implemented as intended?**

- The GNWT's monitoring, evaluation and reporting capacity is limited and the MEA has only been partially implemented.

## Evaluation of GNWT's implementation of its five-year Strategic Plan on FLCS

### Question #1: How effective were leaders at all levels of the GNWT in promoting and supporting the vision of the Strategic Plan throughout their government institutions?

Recommendation	Response
The GNWT should strengthen and follow job descriptions for FLSCs to permit FLSCs to enhance their roles in development and implementation of French language communications and services.	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation; however, individual departments, boards and agencies are responsible for creating and updating their job descriptions.</p> <p>Job descriptions are statements of fact describing the scope, responsibilities and organizational relationships of a job. It is intended to provide a clear picture of the position's role within the organization. There is not a standard FLSC job description; rather, they are specific to the department, board or agency. However, there is consensus among departments that FLSC job descriptions should include visiting points of public service.</p>
FLCS should be an agenda item for departments' senior management meetings at least quarterly. The coordinators should be invited to attend and participate in these meetings.	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation, and agrees that departments' senior management meetings should include French Language Communications and Services as an agenda item on a regular basis. One suggestion received is to schedule updates to senior management so they coincide with the quarterly meetings of the French Language Services Coordinating Committee.</p>
<p>The GNWT should increase the number of working partnerships on FLCS "program design and actual program delivery" with service providers including non-governmental organizations and the private sector. This should be done through a competitive process.</p> <p>More time should be allocated to coordinators to engage and listen to the Francophone community and visit points of service.</p>	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation, and will continue to work with the community whenever possible. The GNWT will continue to follow procurement practices for all contracts.</p> <p>The GNWT currently has several partnerships with the Francophone community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDÉTNO</li> <li>• Réseau TNO Santé en français</li> <li>• Collège francophone nordique</li> </ul>

## Evaluation of GNWT's implementation of its five-year Strategic Plan on FLCS

### Question #2: How strong is the capacity of the GNWT to implement the Strategic Plan?

Recommendation	Response
The Secretariat should conduct a comprehensive review and revision of the Standards to reduce the lack of clarity.	<p><b>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation,</b> and is conducting a comprehensive review and revision of the Standards which will be complete in winter 2018-2019.</p>
The GNWT should offer awareness training for GNWT employees to demonstrate the importance of French language services within the GNWT.	<p><b>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</b></p> <p>The Department of Finance will launch training on Official Languages for new GNWT employees as part of the onboarding training package. This online module will provide an overview of the Official Languages Act of the Northwest Territories and identify how it will affect them as employees of the GNWT.</p>
GNWT should clarify the bilingual bonus policy and communicate this policy to all staff.	<p><b>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</b></p> <p>The Bilingual Designation Policy and Guidelines have been drafted and will be launched during 2018-2019 fiscal year. The policy aims to assist Deputy Heads and Senior Managers to designate positions within the public service as bilingual required; evaluate and assess employee language proficiency; and determine whether a position should be assigned a bilingual preferred status.</p>
<p>GNWT should strengthen its bilingual bonus program, to provide the bonus to all bilingual staff as opposed to staff serving points of service. This should serve to strengthen the culture of French bilingualism in NWT.</p> <p>Recognizing cost constraints, GNWT may explore providing the bonus to all bilingual staff as part of future funding agreements with the Government of Canada, both in relation to funding for</p>	<p><b>The GNWT does not agree with this recommendation.</b></p> <p>The bilingual bonus is granted as per article 24.12 of the Collective Agreement with the Union of Northern Workers. Article 24.12 provides that “Employees, other than employees assigned to duties of translation and interpretation in their job descriptions, who are required by the Employer to use two or more of the official languages of the Northwest Territories shall receive a bilingual bonus of \$1,200.”</p> <p>The GNWT recognizes the importance of strengthening the culture of French bilingualism in the NWT; however, staff should actually, or potentially, be providing a service in French to receive the bonus.</p>

Francophone and Aboriginal languages.	
Recommendation	Response
The GNWT should explore options to increase French training offerings and align the length of training with government institutions in other jurisdictions, such as the Government of Canada.	<p><b>The GNWT does not agree with this recommendation.</b></p> <p>The length of language training is considered on a case by case basis. Training is based on the needs of employees and operational requirements of departments. The GNWT will ensure linguistic capacities of its workforce are adequate to meet its commitments in regard to French communications and services.</p>
Include provisions related to advertising in the overall review of the Standards and consult the Francophone community in this regard.	<p><b>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation,</b> and is conducting a comprehensive review and revision of the Standards which will be complete in winter 2018-2019.</p>

## Evaluation of GNWT's implementation of its five-year Strategic Plan on FLCS

### Question #3: How valuable was the Strategic Plan to the Francophone community?

Recommendation	Response
GNWT should implement ongoing monitoring of self-reported statistics to promote validity and accuracy.	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Tools need to be provided to departments so they can clearly understand what statistics they need to be capturing. This should be consistent across the GNWT to obtain meaningful data. The Secretariat's new monitoring and evaluation position will be staffed in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The requirements for monitoring will be reviewed at that time.</p> <p>The GNWT will complete the update of the GNWT Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services. In addition, ECE will plan, develop, implement and monitor a comprehensive framework for quality and risk management related to GNWT French language communications and service.</p>
The GNWT should seek to establish a consensus with the Francophone community to allocate GNWT's limited resources to key sectors that matter most to the Francophone community, such as health, transportation, justice and housing.	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation in principle; however, this would not be in compliance with the <i>Official Languages Act</i> or the Standards as they are currently written.</p> <p>The GNWT will engage the francophone community in a priority setting exercise regarding the provision of services in French.</p>
The GNWT should revise the FLSC job description to include responsibility for visiting points of service to observe service availability and provide feedback to senior management.	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation; however, individual departments, boards and agencies are responsible for creating and updating their job descriptions.</p> <p>Job descriptions are statements of fact describing the scope, responsibilities and organizational relationships of a job. It is intended to provide a clear picture of the position's role within the organization. There is not a standard FLSC job description rather they are specific to the department, board or agency. However, there is consensus among departments that FLSC job descriptions should include visiting points of public service.</p>

Recommendation	Response
The GNWT should search for additional mechanisms to solicit client feedback.	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Launched in early 2018, <i>À Votre Avis</i> is an online mechanism meant to solicit feedback on the quality and availability of GNWT services in French. The Secretariat could brainstorm with the community, the FLSCC and Corporate Communications regarding additional mechanisms/channels to promote the availability, intent and importance of the feedback process.</p> <p>HSS provides the Patient Satisfaction Survey and the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire in both French and English. HSS and the NTHSSA are actively seeking ways to improve mechanisms to solicit client feedback.</p>
The GNWT should request an annual briefing with the Official Language Commissioner to collaborate on areas of improvement for French language communications and services.	<p>The Official Languages Commissioner is an independent officer reporting to the Legislative Assembly.</p> <p>The GNWT and the Secretariat remain open to a robust working relationship with the Language Commissioner where appropriate.</p>

## Evaluation of GNWT's implementation of its five-year Strategic Plan on FLCS

### Question #4: To what extent has the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability (MEA) plan been implemented as intended?

Recommendation	Response
<p>Prior to the development of the new MEA Plan, the GNWT should conduct a strategic review to examine how the MEA process can function more effectively. This process should consider GNWT's limited MEA capacity. The review should also include examination of the frequency of reporting, improvement of existing tools, such as monitoring forms, and incentives to promote robust reporting by departments.</p>	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>The MEA Specialist position will be integral to reviewing the process in order to determine next steps for the monitoring and evaluation of French Language Communications and Services.</p>
<p>As the GNWT increase its overall monitoring and evaluation capacity, it should integrate French language communications and services into its operational processes.</p>	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p>
<p>The GNWT should clarify the FLSC role of collecting data and preparing program updates and reports. The GNWT should staff the MEA Specialist position.</p>	<p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>The Secretariat is currently working on a job description for the MEA Specialist Position, and is aiming to fill the position within the 2018-2019 fiscal year. This position will be integral to assisting FLSC in the collection of data.</p>