



***Strategic Plan
on French Language
Communications
and Services
2018-2023***

Government of
Northwest Territories

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

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French

Kīspin ki nitawihitīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

Tłıç hq yatı k'èè, Dı wegodi newq dè, gots'o gonede.

Tłıç hq

ʔerihit'ís Dēne Sųłiné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theʔą ʔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yółtı.

Chipewyan

Edı gondı dehgáh got'ıę zhatıé k'ée, edat'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahıı.

South Slavey

K'áhshó got'ın e xədə k'é hederı ʔedıł tı'é yerıniwę nıd é dúle.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ijāhch'uu zhit yinothān jı', diits'āt ginohkhii.

Gwich'in

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqłuta.

Inuvialuktun

Ćᑲᑦᑲ ᑎᑎᑦᑲᑦᑲ ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ ᑲᑲᑲᑲᑲ.

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

Indigenous Languages and Education Secretariat: 867-767-9346

Francophone Affairs Secretariat: 867-767-9343

MINISTER'S MESSAGE



Language and culture enrich the very fabric of our northern society. Our efforts with our language communities and partners are based on improving service standards, and preserving and revitalizing our official languages for future generations.

French is an Official Language in the Northwest Territories and the Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes the Francophone language community as an important component of Northwest Territories society and contributor to its social, economic and cultural development.

The capacity of the Government of the Northwest Territories to provide official languages services has evolved considerably over the past few years. With cooperation and ongoing partnerships with French language groups, the government continually improves its capacity to develop and deliver services to the French language community.

This Strategic Plan builds on the successes of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services, as well as significant work undertaken with the Francophone community over the past five years and its implementation will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of French-speaking residents, workers and visitors in the NWT.

I would like to thank the numerous organizations and individuals who contributed to the success of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, and look forward to working together over the next five years to ensure the continued improvement of the GNWT's French language communications and services.

I am pleased to release the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services.

Thank you,

Honourable Caroline Cochrane
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

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PART A: CONTEXT

French is an official language of the Northwest Territories (NWT), and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) recognizes the Francophone community as an important component of the NWT society and contributor to its social, economic and cultural development. In recognition of this, and that official languages have equality of status and equal rights and privileges, the GNWT created the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan to guide government institutions in the development, offer and provision of French language services and communications to the Francophone community.

In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the GNWT undertook an evaluation and audit of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan. Recommendations from the resulting reports have been incorporated into this document to orient the GNWT's work on French language communications and services from 2018-2023. Significant progress was made over the past five years, but there is still more to be done. Over the next five years, there will be a renewed focus on accountability, including monitoring and evaluation, as well as engagement with the Francophone community to further improve French language communications and services.

PART B: LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, AND MEASURES

EXISTING LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

The NWT *Official Languages Act* (OLA) is the base upon which the *2018-2023 Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services* (2018-2023 Strategic Plan) rests.

The *Government Institution Regulations* lists the agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, offices, and other bodies designated as government institutions for purposes of the OLA. “Government institution” means a department or ministry of the GNWT, the Office of the Legislative Assembly, and an agency, board, commission, corporation, office or other body designated in the *Government Institution Regulations*.

As stated in subsection 11(1) of the OLA:

“Any member of the public in the Northwest Territories has the right to communicate with, and to receive available services from, any head or central office of a government institution in English or French, and has the same right with respect to any other office of that institution where

- (a) there is a significant demand for communications with and services from the office in that language; or
- (b) it is reasonable, given the nature of the office, that communications with and services from it be available in both English and French.”

Within the *Government Institution Regulations*, the concepts of significant demand and nature of office, with regard to French language communications and services, are defined below.

Significant Demand

For the purposes of the OLA, the following communities are considered to represent “significant demand” for communications and services in French:

- Yellowknife
- Hay River
- Fort Smith
- Inuvik

The communities are identified on the basis of certain favourable criteria or indicators of the vitality of the French language—such as statistics based on a combination of factors, including mother tongue, home language and ability to speak French, and/or the existence of French-language institutions (e.g., a French charter school)—that support the concept of a community living in French.

Nature of Office

For the purposes of the OLA, the “nature of office” clause is triggered when the nature of an office of a government institution is such that it is reasonable that communications and services from that office be available in both English and French if the office:

- (a) generally offers services to the public; and
- (b) in respect to those services, is a central service point or a referral centre providing services to the public for the whole of the NWT.

PART C: ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

EXISTING ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

Government Institutions Concerned

- As per regulations

Government Institution Offices Concerned

- Head and central offices
- Offices impacted by the “significant demand” or “nature of office” criteria

Guidelines on French Language Communications and Services

The Guidelines on French Language Communications and Services (Guidelines) are designed to facilitate the application of the OLA and apply to all government institutions.

In the Guidelines:

- Bilingual refers to French and English.
- Minister Responsible for the Official Languages Act (Minister Responsible for the OLA) implies, “Minister in charge of French language communications and services.”

Administrative Structures

1. The Francophone Affairs Secretariat, with the appropriate authority and resources to fulfill the roles and responsibilities stipulated in Guideline 1.
2. French Language Services Coordinating Committee stipulated in Guideline 1.
3. French Language Services Coordinators in place that have the appropriate authority and resources to carry out their duties as per Guideline 1.
4. Bilingual Human Resources Advisor position stipulated in Guideline 1.
5. Full-time French Language Services Coordinators at the Departments of Infrastructure, Justice, and Health and Social Services.

MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED

1. Staff the French Language Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor position, located in the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.
2. Develop and implement a new monitoring, evaluation and accountability framework.
3. Create a systematic process for recruiting bilingual personnel (professional and other), particularly in the health area: physicians, nurses, technicians and pharmacists.
4. Develop a system for evaluating the competency of French interpreters in the health area based on objective standards, including mandatory training in medical terminology.

PART D: GUIDELINES ON FRENCH LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIONS AND SERVICES

GUIDELINE 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. *Executive Council*

The Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly play an oversight role in the implementation and administration of the OLA.

2. *Minister Responsible for the OLA*

The Minister Responsible for the OLA will:

- develop appropriate partnerships with the Francophone community and formally meet with that community at least once each year to ensure that the GNWT is aware of the Francophone community's needs and priorities;
- recommend guidelines and strategies to the Executive Council for government institutions respecting plans, programs, policies, priorities, evaluations, and reporting on French language communications and services; and,
- respond to public concerns respecting the provision and quality of French language programs and services.

3. *Other Ministers*

Individual Ministers will:

- provide for French language communications and services in their assigned government institutions per the OLA, related regulations and the Guidelines;
- ensure that operating plans, programs and reports respecting French language communications and services are prepared for assigned government institutions in accordance with the Guidelines; and,
- with the Minister Responsible for the OLA, respond to public concerns respecting the quality of French language communications and services provided by government institutions for which the Minister is responsible.

4. *Department of Finance*

The Department will:

- provide advice and expertise in addressing bilingual human resource requirements through the human resource planning process, including recruitment, retention and French language assessment and training strategies;

- maintain an inventory and appropriate profile of the bilingual human resources within the public service;
- maintain French language competency requirement profiles for positions designated as bilingual required and bilingual preferred, and for the bilingual personnel on designated bilingual teams;
- create a systematic process for recruiting bilingual personnel (professional and other);
- work with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and the French Language Services Coordinators to perform the above tasks; and,
- have a Bilingual Human Resources Advisor to help carry out the above and related functions.

5. Department of Health and Social Services

The Department will:

- develop a systematic process for recruiting bilingual personnel (professional and other) including, in the health area: physicians, nurses, technicians and pharmacists; and
- develop a plan to objectively evaluate the competency of interpreters in health services and provide mandatory training in medical terminology.

6. Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs

Cabinet Communications will:

- work with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat on areas of shared interest regarding French language communications, such as the translation of news releases and media advisories.

Corporate Communications will:

- work with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat on areas of shared interest regarding French language communications, such as social media, advertising, publishing, visual identity, design, evaluation, and reporting.

7. Deputy Heads

Deputy Heads of government institutions will:

- support their Minister in carrying out the Minister's duties related to these Guidelines and the legislative framework;
- provide clear direction within their area of jurisdiction regarding French language communications and services as per the OLA and Guidelines;
- designate a French Language Services Coordinator to assist and advise the Deputy Head on the implementation of these Guidelines;
- where appropriate, engage in consultation with Francophone community organizations respecting the provision of services in French by the government institutions for which their Minister is responsible; and,
- include French language communications and services as an agenda item for their government institution's senior management meetings at least quarterly.

8. Francophone Affairs Secretariat

The Francophone Affairs Secretariat's responsibilities are to:

- provide support and advice to the Minister Responsible for the OLA in carrying out the Minister's related duties;
- offer advice, tools and support to government institutions for the purpose of developing plans on French language communications and services and adopting or providing programs, policies and services that reflect the needs of the Francophone community;
- develop and support the implementation of a new monitoring, evaluation and accountability framework;
- develop orientation programs for French Language Services Coordinators and, in cooperation with these Coordinators, for employees of government institutions with respect to their obligations under the OLA and Guidelines;
- liaise with the Francophone community on a regular and ongoing basis regarding the provision of French language communications and services;
- serve as a central support agency for government institutions for French language communications and services and provide interpretations of the Guidelines regarding such communications and services;
- review the availability and quality of French language communications and services and, as required, make recommendations for their improvement to the Minister Responsible for the OLA;
- coordinate the provision of French translation services government-wide;
- support the Department of Health and Social Services in the planning, provision, and evaluation of interpretation services in the health field;
- ensure that formal complaints are properly recorded and that the appropriate follow-up is completed, and work with the French Language Services Coordinators as required on resolving problems identified via complaints;
- ensure the systematic audit of French language communications and services applicable to all government institutions;
- manage Services TNO;
- provide support to the Minister Responsible for the OLA at the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie;
- negotiate, manage and administer any GNWT agreements with the Government of Canada or with provincial/territorial governments regarding French language communications and services in accordance with direction provided by the Executive Council and the Minister Responsible for the OLA;
- chair and call regular meetings of the French Language Services Coordinating Committee; and,
- carry out any other function assigned by the Minister Responsible for the OLA.

9. French Language Services Coordinating Committee

The French Language Services Coordinating Committee is comprised of the French Language Services Coordinators designated by the Deputy Head of each government institution and is chaired by the Executive Director of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

The Committee's responsibilities are to:

- provide ongoing feedback and advice to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat on the content and implementation of these Guidelines;
- make recommendations to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat on issues and areas of importance to focus on during audits of French language communications and services;
- review and assess the consistency of practice among government institutions respecting these Guidelines;
- make recommendations, through the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, to the respective Deputy Heads, and, as appropriate, the responsible Minister;
- act as a forum to exchange ideas as well as discuss common issues and responses respecting communications and services in French; and,
- hold quarterly meetings to which community representatives may be invited.

10. French Language Services Coordinators

The general responsibility of the French Language Services Coordinators is to champion and coordinate the provision of quality French language communications and services by their respective government institution.

French Language Services Coordinators are, preferably:

- fluently bilingual, especially in the government institutions that offer several front-line services;
- very familiar with the programs and services of their government institution;
- granted access to senior officers or managers within their government institution;
- full-time dedicated positions in government institutions that offer several front-line services;
- possibly serving several smaller government institutions in a shared position; and,
- able to communicate with their Deputy Head, either directly or through their director, to assist and advise them on matters pertaining to French language communications and services.

The responsibilities of a French Language Services Coordinator are to:

- assist the senior officials of their government institution in the planning and implementation of French language communications and services, including providing updates for senior management meetings;
- work with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat regarding the development of plans and strategies for an effective delivery and active offer of French language services;
- assist senior officials to ensure their government institution has the necessary and appropriate human resources to deliver French language services in accordance with its operating plan. This includes participating in the selection of positions or teams to be designated as bilingual required

or bilingual preferred, helping to determine the language competency requirements for each designated position or team, and assisting in the recruitment of qualified bilingual staff;

- ensure the appropriate orientation and training of all government institution staff regarding their obligations under the OLA and Guidelines with a focus on those staff providing front-line services and working in communications;
- visit points of public service to run through service scenarios with staff and offer additional training and/or resources as required;
- ensure that communications with the general public conform to these Guidelines;
- support the development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation initiatives aimed at assessing and reporting on progress and results in relation to the intended purposes of the OLA and of these Guidelines;
- ensure timely and accurate reporting required pursuant to these Guidelines;
- assess any proposed changes to programs and services in terms of their impact on the implementation of French language communications and services and coordinate the planning and incorporation of measures to ensure that such changes meet or enhance the extent and quality of the communications and services affected;
- act as a resource in interaction and consultation with the Francophone community;
- follow up on any complaints received regarding the government institution's French language communications and services;
- participate in the meetings of the French Language Services Coordinating Committee;
- maintain a list of bilingual staff and provide advice to the Deputy Head regarding application of the Bilingual Bonus; and,
- maintain an inventory of all points of French language services delivery for their respective government institution.

11. Key Units and Staff

Within each government institution and within units responsible for certain centralized systems and operations of the GNWT, there are individuals or groups that can play important roles in the development, implementation and evaluation of French language communications and services. This section underlines some of their roles and responsibilities.

Divisional Directors and Program Managers are responsible for:

- integrating French language requirements into planning processes, program and service delivery, communications, human resources planning and development, monitoring and evaluating initiatives, reporting, budgetary planning as well as policy development; and,
- helping resolve shortcomings in the delivery of French language communications and services.

Communications Staff are responsible for:

- assisting and advising the appropriate members of their government institution in the development and execution of quality communications in French with due regard to the Guidelines.

Directors/Managers of Finance are responsible for:

- providing guidance on the identification of resources to support the provision of French language communications and services and ensuring that French language requirements have been appropriately considered by the organization in the preparation of the budget.

12. Bilingual Service Providers, Bilingual Bonus Employees and Non-Bilingual Front-Line Staff

Staff in positions designated as bilingual required or bilingual preferred, staff on designated bilingual teams, non-bilingual staff working with them, and employees receiving the bilingual bonus are responsible for:

- being familiar with the Guidelines, their obligations and the appropriate processes and methods regarding the effective delivery or active offer of their services in French; and
- being sensitive to the importance of their key roles in the implementation of the OLA and related policies and guidelines, and in the public's assessment of the effectiveness of that implementation.

Non-bilingual front-line staff will:

- provide the proper responses to French language inquiries from the public; and
- work with their government institution's French Language Services Coordinator to understand their role in offering service to the French-speaking public.

GUIDELINE 2: SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Philosophy

The GNWT believes that its communications, programs, and services should be available or accessible in French throughout the NWT through appropriate and practical methods that are adapted to the particular context and needs of the Francophone community. With this in mind, the GNWT's objective is the effective delivery of French language services and the simultaneous publication of communications in French and English.

GUIDELINE 2(a) SERVICES

Effective Delivery

Effective service delivery results from a set of measures taken to ensure that French language services, whether provided by oral, written or electronic methods, are evident, readily available, and easily accessible to the general public.

The availability of French language services is made evident by:

- using active offer signage to that effect;
- displaying French language and/or bilingual materials in public reception areas;
- using bilingual greetings in person, on the telephone or on telephone messages for callers where French language services are available; and,
- ensuring access to information in French on the government institution's websites.

French language services are made readily available through:

- having bilingual personnel at points of direct service to the public;
- using referral systems to facilitate easy access to bilingual personnel or an interpretation service upon first contact between a French-speaking client and a non-French-speaking employee;
- using the appropriate bilingual publication format for public information and usage materials; and,
- presenting materials in both languages in display areas and on websites.

Access to service in French is facilitated by ensuring that mechanisms, such as those listed below, are in place to provide service in French in locations where French-speaking clients will be at ease using said service.

- Single window service centres, such as Services TNO
- Dedicated telephone lines
- Automated self-service telephone and online options allowing clients to select the language of service

Active Offer

The effective delivery of French language services will often involve the active offer.

An active offer is a greeting that informs the public that they may communicate in either French or English when requesting a service from the GNWT. Its purpose is to ensure that an individual feels comfortable expressing themselves in either language. An active offer can take the form of a sign, personal greeting, or message.

In contexts where urgent or highly confidential matters are likely to arise, the client should feel confident accessing the required service or in knowing it is available due to the active offer.

Immediate Service, Referral Service and/or Direct Service

When the service sought by a member of the public involves urgent or highly confidential matters, they are entitled to immediate service in French. In this case, the service should be available without the interposition of a third-party interpreter, especially when health-related matters are concerned.

When urgency or confidentiality is not immediately engaged, there is greater flexibility in determining how to provide services in French. For example, while a member of the public is entitled to ask in French for a service mandated by the OLA, the front-line employee need not be bilingual. Rather, the employee should have ready access to a person who can respond to the request in French.

This can be accomplished by using a referral system to access a bilingual employee in the same office or in another location. In some circumstances, the service provider may not be physically located at the first point of contact but provides the service over the phone, through email, video conferencing, or other online service mechanisms.

The orientation and training of staff are essential to ensuring that all employees play an appropriate role in the provision of services in French. The referral system is an effective means by which employees, unable to provide an adequate service in French in person or over the telephone, use a predetermined network of bilingual employees to respond promptly to the communication in French.

Taking effective service delivery and active offer into consideration, program or service planners and providers will strive to employ direct service measures. Direct service means the actual service provider is able to provide the service in French in a manner comparable to the service offered in English.

Interpretation Service

The GNWT delivers its program and services throughout a territory of over one million square kilometres populated by just over forty thousand people. This expansive operating area makes it challenging for the GNWT to provide consistent, quality services in every community. In many locations, there is a single person or very small team providing any particular service, and staff turnover and recruitment difficulties can result in temporary interruptions in service availability in all languages.

The GNWT will strive to fill designated service positions with bilingual staff, but this may not always be possible. It may become necessary to fill key program and service positions with unilingual staff simply to ensure the availability of a critical service. In these temporary situations, French language services may need to be provided through interpretation. When this occurs, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat will be notified of the situation and of the plan of action to address it.

Where circumstances require programs and services to be provided through interpretation, the interpretation service shall be promptly available and of excellent quality. This means there should be no undue delay in securing and making available a suitable interpreter, and that the interpreter shall be fully fluent in both English and French.

The competency of interpreters in health services will be evaluated based on objective standards, and mandatory training in medical terminology will be provided. This will require that forethought and planning go into the provision of interpretation services and that a formal resourced interpretation plan be prepared and implemented as required. This resourced interpretation plan shall be the responsibility of the Department of Health and Social Services, in collaboration with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

GUIDELINE 2(b) COMMUNICATIONS

The GNWT Standards on French Language Communications and Services (Standards) were established to guide government institutions in the application of this Guideline. The Standards apply where the criteria for significant demand, nature of the office, and head or central office are met.

Where there is ambiguity around how to apply the Standards, French Language Services Coordinators should seek the advice of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

In line with the OLA, where a written instrument is intended for notice to or use by the public, it shall be translated and made available in English and French .

By way of further guidance, the following is an illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of written instruments that require translation and simultaneous publication in French and English:

- Any paid notice, advertisement or insert in a newspaper, periodical, radio broadcast or on television (e.g., tender or proposal calls, job advertisements, proclamations, meeting or hearing notices, program and service announcements, promotional inserts, public education messages, commercials, etc.);
- Public Health and Emergency Measures Advisories;
- Annual reports, action plans and strategies;
- Program and service application or registration forms and documents (e.g. student financial assistance, land lease documents, tax filings, health care forms, corporate registry forms);
- All public signage (e.g., highway signs unless using universal pictograms, parks and tourism signs, public project signage such as those for construction projects, building signage (exterior and interior), etc.);
- Certificates, permits, and licences;
- Training manuals and materials intended to educate the public;
- Brochures and promotional material intended to inform, educate or instruct the public;
- Websites intended to inform, educate or instruct the public; and,
- Social media posts.

Correspondence

All correspondence received from the public in French shall be answered in French.

Correspondence initiated by a government institution and directed to a member of the public whose preferred official language of communication is unknown will include a statement requesting that the recipient indicate their preferred official language for future communications. Subsequent correspondence by the government institution with that individual will respect the indicated preference.

Tender and Proposal Calls

All public advertisement of tender and proposal calls shall be published in English and French on the GNWT's contract event opportunities website. When it is advertised in English in a territorial newspaper, it shall be advertised in French in a French language newspaper. Actual tender and proposal documents (e.g., detailed and technical specifications and drawings) would not normally require translation unless specific circumstances made it reasonable and desirable to do so. The advice of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat should be sought in these situations.

Websites

The contents of most GNWT websites are considered written notices to the public and shall be translated and posted in both French and English. See the Standards and the GNWT's Consistent User Experience for more information.

Job Postings

Job postings shall be posted in French and English on the GNWT's career opportunities website. When a job posting is advertised in English in a territorial newspaper, it shall be advertised in French in a French language newspaper.

Public Hearings and Meetings

Public hearings and other types of engagement organized by a government institution and held to review and make a determination on a given matter of general public interest must take into account the need for French language communications and services, whether admission to the meeting is general or restricted. This is especially true for meetings seeking public opinion regarding major changes to legislation, regulations or policy or regarding initiatives that could have a major impact on the Francophone community.

This applies for the various aspects of the hearings or meetings:

- General public notification
- Registration of presenters, if applicable
- Reception of members of the public attending the hearings or meetings
- Interaction with presenters or members of the public attending the hearings or meetings

Either direct or interpretation services may be utilized.

Though direct or interpretation services may be utilized, it may be more practical to ensure that at least one structured engagement session occurs with the Francophone community on that initiative, whereby individuals in all significant demand communities can participate in French. This can be determined in consultation with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and the Francophone community.

Indication of Availability of French Language Services: Signage and Materials Display

Signs will be placed in reception areas or on front counters where French language services are available directly or through a referral service, indicating that services are available in French. Such signs are required in head or central offices and in other offices impacted by the significant demand or nature of office criteria.

Main directory board signs (interior sign located near the entrance to a building or facility that provides information or direction to the public) and directory signs (an interior sign located near the entrance to a floor or other section of such buildings or facilities) that are posted in English and French are also used to communicate the availability of French language services, as are bilingual exterior signs placed on buildings or facilities. Such signs are required in head or central offices and in other offices impacted by the significant demand or nature of office criteria.

Materials displayed in English and French in such offices also serve to indicate the availability of French language services.

Publication Formats

To facilitate effective delivery of French language services and ensure that such services are readily available, the simultaneous publication of documents in French and English, either in bilingual format or in separate versions, shall be used for public information and usage materials. See the Standards for more information.

GUIDELINE 3: HUMAN RESOURCES

The GNWT is committed to the active offer and effective delivery of French language services. Employees (whether bilingual or not) required to offer and provide such services shall be appropriately trained, positioned, encouraged, and supported to play an important role in ensuring services are available in French.

To facilitate the delivery of French language services, the GNWT strives to make effective use of members of its workforce who can adequately provide services in both French and English. It provides for a formal method of objective assessment of the oral and written capacity in French of employees occupying bilingual positions and endeavours to increase its bilingual workforce as necessary according to service delivery plans.

A systematic process will be established for recruiting bilingual personnel (professional and other) including, in the health area: physicians, nurses, technicians and pharmacists.

The GNWT pursues the above human resources objectives through various means and activities, including appropriate planning, strategy development and implementation actions.

As outlined elsewhere in these Guidelines, each government institution assesses its French language communications and services and develops an operating plan using a template provided by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. Various areas, such as communications and services involving interactions with clients, are covered in these plans. Specific objectives and actions are identified on an annual basis, and a report is made at the end of each fiscal year indicating the results of the implementation of the plans.

The objectives, actions, and reports address, among other things, the human resources considerations pertinent to the provision and improvement of French language communications and services.

The French Language Services Coordinator plays an important role in the planning and strategy development for the implementation of such services. They work with the appropriate personnel, including management, in carrying out their responsibilities.

Bilingual Positions and Teams

Government institutions have different options with respect to bilingual human resource planning, such as:

- designating specific positions as bilingual;
- using bilingual teams with a sufficient number of bilingual personnel to adequately offer French language communications and services;
- consolidating bilingual staff in single window service centres to cover a range of services; and,
- using a combination of the above options.

In determining what positions are designated as bilingual or which teams require a bilingual capacity, the following points are taken into consideration:

- Positions that serve the public directly as outlined in section 2(a).
- If offering service in person, positions are centrally located within a significant demand community.
- Needs of the Francophone clientele are effectively addressed.

French Language Proficiency

When designating positions or teams as requiring a bilingual capacity, the level of French language proficiency required must be specified by the government institution where the designated position or team is located. The public's first contact is usually at the reception level, which often implies interactions that are straightforward and uncomplicated, and may thus require only an intermediate level of French proficiency. A professional level involving delivery of more complex services may require advanced oral and writing skills in French.

The levels of language proficiency (basic, intermediate, and advanced) are those defined by the Department of Finance in consultation with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

Testing to determine the French language proficiency of existing employees, or candidates for designated bilingual positions or teams, is done through the mechanisms developed by the Department of Finance.

Recruitment of Bilingual Personnel

When working on its operating plan, the government institution looks at how best to utilize existing bilingual capacities in the workforce. It also develops strategies for the recruitment of bilingual staff as required for existing positions and teams, or for future needs.

The recruitment of bilingual personnel requires creative approaches and systematic processes such as those presented in the points which follow:

- Working with the community to promote awareness of bilingual positions in the GNWT.
- Offering education leave under return of service arrangements to bilingual employees who wish to undertake studies in certain fields such as health or social services.
- Making presentations on bilingualism in the government workforce at career fairs in French and French immersion schools.
- Encouraging bilingual students using summer placement and internship programs where their bilingualism would be useful.
- Creating work-experience programs, such as career days, that will place students from French and French immersion schools in settings where French language communications and services are provided.
- Staffing developmental positions, involving on-the-job assessment and training, to create opportunities for bilingual employees to acquire experience and training leading to their eventual qualification for particular designated bilingual positions.
- Developing and maintaining registries of bilingual employees and professionals to better identify existing bilingual capacity in the workforce, including a self-identification inventory of bilingual staff.
- Establishing employee committees to brainstorm and advise on bilingual human resource issues.

When recruiting for a designated bilingual position, the following procedural elements are required:

- The job description indicates the French language proficiency requirements (speaking, reading, and writing),
- The position is advertised bilingually on the GNWT website,

- The selection committee includes language proficiency in the factors to consider in the pre-selection of candidates for the job interviews,
- The selection committee includes at least one bilingual person able to assess, according to predetermined methods, the language proficiency of candidates,
- Follow-up French language proficiency testing will be completed with the top candidate,
- Provision of appropriate orientation regarding the active offer of French language communications and services for the recruited candidate to a bilingual position.

Retention of Bilingual Staff

Operating plans also identify the government institution's strategies for the retention of bilingual staff. This can be done through a variety of special initiatives including:

- fostering an organizational culture that values bilingualism;
- encouraging and providing professional development opportunities in French;
- facilitating French language refresher training for employees who have existing capacity in French.

French Language Training

French Language Services Coordinators are responsible for ensuring the appropriate orientation and training of all government institution staff regarding their obligations under the OLA and Guidelines with a focus on those staff providing front-line services and working in communications. Operating plans shall outline strategies for the use of training to improve capacity to offer French language communications and services, including:

- using French language training to improve language proficiency of staff in designated bilingual positions or on bilingual teams;
- bringing instructors in or sending staff to be trained elsewhere;
- organizing and carrying out appropriate orientation sessions regarding the effective delivery and active offer of French language communications and services for employees (including management) responsible for or involved with the planning and delivery of government services;
- ensuring all front-line employees are trained on the GNWT's obligation to provide service in French per the OLA, their role in responding to French language communications from the public, and how to use referral systems to provide the appropriate response;
- developing or adapting videos or other tools to provide the required training on the effective delivery and active offer of French language communications and services, as well as the GNWT's legal obligations with regards to the OLA; and,
- visiting points of public service to run through service scenarios with staff and offer additional training and/or resources as required.

GUIDELINE 4: PLANNING AND REPORTING

Fulfilling the GNWT's obligations and goals respecting French language communications and services requires thorough and deliberate planning, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation at both the overall GNWT and individual government institution levels.

At the GNWT level, the Minister Responsible for the OLA has the responsibility to coordinate the delivery of French language services throughout the GNWT. This includes the development and implementation of mechanisms to support the success of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. At the government institution level, the responsible Minister must ensure the development and implementation of an operating plan that is compatible and complementary to the GNWT's overall vision.

In carrying out their responsibilities, the Minister Responsible for the OLA is supported by the Franco-phone Affairs Secretariat, while government institutions are supported by their respective Deputy Heads and French Language Services Coordinators.

During the planning, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation phases, the Francophone community can be engaged or involved in various processes. See Guideline 6: Community Input for more information.

Such engagements may serve to:

- underline the priorities of the Francophone community in the NWT and its long- and short-term objectives related to the development and vitality of the Francophone community in the NWT;
- determine the most appropriate and effective role for the GNWT in helping the Francophone community to achieve its development objectives;
- inventory and evaluate the effectiveness of current GNWT support and services to the Francophone community; and,
- determine the changes required to existing support and services, and/or what new support and services are required, for the GNWT to better meet the objectives of the OLA and relevant Francophone community objectives.

Long Term Strategic Plan

The GNWT requires a strategic plan on French language communications and services. The document must pay due attention to the legislative and regulatory framework and provide guidelines for the better administration of services for the Francophone community.

The strategic plan on French language communications and services shall be revised and renewed by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat every five years or more often if required. Representatives of the Francophone community shall be engaged in the revision of said strategic plan, which shall be submitted to Cabinet upon completion and subsequently made public.

The strategic plan on French language communications and services will:

- have a planning approach consistent with overall GNWT planning;
- reflect GNWT-wide policies, goals, objectives and actions;
- require measurable program- and service-level goals through operating plans and a monitoring, evaluation, and accountability framework;

- detail the importance of engaging with the Francophone community for advisory purposes regarding French language communications and services;
- ensure government institutions establish relevant baseline information regarding such matters as current availability of French language communications and services, public points of service including the methods of offering service in French at said points of service, and availability of bilingual human resources and their language proficiency levels;
- provide guidelines for an effective delivery of French language communications and services;
- include a human resources component addressing the designation of positions or teams as bilingual as well as bilingual staff recruitment, retention, and language development and training;
- include a monitoring and reporting system by which progress can be annually assessed and reported publicly; and,
- be made public.

Operating Plans

On an annual basis, all government institutions assess their French language communications and services to assist with the development of an operating plan. The results of any feedback received from the Francophone community should be reflected in the operating plan. The assessment and operating plan shall be submitted to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

Government institutions shall prepare an operating plan which will:

- be based on the GNWT's strategic plan on French language communications and services;
- use as a base the government institution's assessment of its French language communications and services;
- take into consideration, if applicable, the results of engagement with the Francophone community;
- focus on aspects that are key to effective French language communications and services, namely training, service delivery locations and methods, and bilingual human resources;
- specify measurable objectives and actions against which success and progress will be measured and publicly reported; and,
- reflect any changes or adjustments to the monitoring and reporting system.

Monitoring and Reporting

One of the key recommendations of the evaluation of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan was to conduct a strategic review to examine how the monitoring, evaluation, and accountability process can function more effectively. With this in mind, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat has created a French Language Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor position to act as a catalyst for change and improvement in relation to performance and quality assurance of French language communications and services within the GNWT.

This position leads, with continuous stakeholder engagement, the design, development, and implementation of the monitoring, evaluation, and accountability framework, including:

- program descriptions;

- logic models;
- performance measurement strategies;
- reporting cycles, evaluation matrices and/or frameworks;
- implementation plans; and,
- data collection and reporting tools.

To ensure the success of the new monitoring, evaluation, and accountability framework, in-service training on the auditing, monitoring, and evaluation of French language communications and services will be offered to French Language Services Coordinators and other staff involved with the delivery of said services.

Monitoring

Effective monitoring requires a formal monitoring system through which predetermined information is collected, verified, compiled, and analyzed. Each strategic plan and operating plan shall include a description of how this monitoring system is structured and maintained.

Monitoring facilitates the annual planning of objectives and actions, and the annual reporting of results and progress on the actions stated in the strategic plan and operating plan.

The Minister Responsible for the OLA and each Minister responsible for a government institution shall ensure the regular monitoring of progress on the objectives and actions established in the strategic plan and operating plan for which they are responsible. Their respective staff will provide support for the carrying out of this responsibility.

The Francophone Affairs Secretariat will regularly follow up with government institutions on progress being achieved and discuss potential corrective action.

Reporting

Progress on the objectives and actions of the strategic plan and government institution operating plans shall be reported annually. If any progress report identifies that planned progress is substantially lacking, an explanation shall be provided to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and corrective measures identified.

Using the template provided by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, government institution progress reports shall be submitted to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, which shall compile the reports into a consolidated report for publication purposes.

The Francophone Affairs Secretariat shall issue reporting guidelines respecting timing, content, and format to government institutions as required.

GUIDELINE 5: AUDITS AND EVALUATIONS

Systematic Audits

With the assistance of the French Language Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat will ensure that systematic audits are carried out regularly to assist government institutions in improving their French language communications and services.

An audit may concentrate on a specific issue or a few questions advanced by the French Language Services Coordinating Committee or the Francophone community.

Evaluations

The quality and adequacy of GNWT policies, plans, and actions with respect to French language communications and services and progress towards planned objectives shall be evaluated on a government-wide basis during the final year of the strategic plan.

The evaluation will be performed by a person, firm or organization operating at arm's length from GNWT, selected through a competitive process initiated by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

The francophone community shall be involved in the evaluation process, which should be conducted in accordance with the Program Evaluation Standards as published by the Canadian Evaluation Society. The results of this evaluation shall be made public.

GUIDELINE 6: COMMUNITY INPUT

GUIDELINE 6(a) ENGAGEMENT

The primary responsibility for maintaining the use and vibrancy of the French language and culture rests with the Francophone community itself. The GNWT is committed to supporting the NWT Francophone community in maintaining the use and vibrancy of its language.

The GNWT will work with the Francophone community on an ongoing basis to understand its needs and priorities for the provision of government services in French. The Francophone community is therefore acknowledged as the target clientele for French language communications and services and as a partner of the GNWT in requesting service in French.

GNWT support to the Francophone community shall be determined through:

- regular and structured engagement ; and
- working partnerships characterized by ongoing dialogue and exchanges at a working level.

Structured Engagement

The Francophone community has established bodies and institutions through which it addresses language-related matters.

The minimum standards of structured engagement are:

- The Minister Responsible for the OLA shall formally meet once each year with representatives of the NWT's Francophone organizations to discuss matters of importance to the community and the GNWT related to the delivery of French language services by the GNWT.
- Where the Francophone community has established a working group or participates in a government-established working group, a representative of the responsible government institution shall meet at least once each year with that forum to address shared matters of importance;
- As stated under Guideline 4, representatives of the Francophone community shall be engaged in the revision of the strategic plan on French language communications and services.

Elements of structured engagement could include:

- formal agendas jointly developed in advance of the meeting;
- the provision of interpretation services for the meeting;
- meeting minutes that are recorded, circulated, and subsequently approved by the parties; and,
- documented follow-up action lists that are maintained and reported on.

These guidelines are not comprehensive or limiting and may be waived or modified by mutual agreement between the GNWT and the Francophone community, should a different approach be deemed more appropriate.

Consultation/Cooperation Committee

In 2010, the Consultation/Cooperation Committee was established, bringing together representatives of the GNWT and the Fédération franco-ténoise (FFT) to consult on the drafting, implementation, administration, and promotion of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan. It is composed of representatives of both the GNWT and the FFT.

Though the original Terms of Reference for the Consultation/Cooperation Committee were based on the implementation of the 2013-2018 GNWT Strategic Plan, the committee remains in place as a valuable component of the GNWT's relationship with the Francophone community.

Working Partnerships

Working partnerships are an excellent opportunity to establish a shared vision and give practical expression to the requirements of the OLA by sharing expertise. Ongoing dialogue with community partners is essential for the GNWT to adapt how it offers services based on feedback from those who are using said services.

Although structured engagement is important to building the trust and relationships necessary for a respectful and productive working relationship, one of the best ways to inform the Francophone community and obtain their input and advice on their needs and priorities is to work together on such things as research studies, policy development, program design, and actual program delivery.

The Francophone Affairs Secretariat is always looking for opportunities to partner with the Francophone community on projects and initiatives. Government institutions are encouraged to directly involve the community in initiatives and projects where their expertise could be incorporated.

GUIDELINE 6(b) PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Situations may arise where a member of the public is dissatisfied with the non-availability, incomplete provision, or quality of French language communications and/or services. The public may also wish to express appreciation for service which meets or exceeds the Standards.

A member of the public has two options to provide feedback:

1. They can do so, without requiring a formal reply, by completing an online form². A printed version Of the form is also available.
2. If the member of the public would like a formal reply to their feedback, they can submit a formal compliment or complaint in writing. The appropriate form can be found at any of these offices:
 - a. The Francophone Affairs Secretariat
 - b. Services TNO
 - c. The French Language Services Coordinator of the relevant government institution.

² At the time of publication, this online form could be found at www.votreavisgtno.ca.

The completed form can be submitted to the government institution concerned via its French Language Services Coordinator or to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. In either case, the French Language Services Coordinator and the Francophone Affairs Secretariat will work together to ensure the appropriate follow-up on the feedback received.

A member of the public wishing to remain anonymous upon submitting formal feedback must request it at the time of submitting the form. Their request for anonymity will be recorded on the form. Their identity will also be recorded, but will not be divulged during any follow-up on their feedback.

Follow-up to a complaint involves:

- determining the legitimacy of the complaint;
- assessing legitimate problems with the appropriate authorities in the government institution concerned;
- finding appropriate solutions and taking corrective actions as required; and,
- within 30 working days of receipt of the complaint, informing the complainant of corrective action undertaken and of any results that may already have been obtained by said corrective actions. Whoever received the complaint initially, be it the French Language Services Coordinator or the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, communicates this information to the complainant in writing and copies the other as well as the Deputy Head concerned.

The process outlined above does not restrict a member of the public from submitting a formal complaint to the Languages Commissioner of the NWT. As outlined in the OLA, the Languages Commissioner shall investigate any reasonable complaint made to their office arising from any act or omission to the effect that, in any particular instance or case, in the administration of the affairs of any government institution:

- a) the status of an official language was not or is not being recognized;
- b) any provision of any Act or regulation relating to the status or use of the official languages was not or is not being complied with; or,
- c) the spirit and intent of the OLA was not or is not being complied with.

The GNWT and the Francophone Affairs Secretariat remain open to a robust working relationship with the Languages Commissioner where appropriate.