



Government of the Northwest Territories  
Response to Recommendations from the

*Compliance Audit on GNWT French  
Communications in the Health Sector*



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## Introduction

Following the results of the first Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey 2019-2020, it was made clear by the Francophone community that Health and Wellness is a priority when it comes to accessing communications and services in French. Therefore, it was decided that this compliance audit would focus on this sector.

Corporate Communications has been tasked with producing the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Response to Recommendations on the compliance on GNWT French communications in the health sector.

The scope of this compliance audit targets three (3) websites and three (3) Facebook pages related to the NWT's health sector. All sites and respective websites are as follows:

1. Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Website [www.hss.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca)
2. Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) Website [www.nthssa.ca](http://www.nthssa.ca)
3. GNWT's Response to COVID-19 Website [www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19](http://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19)
4. Government of the Northwest Territories / Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest (GNWT/GTNO) Facebook Pages (managed by Corporate Communications)  
[www.facebook.com/yourGNWT](http://www.facebook.com/yourGNWT) [www.facebook.com/votreGTNO](http://www.facebook.com/votreGTNO)
5. Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) / Administration des services de santé et des services sociaux des TNO (NTHSSA/ASTNO) Facebook page [www.facebook.com/NTHSSA](http://www.facebook.com/NTHSSA)  
[www.facebook.com/ASTNO2](http://www.facebook.com/ASTNO2)
6. Hay River Health and Social Services Authority (HRHSSA) Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/Hay-River-Regional-Health-Centre-1454565548205248](http://www.facebook.com/Hay-River-Regional-Health-Centre-1454565548205248)

Each response that is provided will have an impact government-wide. Commitments to new processes, tools or tactics will be rolled out across GNWT Departments and Authorities.

## Objectives

The objective of the compliance audits is twofold. First, it aims to determine if the Standards for French Communications and Services are being adhered to. Second, the results of the compliance audits will guide and assist GNWT institutions in improving their French language communications and services to the public.

## Overall Compliance Rate

Positive observations and opportunities for improvement were noted throughout the audit. One of the major findings of this audit was that the overall compliance rate of NTHSSA5, the COVID-19 Secretariat, and the Department of Health and Social Services was high. Those institutions got 80%, 82%, and 81% respectively, meaning that they are compliant with Standards most of the time. Those percentages were calculated by adding the scores of all the indicators audited for each department, taking into account the weight of those indicators.

GNWT/GTNO received a total compliance rate of 88% on their Facebook pages, in comparison; HRHSSA reached 48% of compliance.

| <b>Recommendations and GNWT's Response</b>   |   |
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| <b>Indicator A:</b> Content of the website is translated and comparable in quality and content in both French and English (French Communications and Services Standards section 3.8)   |   |
| <p><b>Recommendation A.1:</b><br/> <i>We recommend to the departments that they collaborate with the web team of Information Systems Shared Services (ISSS) to help them address the structural problem of their websites. Departments can submit helpdesk tickets with the list of sections to be checked. Government institutions should also keep in mind that the web team of ISSS can be a helpful resource if they need technical support to improve their websites.</i></p> | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Information Systems Shared Services (ISSS) and Corporate Communications will launch a project to improve French language accessibility and quality across GNWT websites. The Web and Digital Presence Committee (WDPC) has communications representatives from every Department and will be the committee to help define the scope, determine next steps, and roll out the technical and process changes.</p> <p>This project will address structural and technical solutions, as well as process improvements, to departmental websites.</p> |
| <p><b>Recommendation A.2:</b><br/> <i>We also recommend that the departments and agencies (through their French language coordinators, for instance), coordinate the regular review of their websites to monitor and maintain the quality of French translations.</i></p>  | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Corporate Communications will set up an audit schedule for all Departments and Health Authority websites.</p> <p>Corporate Communications will work with the French Language Services Coordinating Committee members to ensure new French content on Departmental and Health Authority websites are proofread through the Broca system.</p> <p>French Language Coordinators will then work with departmental communicators to make any changes or edits to content.</p>   |
| <p><b>Recommendation A.3:</b><br/> <i>Finally, we encourage departments to analyze and track the usage of websites.</i></p>  | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Google analytics reporting is used to provide website usage on all GNWT websites.</p> <p>The WDPC will determine the reporting template, process and frequency and will share the reports with the French Language Services Coordinating Committee and Francophone Affairs Secretariat.</p>   |

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| <b>Indicator B:</b> Written instruments (forms, brochures) intended for the public should be represented in both English and French (French Communications and Services Standards section 3.8)   |   |
| <b>Recommendation B.1:</b><br><i>To make the written instruments easier to search and more accessible to French speakers, we recommend that French titles be used to name the document on the website. A good practice would be that when the communications officer received the document from the vendor, they should open the document and save it under the name created by the translator.</i>  | <p>The GNWT does not agree with this recommendation.</p> <p>The objective of the recommendation to make the written instruments easier to search and more accessible is not solved by renaming the document itself. The search function of GNWT websites picks up the name from the Title entered into Drupal when the file is published.</p> <p>To make published resources easier to search and more accessible, Corporate Communications will ensure departmental communicators are entering the French title in Drupal when publishing a document by including in departmental Drupal training, presenting at the communications working group and including in web guidelines.</p> <p>A consistent naming convention for English and French documents, consistent with Federal rules, will be included in the Publishing Guidelines.</p> |
| <b>Indicator C:</b> French and English fonts are of equal prominence (French Communications and Services Standards section 3.8)  |   |
| <b>Recommendation C.1:</b><br><i>Departments to keep in mind that, typically, the French version will take more space than the English. This should be planned ahead when the publications are designed. If there is no sufficient space for French fonts, both English and French fonts have to be reduced to make sure they are the same size.</i>   | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>GNWT communicators currently endeavour this practice in the design phase of all collateral.</p> <p>In order to improve this practice, Corporate Communications will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add simultaneous English/French design as best practice to the Publishing Guidelines</li> <li>• add this to vendor and communicators training</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Indicator D:</b> French Communications intended for the public are easily accessible (French Communications and Services Standards, preamble, p. 5)   |   |
| <b>Recommendation D.1:</b><br><i>We recommend that the French keyword search feature be able to recognize and use French keywords. The architecture of the system shouldn't count on the fact that the member of the public looking for information will know the English translation of the program or services that they are looking for – much less assuming that this person will have the reflex to enter an English keyword in the French search engine.</i> | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>ISSS and Corporate Communications will launch a project to improve French language accessibility and quality across GNWT websites. WDPC has communications representatives from every Department and will be the committee to help define the scope, determine next steps, and roll out the technical and process changes.</p> <p>This project will address structural and technical solutions, as well as process improvements, to departmental websites.</p>  |

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| <p><b>Recommendation D.2:</b><br/> <i>We recommend that departments work with ISSS to explore the possibility of improving the keyword search feature by working on metadata to allow the system to recognize keywords</i></p>   | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>ISSS and Corporate Communications will launch a project to improve French language accessibility and quality across GNWT websites. WDPC has communications representatives from every Department and will be the committee to help define the scope, determine next steps, and roll out the technical and process changes.</p> <p>This project will address structural and technical solutions, as well as process improvements, to departmental websites.</p>   |
| <p><b>Indicator E:</b> All videos intended for the general public must be available in both French and English. (French Communications and Services Standards section 3.6.3)</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation E.1:</b><br/> <i>When posting third-party videos, it is ideal to post its equivalent French version, or make an effort to find a similar video in French.</i></p>   | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Social Media and Publishing Guidelines will reference the French Communications and Services Standards section 3.6.3 and will endeavour to post a French equivalent to English only videos where possible.</p>   |
| <p><b>Indicator F:</b> Social media content is available in French and English (French Communications and Services Standards section 3.6.1)</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation F.1:</b><br/> <i>We recommend that government institutions (especially HRHSSA) implement a translation process for social media postings to ensure that the Standards are met in that regard. Social media posts can be planned most of the time. Posts could be sent to translation service a few weeks in advance to ensure they are available in French on time. Also, translation process should be part of the communication process, so the French Standards are taken into account from the start.</i></p> | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Social Media Guidelines will reference the French Communications and Services Standards section 3.6.1 and will include best practice for planning social media posts, and tools and templates to help departmental communicators with planning.</p> <p>HRHSSA now attends the Web and Digital Presence Committee meetings ensuring they have access to the same information, tools and expertise as other Departments in the GNWT.</p> <p>HRHSSA will be added to the GNWT social media management system, Sprout Social, and will be trained to use the system and processes, including translation services.</p> |
| <p><b>Indicator G:</b> Social media content is posted simultaneously in French and English (French Communications and Services Standards section 3.6.1)</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation G.1:</b><br/> <i>Institutions should ensure to have all the materials ready (in English and French) when they post them on Facebook to avoid unreasonable time gaps between English and French postings.</i></p>  | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Social Media Guidelines will reference the French Communications and Services Standards section 3.6.1 and will include best practice for planning social media posts, and tools and templates to help departmental communicators with planning.</p> <p>Comms101 for Managers is a mandatory training module being developed by Corporate Communications and will include instruction</p>   |

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|   | <p>on communications planning allowing time for English and French distribution of information simultaneously.</p>   |
| <p><b>Indicator H:</b> Any online comments in French must be answered in French. (French Communications and Services Standards section 3.6.1)</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation H.1:</b><br/> <i>The French Language Services Coordinating Committee and the Francophone Affairs Secretariat will collaborate with GNWT communicators to ensure a strategic and consistent approach on social media use to make sure posts reach the Francophone community and increase engagement.</i></p>  | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Social Media Guidelines will reference the French Communications and Services Standards section 3.6.1 for all online comments in French to be answered in French.</p> <p>The French Language Services Coordinating Committee and Francophone Affairs Secretariat will be invited to a GNWT Communications Working Group bi-weekly meeting for a presentation and Q &amp; A regarding French Communication Services Standards for Social Media.</p>   |
| <p><b>Recommendation H.2:</b><br/> <i>The Francophone Affairs Secretariat could adapt a few questions on social media usage and preferences in its annual French Community Satisfaction Survey.</i></p>   | <p>The GNWT agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>The Francophone Affairs Secretariat will also include the public’s search habits and practices to better help us understand how they get to the information or service they need.</p>  |
| <p><b>Indicator I:</b> Information from a 3rd party that is acting on behalf of the GNWT should be available in French (best practice)</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation I.1:</b><br/> <i>It is recommended that when government institutions empower a third party to act on their behalf, the request for proposals should advise proponents that their bid will require capacity in French in order to meet the evaluation criteria of the proposed contract. Similarly, the contract or contribution agreement formalizing the relationship should refer to the language obligations.</i></p> | <p>The GNWT does not agree with this recommendation as worded.</p> <p>The GNWT and Health Authorities have put French language services in place to serve NWT residents inside and outside the territory. French language interpreters are available to ensure site translation and assistance to fill out forms. On all DHSS French webpages and publications, the published toll free telephone number provides service in French.</p> <p>To ensure French language service is built into future contracts, when the GNWT puts out a request for proposal for a third party to act on its behalf, the terms of reference will request information on how they will offer the service in French or how they will put processes in place to work with our systems to offer service in French.</p> <p>Responding to this audit finding directly, DHSS worked with Alberta Blue Cross to translate the one English-only form and confirmed that Alberta Blue Cross is able to process French forms. There is also a toll-free phone number specific to French inquiries for Alberta Blue Cross services.</p> |