GOVERNMENT OF NORTHWEST TERRITORIES –ACTION PLAN 2023-2028

CANADA–NORTHWEST TERRITORIES AGREEMENT ON FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES

2023-2024 to 2027-2028

PREAMBLE

The Northwest Territories' Francophone community is growing.

According to the Census 2021, the total number of individuals that reported French as a mother tongue was 1,475 (3.6% of the NWT population estimated at 41,070 habitants). This represents an increase from results of the Census 2016, where 1,360 respondents reported having French as a mother tongue (3.25% of the NWT population estimated at 41,786 habitants). Moreover, the number of residents using French as the main language spoken at home increased from 550 in 2016 to 615 in 2021.

The number and proportion of residents who could have a conversation in French or who used French most often at work reached all-time highs in 2021[1]. In 2021, a total of 4,395 persons (10.8% of the NWT residents) reported being able to speak French, versus 4,340 persons in 2016 (10.4% of the NWT population). The NWT French language community is concentrated largely in Yellowknife (about 77%), with smaller communities in Hay River, Fort Smith and Inuvik.

1. Context

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

The Canada - Northwest Territories Co-Operation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages in the NWT (Agreement) signed in 1984 assured that the Government of Canada (Canada) would bear all costs involved in the provision of communications and services to the public in French and the costs involved with

[1] Key facts on the French language in the Northwest Territories in 2021, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2023009-eng.htm.

the implementation of French as an official language in the NWT. Since then, Canada has made a commitment to fund French language communications and services in the NWT through various agreements.

The OLA has been amended several times. In 2020, the Standing Committee on Government Operations started its latest review of the Act. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, work on the review was delayed and the Report on the 2021-22 Review of the *Official Languages Act* was released in March 2023. The report outlined four transformative changes and thirteen specific recommendations for the Government of the Northwest Territories.

On March 28, 2023, Bill 63: An Act to Amend to *Official Languages Act* received a third reading and assent to:

- Clarify and strengthen the role of the Languages Commissioner;
- Merge the Languages Boards;
- Update language in the Act to enhance protection of the language rights of all communities in the NWT; and
- Emphasize the importance of language protection by implementing the Articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In this Action Plan, “bilingual” refers to English and French. Also, any description of communications or services refers to French language, unless otherwise indicated. Funds utilized under the Agreement cover costs associated with French language communications and services to implement the Schedule C of the Agreement.

2. Current status and issues to be addressed

The year 2022-2023 marked the final year of the GNWT Strategic Plan for French Language Communications and Services 2018-2023 (Strategic Plan 2018-2023). As per the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan 2020 (MEA Plan 2020), an evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 was conducted by a third-party contractor, Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, towards the end of its life cycle. The purpose of this Evaluation was to determine the overall success and value of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 and to inform the redevelopment of the next five-year Strategic Plan 2023-2028. The Evaluation report, along with recommendations, was submitted in January 2023.

In total, the third-party contractor made 23 recommendations. The GNWT provided a formal response during Spring 2023 and agreed to 22 of them. Those recommendations are included in the Strategic Plan 2023-2028.

The year 2022-2023 also marked the end of the Canada-NWT Agreement on French Language Services. In 2023-2024, the GNWT negotiated a new Agreement with Canada for 2023-2028. The Francophone Affairs Secretariat of the GNWT is responsible for the management of this new Agreement.

3. Strategic priorities

The following strategic priorities aim to reinforce the GNWT's commitment to offer and deliver quality French language communications and services to the Francophone community. Priorities have been established following the Evaluation of the GNWT Strategic Plan on French language communications and services and the recommendations made by Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton in 2022-2023. For 2023-2028, strategic priorities are:

Services

- Offer and delivery
- Special focus on health
- Promotion
- Mitigation of factors hampering the public use of French services

Monitoring and evaluation

- Renewal of key performance indicators
- Renewal of data collection tools
- Increase GNWT institutions' monitoring and internal reporting

Francophone Community input

- Strengthen partnerships
- Increase public engagement

4. Progress made under the previous agreement (2020-2021 to 2022-2023)

The implementation of the GNWT Strategic Plan 2018-2023 generated significant improvement in regard to communications, especially in terms of signage and advertisement. The Evaluation report of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 indicated that the Francophone community noticed that GNWT institutions made an effort to provide the availability of communications in French.

Moreover, in the past years, GNWT institutions have shown progress in their attempts to recruit and retain bilingual personnel. Bilingual job posting was done, and Senior management was found supportive of the French language, providing tools and resources to obtain additional French language training as needed.

Between 2018 and 2023, efforts have also been made to increase the GNWT's accountability for French language communications and services, notably by improving the monitoring and reporting aspects. The position of French Language Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, located at the Francophone Affairs Secretariat,

was developed and staffed, and the MEA Plan 2015 has been updated into the MEA Plan 2020 to help track and assess progress and results of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023. According to Evaluation report of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023, all tasks stated in the Strategic Plan pertaining to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, regarding monitoring and evaluation, have been achieved.

Finally, the GNWT launched the Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey in 2019-2020. This annual initiative aimed to ensure that the Francophone community was aware of the GNWT's French language communications and services and was satisfied with its offer and delivery. The Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey was a new opportunity given to the Francophone community members to engage with the GNWT and provide their input.

5. Objectives for 2023-2024 to 2027-2028

Objective 1
The GNWT has the capacity to actively offer and deliver its communications and services to the public in French, in accordance with the OLA, Regulations, Policies and Standards.

Objective 2
The GNWT continues to inform and consult with the Francophone community on GNWT French language communications and services.

Objective 3
The Francophone Affairs Secretariat (excluding French Translation Services and Services TNO) and the Department of Finance (Human Resources division) continue to provide administrative support to GNWT institutions to deliver French language communications and services.

6. Consultations carried out with the French language community

The GNWT is committed to offering and delivering quality French language communications and services to the public. To do so, input from the Francophone community on GNWT's capacity is essential.

The GNWT consulted with the Francophone community via the Official Languages Board. The Official Languages Board is composed of members representing each of the official languages of the NWT. Members can advise and make recommendations to the Minister on matters related to languages. In the past five years, the GNWT also consulted the Francophone community via working partnerships (GNWT institutions and Francophone organizations), or through public engagement (i.e.: Have your Say, public consultations). Moreover, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat administered the annual Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey and the public feedback process, Votre avis GTNO.

The Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey Reports (2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022) have indicated that Health and Wellness is the number one priority for the Francophone community to receive communications and services in French. The Evaluation report of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 revealed that improvements within the structure and operational processes were required from the Health and Social Services System. In 2023-2024, a new position at the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (Strategic Lead – French Language Services) will be staffed. This position will play a key role in implementing the NTHSSA's Operating Plan for French language communications and services and in liaising with the Francophone community.

Additionally, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed between the Health and Social Services System and Fédération franco-ténoise to formalize a working committee. This direct channel, once formalized, will continue to define and prioritize health needs of the French community.

Moreover, recommendations contained in the Evaluation report emphasized on the need for the GNWT to continue to implement guidelines related to monitoring and internal reporting, especially for GNWT institutions. With the renewal of key performance indicators and data collection tools, improving the monitoring process will increase accountability to the Francophone community. The community has asked for specific indicators, for example those related to bilingual positions.

Finally, as part of the recommendations of the Evaluation report, it was also suggested that the dialogue between the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and the Francophone community representatives be reviewed to increase communications, clarify expectations, address issues, and discuss actions to be taken towards the challenges. The GNWT agreed to this recommendation and indicated that the new GNWT Strategic Plan 2023-2028's guideline on Community input will be reviewed to reflect current preferences for interactions with the Francophone community. For 2023-2028, there is a common will on strengthening partnerships and increasing public awareness and engagement towards GNWT French language communications and services.

The overall objective of Northwest Territories' 2023-28 Action Plan is to continue to offer government information and services in French to the public according to the *Official Languages Act of the NWT* and respecting the GNWT's Response to 2023 Evaluation of French Strategic Plan. This will enhance the vitality of the French language community and contribute to its development.

Strategic Objective 1: The GNWT has the capacity to actively offer and deliver its communications and services to the public in French, in accordance with the *Official Languages Act*, Regulations, Policies and Standards						
Expected Results (Outputs)	**Planned Actions (Activities)**	**Performance Indicators**	**Baseline Data 2022-2023**	**Targets 2027-2028**	**Funding**	
					By fiscal year	**Canada**
1.*The GNWT has resources to actively offer and effectively deliver* ***services*** *in French*	***1.1*** *GNWT institutions endeavour to have necessary human resources to support the active offer and effective delivery of French language communications and services*	***1.1.1*** *Number of bilingual required positions*	*73 bilingual required positions*	*74 bilingual required positions*	**2023-24** **2024-25** **2025-26** **2026-27** **2027-28**	**$4,095,000** **$4,095,000** **$4,095,000** **$4,095,000** **$4,095,000**
		1.1.2 *Percentage of bilingual required positions filled*	*81% of bilingual required positions are filled*	*85% of bilingual required positions are filled*		
		1.1.3 *Number of employees receiving the bilingual bonus for French*	*174 employees received a bilingual bonus for French*	*192 employees receive a bilingual bonus for French (2% increase per year)*		
		1.1.4 *Number of initiatives to target and recruit bilingual employees*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
		1.1.5 *The position of Strategic Lead - French Language Services at the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority is staffed*	*Position is staffed in 2023-2024*	*Position is maintained and staffed*		
	1.2 *The GNWT administers the bilingual NWT eServices Portal[2] to provide services to the public*	***1.2.1*** *Number of GNWT services available in French via the NWT eServices Portal*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
	1.3 *French Language Services Coordinators provide appropriate training to GNWT employees within their institution regarding their obligation under the OLA (active offer, effective delivery and public feedback)*	***1.3.1*** *Number of training sessions scheduled and delivered by the French Language Services Coordinators to GNWT employees*	**Scheduled:** Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data ***Delivered:*** *56 trainings*	**Scheduled:** Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline ***Delivered:*** *30 trainings*		
	1.4 *The GNWT administers* Services TNO, *a single window services service, to offer and deliver French*	***1.4.1*** *Number of public requests in French processed by Services TNO*	*316 requests in French processed by Services TNO*	*366 requests in French processed by* Services TNO *(3% increase per year)*		

[2] NWT eServices Portal: the NWT eServices Portal enables a convenient and secure access to participating online government services.

	language communications and services to the public	***1.4.2*** *Number of Memorandum of Agreement between* Services TNO *and GNWT institutions*	*13 Memorandum of Agreement between* Services TNO *and GNWT institutions*	*Maintain at least 13 Memorandum of Agreement between* Services TNO *and GNWT institutions*		
2. *Communications intended for the public are translated by the GNWT according to the OLA and the GNWT Standards on French Language Communications and Services*	***2.1*** *The GNWT and Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission provide French language translation services for communications to the public*	***2.1.1*** *Number of words translated per year*	*2,741,000 words translated*	*Words translated are in compliance with the OLA*		
		2.1.2 *Level of satisfaction of Broca[3] users towards the GNWT Translation Services (excluding Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission)*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		

[3] Broca: Online Translation Request Management Portal and Translation Memory.

Strategic Objective 2: The GNWT continues to inform and consult with the Francophone community on GNWT French language communications and services						
Expected Results (Outputs)	**Planned Actions (Activities)**	**Performance Indicators**	**Baseline Data 2022-2023**	**Targets 2027-2028**	**Funding**	
					By fiscal year	**Canada**
3. *The Francophone community is informed on GNWT French language communications and services*	***3.1*** *The GNWT ensures communications intended for the public are bilingual and available to the public*	***3.1.1*** *Number of media used to place communications in French for the public*	*8 media used*	*Maintain 8 media per year*	**2023-24** **2024-25** **2025-26** **2026-27** **2027-28**	**$525,000** **$525,000** **$525,000** **$525,000** **$525,000**
		3.1.2 *Number and percentage of GNWT institutions that have a mirrored French-English website*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
		3.1.3 *Number and percentage of GNWT institutions' main Facebook pages that have a French version*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
	3.2 *The GNWT conducts promotional activities to promote French language communications and services*	***3.2.1*** *Number of GNWT promotional activities directed to the Francophone community*	*3 promotional activities*	*Maintain 3 promotional activities per year*		
	3.3 *The GNWT engages with the Francophone community*	***3.3.1*** *Number and percentage of GNWT institutions that engaged with the public*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
4. *The Francophone community is consulted on needs and priorities for French language communications and services*	***4.1*** *The GNWT has working partnerships with the Francophone community*	***4.1.1*** *Number of GNWT institutions that have a working partnership with a Francophone community organization*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
		4.1.2 *Number of meetings between the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and Francophone community leaders*	*3 meetings in 2023-2024*	*2 meetings per year*		
5. *The Francophone community is consulted on needs and priorities in regards to developing and implementing*	***5.1*** *The HSS System and Fédération franco-ténoise will formalize and implement a working partnership*	***5.1.1*** *A Memorandum of Understanding is signed between HSS System and Fédération franco-ténoise in 2023-2024*	*Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2023-2024*	*Memorandum is in effect* *Terms of Reference signed in 2024-2025*		

strategies related to promoting and improving Health and Social Services System's French language communications and services		***5.1.2*** *Number of meetings between HSS System and Réseau TNO Santé*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
		5.1.3 *Number of projects realized in partnership between HSS System and Réseau TNO Santé, on French health-related projects*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
6. *The Francophone community is satisfied with GNWT French language communications and services*	***6.1*** *The GNWT consults the Francophone community on its satisfaction with GNWT French language communications and services*	***6.1.1*** *Percentage of the Francophone community that is satisfied with GNWT French language* ***communications*** *(Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey, to be conducted in 2024-2025 and 2026-2027)*	Baseline to be established in 2024-2025	Target to be established in 2024-2025		
		6.1.2 *Percentage of the Francophone community that is satisfied with GNWT French language* ***services*** *(Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey, to be conducted in 2024-2025 and 2026-2027)*	*76.8% rate of satisfaction with GNWT French language services (in 2021-2022)*	*Maintain a 75% rate of satisfaction with GNWT French language services*		
		6.1.3 *Percentage of the Francophone community that is satisfied with GNWT French language* ***communications and services for Health and Social Services specifically*** *(Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey, to be conducted in 2024-2025 and 2026-2027)*	Baseline to be established in 2024-2025	Target to be established in 2024-2025		
	6.2 *The GNWT seeks and responds to ongoing Francophone community feedback*	***6.2.1*** *Number of initiative(s) to encourage public feedback on French language communications and services*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	Target to be established before July 1, 2024, according to baseline		
		6.2.2 *Number of feedback received from the public*	*5 feedback were received from the public*	*20 feedback (in 2027-2028)*		

		6.2.3 *Number and percentage of feedback that required a GNWT response and to which the GNWT responded*	*0 feedback required response (100%)*	*100% of feedback requiring a response received a response*		

Strategic Objective 3: The Francophone Affairs Secretariat (excluding French Translation Services and Services TNO) and the Department of Finance (Human Resources division) continue to provide administrative support to GNWT institutions to deliver French language communications and services						
Expected Results (Outputs)	**Planned Actions (Activities)**	**Performance Indicators**	**Baseline Data 2022-2023**	**Targets 2027-2028**	**Funding**	
					By fiscal year	**Canada**
7. *GNWT institutions are supported by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat in the active offer and effective delivery of French language communications and services*	***7.1*** *The Francophone Affairs Secretariat provides training to GNWT employees*	***7.1.1*** *Number of training sessions scheduled and delivered on the provision of French language communications and services to GNWT employees*	***Scheduled:*** *4 training sessions* ***Delivered:*** *4 training sessions*	***Scheduled:*** *4 training sessions per year* ***Delivered:*** *4 training sessions per year*	**2023-24** **2024-25** **2025-26** **2026-27** **2027-28**	**$1,280,000** **$1,280,000** **$1,280,000** **$1,280,000** **$1,280,000**
		7.1.2 *Percentage of the GNWT employees who gave feedback that are satisfied with the training provided by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data	*At least 75% of GNWT employees are satisfied with the training provided*		
	7.2 *The Francophone Affairs Secretariat offers support and advice to all GNWT institutions for the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028*	***7.2.1*** *Number of initiatives executed by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat to support GNWT institutions*	*7 initiatives in 2022-2023, amalgamated into 6 initiatives in 2023-2024*	*6 initiatives per year*		
		7.2.2 *Number and percentage of GNWT institutions that updated their Operating Plan*	*14 GNWT institutions updated their Operating Plan (100%)*	*100% of GNWT institutions update their Operating Plan, per year*		
	7.3 *The Francophone Affairs Secretariat carries out compliance audits on GNWT French language communications and services and ensures a response*	***7.3.1*** *A compliance audit is done in 2024-2025 and the response to the recommendations is used to adjust targets, if necessary*	*N/A*	*Completed in 2024-2025*		
		7.3.2 *A compliance audit is done in 2026-2027 and the response to the recommendations is used to adjust targets, if necessary*	*N/A*	*Completed in 2026-2027*		

8. *GNWT institutions are supported by the Department of Finance for Human Resources*	***8.1*** *The Department of Finance administers French language testing and training for GNWT employees*	***8.1.1*** *Percentage of GNWT employees requiring test to determine their French language proficiency for bilingual bonus that are tested (Bilingual Designation Policy)*	*100% of GNWT employees requiring testing were tested (49 employees)*	*100% of GNWT employees requiring testing are tested*		
		8.1.2 *Number of GNWT employees who enrolled in French language Refresher Training*	*24 employees enrolled in French language Refresher Training*	*25 employees enroll in French language Refresher Training*		
	8.2 *The Department of Finance offers support to GNWT institutions for the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028*	***8.2.1*** *Percentage of vacant bilingual required positions for which job competitions were held*	Baseline to be established before July 1, 2024, according to 2023-2024 data *(31 job competitions were held for bilingual required positions)*	*Competitions are held for 100% of vacant bilingual required positions*		
9. *The GNWT has tools to support the implementation and monitoring of French language communications and services*	***9.1*** *The GNWT updates tools to implement and monitor progresses of French language communications and services*	***9.1.1*** *The Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is developed and approved by the Executive Council*	*N/A*	*Done in 2023-2024*		
		9.1.2 *The GNWT Standards for French Language Communications and Services are updated*	*N/A*	*Major update in 2023-2024, regular updates as needed every year*		
		9.1.3 *The Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan 2020 is updated to reflect the new Strategic Plan 2023-2028*	*N/A*	*Done in 2024-2025*		
	9.2 *An evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is made*	***9.2.1*** *The evaluation report and the recommendations are completed*	*N/A*	*Done in 2027-2028*		

Summary of the planned funding

By Fiscal Year	Canada	TOTAL
2023-24	5.9 millions	5.9 millions
2024-25	5.9 millions	5.9 millions
2025-26	5.9 millions	5.9 millions
2026-27	5.9 millions	5.9 millions
2027-28	5.9 millions	5.9 millions
TOTAL	29.5 millions	29.5 millions