



Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services

2023-2028

K'áhshó got'ıne xədə k'é hederı ɔedjhtl'é yerıniwę ní dé dúle.
Dene Kədə

ɔerıhtl'ıs Dēne Sų́ıné yatı t'a huts'elkēr xa beyáyatı theɔą ɔat'e, nuwe ts'ēn yóltı.
Dēne Sų́ıné

Edı gondı dehgáh got'ıje zhatıé k'éé edat'éh enahddhę nıde naxets'é edahfı.
Dene Zhatıé

Jii gwandak izhii ginjik vat'atr'ıjähch'uu zhit yınohthan jı', diıts'ät ginohkhıi.
Dinjii Zhu' Ginjik

Uvanittuaq ilitchurisukupku Inuvialuktun, ququaqłuta.
Inuvialuktun

Ċ'ɔł ɔɔɔ'ɔɔɔ Δ ĄŁJΔĄ Ąɔɔ'ɔɔɔ ĄŁJΔĄ, ɔ'ɔ'ɔ'ɔ'ɔ' ɔ'ɔ'ɔ'ɔ'ɔ' ɔ'ɔ'ɔ'ɔ'ɔ'.

Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.
Inuinnaqtun

kıspin ki nitawihtın ē nıhıyawıhk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.
nēhiyawēwin

Tıjchq yatı k'èè. Dı wegodı newq dè, gots'o gonede.
Tıjchq

Indigenous Languages

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Minister's Message



**The Honourable
Caitlin Cleveland**
*Minister of Education,
Culture and Employment*

With 11 official languages, the Northwest Territories is a linguistically-rich jurisdiction. NWT residents take great pride in the vibrant languages and cultures found across the territory.

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. Government communications and services are required in French, whether it be important health information, an application for a funding program, or forms to renew licences and registrations, and providing this service is important to the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

Since the release of the GNWT's first *Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services 2013-2018* a decade ago, tremendous progress has been made that is worth celebrating. The GNWT now has an established Francophone Affairs Secretariat and a network of French Language Service Coordinators within every department. Employees receive training to provide an active offer and effective delivery to the public, and feedback mechanisms exist to identify areas of improvement. We have staff receiving bilingual bonuses, and public-facing material is available in French in all significant demand communities. In 2021-2022 alone, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat translated a record 3.27 million words for government communications and services.

This third Strategic Plan will build on this significant work to date in providing French language communications and services, where we will see continued growth and improvement of this maturing system. We will continue to plan, implement, and evaluate our work to meet the needs of our French-speaking residents, workers, and visitors.

Improving French language communications and services would not be possible without our valued partnerships with French language groups in the NWT. I want to thank the organizations and individuals who have contributed feedback and recommendations in each iteration of the Strategic Plan and throughout engagement opportunities.

I am pleased to release the *GNWT Strategic Plan on French Language Communications and Services 2023-2028*.

Thank you,

Caitlin Cleveland
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment



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Introduction

Under the *Official Languages Act* of the Northwest Territories (NWT), French is an official language of the NWT.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) recognizes the Francophone community as an important component of the NWT society, and a contributor to its social, economic and cultural development. The GNWT's efforts over the last decade began with the first Strategic Plan on French language communications and services 2013-2018 (Strategic Plan 2013-2018). Over the years, the GNWT's capacity to deliver communications and services in French has evolved considerably.

Moving forward, the GNWT is committed to continue improving its communications and services to the Francophone community, and to keep monitoring and reporting on its activities to assess advancement and results.

This Strategic Plan 2023-2028 is the third plan on GNWT French language communications and services. It is based on progress made in recent years and includes recommendations from the third-party evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023. This document aims to guide GNWT institutions in the development, implementation, offer and delivery of French language communications and services to the public.

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

Those strategic priorities are reflected in and will be implemented through the GNWT Action Plan 2023-2028 under the Canada-NWT Agreement on French Language Services 2023-2028.



Context

Background

1984

In 1984, the GNWT adopted the *Official Languages Act*, which recognizes official language rights in the NWT and provides official language status to English, French and nine Indigenous languages.

2009

Court procedures ended in 2009 with the Supreme Court of Canada decision. The court required that most GNWT institutions were to provide services in French to the public.

1984

2009

1999

2012

1999

In 1999, litigation between the Fédération franco-ténoise and the GNWT began as a result of the lobbying for an equivalent balance of English and French programs and services.

2012-2013

In 2012, the GNWT established the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and in 2013, the first Strategic Plan 2013-2018 was developed in partnership with the Fédération franco-ténoise.

2015

Two years later followed the GNWT Standards on French Language Communications and Services (Standards) and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan 2015, which were created to complement the Strategic Plan 2013-2018.

2020

Updated in 2020, the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan 2020 was closely linked to the Strategic Plan 2018-2023, providing tools for its implementation and guidance to track and assess progress and results of its implementation. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan 2020 also contained provision for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023, to be conducted at the end of its life cycle.

2015

2020

2017

2022

2017-18

In 2017-2018, an audit of the GNWT French language communications and services and an evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2013-2018 were conducted by a third-party contractor. Those activities helped determine the overall success and value of the Strategic Plan 2013-2018 and inform the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023. This second Strategic Plan included a focus on accountability and engagement with the Francophone community.

2022

The Evaluation of French Language Communications and Services for 2018-2023 Strategic Plan (Evaluation) was completed during summer 2022, and the final report included 23 recommendations, to which 22 were agreed upon by the GNWT. Those recommendations are reflected in this third Strategic Plan 2023-2028.



Vision

The NWT's Francophone community is supported by the provision of French language communications and services to maintain the use and vitality of the French language.

Francophone Community

The NWT's Francophone community is growing.

According to the Census 2021, the total number of individuals that reported French as a mother tongue was 1,475; an 8.5% increase from the Census 2016. Moreover, 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. According to the Census 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).

Progress made under Strategic Plan 2018-2023

The implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 generated significant advancement regarding communications, especially in terms of signage and advertisement. The Evaluation report of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023 indicated that the Francophone community acknowledged the GNWT made improvements in the availability of communications in French.

During this same time period, GNWT institutions made progress in recruiting and retaining bilingual personnel. Bilingual job postings were created, and senior management was found to be supportive of the French language, providing tools and resources to obtain additional French language training as needed. Additionally, the Bilingual Designation Policy was approved in 2019, bringing clarity on how employees' language proficiency is evaluated and assessed, how to determine if an employee should be assigned a bilingual preferred status, and to give directions on circumstances in which employees can receive the bilingual bonus.

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. Some highlights include:

- Developing and staffing the position of French Language Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, located in the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.
- Developing the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan 2020, which was intended to help track and assess progress and results of the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023.

According to the Evaluation report of the Strategic Plan 2018-2023, all tasks stated in the Strategic Plan for monitoring and evaluation by the Francophone Affairs Secretariat 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.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

Existing Legislation and Regulations

The *NWT Official Languages Act* is the base upon which the Strategic Plan 2023-2028 rests.

The *Government Institution Regulations* lists the agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, offices, and other bodies designated as government institutions for purposes of the *Official Languages Act*.

As stated in subsection 11(1) of the *Official Languages Act*:

“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.”

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

Government Institutions Concerned

- As per *Government Institution Regulations*
- Head and central offices
- Offices impacted by the “significant demand” or “nature of office” criteria



Guidelines on French Language Communications and Services

The following Guidelines on French Language Communications and Services (Strategic Plan Guidelines) are designed to facilitate the application of the *Official Languages Act*. They apply to all GNWT institutions.

In these Guidelines, 'bilingual' refers to French and English.



Guideline

1

Roles and Responsibilities

01 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly play an oversight role in the implementation and administration of the *Official Languages Act*.

02 MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The Minister Responsible for the Official Languages 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 strategies to the Executive Council for GNWT institutions respecting 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 communications and services.

03 OTHER MINISTERS

Individual Ministers will:

- provide for French language communications and services in their assigned GNWT institutions per the *Official Languages Act*, related regulations and the Strategic Plan Guidelines;
- ensure that Operating Plans and reports respecting French language communications and services are prepared for assigned GNWT institutions in accordance with the Strategic Plan Guidelines; and
- with the Minister Responsible for the Official Languages, respond to public concerns respecting the quality of French language communications and services provided by GNWT institutions for which the Minister is responsible.



04 DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

The Department of Finance 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;
- in partnership with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, maintain and enhance a systematic process for attracting and recruiting bilingual personnel (professional and other) with a special focus on the health area (physicians, nurses, counsellors, social services professionals, and allied health professionals);
- maintain an inventory and appropriate profile of the bilingual human resources within the public service;
- maintain French language competency requirement profiles for bilingual required positions and bilingual preferred status; and
- have a Senior Bilingual Human Resources Advisor and an Advisor – Human Resources and French Language Services to help carry out the above and related functions.

05 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

The Department of Health and Social Services will:

- work with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority to resource improvement initiatives within the Health and Social Services System; and
- formalize a working committee with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and the Fédération franco-ténoise for developing and implementing strategies to address the Francophone community priorities related to promoting and improving French language communications and services within the Health and Social Services System.

06 NORTHWEST TERRITORIES HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority will:

- staff the new Strategic Lead, French Services position;
- work with the Department of Health and Social Services and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority to resource improvement initiatives within the Health and Social Services System;
- in partnership with the Department of Finance and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority, maintain and enhance a systematic process for attracting and recruiting bilingual personnel (professional and other) with a special focus on the health area (physicians, nurses, counsellors, social services professionals, and allied health professionals); and
- formalize a working committee with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority and the Fédération franco-ténoise for developing and implementing strategies to address the Francophone community priorities related to promoting and improving French language communications and services within the Health and Social Services System.

07 HAY RIVER HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

The Hay River Health and Social Services Authority will:

- work with the Department of Health and Social Services and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority to resource improvement initiatives within the Health and Social Services System;
- in partnership with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, maintain and enhance a systematic process for attracting and recruiting bilingual personnel (professional and other) with a special focus on the health area (physicians, nurses, counsellors, social services professionals, and allied health professionals); and
- formalize a working committee with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority and the Fédération franco-ténoise for developing and implementing strategies to address the Francophone community priorities related to promoting and improving French language communications and services within the Health and Social Services System.

08 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, web content, advertising, publishing, visual identity, design, evaluation and reporting.

09 DEPUTY HEADS

Deputy Heads of GNWT institutions will:

- provide clear direction within their area of jurisdiction regarding French language communications and services as per the *Official Languages Act* and Strategic Plan Guidelines;
- regularly include French language communications and services as an agenda item for their GNWT institution's Senior management meetings; and
- where appropriate, engage with Francophone community organizations respecting the provision of services in French by the GNWT institutions for which their Minister is responsible.



10 FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT

The Francophone Affairs Secretariat serves as a Central Support Agency for GNWT institutions in regard to French language communications and services. It provides advice on the interpretation of the Strategic Plan and the Standards, and offers support for monitoring and reporting matters.

The Francophone Affairs Secretariat's responsibilities are to:

- provide support and advice to the Minister Responsible for the Official Languages in carrying out the Minister's related duties;
- provide support to the Minister Responsible for the Official Languages at the Ministers' Council on the Canadian Francophonie;
- 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 Official Languages;
- carry out any other function assigned by the Minister Responsible for the Official Languages
- negotiate, manage and administer the Canada/NWT Agreement on French Language Services;
- coordinate the provision of French translation services government-wide;
- manage Services TNO;
- offer advice, tools and support to GNWT institutions for the purpose of developing and implementing Operating Plans on French language communications and services and adopting policies that reflect the needs of the Francophone community;
- develop orientation programs for French Language Services Coordinators and, in cooperation with these Coordinators, for employees of GNWT institutions with respect to their obligations under the *Official Languages Act* and Strategic Plan Guidelines;
- call and chair regular meetings of the French Language Services Coordinating Committee;
- update the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan to reflect the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028;
- ensure compliance audits of French language communications and services applicable to all GNWT institutions;
- liaise with the Francophone community on a regular and ongoing basis regarding the provision of French language communications and services; and
- ensure that 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.

11 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 GNWT 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 implementation of French language communications and services;
- make recommendations to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat on issues and areas of importance to focus on during compliance audits on French language communications and services; and
- act as a forum to exchange ideas as well as discuss common issues and responses respecting French language communications and services.

12 FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COORDINATORS

The main responsibility of the French Language Services Coordinators is to champion and coordinate the provision of quality French language communications and services in their respective GNWT institution.

French Language Services Coordinators are, preferably:

- fluently bilingual, especially in the GNWT institutions that offer several front-line services;
- in full-time dedicated positions in GNWT institutions that offer several front-line services;
- serving several smaller GNWT institutions in a shared position, as possible;
- granted access to senior officials or managers within their GNWT institution;
- 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; and
- very familiar with the programs and services of their GNWT institution.

The responsibilities of a French Language Services Coordinator are to:

- assist senior officials of their GNWT institution in the planning and implementation of French language communications and services, including providing updates for Senior management meetings;
- assist senior officials to ensure their GNWT institution has the necessary and appropriate human resources to deliver French language services in accordance with its Operating Plan;
- maintain a list of bilingual staff and provide advice to the Deputy Head regarding application of the bilingual bonus;
- develop, monitor, report on, and update their GNWT institution's Operating Plan in a timely manner, in collaboration with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat;
- ensure the appropriate orientation and training of all GNWT institution staff regarding their obligations under the *Official Languages Act* and Strategic Plan Guidelines with a focus on staff providing front-line services and working in communications;
- maintain an inventory of all points of public service for their respective GNWT institution;
- visit points of public service to run through service scenarios with staff and offer additional training and/or resources as required;
- ensure that communications, including web content, intended for the public conform to the Strategic Plan Guidelines, Standards and Communications and Policy Directives;
- 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 Official Languages Act and Strategic Plan 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 engagement with the Francophone community;
- follow up on any complaints received regarding the GNWT institution's French language communications and services; and
- participate in the meetings of the French Language Services Coordinating Committee and make recommendations to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, as required.



13 KEY UNITS AND STAFF

Within each GNWT institution and within units responsible for certain centralized systems and operations of the GNWT, some individuals or groups play important roles in the development, implementation and evaluation of French language communications and services.

Divisional directors and program managers are responsible for:

- integrating French language requirements into planning processes, programs, communications and services, human resources planning, monitoring and evaluation, 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 employees of their GNWT institution in the development and implementation of quality French language communications with due regard to the Strategic Plan Guidelines, Standards and Communications and Policy Directives.

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.

14 BILINGUAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND NON-BILINGUAL FRONT-LINE STAFF

Bilingual service providers and non-bilingual front-line staff are responsible for:

- working with their GNWT institution's French Language Services Coordinator to understand their role in offering and delivering French language service to the Francophone community;
- being familiar with their obligations, the Strategic Plan Guidelines, and appropriate processes and methods regarding the active offer and effective delivery of French language services; and
- being sensitive to the importance of their key roles in the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* and related policies and Strategic Plan Guidelines, and in the public's assessment of the effectiveness of that implementation.

Guideline

2

Communications

The Standards were created to guide GNWT communications. The Standards apply where the criteria for significant demand, nature of the office, and head or central office are met. In line with the *Official Languages Act*, 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.

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

The following is an illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of written instruments that require translation and simultaneous publication in French and English:

- Social media posts;
- Any paid notice, advertisement or insert in a newspaper, periodical, radio broadcast or on television;
- Public health and emergency measures advisories;
- Annual reports, action plans and strategies;
- Program and service application or registration forms and documents;
- Public signage;
- Certificates, permits, and licenses;
- Training manuals and materials intended to educate the public;
- Brochures and promotional material intended to inform, educate or instruct the public; and
- Websites and web content intended to inform, educate or instruct the public.

Additional information on communications requirements, including examples, is detailed in the Standards and in the Communications Policy and Directives.



Guideline

3

Services

To comply with the *Official Languages Act*, a service can be delivered in various ways, such as direct service, referral service and interpretation or language facilitation. **Although a direct service is deemed ideal, it is not always possible.** Where the service sought involves urgent or confidential matters, a member of the public is entitled to immediate service in French. Ideally, such service should usually be available without the use of a third-party interpreter, especially when such confidential and sensitive matters as health are concerned.

Direct service:

- provided face-to-face, over the phone, or via email; the bilingual employee who offered the service provides the service in French.

Referral service:

- a non-bilingual front-line employee has ready access to a bilingual employee in the same office or in some other location who can serve a member of the public in French. The service provider may not be physically located at the first point of contact but can provide the service over the phone, through email or via video conferencing.

Interpretation or language facilitation service:

- an interpreter assists a non-bilingual employee in the delivery of a service in French to a member of the public. Interpretation is accessed via telephone, face-to-face or via video conference. Only certified interpreters shall provide **interpretation service**; however, other bilingual employees may provide **language facilitation** to aid non-bilingual employees to serve members of the public in French.

Active Offer

The active offer of French services is normally the first step of an effective delivery.

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 be:

- a sign such as a tent card
- a personal greeting such as “hello, bonjour”
- a message such as an email or a voicemail

Resources related to active offer, such as signage and window decals, are available from the Francophone Affairs Secretariat.

Effective Delivery

Effective service delivery means that French language services are:

- evident
- readily available
- easily accessible to the public

French language services are made evident by:

- active offer signage;
- French language and/or bilingual materials available in public reception areas;
- bilingual greetings (in person, on the telephone or as a voicemail); and
- information in French being accessible on GNWT institution websites.

French language services are made readily available through:

- bilingual personnel at physical points of public service;
- referral systems in place to facilitate easy access to bilingual personnel or interpretation service upon first contact between a French-speaking client and a non-French-speaking employee;
- appropriate bilingual publication format; and
- materials presented in both languages in display areas and on websites.

French language services are made easily accessible via:

- single window service centres, such as Services TNO;
- dedicated telephone lines; and
- automated self-service telephone and online options allowing clients to select the language of service.



Guideline

4

Human Resources

Every GNWT institution has a French Language Services Coordinator, who champions and coordinates the provision of quality French language communications and services by their respective institution. French Language Services Coordinators are responsible to plan, develop and implement plans and strategies for the active offer and effective delivery of French language communications and services.

To do so, they shall ensure their GNWT institution has the necessary and appropriate human resources to deliver French language services and shall make recommendations and provide assistance to senior management in planning for bilingual required positions or bilingual preferred status employees.

Employees required to offer and provide such services, whether bilingual or not, shall be appropriately trained, positioned, encouraged, and supported to play an important role in ensuring services are available in French.

Bilingual Human Resources

GNWT institutions have different options for bilingual human resources planning:

- Designating specific positions as bilingual required;
- Encouraging bilingual preferred status for relevant employees;
- Ensuring units have a sufficient number of bilingual personnel to adequately deliver 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.

Adopted in 2019, the Bilingual Designation Policy provides guidance in attributing bilingual bonus and how employees' language proficiency shall be evaluated. Employees eligible for bilingual bonus are individuals who provide government services in more than one NWT official language and occupy a bilingual required position or are designated with the bilingual preferred status.

Bilingual required position:

- refers to a **POSITION** which has been designated as requiring the use of multiple languages, and where this requirement has been included in the job description for the position.
- Receives bilingual bonus.

Bilingual preferred status:

- refers to an **EMPLOYEE** who is able to occasionally provide government services in an official language in addition to English, who is not in a position designated as bilingual required.
- Receives bilingual bonus.

Front-line staff:

- refers to an employee who interacts with members of the public as a first point of contact. Front-line staff are able to actively offer and provide answers in French or offer referral or interpretation/language facilitation services.

French Language Proficiency

The level of French language proficiency is indicated in job descriptions. Those levels - basic, intermediate, and advanced - are defined by the Department of Finance in consultation with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. GNWT institutions are responsible to determine the appropriate level of French language proficiency that will be required to ensure they have the ability to offer and deliver French language services to the public.

Individuals appointed to a bilingual required position must undergo an assessment during the hiring process to confirm their language proficiency. Testing to determine or validate the French language proficiency of an employee, or future employee that might be eligible for bilingual bonus is mandatory. It is done through the mechanisms developed by the Department of Finance.

Training*Active offer and public feedback training*

French Language Services Coordinators are responsible for ensuring their GNWT institution staff receive necessary orientation and training on their obligations under the *Official Languages Act* and Strategic Plan Guidelines. This includes bilingual employees, senior management, communications staff and front-line staff (both bilingual and non-French speaking).

To do so, French Language Services Coordinators shall:

- provide training on the active offer, effective delivery and feedback process; and
- visit their GNWT institution's points of public service to offer support, training and additional resources as needed.



French language refresher training for GNWT employees

With the approval of their supervisor, a bilingual employee who meets the criteria can enroll in the French language refresher training for GNWT employees to improve their writing and oral skills. The training is supported by the Department of Finance and delivered through a partnership with Collège Nordique francophone.

This initiative aims to support bilingual human resources in feeling confident when offering and providing services in French.

Recruitment of personnel for bilingual required positions

GNWT institutions assign bilingual required positions when possible. The recruitment of employees for bilingual required positions demands creative approaches and systematic processes such as:

- Working with the community to promote awareness of bilingual positions in the GNWT;
- Offering presentations on bilingualism in the government workforce at career fairs at Francophone schools and at French immersion schools;
- Encouraging bilingual students to showcase their French language abilities during summer employment and internship programs;
- Creating work-experience programs, such as career days, that will place students from Francophone schools 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 support their eventual qualification for bilingual required positions; and
- Establishing employee committees to brainstorm and advise on bilingual human resource issues.

When recruiting for a **bilingual required 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 at least one bilingual person able to assess, according to predetermined methods, the language proficiency of candidates; and
- Follow-up French language proficiency testing will be completed with the top candidate.

Additionally, for the recruitment of personnel for bilingual positions in the health area specifically, the Department of Finance works in partnership with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority, which also works in partnership with the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority.

Guideline

5

Planning

Strategic Plan

To implement the *Official Languages Act*, and to fulfill the GNWT's obligations, goals and objectives for French language communications and services, the current Strategic Plan is established at a GNWT-wide level. The Minister Responsible for the Official Languages has the responsibility to coordinate the delivery of French language services across the government.

Operating Plans

The core points of the Strategic Plan are reflected at the GNWT institutions' level through their Operating Plans for French Language Communications and Services. Each GNWT institution is responsible for developing its own Operating Plan, a customized document that guides them in the implementation of the GNWT Strategic Plan, in accordance with their unique situation. GNWT institutions shall ensure the Operating Plan is compatible and complementary to the GNWT's overall vision, goals and objectives.

Operating Plans are updated annually and submitted to the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. They encompass targets and activities that are monitored through the year and reported on.



Guideline

6

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are fundamental to achieve goals and objectives, and ultimately improve performance. Those processes help track the implementation of a project or program, the assessment of its effectiveness, and corrective measures as needed.

Monitoring and Reporting

Effective monitoring requires a formal monitoring system through which predetermined information is collected, verified, compiled, and analyzed. Both the GNWT Strategic Plan and GNWT institutions' Operating Plans are monitored through the year, which allows annual reporting on progress, and planning for the following year.

Progress on activities and targets of the GNWT Strategic Plan and GNWT institutions' Operating Plans are reported on annually, in addition to GNWT institutions conducting a mid-year review on their Operating Plan. As much as each GNWT institution is responsible for developing its own Operating Plan, they are also accountable in monitoring and reporting on their plans and strategies.

Compliance Audits

GNWT institutions perform internal monitoring and reviews. At a higher level, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat is responsible for compliance audits and the evaluation of the Strategic Plan at the end of its life cycle.

Two compliance audits will be carried out during the life cycle of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028:

- 2024-2025
- 2026-2027

To ensure impartiality, those compliance audits may be conducted by a third-party contractor. They may concentrate on an issue related to a specific GNWT institution or address a global concern that relates to various GNWT institutions.

Compliance audits will be determined in collaboration with the Francophone community, or in accordance with suggestions advanced by the French Language Services Coordinating Committee. Each compliance audit will generate a report with recommendations, which will be made available to the public.

Evaluation

At the end of the life cycle of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028, an evaluation will be conducted by a third-party contractor to determine its overall success and value, and to inform the development of the subsequent Strategic Plan 2028-2033. The evaluation will generate a report with recommendations, to which the GNWT will provide a response.

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 will be made public.

All details pertaining to monitoring and evaluation are addressed in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan. This document provides guidance to the GNWT and its institutions to effectively implement the Strategic Plan, while also ensuring the application of the 2009 court order. It establishes specific indicators to ensure accurate monitoring, reporting and accountability of the Strategic Plan, which help track and assess the progress and results of its implementation.

The current Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan 2020 will be renewed to reflect the Strategic Plan 2023-2028 and the actual Francophone community priorities. Additional information pertaining to monitoring, reporting, compliance audits and evaluation can be found in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability Plan.



Guideline

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Community Input

The primary responsibility for maintaining the use and vitality of the French language and culture rests with the Francophone community itself. The GNWT is committed to support the NWT Francophone community in doing so by offering and providing French language communications and services to the public.

Community input is a useful source of information for the GNWT. It provides clarification on the community needs and priorities and helps the GNWT to improve its approaches in offering and delivering quality French language communications and services to the public. Input can be received through partnerships or via public engagement.

Partnerships

Official Languages Board

The Official Languages Board is established to advise and make recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Official Languages with respect to any matter within its purview. The Official Languages Board is composed of members representing each of the official languages of the NWT. Its focus is on communications, services, and programs.

Minister Responsible for the Official Languages

The Minister Responsible for the Official Languages develops appropriate partnerships with the Francophone community and formally meets at least once a year with that community to ensure the GNWT is aware of the Francophone community's needs and priorities.

Francophone Affairs Secretariat and Francophone community representatives

In 2010, a consultation/cooperation committee was established, bringing together representatives of the GNWT and the Fédération franco-ténoise to

consult on the drafting, implementation, administration and promotion of the first Strategic Plan 2013-2018. This committee was also part of the second Strategic Plan 2018-2023.

For the Strategic Plan 2023-2028, maintaining an open dialogue between the GNWT and the Francophone community representatives remains a priority. Terms of reference will be developed by the GNWT and Fédération franco-ténoise during the first two years of this Strategic Plan.

In addition, the GNWT, via the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, will meet with the Francophone community representatives at least twice a year to clarify expectations and to allow both parties to discuss issues and actions taken to address them.

Working partnerships

Working partnerships are an excellent opportunity to establish a shared vision and put in place the requirements of the Official Languages Act by sharing expertise. It can be done through a long-time partnership, or via collaboration that enables a GNWT institution to offer and deliver its communications and services in French to the public.

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

Health and Social Services System Working Committee

The Department of Health and Social Services, the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority and the Hay River Health and Social Services Authority will formalize a working committee with the Francophone community via the Fédération franco-ténoise. The purpose of this Committee is to develop and implement strategies to address the Francophone community's priorities related to promoting and improving French language communications and services within the Health and Social Services System.

Public Engagement

Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey

The Francophone Community Satisfaction Survey, conducted every two years, provides Francophone community members with an opportunity to share their feedback on the GNWT's French language communications and services. Participation is voluntary and responses are anonymous. The results are public and used to make improvements to GNWT French language communications and services.

Have your Say

The Have your Say website is managed by the GNWT. Its purpose is to engage with residents on decisions being made across the GNWT. Engagements are bilingual, and the Francophone community can contribute in French to decisions that affect the Northwest Territories.



Other public engagements

Public hearings and meetings are examples of public engagement during which the Francophone community members can express their views in French on various topics raised by the GNWT.

Public feedback process: Votre avis GTNO

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

The public feedback process *Votre avis GTNO* is accessible to members of the public and offers two options to provide feedback in writing to the GNWT. Printed versions of these options can be requested from Services TNO.

Option 1 – no formal response

- Feedback is **ANONYMOUS**. The GNWT will act in response to the feedback, but the member of the public will not receive a response.

Option 2 – formal response

- The individual providing the feedback can request that their identity remain **CONFIDENTIAL** at the time of submitting the signed and dated form. A formal response from the GNWT will be provided.

When submitting a complaint under ‘Option 2 – formal response’, follow-up involves:

- determining the legitimacy of the complaint;
- assessing legitimate problems with the appropriate authorities in the GNWT institution concerned;
- finding appropriate solutions and taking corrective actions as required; and
- within 30 working days of receipt of a formal signed complaint, informing the complainant of corrective actions 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. The GNWT and the Francophone Affairs Secretariat remain open to a robust working relationship with the Languages Commissioner where appropriate.

