

NOVA SCOTIA OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION
French-language Services Plan
for 2008-2009

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Message from Rosalind Penfound, Deputy Minister

I am pleased to present the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration's French-Language Services Business Plan for 2008-2009. The plan outlines our intent to broaden the array of French information available to our clients, and underscores our commitment to serving Nova Scotia's Acadian and French communities.

As indicated in *Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy* (2005), our province is facing a number of demographic challenges, including slow population growth, an aging population, low birthrate, and out-migration of youth. These are all prominent issues in the Acadian communities of the province. An influx of Francophone immigrants to our province would help to enrich the social, cultural, and economic life of our Acadian and French communities. In this way, immigration can help contribute to the preservation and growth of the Acadian and francophone community.

With the goals of attracting and retaining more immigrants to Nova Scotia's Acadian and French communities, we have established a partnership with the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Since the Immigration Strategy was introduced in 2005, the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration has worked closely with its Acadian and francophone partners in holding consultations, developing French language materials and offering information sessions to stakeholders. In 2007 representatives of the Office of Immigration along with representatives of Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse attended immigration fairs to promote Nova Scotia's Acadian and French communities as francophone immigration destinations.

In 2008-2009 our work will include promoting Nova Scotia as an attractive francophone destination with supporting local networks, increasing awareness of the benefits of immigration among the local community, and selecting potential immigrants.

We support and applaud the good work of the Nova Scotia Office of Acadian Affairs and our community partners.

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration's French-Language Services Business Plan for 2008-2009 is in keeping with the goals of our Immigration Strategy as well as our responsibilities under the *French Language Service Act*.

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration's French-language Services in Place

How our institution's staff has been instructed to respond to verbal and written requests from the public to communicate in French.

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration has two fully bilingual staff who will respond to verbal and written French requests from the public. The *Bonjour!* sign offering services in both official languages is prominently displayed in the reception area. Furthermore, bilingual staff are encouraged to wear the *Bonjour!* pin to indicate their bilingual capacity.

Staff are encouraged to respond in French to ask the client to wait a moment while they get a bilingual staff member if available. This policy is in effect for both in-person and telephone inquiries. All written requests will be responded to in the official language of choice of the correspondent.

French-language services offered

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration currently offers French-language services in the following areas:

Partnership

- On-going consultation with the Acadian and francophone community on settlement services, as well as, immigration recruitment, attraction and strategies to increase partnerships between the Acadian and francophone community and the Office of Immigration.
- Collaboration with the Acadian and francophone community-based organizations to support recruitment and integration activities for Francophone immigrants.

Communication

- Since November 2005, NSOI provides clients service in French.
- Publication and distribution of French language promotional material: pamphlets, kit folders, signage.
- Translation and availability of Immigration Settlement Program Funding and Nova Scotia Nominee Program application guides and forms in French.
- Participation in immigration fairs in francophone countries with representatives from the Acadian community to promote Nova Scotia programs such as the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) and to advertise Nova Scotia as a francophone immigration destination.
- Facilitation of information sessions and presentations in French to interested stakeholders and liaison with community partners and employers to raise awareness about the benefits of immigration in general and the Office of Immigration programs in particular.

Support

- Allocation of funding under the Immigration Settlement Program to support public awareness, development and settlement activities in the Acadian and francophone

community. This funding assists French-speaking immigrants in settling in Nova Scotia Acadian communities.

- Provision of learning opportunities to NSOI staff to participate in the French as second language program via the Public Service Commission and the Office of Acadian Affairs.

How the plan will contribute to the preservation or growth of the Acadian and Francophone community

A dedicated bilingual nominee officer will help ensure that French-speaking immigrants and community-stakeholders will receive service in their mother-tongue.

Many Acadian regions of Nova Scotia are located in rural areas and are experiencing significant outmigration of its younger workforce. In an effort to counteract the shortage of skilled workers, Office of Immigration will continue to work closely with and provide support to Acadian and francophone organizations such as Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE), in carrying out immigration promotional activities, so that Nova Scotia can attract more French-speaking immigrants and ensure that they have the necessary settlement supports to stay and succeed here.

The Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse is officially identified as a partner under the nominee program, community identified stream. This status allows FANE to provide letters of identification for an individual who has established community connections within the Acadian community and wishes to be nominated through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program for permanent residency.

In conjunction with the Department of Education, the Office of Immigration held consultations in the Fall of 2007 on inter-provincial labour mobility and international credential recognition. A specific consultation was held with Francophone stakeholders. The aim of the consultation was to identify potential solutions to the barriers faced in recognition of credentials and qualifications for those trained and educated outside of Nova Scotia.

Goals, Objectives and Initiatives for 2008-2009

Corporate Objective 1 Strengthening the policy, regulatory, and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act.		
Specific Goals and Objectives	Progress in reaching specific goals and objectives set for 2007-2008	Specific Measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009
<p>1.1</p> <p>The Office of Immigration and the Minister fulfill their obligations under the French-language Services Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from the Office of Immigration regularly participate on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee • In January 2008, one of the Nominee Officer positions was designated officially as a bilingual position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the work of the Office of Acadian Affairs and the implementation of the French-language Services Act by ensuring representation of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee. • Provide an accountability report to the Minister of Acadian Affairs demonstrating accomplishments of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration towards our 2008-2009 French-language Services Plan: goals and objectives. • Nova Scotia Office of Immigration bilingual staff to provide French services to stakeholders and clients, and to increase French language capacity at the Office of Immigration.

Corporate Objective 2

Consulting with the Acadian and francophone community

Specific Goals and Objectives	Progress in reaching specific goals and objectives set for 2007-2008	Specific Measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009
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<p>2.1</p> <p>Establishment and prioritization of French-language services to be offered, and of strategies or approaches for service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nova Scotia Office of Immigration provided \$55,000 to FANE to build capacity to promote, recruit, welcome and integrate new French-speaking immigrants in the Acadian and francophone regions of Nova Scotia. NSOI continues to be an active partner in helping FANE and other Acadian and francophone partners build capacity to welcome newcomers into their communities. • Nova Scotia Office of Immigration provided grants of \$8,666 and \$10,000 respectively to FANE and Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse to support the development of French language website resources to facilitate immigration. • Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to access \$20,550 in funds to support Francophone immigration promotional activities. The promotional activities included staff from NSOI, FANE and Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse attending immigration fairs in France, Belgium and Tunisia with success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going consultation with the Acadian and francophone community on immigration recruitment, settlement services, services delivery to French speaking immigrants and strategies to increase partnerships between the Acadian and Francophone community and the Office of Immigration. • Collaborate with the Acadian and francophone community-based organizations on outreach projects funded by the Office of Immigration and led by organizations such as the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. • Build stronger relationships between the Office of Immigration and Acadian and francophone community-based organizations such as the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse and the Acadian Immigration Steering Committee.
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<p>2.1 (suite)</p> <p>Establishment and prioritization of French-language services to be offered, and of strategies or approaches for service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On October 3, 2007, staff from the Department of Education and Office of Immigration held a consultation session with interested stakeholders from the Francophone community to identify potential solutions to issues associated with inter-provincial labour mobility and foreign credential recognition. The aim of which is to make it easier for those educated and trained outside of Nova Scotia to become regulated and find work in their chosen profession in Nova Scotia. • Representatives from the Office of Immigration participated to the <i>Comité directeur pour l'immigration francophone</i>, a multi-stakeholder committee initiated by the FANE. • NSOI staff have conducted immigration presentations in French at various events, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - July 5: Alliance française (Halifax) - July 6: Belgium Farmers (NSAC in Truro) - Sept. 20: Business Leaders (Tusket) - Oct. 10: International Students (Université Sainte-Anne in Pointe-de-l'Église) - Oct. 11: Business Leaders (Halifax) - Nov. 2: Francophone Conference on regionalization (Pointe-de-l'Église) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Acadian and francophone communities on specific issues such as skill shortages and need for immigrants. <p>Province-wide meeting for public consultations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a French-language component in consultations on immigration with business leaders, students and Office of Immigration mandated organizations.
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<p>2.1 (suite)</p> <p>Establishment and prioritization of French-language services to be offered, and of strategies or approaches for service delivery.</p>	<p>- Feb 1: Orientation for FANE regional coordinators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with regional development authorities, including FANE, were held on May 24 to strengthen the procedures and criteria nomination under the community identified stream of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. • On January 17, 2008 a consultation session was held with regional development authorities and FANE on the proposed entrepreneur stream of the Nova Scotia nominee program. The discussion paper was made available in French and English. 	
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Corporate Objective 3**Communicating, sharing information, and promoting services available in French.**

Specific Goals and Objectives	Progress in reaching specific goals and objectives set for 2007-2008	Specific Measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009
<p>3.1 Public information is available in both French and English</p> <p>3.2 Employees and the public are more aware of the approach being taken by the Office of Immigration to provide French-language services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Procedure for responding to and referring inquiries in French were developed and implemented• There are currently three pamphlets and two display panels in French that are used for promotional purposes. Application materials and guidelines are available in French. The application and guides for settlement funding are also available in French.• The Office of Immigration launched a new website in 2007. Key documents and application materials are available in both official languages on the website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSOI bilingual staff will respond to verbal and written French communications and requests.• Prominently display the <i>Bonjour!</i> sign offering services in both official languages in the reception area.• Bilingual staff are encouraged to wear the <i>Bonjour!</i> pin to indicate their bilingual capacity.• Prioritize, translate and make available information material which must be provided in French<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ Website: ensure that significant portions of the NSOI website are available in French, and include French specific information related to immigration.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSOI provided funding to the FANE to increase the content of their immigration website Vie Nouvelle-Écosse • Staff from NSOI participated in three French-specific immigration fairs in November 2007 in France, Belgium and Tunisia. Funding was also provided through Citizenship and Immigration Canada for representatives of the Acadian community to attend these fairs. • NSOI followed up on a large number of requests from French speaking foreign nationals on immigration in Nova Scotia. Some of them came to the province to visit and explore the possibilities for immigration. • Staff participated in a number of interviews with Francophone media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Promotional material : increase the number of promotion materials available in French ▫ Printed publications such as reports made available in French • Promote Nova Scotia as a francophone destination and promote the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP) through marketing efforts such as on-line publications, brochures and international immigration fairs. • Conduct information sessions and make presentations in French to interested stakeholders, and liaise with community partners and media (on occasion) to raise awareness about the benefits of immigration in general and of the programs and services of the Office of Immigration in particular.
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Corporate Objective 4**Supporting French-language services development, planning and delivery in priority areas**

Specific Goals and Objectives	Progress in reaching specific goals and objectives set for 2007-2008	Specific Measures which will be taken to achieve these goals and objectives in 2008-2009
<p>4.1</p> <p>Development and adaptation of plans and strategies for French-language service delivery as part of the annual planning process and accountability reporting process.</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>The Office of Immigration has a coordinated approach to deal with human resources issues related to the delivery of French-language services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nova Scotia Office of Immigration designated one of its Program Officer positions as bilingual to liaise with the Acadian and Francophone community.• Opportunities for French-language training is available to staff at NSOI.• Worked in close collaboration with our community partners on recruitment, attraction and retention strategy in the Acadian and francophone communities of Nova Scotia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examine the level of services in French and the capacity for offering services, identify the priority areas and monitor progress.• Provide staff with opportunities, learning tools and resources for French-language skills development, maintenance and growth.• Support the development of francophone immigration in Nova Scotia through partnership with Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and other community organizations.• Support community immigration related initiatives that meet the needs of the Acadian and francophone community through the NSOI Immigration Settlement Program Funding.