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French-language Services Action Plan for 2009-2010

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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 Plan for 2009-2010. 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 Francophone communities.

As indicated in the Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy, 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 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 Acadian and Francophone communities. In this way, immigration will contribute to the preservation and growth of the Acadian and Francophone community.

In 2008, the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration created an Immigration Advisory Council consisting of 13 council members representing a wide spectrum of expertise and backgrounds. Among the new appointees are business, municipal, labour and community leaders, many of whom left their homelands to build highly successful rewarding careers in Nova Scotia. We are delighted to count two Francophones on the Immigration Advisory Council.

Furthermore, the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration participates on the Steering Committee for Francophone Immigration, lead by our community partner, the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. This organization has developed a five-year business plan for Francophone immigration to contribute to the global development of Acadian communities in Nova Scotia.

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 materials, offering information sessions to stakeholders and supporting the processing of Francophone immigrants through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. In 2008, a representative 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 in Europe to promote Nova Scotia's Acadian and Francophone communities.

In 2009-2010, our work will include promoting Nova Scotia as an attractive francophone destination with supporting local networks, increasing awareness for 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 Plan for 2009-2010 is in keeping with the goals of our Immigration Strategy as well as our responsibilities under the *French-language Services Act and Regulations*.

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration's French-language Services Plan for 2009-2010

1. Responses to French requests

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration has one 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 is encouraged to wear the *Bonjour!* pin to indicate their bilingual capacity.

Reception staff is 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.

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (NSOI) has designated one of the nominee positions officially as a bilingual position.

2. French-language Services Inventory

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 September 2005, NSOI provides clients with services 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 and employment 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 Funding 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's Acadian and Francophone 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.

3. Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2008-2009

See Table 1

4. Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2009-2010

See Table 2

5. Priorities of the Acadian and Francophone Community

As previously mentioned in the Message from the Deputy Minister, various immigration stakeholders are members of the Steering Committee on Francophone Immigration with the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration to discuss important issues for Nova Scotians and the community.

The Acadian and Francophone community has outlined in its five year plan on Francophone immigration – *Plan directeur – Immigration francophone 2009-2014*, the strategies to support Francophone immigrants to the province for the following objectives:

- to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants to change the demography of the Acadian communities
- to improve the capacity of the communities to welcome newcomers
- to support the economic integration of Francophone immigrants in the Francophone communities
- to support the social and cultural integration of Francophone immigrants in the Acadian communities

The NSOI was involved in the development of the action plan and support its global vision and objectives. Collaboration is not a mere word and over the years NSOI has fostered a strong positive relationship between the Acadian community and its Office.

6. Conclusion: Contribution to the Preservation and Growth of the Acadian and Francophone community

A dedicated bilingual nominee officer will help ensure that French-speaking immigrants and community stakeholders will receive services 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, and identifying employment opportunities so that Nova Scotia can attract more French-speaking immigrants and ensure that they have the necessary settlement supports to stay and succeed here.

In 2008-2009, under the Labour Market Agreement, the Office of Immigration was able to support two other organizations to provide services in the Acadian community, namely Université Sainte-Anne and Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse. The grant to Université Sainte-Anne aimed to facilitate the integration of Francophone immigrants to the Canadian labour market and workplace, with a serie of workshops and a two-week work placement in a business or organization. The other grant to Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse was used to organize a one-day forum for employers and stakeholders on immigration in the province's Acadian regions to discuss the best employability practices for the integration of immigrants in the workplace.

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.

Table 1 – Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2008-2009 (Office of Immigration)

Corporate Objective 1		
Strengthening the policy, regulatory and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act		
Goals and Objectives 2008-2009	Planned Measures 2008-2009	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 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"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from the Office of Immigration regularly participate on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee and sub-committees such as HR. • Contribute to the Government's annual report on French-language services. • NSOI bilingual staff is available to provide an array of services in French in a timely manner. In 2008-2009, NSOI had two bilingual staff and three bilingual staff out of 20 for a short period of time.

Corporate Objective 2 Consulting with the Acadian and francophone community		
Goals and Objectives 2008-2009	Planned Measures 2008-2009	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2008-2009
<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"> 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 relationship 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 Francophone Immigration Steering Committee. 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nova Scotia Office of Immigration provided \$70,000 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. Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to access \$18,000 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 (CDÉNÉ) attending immigration fairs in France and Belgium with success. Nova Scotia Office of Immigration provided a grant of \$19,037 to FANE to include a serie of video testimonials from French-speaking immigrants to Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia Office of Immigration provided funding for \$44,930 through the Labour Market Agreement to Université Sainte-Anne for a pilot project that aim at preparing French-speaking immigrants to the Canadian labour market and

		<p>workplace, including a two week job placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funding - \$17,409 from the Labour Market Agreement was allocated to the Conseil de développement économique for a one-day forum on the integration of immigrants in the workplace and employability best practices. • Representatives from the Office of Immigration participated to the Round-Table on French speaking Core Professional recruitment and retention for the CSAP to identify potential solutions to issues associated with inter-provincial labour mobility and foreign credential recognition. • Representatives from the Office of Immigration participate to the <i>Comité directeur de l'immigration francophone</i>, a multi-stakeholder committee initiated by the FANE. • The Office of Immigration staff met with the new Immigration Coordinator of the FANE for training and information purposes as well as the Halifax Francophone regional coordinator. • NSOI hosted an information session for more than 40 employers and employment stakeholders on skills workers recruitment in France and Belgium. Representatives from the Canadian Embassy in Paris, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the French employment and international mobility agency <i>Espace Emploi International</i> were present to provide more information to Nova Scotian employers. This event was organized in cooperation with FANE and CDÉNE
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSOI staff conducted immigration presentation in French at various events, including : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - September and October 2008 : Numerous meetings with Nova Scotia employers to discuss the recruiting of foreign skilled workers and encourage them to join Team Nova Scotia during the immigration job fairs in Europe. - September 13, 2008: NSOI organized an employer fair for immigration in Halifax with the participation of Direction employ, Université Sainte-Anne and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial. - October 2008: Presentation to foreign students at Université Sainte-Anne on the International Graduate stream of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (Pointe-de-l'Église) - March 4, 2009: Conseil de développement économique – Workplace Integration for Immigrants Best Practices Forum (Halifax)
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Corporate Objective 3 Communicating, sharing information, and promoting services available in French		
Goals and Objectives 2008-2009	Planned Measures 2008-2009	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 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"> • 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. ○ Promotional material: increase the number of promotional 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 publication, brochures and international immigration fairs. • Conduct information sessions and make presentations in French to interested stakeholders, and liaise with community partners and media (on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of procedure for responding to and referring inquiries in French • There are currently three updated pamphlets and five large display panels in French and a bilingual table runner 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 translated additional portions of its website that are to be posted very soon. • NSOI provided funding to the FANE and Conseil de développement économique to increase the immigration content of their respective websites. • Staff from NSOI participated to four specific immigration fairs in November 2008 in Paris (2), Toulouse and Brussels. Funding was provided through Citizenship and Immigration Canada for representatives of the Acadian community to attend these fairs. The Office of Immigration covered the cost of its own representative. • NSOI followed up on a large number of requests from French-speaking foreign nationals on immigration to Nova Scotia. Some of them came to the province to visit and explore the possibility

	<p>occasion) to raise awareness about the benefits of immigration in general and of the programs and services of the Office of Immigration in particular.</p>	<p>for immigration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff participated in a number of interviews with Francophone media locally and internationally. • NSOI staff provided information in French in person, in writing and over the phone to individuals interested in immigrating to Nova Scotia.
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Corporate Objective 4		
Supporting French-language services development, planning and delivery in priority area		
Goals and Objectives 2008-2009	Planned Measures 2008-2009	Progress in Reaching Goals and Objectives for 2008-2009
<p>4.1 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 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"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nova Scotia Office of Immigration designated one of it's the Program Officer position as bilingual to liaise with the Acadian and Francophone community. • Opportunities for French-language training is available to staff at NSOI. Two staff members took French-language training. • On-going collaborative work with our community partners on recruitment, attraction and retention strategy in the Acadian and Francophone communities of Nova Scotia. • NSOI supported three Acadian organizations and their various immigration initiatives through the NSOI Immigration Settlement Program Funding and the Labour Market Agreement funding – FANE, CDÉNE and Université Sainte-Anne.

Table 2 – Goals, Objectives and Measures for 2009-2010

Corporate Objectives	Goals and Objectives 2009-2010	Planned Measures 2009-2010
<p>Objective 1 – Framework and Policy</p> <p>Strengthening the policy, regulatory and administrative framework in support of the French-language Services Act</p>	<p>1.1</p> <p>The Office of Immigration and the Minister fulfill their obligations under the French-language Services Act and Regulations.</p>	<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 on the French-language Services Coordinating Committee. • The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration contribute to the Government’s annual progress report on French-language services. • Develop and implement internal policies to identify areas where changes are required in order to allow for improved delivery of services in French.
<p>Objective 2 – Enabling French-language Services</p> <p>Consult, plan, develop and deliver French-language services in priority areas</p>	<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"> • 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 Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. • Collaborate with the Steering Committee on

		<p>Francophone Immigration to include appropriate information in French on our website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Acadian and Francophone community-based organizations in their development of immigration web information. • Build stronger relationship between the Office of Immigration and Acadian and Francophone community-based organizations such as the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, the Conseil de développement économique, and the Comité directeur pour l'immigration francophone, a multi-stakeholders advisory committee, through collaboration, consultation and grants support. • Work with the Acadian and Francophone communities on specific issues such as skill shortages and needs for immigrants. • Include a French-language component in consultations on immigration with business leaders, students and Office of Immigration mandated organizations. • Collaboration with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to support Francophone immigration promotional activities.
	<p>2.2 The Office of Immigration employees are more aware of the approach being taken by the Office of Immigration to provide French-language services and are more sensitive to cultural issues pertaining to the Acadian and Francophone community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Office of Immigration staff are encouraged to attend information session on social and cultural issues pertaining to the Acadian and Francophone community.

	<p>2.3</p> <p>The public is more aware of the approach being taken by the government to provide French-language services and of the programs and services available to them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 benefit of immigration in general and of the programs and services of the Office of Immigration in particular.
	<p>2.4</p> <p>The capacity of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration to provide services in French is increased through recruitment of French-speaking employees and training of employees</p>	<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 (e.g. Termium, dictionary) • Maintain a bilingual Nominee Officer position within the Office of Immigration
<p>Objective 3 – Community Development and Capacity Building</p> <p>Ensure that the Acadian and Francophone community has resources available for its long-term development and sustainability</p>	<p>3.1</p> <p>The Office of Immigration support Acadian and Francophone community-based organizations, where appropriate, achieve their objectives expressed in the community's Global Development Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community immigration related initiatives that meet the needs of the Acadian and Francophone community through the NSOI Immigration Settlement Program Funding and other available funding. • Work in collaboration with <i>Comité directeur de l'immigration francophone</i> to continue the implementation of attainable objectives in the five year plan on Francophone immigration.