



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Report on Achievements 1998-1999

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

IMPLEMENTATION OF
SECTION 41 OF
THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Canada 

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Foreword

Section 41 of Part VII of the Official Languages Act (OLA) states that the federal government and its institutions are committed to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada, supporting and assisting their development, and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian Society.

In support of this commitment, 27 federal institutions, including the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), agreed to form new partnerships with the communities to support their development. According to the provisions of section 41, the Government of Canada, through ACOA, is committed to support Atlantic Canadians who belong to a official linguistic minority by:

- c supporting and assisting their economic development; and
- c enhancing their growth of earned incomes and employment opportunities.

The 1998-99 financial year saw continued implementation of section 41 of the OLA through the efforts of an ACOA coordination group in consultation and cooperation with official-language minority communities. The group is made up of a regional coordinator for each of the regional offices and a Head Office coordinator who assumes the role of national coordinator.

ACOA's mandate is to promote economic development opportunities in Atlantic Canada. To achieve this mandate, the Agency has established four strategic priorities: Policy, Advocacy and Coordination; Trade, Investment and Tourism; Innovation and Technology; and Entrepreneurship and Skills Development. The focus of these priorities is developing means to foster the creation and growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), eliminating obstacles to growth, creating a context favourable to growth and working in sectors showing particular promise. These priorities serve as guidelines for ACOA and the activities carried out with respect to the implementation of section 41 of the OLA are presented and classified according to these priorities in this report.

Summary of Achievements

ACOA actively pursued implementation of Section 41 of the OLA through measures taken at the Head Office and the regional offices' level.

- C ACOA Head Office is still represented at the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resource Development;
- C With the upcoming *Sommet de la Francophonie* in Moncton, the major event of the Year of La Francophonie, ACOA Head Office has established, in partnership with the government of New Brunswick, a coordinating committee made up of representatives from federal and provincial departments in the region with an economic mandate. The committee's mandate is to coordinate more than twenty (20) economic activities planned around the *Sommet*. These activities will cover various themes such as trade, biotechnology, health sciences, information technology, sustainable development, entrepreneurship, education and skills development, and tourism. These economic activities will be held mainly in NB, but also in NS and PEI, during the 1999-2000 fiscal year;
- C ACOA Head Office has supported the Société Nationale de l'Acadie (SNA) in its efforts to develop tourism-related products and the use of information technology in Francophone communities. ACOA also contributed financial assistance for a SNA trade mission in Louisiana to encourage the export of Acadian musicians and their music;
- C ACOA Head Office has continued to support the television series *Temps d'Affaires* which promotes and celebrates entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurs of Atlantic Canada;
- C Since the *Sommet de la Francophonie* will be held in New Brunswick, the regional office in the province has funded four studies (Communications, Sponsorships, Peripheral Events and Cultural). Beside these studies, ACOA NB has approved four projects related to the *Sommet*. Through the Regional Economic Development Agreement (REDA), a federal-provincial program with the ACOA and the Province of NB, many other activities have been planned and funded;
- C In light of the Acadian Peninsula's precarious economic situation, ACOA NB, in partnership with the Province of NB, created, provided funding and actively participated in the Economic Expansion Commission of the Peninsula Inc.;
- C In partnership with the Province, ACOA NB provided funding for two strategic tourism attractions both focussing on the Acadian heritage: *Le Pays de la Sagouine* et *Le Village historique Acadien*;
- C Two of ACOA NS's key tools to facilitate economic development in rural communities are the networks of Community Business Development Corporations (CBDC) and the Regional Development Authorities (RDA) in the province;
- C ACOA NS has worked to facilitate the development and revitalization of tourism-related products including the Acadian Pubnico Village, and the Grand Pré Historic Site;
- C Financial assistance in Francophone communities continues to be offered through *Le Centre Jodrey* at the *Université Ste-Anne*, Nova Scotia;
- C ACOA PEI continued to work closely with the *Société de développement de la Baie Acadienne Inc.*;
- C Assistance was provided by ACOA PEI to facilitate the development of tourism-related products such as *Cinéscène* and the Maximeville Dunes, among others;
- C ACOA NF has worked closely with the Francophone Affairs Steering Committee, the Port au Port local resource committee of *L'Association Régionale de la Côte Ouest (ARCO)*, the SNA and the Francojeunes of Newfoundland and Labrador on various projects; and
- C ACOA NF supported various projects to diversify the economy of the Port au Port Peninsula, a rural region with a history of dependance on the fishery.

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Achievements - Pan-Atlantic

A. ACTIVITY OVERVIEW ASSOCIATED TO ACOA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

ACOA Head Office has been very active regarding OLA Section 41 in 1998-1999 as shown below:

1. POLICY, ADVOCACY AND COORDINATION

Policies

The Policies group continues to ensure that any studies and research undertaken include Francophones in their consultations and that the publications are available in both official languages.

Forest industry opportunities

A presentation was made to New Brunswick's Francophone forest producer groups on the study into forest industry opportunities. Francophone producers were also consulted when conducting this study. The presentation was made as part of a seminar on exporting that took place in Edmundston in March 1999. The seminar was followed by a meeting with Francophone producers interested in the results of the study.

Economic Development

ACOA will continue to participate in the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resource Development.

Sommet de la Francophonie

With respect to the *Sommet de la Francophonie*, ACOA has developed a partnership strategy with the New Brunswick Department of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs in order to promote Atlantic region businesses and interests to an international public. This strategy is designed to maximize economic spin-offs to the region. Under the strategy, a coordinating committee was struck to coordinate the economic activities surrounding the *Sommet*. The committee is made up of representatives of federal and provincial economic departments in the region.

ACOA's Head Office has lent its support to organizing a number of economic activities in conjunction with the *Sommet de la Francophonie*. The activities are scheduled for the 1999-2000 financial year. The targeted themes are trade, biotechnology, health sciences, information and communications technology, sustainable development, entrepreneurship, education and skills development, and tourism.

Year of La Francophonie in Canada

The *Sommet* is a major event in the Year of La Francophonie in Canada. The *Sommet*-related economic activities, which are coordinated by ACOA, fit in with the activities related to the Year of La Francophonie in Canada.

2. TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM

SNA trade mission

ACOA supported the SNA trade mission composed of seventeen musician's agents, distribution houses and Acadian musical industry executives which visited a number of music industry representatives during their visit to LaFayette, Louisiana in April 1998. A part from the contract opportunities sought in conjunction with the *Congrès mondial acadien*, the mission was seeking to establish longer term business agreements with regards to the showcasing of Acadian musicians and their music in the southern US market.

Strategic links with foreign businesses

ACOA lent its support to Franco Com'99, an international trade fair, organized around the Sommet de la Francophonie and aimed at Francophone entrepreneurs from countries of the worldwide Francophonie. The event is designed to establish partnerships between firms from the countries concerned and those in the Atlantic provinces. These partnerships will be of all types, ranging from joint-venture companies to technology transfer, from distribution to basic representation. Both international trade and investment will be involved. The event is being organized by the *Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* in partnership with ACOA.

How to go public

ACOA provided support to Deloitte & Touche to conduct a study of public companies in Atlantic Canada to find out the challenges they faced in going public and how they overcame these challenges. The results of the survey were presented to the business community in three identical seminars entitled "How to Go Public", held in Halifax, Moncton and St. John's. The Moncton seminar was conducted in both official languages and Francophone entrepreneurs from Atlantic Canada were invited to attend.

National network of the Association des radios communautaires du Canada

ACOA provided support to the Association des radios communautaires acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick to create a national radio programming service using satellite technology to form a network of Acadian and Francophone community radio stations across Canada.

Tourism-related products

ACOA has worked to facilitate the development of tourism-related products in Francophone communities which included the following:

- C Tourism Atlantic concluded a multi-year agreement with the SNA to undertake an overall comprehensive Acadian Tourism Initiative. This initiative known as *L'Acadie* focuses on research, product development and marketing in association with the Atlantic Region's primary Acadian attractions, Parks Canada and the Provinces.

- C Tourism Atlantic engaged in a cooperative research program with Parks Canada to research a commemoration program which could eventually see key historic sites in Acadian heritage receive greater public recognition.

3. INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Commission des télécommunautés acadiennes et francophones de l'Atlantique (TAFA)

ACOA is a member of the *Commission des télécommunautés acadiennes et francophones de l'Atlantique*, an initiative of the *Société nationale de l'Acadie*. The role of the commission is to promote the innovative use of information technology (IT) in the economic, social and cultural development of Acadian and Francophone communities in Atlantic Canada and ensure progress on TAFA strategic plan.

ACOA lent its support to the *Société nationale de l'Acadie* for the organization of a conference called *L'Acadie ingénieuse: Virage ou Mirage* on the topic of smart communities. Acadians and Francophones from Atlantic Canada were invited to attend to discuss IT.

International Conference on Health Sciences

ACOA provided support for the Acadie-Sherbrooke International Francophone Conference on Health Sciences, organized by *Programme de formation médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick*, the Faculty of Medicine of the Université de Sherbrooke, the Nurses Association of New Brunswick and the International Nursing Institute of Canada. The conference will focus on the use of information technology in the health sciences. Collaborating organizations include the World Health Organization, the Network of Community-Oriented Health Education Institutions, the International Nursing Council and *Conférence internationale des doyens de médecine d'expression française* (CIDMEF). This activity is being organized around the *Sommet de la Francophonie*.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

National Forum

ACOA provided support to the *3^e Forum des gens d'affaires francophones du Canada*, organized by the *Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* with the theme *Partenaires pour mieux réussir* (Partners for greater success). An activity organized around the *Sommet*.

Temps d'Affaires Television Series on Entrepreneurship

ACOA supported the 5th season of the television series *Temps d'Affaires*. It is a series, usually, of 20 shows which promotes and celebrates entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurs of Atlantic Canada. It is produced in French and airs on Radio Canada Atlantique, the RDI network and the Americas component of the French network TV5. It is supported by a coalition of government and non-government partners.

Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF)

The APEF is a grouping of the four provincial departments of Education in Atlantic Canada responsible for the public school system up to Grade 12. It is part of the Council of Maritime Premiers. ACOA has worked with the APEF at least since 1993 to instill notions of entrepreneurship and enterprising values in schools. Assistance is provided for the development of Francophone teaching resources and training of teachers on use of this material. About 110,000 students (26.56% of total school population) are being reached across Atlantic Canada. For Francophones, the figure is 27,666 students (25.13% of Francophone enrollment).

Atlantic Colleges Committee for Entrepreneurial Development (ACCED)

The ACCED is a new group representing community college instructors and others interested in helping faculty and students gain knowledge about how to create and run a business, and how to be more entrepreneurial. Work is just getting underway but, thus far, an in-service package for instructors and a cross-curricular instructor's resource have been produced. The Letters Patent of ACCED specify clearly that the Committee must serve both linguistic communities in Atlantic Canada, that all their material must be produced in both languages, and that there must be Francophone representation on their Board of Directors.

Assemblée des aînées et aînés francophones du Canada

The *Assemblée* has received ACOA funding to implement a project in various communities across Atlantic Canada through which retired or about-to-retire Francophone entrepreneurs are invited to work with the high schools and the communities to serve as advisors/guest speakers/mentors to students interested now or eventually to have their own business, as well as with drop-outs.

Le Mondial de l'entrepreneuriat jeunesse

ACOA's involvement facilitated the participation of nineteen (19) young Atlantic-Canadian Francophone entrepreneurs in the second *Mondial de l'entrepreneuriat jeunesse* held in September 1998. An initiative of Forum Ontario/Francophonie Mondiale (FOFM), this event attracted 500 young Francophone entrepreneurs aged 18 to 35 from around the world to establish business and trade links.

You Corps

ACOA, together with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and other sponsors, funded this career fair kiosk targeting young aspiring entrepreneurs. Staffed by young entrepreneurs, and a bilingual facilitator, the kiosk visited 40 schools in Atlantic Canada in the fall of 1998, including two Francophone schools. The initiative will continue in 1999.

Starting Your Own Business: Info-Guide

This start-up guide was the latest tool to be made available as part of ACOA's "ConneXion" suite of products for young entrepreneurs. Consisting of a jacket folder with inserts covering self assessment, business idea generation, business planning, and where to go for help, this kit was made available primarily through the Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) and You Corps kiosk described above.

Publications

In addition, the ACOA has produced a number of publications and research pieces such as *The State of Small Business and Entrepreneurship in Atlantic Canada*; and the profiles publication *Profiles of Entrepreneurial Opportunity and Success: The Dream Catchers*; as well as other awareness-creation tools which are always made available in both official languages. As part of normal distribution plans, these collaterals are targeted for delivery to end-users from the respective linguistic communities. Another case in point produced by the Entrepreneurship Development Directorate is *Opportunity Trails: An Atlantic-Wide Connection*. This is basically a guide for entrepreneurship education teachers, French and English, which outlines a wide array of contacts, programs and services related to entrepreneurship and also points out in which language(s) these contacts, programs and services are available.

B. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The ACOA Head Office will continue with its implementation of the 1998-2000 Action Plan on Section 41 - The *Official Languages Act*. Measures outlined in the Plan include:

- C continue to play an economic development leadership role, particularly in the economic development of official language minority communities;
- C support Francophone economic activity, particularly with respect to Francophone SMEs, young and women entrepreneurs, and Francophone organizations involved in economic development;
- C work in cooperation with other federal and provincial departments and agencies and with groups representing Francophone communities to better meet their needs;
- C continue to represent the Agency at National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resources Development and support the activities proposed under its three-year Action Plan;
- C in cooperation with other federal and provincial economic departments, ACOA will continue to coordinate and participate in the economic activities related to the *Sommet de la Francophonie* in order to maximize the economic spin-offs to the Atlantic region from this international event. These activities will take place in 1999-2000 fiscal year and include open houses on the Francophonie, the *3^e Forum des gens d'affaires francophones du Canada*, the Acadie-Sherbrooke International Francophone Conference on Health Sciences, the *Franco Com'99* international trade fair, a technology showcase at the *Place du Sommet* and the International Conference and Trade Fair on the Development of Smart Communities;

- C continue to support the television series *Temps d’Affaires* and the Atlantic Colleges Committee for Entrepreneurial Development in their efforts in stimulating entrepreneurial initiatives; and

- C continue to participate in the *Commission des télécommunautés acadiennes et francophones de l’Atlantique* (TAFa).

Achievements - Regional Offices

New Brunswick Office

A. CONTEXT

Based on the 1996 census of Statistics Canada, the number of persons with French as their official language totals 239,730 in New Brunswick, accounting for 32.9% of the total population. More than 90 per cent of the French-speaking population lives in the urban and rural areas of the northern and eastern parts of the province. They tend to be concentrated in the counties of Madawaska, Restigouche, Gloucester, Northumberland, Kent, and Westmorland. Although, they live in significant numbers in many other regions of the province such as Fredericton, Miramichi and Saint John.

The recognition and vitality of both official languages in New Brunswick are becoming well established. For example:

- C In 1969, the *Official Languages Act* of New Brunswick declared English and French as the official languages of the province in the Legislative Assembly, in its courts, in education and in the provision of government services;
- C In 1973, the New Brunswick Department of Education recognized linguistic duality;
- C Since 1981, New Brunswick has had two parallel and homogeneous school systems;
- C In 1982, the principles of the *Official Languages Act* and other important components of language policy were enshrined in the Constitution through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom;
- C In 1994, the Government of Canada and New Brunswick passed a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the equality of New Brunswick's English and French-speaking communities; and
- C In 1994, the Department of Canadian Heritage introduced new measures in its strategy for implementing the provisions of the *Official Languages Act*: Consultations with the official-language minority communities; development of annual action plans and accountability reporting by key federal departments.

B. ACTIVITY OVERVIEW ASSOCIATED TO ACOA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

ACOA New Brunswick's various divisions work with all areas of development and assist regional agencies with planning and implementation of development strategies for the Francophone regions of the Province such as CBDC, Regional Economic Development Commissions and CBSC. A brief account of ACOA New Brunswick's involvement with projects furthering the economic development of the Francophone community is provided by strategic priority.

1. POLICY, ADVOCACY AND COORDINATION

In partnership with the Province of New Brunswick, ACOA New Brunswick has approved funding for four studies (Communications, Sponsorships, Peripheral Events and Cultural) for the purpose of identifying and increasing the economic development opportunities related with the *Sommet de la Francophonie*.

Also in relation with the *Sommet de la Francophonie*, four projects were approved which include two international conferences, an innovative exhibit showcase, *Le Village de la Francophonie*, and a tourism and hospitality industry training. Other projects were elaborated through the Regional Economic Development Agreement (REDA), a federal-provincial program with the ACOA and the Province of NB. These projects consist of various international conferences and events which will take place in 1999/2000 fiscal year.

ACOA New Brunswick has lent support to the *Association Acadienne des Artistes Professionnels du Nouveau-Brunswick* to assist them in promoting the artistic community and its products.

In an effort to assist in the rural development of the Francophone communities, the following initiatives have received support from ACOA New Brunswick:

- C In light of the Acadian Peninsula's precarious economic situation, ACOA New Brunswick, in partnership with the Province of New Brunswick, created and provided funding for the Economic Expansion Commission of the Peninsula Inc. for the economic development of the Acadian Peninsula. The purpose of the funding was to identify potential solutions to economic issues affecting the Acadian Peninsula. Its report focussed primarily on the identification of long term economic development solutions for the area; and
- C ACOA New Brunswick has lent support to *Le Salon de la Forêt*, an annual event in Northwestern New Brunswick, which brings together various producers, manufacturers and the general public in order to highlight the importance of this industry in this part of New Brunswick.

2. TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM

Access to capital is vital to the success of the small and medium businesses. Under the Business Development Program (BDP), ACOA New Brunswick has contributed to numerous projects developed by Francophone clients. By providing funding to Francophone entrepreneurs, ACOA is creating employment in Francophone communities.

The Province of New Brunswick and ACOA New Brunswick have approved funding for a major upgrade of the Moncton airport to permit better handling of aircraft and dignitaries at the Sommet de la Francophonie.

In partnership with the Province of New Brunswick, ACOA New Brunswick provided funding for two strategic tourist attractions both focussing on the Acadian heritage:

- C *Le Pays de la Sagouine* in Bouctouche has received funding to assist with the production of a business plan which will involve a comprehensive evaluation of costs, revenue generation and existing facilities usage; and
- C Funding was also provided to the *Village Historique Acadien* in Caraquet for a major expansion. The expansion of the Village is to focus on the pre-industrial era (1880-1930). This is the logical extension of the present rural theme (1780-1880). The project includes site preparation, lumber camp, steam powered cedar shake mill, lobster hatchery, cooperage and house, garage and hotel.

3. INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Many initiatives in 1998-1999 fell under the strategic priority of Innovation and Technology. Information technology and the knowledge-based sector continue to be strategically important and viewed as the source for “jobs of the future.” ACOA New Brunswick recognizes the need to assist the Francophone communities to increase their knowledge and acquire new tools to be more competitive.

The *Université de Moncton* has received funding, in partnership with the Province of New Brunswick, to allow it to transform selected programs/courses offered into computer-based learning. This component “Technology in Education & Learning” is one of four project components which will contribute to the eventual transformation of the University into a “Centre of Excellence in Distance Teaching & Learning.”

The *Université de Moncton* has also received funding in support of its applications to the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). These funds allowed the purchase of equipment that will be used in Research and Development initiatives and to train new researchers. ACOA New Brunswick helped the *Université* by providing expertise to assist in the preparation of several high quality proposals.

ACOA New Brunswick has supported the *Institut de Recherche Médicale Beauséjour* for the establishment of a bio-medical research facility in partnership with the *Université de Moncton* and *La Corporation Hospitalière Beauséjour*. The Institute focuses its research work in the area of cellular and genetic culture, the only establishment of the kind in the province.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

ACOA New Brunswick continues to support the activities of *Le Conseil Économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* in its efforts to stimulate and support economic development and networking in French-speaking communities.

C. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Francophone community accounts for a significant percentage of ACOA New Brunswick's client base. There is a strong commitment to support the community and provide a quality service in the French language.

ACOA New Brunswick will continue to provide assistance and guidance to other economic development agencies such as the CBDC, Regional Economic Development Commissions and CBSC.

Over the years, strong core establishments and organizations have been put in place. These organizations have been instrumental in the economic development of the New Brunswick Francophone communities. ACOA New Brunswick will continue to lend its support to these organizations among which we can count the following:

- ☐ L'Université de Moncton
- ☐ Concept +
- ☐ Le Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick

The year 1999-2000 will be marked by the *Sommet de la Francophonie*. ACOA New Brunswick has already identified initiatives to which it will lend its support including two conferences (Rendez-vous BioAltantech 1999 and *New Tools, New Approaches for the Sustainable Management of the Marine Environment*), an innovative exhibit showcase, *Le Village de la Francophonie*, and a tourism and hospitality industry training. With REDA, other conferences and events will occur in 1999. It is important for the Agency to capitalize on the economic development of opportunities resulting from an event of this magnitude.

A. CONTEXT

Based on the 1996 census, 35,040 residents of Nova Scotia cited French as their first language which accounted for 3.9% of the population. In mainland Nova Scotia the Francophone population totals 27,680, representing 3.7% of the mainland portion of the province's total population. The mainland Francophone population is concentrated in Halifax (9,635), Digby (6,850) and Yarmouth (6,295) Counties. These three counties account for 82% of mainland Nova Scotia's Francophone population. In addition, there are approximately 7,360 Francophones on Cape Breton Island. Most live in rural communities concentrated on Isle Madame and northern Inverness County. They represent approximately 4.7% of the Island's population.

ACOA's activities with the Francophone speaking population of Nova Scotia include cooperation with the following groups:

- C the general business and trade communities;
- C the education community - *Université Ste. Anne, Le Centre Jodrey* and *College de l'Acadie*; and
- C umbrella organizations such as *La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (LA FANE), *Société nationale de l'Acadie*, and the *Chambres de Commerce*.

A central element of ACOA's interactions with the Francophone community is through the bilingual services and expertise of its Halifax and Yarmouth offices which provide assistance to plan and implement economic development strategies in Francophone regions of the province. ACOA also assists and utilizes the province's community economic development network for delivery of its programs and projects. This network includes Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) which coordinate economic development in local communities and Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) which provide lending and counselling services to SMEs. The RDAs and CBDCs are active in all areas of the province.

The economy of Nova Scotia's Francophone regions continues to face challenges, however, there has been progress. Roughly two-thirds of Francophone Nova Scotians live in rural areas of the province, particularly in areas which have been severely impacted by the downturn in the fishery. The Acadian community of Isle Madame on Cape Breton was economically devastated as a result of the collapse of the groundfishery in the early 1990's, but has emerged as a model of successful community economic development. This has been as a result of strong local leadership, community resolve, and joint action with government partners. Acadian communities in south western Nova Scotia were also impacted by the fishery collapse, and, in response, local RDAs and other economic development stakeholders have successfully implemented a variety of projects aimed at diversifying the economy. Diversification has included new, non-fishery related products at local boatbuilding facilities, and initiatives to benefit from the growing tourism sector.

B. ACTIVITY OVERVIEW ASSOCIATED TO ACOA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The ACOA Nova Scotia office works to advance ACOA's four strategic priorities.

1. POLICY, ADVOCACY AND COORDINATION

Francophones in Nova Scotia have developed a number of organizations, networks and institutions to advance development of their community. The ACOA NS office participates in these community initiatives in a variety of ways. Examples in the past year include:

- C Meetings were held between representatives of Francophone organizations and ACOA NS to discuss economic development initiatives;
- C Meetings were held (on average) more than once a month between ACOA NS and a variety of business and community representatives;
- C There have been discussions with interested parties to continue to identify and assist the implementation of concrete initiatives from the Nova Scotia (Acadian) Cultural Sector Development Plan; and
- C ACOA Nova Scotia was represented on the Nova Scotia Steering Committee preparing for the Francophone Summit scheduled for Moncton in 1999. A comprehensive action plan was prepared which includes plans for three sustainable development pilot projects for Francophone regions in the province.

As the majority of Nova Scotia's Francophone community lives in rural areas, The ACOA NS office works in a variety of ways to ensure that their economic development needs are being met.

One of ACOA NS's key tools to facilitate economic development in rural communities is the network of CBDC in the province. These CBDCs are under provincial jurisdiction. CBDC work with respect to Francophone communities in the past years has included:

- C Francophone participation on the Board of the CBDC's in French-speaking areas was monitored to ensure equitable and fair representation from this population. The current Francophone representation on CBDC boards is 30% in the three CBDCs serving predominantly Francophone areas. One Francophone intern has been hired in the Digby CBDC to work out of *Le Centre Jodrey*; and

- C Feedback from board members continued to reinforce the practices of Board representation and engagement of other development partners with respect to the Francophone community.

Another key tool which ACOA NS uses to address the economic development needs of rural communities is through core funding support to Regional Development Authorities (RDAs). These organizations are also under provincial jurisdiction. In the past year, RDA work to meet the economic development needs of rural communities included the following:

- C The Western Valley Development Authority established a Clare office at Clare Municipal Building;
- C Habitat restoration work was undertaken on the Meteghan River in cooperation with *l'École Secondaire de Clare*;
- C A French language version of the regional profile, *OPPORTUNITÉ* was produced;
- C A project by *l'Association Radio Clare* to provide recording facilities for local artists was supported;
- C The South West Shore Development Authority (SWSDA) assigned responsibility for Acadian Cultural Development to one of its bilingual officer staff;
- C RDAs in the Strait-Highlands area and the Acadian Shore have developed activities in both official languages; and
- C The Musique St. Bernard festival was supported in both 1997 and 1998.

In 1998-99 ACOA Nova Scotia, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development and Tourism (EDT), presented the first Community Economic Development (CED) awards. The RDA responsible for Isle Madame won the award for "Contribution to Economic Growth."

ACOA NS held a separate consultation session on the Canadian Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring Initiative (CFAR) with the *Comité de développement acadien* situated in Argyle.

Financial assistance opportunities in Francophone communities continues through the strong relationship and alliances with EDT and ACOA field staff as well as *Le Centre Jodrey*. Marketing initiatives have also been expanded to increase awareness in the Francophone community of the assistance available.

2. TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM

Nova Scotia's Francophone community is predominantly based in rural areas. Tourism is viewed provincially and globally as a key economic development sector. It is also a sector in which rural communities have an advantage. A key trend in tourism is the focus on cultural and environmental attractions. Nova Scotia's Francophone community with its rural base, strong cultural identity and traditions, and location in some of the most picturesque areas of the province is in an excellent position to benefit from development in the tourism sector. The ACOA NS office has worked to facilitate this development in cooperation with community partners in initiatives which included the following:

- C Assisted with development and implementation of the Acadian Pubnico Village project;
- C A French Advertising Project was assisted by placing an insert in the magazine *Bienvenue en Nouvelle-Écosse* to promote region as a destination for French-speaking travellers;
- C The 1st annual "Acadian Week", Evangeline Promotion and *Le Festival de la Mi-Carême* were assisted;
- C The Business Development Program supported production of the *Institut de développement Communautaire* - Acadian Tourism Brochure;
- C Acadian groups and regions have benefited from the International Years of Music project and Trail Enhancement Projects around the province;
- C ACOA Nova Scotia staff has been actively working with the proponents of a revitalization project at the Grand Pré historical site to develop a business plan. The project is currently under consideration for funding from the Economic Diversification Agreement; and
- C An Atlantic Acadian Marketing Strategy was funded by ACOA and provincial governments.

3. INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

A central innovation and technology project in the ACOA NS office has been the Information Economy Initiative (IEI). This project works to develop the province's technology infrastructure, connect the province's residents to the Internet, and, generally, to ensure that all areas of the province have the fundamental technological tools to benefit from the knowledge-based economy.

The schools component of IEI saw all 17 schools in the *Conseil Scolaire Provincial Acadien* connected to the Internet and consulted with respect to being outfitted with new computer equipment.

The community access program of the Information Economy Initiative works to develop Community Access Programs (CAP) in Nova Scotian communities. There are currently four official Francophone CAP sites in the province. Other sites are located in, or nearby, Acadian communities. Six other Acadian communities have applied (in cooperation with *Collège de l'Acadie*) to have Francophone sites developed in 1999-2000.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

One of ACOA NS's key tools for facilitating progress in Francophone communities in the area of entrepreneurship and skills development has been ongoing core funding support for *Le Centre Jodrey* at the *Université Ste. Anne*. *Le Centre Jodrey* is one of five University Business Development Centres supported by ACOA in the province. *Le Centre Jodrey* is very active in the Francophone community in Digby and Yarmouth Counties. There have been discussions on extending the work of the Centre to Cape Breton.

In the fiscal year ended August 1998, the Centre had the following activity statistics.

Summary of Special Activities - Centre Jodrey

Activities/Projects	#	Participants
University	4	72
Presentations	8	517
Trade Missions	2	35
Seminars Attended	4	n/a
Total	18	624

Summary of Clients Contacts - Centre Jodrey

Clients contacts	#
Business Plans	225
Market Research	314
Bookkeeping	71
Conferences	1364
Counselling	493

Other entrepreneurship development work included sessions which were organized in Francophone schools in Yarmouth County as part of small business week.

There have been four Business Development Program loans made to Francophone entrepreneurs. Sectors in which these entrepreneurs operate include food processing, wood products manufacturing, and other manufacturing operations.

As part of the Entrepreneurship and skills development's ACOA strategic priorities, the ACOA NS office has prioritized youth. Work to lay the foundations for strong economic development in the future by working with Francophone youth included a number of projects.

ACOA NS supported the *Institut de développement communautaire*'s 1999 March Break Entrepreneurship Camp for school-aged youth. Entitled *Une aventure en affaires*, twenty-nine (29) young people gathered in Halifax from Sydney, Chéticamp, Pomquet, Clare and Argyle to participate in activities and workshops on the theme of entrepreneurship.

Le Centre Jodrey's activities address both entrepreneurship and youth priorities due to its presence at *Université Ste-Anne* and its mandate to facilitate entrepreneurship development with students. Their work with youth has included hosting youth business development interns, employing students on various projects, teaching an entrepreneurship development program at the Université, being an information agent for the Young Canada Works program, and providing entrepreneurship workshops for local high school students.

C. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The ACOA NS will continue with its implementation of the 1998-2000 Action Plan on Section 41 - The Official Languages Act. Measures outlined in the Plan include:

- C efforts to ensure that local economic development partners (RDAs and CBDCs) meet the needs of the Francophone communities they serve;
- C participation in economic development initiatives related to the 1999 Francophone Summit in Moncton, including up to three sustainable development pilot projects for Francophone regions of the province;
- C work in cooperation with communities and government partners in the elaboration of a strategic plan for the Francophone community;
- C support, through the Regional Economic Development Agreement (REDA), of the revitalization of the Grand Pré Historic Site;
- C ongoing participation in, and cooperation with, Francophone community organizations;
- C support the creation of the *Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (CDENE); and
- C the continued goal of at least five development projects annually with Francophone clients through the BDP.

In addition to the activities outlined in the Action Plan, ACOA NS will be working towards the implementation of the Canadian Fisheries Adjustment and Restructuring (CFAR) initiative in eligible Francophone communities.

A. CONTEXT

Based on the 1996 census of Statistics Canada, the number of persons with French as their official language totals 5,555 in Prince Edward Island, accounting for 4.2 % of the total population. The French-speaking population is mainly concentrated in the *Évangéline* Region, but also in West Prince, Summerside-Miscouche, Rustico, and Charlottetown.

The assimilation rate is very high, especially in regions where there are no French schools or community-school centers. The illiteracy rate is also very high. The only regions with French schools are *Évangéline* and Charlottetown.

The economy of these regions relies on tourism and primary sector activities such as fishery, agriculture and forestry, although a fair number of Acadians and other Francophones work in the federal and provincial administrations in Charlottetown and Summerside. Consequently, the economy is influenced by strong seasonal fluctuations, the unemployment rate is higher and the average income lower than the provincial average.

B. ACTIVITY OVERVIEW ASSOCIATED TO ACOA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

During the course of the year the Prince Edward Island ACOA office was able to undertake a number of successful activities with the residents of the Province's French language community. In addition, Tourism Atlantic engaged in key activities directed at the development of the Atlantic Region's Acadian Heritage product. As an overview 1998-99 was a very active year, with the community initiating many interesting projects to encourage development. Outlined below are a number of these in which the Agency participated.

1. POLICY, ADVOCACY AND COORDINATION

ACOA has always worked closely with the *Société de développement de la Baie Acadienne Inc.* and with its forerunner, *La Commission Industrielle de la Baie Acadienne Inc.* The Agency provides operational funds to this development corporation to enable it to carry out its mandate of helping small business and young entrepreneurs.

The Agency is an active member of the Federal Regional Council's sub-committee on Official Languages.

ACOA PEI has worked with the International Prospecting Committee, that is profiling services that have export potential, that is targeted towards promotion to select member governments attending the *Sommet de la Francophonie*.

The Agency participated and supported portions of the preparatory work for the 1998 Fall Economic Forum hosted by the Saint Thomas d'Aquin Society. The participants discussed in some detail key economic challenges facing the Francophone community of Prince Edward Island and possible mechanisms to ensure greater networking opportunities.

In cooperation with Head Office, the Regional Office has worked in conjunction with the community on an initiative that could see the establishment of a non-government organization (NGO) that would source international development contracts for delivery by various elements of the Atlantic Region's Francophone community.

In conjunction with the other partners to the Tripartite Agreement (Human Resources Development Canada, the Province and the Community), the Agency worked to develop this forum into an effective network to discuss priority areas for development.

2. TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM

The Agency counselled a number of private entrepreneurs on various business ideas, many of which were tourism related. One entrepreneur in particular was counselled over an extended period and was able to come forward with a strong business proposal for a major expansion of his operation in an area of value-added manufacturing showing significant growth potential, by partnering with a firm with strong export sales and by employing state-of-the-art technology to diversify his product lines.

The Agency supported the Baie Acadienne Development Corporation's efforts to prepare plans for an expanded Business Centre in Wellington.

ACOA PEI has worked to facilitate the development of tourism-related products in Francophone communities which included the following:

- C Assistance was provided to Le Village Resort to support the further assessment of the establishment of a *Cinésène* - grand stage light and sound show of Acadian Heritage as a major tourism cultural attraction;
- C Assistance was provided to *L'Association Touristique Évangeline* to help prepare a strategic development plan for the Maximeville Dunes. The Maximeville Dunes concept is to combine outdoor beach and ecological experiences as an eco-tourism site;
- C The Agency financially supported the Acadian Museum in Miscouche to further develop a new cultural tourism event - Festival Folk Acadie by supporting the organizing committee's off-Island marketing and event coordination activities;

- C The Agency provided a capital cost contribution to support the establishment of a multi-purpose facility that is a centre piece for the annual Acadian Festival and Exhibition and the several other festivals held throughout the Evangeline Region;
- C As part of the Tignish Bicentennial Celebrations, the Agency provided assistance to establish an Interpretive Centre, the facility also contains leaseable business space. Additional support was provided to support the off-Island marketing plan for the Bicentennial; and
- C The Agency has worked with the Community as they develop a proposal for the establishment of a Golf Cooperative tourism venue.

3. INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The Agency worked with the *Carrefour Ile Saint Jean* assisting in their planning activities that led to the establishment of the Carrefour InfoTech Centre and a Level II Community Access (CAP) Internet Site.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

ACOA Prince Edward Island continues to support the activities of various economic organizations in their efforts to stimulate and support economic development and networking in French-speaking communities.

C. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The upcoming year will see increased work with the Tripartite Committee and further networking amongst the Community and the two levels of Government. Several cultural tourism related initiatives will quite likely be advanced, in addition to strengthening the information technology base.

ACOA PEI will continue to work with economic development organizations and enterprises.

In cooperation with Head Office and the Institute of Island Studies, the Agency's PEI office will co-sponsor the Smart Communities Conference in October 1999. This bilingual conference in the period immediately following the *Sommet de la Francophonie* enjoys considerable integration with the Island Francophone Telecommunity initiative.

A. CONTEXT

According to the 1996 census, there are 2,275 individuals with French as their Mother tongue in Newfoundland and Labrador, accounting for 0.4% of the Provincial population. These residents are primarily concentrated in three regions: the city of St. John's, the Labrador City area, and the Port au Port Peninsula (Mainland, Black Duck Brook and Cape St. George). Though, there are numerous other French-speaking inhabitants living throughout the Province, due to the nature of the census, their language preferences are not counted. The census counts only mother tongue designation through self-identification.

ACOA's activities with the provincial Francophone community include partnerships with the following groups:

- The Federation of Francophones of Newfoundland and Labrador (FFTNL);
- *L'Association Régionale de la Côte Ouest (ARCO)*;
- The general French-speaking business community of the Province;
- The Francophone Affairs Steering Committee (FASC), representing the Federal and Provincial Governments and the Francophone Community; and
- Francojeunes of Newfoundland and Labrador.

An important element of ACOA's interactions with the Francophone community involves the bilingual services offered through the Corner Brook ACOA Office as well as the Canada Business Service Centre (CBSC) in St. John's. While not required under Treasury Board Guidelines, these offices offer program enquiries and economic planning assistance to the Francophone groups and individuals seeking Agency assistance.

The Agency also supports community driven program delivery vehicles including Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) where SMEs seek business funding, and Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs), through which local economic development strategies and plans are developed for the Provincial Economic Zones.

All provincial communities are facing challenges to their futures. This is especially true for the Francophone communities due to their relatively low population, the distances between and remoteness of some of their communities and the rural nature of the local economies in the communities outside of St. John's.

Partly as a result of these challenges, the FFTNL has grown to become a strong voice in the Francophone community. The *1998 Colloque de réflexion sur l'avenir de la communauté francophone et acadienne de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador* resulted in a strong action plan for the development of the Francophone communities in the Province.

B. ACTIVITY OVERVIEW ASSOCIATED TO ACOA'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The ACOA Newfoundland and Labrador offices work to advance ACOA's four strategic priorities.

1. POLICY, ADVOCACY AND COORDINATION

Francophones in Newfoundland and Labrador have worked within their communities and with the various levels of government to establish good working relationships to advance the economic community agenda. ACOA participates in these organizations and initiatives to advance the mutual agendas of economic development by:

- C Actively participating in the Francophone Affairs Steering Committee (FASC);
- C Working closely with the Port au Port ARCO local resource committee to determine and develop economic development initiatives;
- C Working with the *Société Nationale de l'Acadie* (SNA) to promote initiatives in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- C Working with Francojeunes of Newfoundland and Labrador to introduce entrepreneurship into their agenda; and
- C Participating in the *Colloque de réflexion sur l'avenir de la communauté francophone et acadienne de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador*, celebrating the 25th anniversary of the establishment of FFTNL, and of an action plan for the Francophone communities of the Province.

As is the case in other Atlantic provinces, most of the Newfoundland and Labrador Francophones reside in rural communities. ACOA Newfoundland and Labrador coordinates the economic community agenda in the province to ensure accessibility to information and capital in all communities by:

- Providing bilingual service and information to all residents of the province through the CBSC;
- Providing core funding to the Regional Economic Development Boards for the development and implementation of strategic economic development plans for economic zones, including all communities in the province; and
-

- Supporting the network of CBDCs to ensure access to capital for existing and potential entrepreneurs throughout the province.

Economic development opportunities continue to be pursued on the Port au Port Peninsula through continued program and field staff support to ARCO in the development and implementation of their economic development plan. Similarly, Economic Zone 09 has incorporated many of the ARCO priorities into the strategic economic plan for the entire Zone.

2. TRADE, INVESTMENT AND TOURISM

Francophone communities on the Port au Port Peninsula are rural with a history of dependance on the fishery. Cultural events and traditional ways of life are seen as strengths of the region. In fact the roadway on the drive around the Peninsula has been officially named The French Ancestors Route in recognition of the importance of the Francophone culture to the region.

According to the strategic plans of ARCO and Zone 09, developments in the cultural tourism product, as well as infrastructure in support of tourism are seen as necessary elements of a successful CED strategic plan for the area. Because of the importance of this dossier with both organizations, ACOA has worked with ARCO and Zone 09 in the development and implementation of initiatives which include the following:

- Supporting a pilot project to establish a French language activity camp for highschool French first language students visiting the Port au Port Peninsula;
- Planning and participating in an adventure tourism opportunities seminar for the Port au Port Peninsula. As a follow-up, ACOA liaised with ARCO and Parks Canada officials at Gros Morne Park to discuss tourism infrastructure development in the Francophone Communities on the Port au Port Peninsula. It is expected that the common goals of Parks Canada and ARCO with respect to services to French-speaking clients will result in a strong partnership between the two organizations;
- Supporting a familiarization tour of small businesses in rural northern Quebec to determine how rural small business operates in that province;
- Supporting the development of proposals from FFTNL for Francophone specific activities relating to Soiree 99; and
- Supporting the development of an ARCO / Zone 09 proposal for the establishment of scenic rest-stops along the French Ancestors Route.

3. INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The Francophone community has successfully accessed funds to establish Community Access Program (CAP) sites in various locations across the province. Proposals have also recently been put forward to Industry Canada to increase the number of sites.

In recognition of the importance of this initiative to the development of capacity in the communities, ACOA has begun working with ARCO to determine how the site in the Centre Communautaire in Mainland might be enhanced to provide a service specific to the local entrepreneurs.

4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

ACOA Newfoundland and Labrador continues to support FFTNL and ARCO in their efforts to stimulate and support economic development and entrepreneurship initiatives in their communities.

ARCO realized the importance of entrepreneurship to the community when they developed an economic development plan for their three communities. The Agency supports their efforts to promote entrepreneurship and skills development through continued funding of the plan and assistance in coordination of economic development activities.

Similarly, the Agency understands the importance of youth and entrepreneurship. For this reason the Agency supported an economic development forum to assist Francojeunes incorporate entrepreneurship into their mandate.

C. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Building on the accomplishments and partnerships developed over the past years, ACOA Newfoundland and Labrador will continue to work with Francophone, Federal and Provincial stakeholders in Newfoundland and Labrador, and will continue to play a lead role in economic development activities.

Because Agency financial programs are application driven, the extent of monetary assistance to Francophone initiatives will depend on the level of effort and activities proposed by the Francophone community. ACOA will assist the Francophone communities through program activity as well as through its coordination and advocacy role and its human resources to meet, where possible, identified needs. In Newfoundland and Labrador, ACOA will:

- Continue to work in cooperation with other Federal and Provincial departments and agencies and with groups representing the official minority-language communities to meet the needs of the Francophones in the Region. This will be accomplished on the Provincial level through continued active participation in the Francophone Affairs Steering Committee (FASC), and the ARCO Local Resource Committee (LRC);
- Advocate and coordinate work under its economic development leadership mandate, including that of economic development for official minority-language communities;
- Distribute the ACOA Report on Achievements for 1998-1999 to all Francophone Community groups and economic development partner organizations in the province;
- The ACOA OLA Coordinator will meet with the executive of the Federation of Francophones to review initiatives contained in the Agency Action Plan, and discuss how the plan relates to the FFTNL Plan de développement global 1999-2004;
- Continue to work with ARCO to pursue economic development activities identified in their economic development plan for the Port au Port Peninsula, and assist in the updating of the economic plan;
- Accept and assess proposals from Francophone clients pursuing initiatives in the private and not for profit sectors, where Agency programming has been requested.
- Assist ARCO in the identification of the appropriate funding programs for initiatives arising from their economic development plan;
- Continue to provide enquiry services to Francophone clients in language of choice through the CBSC and the Corner Brook ACOA office;
- Continue to identify Agency staff providing services in both official languages through active offer signs at ACOA St. John's, Corner Brook and the CBSC;
- Continue to maintain and improve the library of bilingual information contained at the CBSC;
- Continue to encourage entrepreneurship in the Francophone communities through support of Small Business Week seminars and activities sponsored by the Francophone Community; and

- Continue to liaise with Development Officers and Managers of the various Francophone groups in Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure a good working relationship is fostered for entrepreneurship and economic development in the Francophone Communities.