



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

REPORT ON ACHIEVEMENTS 2002-2003

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 Government of Canada 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, 29 federal departments and agencies, including the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), agreed to form new partnerships with communities to support their development. According to the provisions of Section 41, the Government of Canada, through ACOA, is committed to supporting Atlantic Canadians who belong to an official language minority by:

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

The 2002-2003 fiscal year saw continued implementation of Section 41 of the OLA through the efforts of an ACOA co-ordinating group in consultation and co-operation with official language minority communities. The group is made up of a regional co-ordinator for each of the regional offices and a Head Office co-ordinator who assumes the role of national co-ordinator.

ACOA's mandate is to promote economic development opportunities in Atlantic Canada. To achieve this mandate, the Agency has established six strategic priorities: Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development; Innovation; Trade, Tourism and Investment; Access to Capital and Information; Community Economic Development; and Policy, Advocacy and Co-ordination. The focus of these priorities is developing the means to foster the creation and growth of SMEs, 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

Here are a few examples of how ACOA actively pursued implementation of Section 41 of the *Official languages Act* (OLA) through measures taken at Head Office and in the regional offices.

- Through the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPLC), a Department of Canadian Heritage program to which ACOA has subscribed, the Agency contributed to the development of a distance education course on SME management to better serve the minority official language communities of the Atlantic region.
- A project with the Baie Acadienne Development Corporation in Prince Edward Island enabled young Francophone potential entrepreneurs to attend an international summer school for young entrepreneurs in Sherbrooke, Quebec.
- ACOA helped the *Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse* to prepare a French adaptation of existing Open for Business training resources of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development.
- ACOA sponsored a project of the *Association de la presse francophone*, in co-operation with the *Association des radios communautaires, L'Acadie Nouvelle* (a French-language daily) and FEDNOR aimed at profiling young Francophone entrepreneurs in weekly columns and radio vignettes.
- With the assistance of ACOA, Canadian Heritage and other sponsors (the DieppeNet community access centre, the Dieppe Community College in New Brunswick and the *Collège de l'Acadie* in Nova Scotia) began setting up a young Francophone entrepreneurship portal.
- The Canada/New Brunswick Business Service Centre was recognized by the Commissioner of Official Languages in January 2003 for its excellent bilingual service.
- ACOA's regional office in New Brunswick has invested in over 75 projects targeting minority language communities under its various programs.
- ACOA is represented on the New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador Federal Council Committees on Official Languages. In fact, the four regional Vice-Presidents of ACOA chair the Federal Council in their respective province.
- ACOA sits as an observer on the *Congrès mondial acadien 2004* Board of Directors.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, ACOA's regional co-ordinator ensures the delivery of French program services to the Francophone community.

ACHIEVEMENTS - PAN-ATLANTIC

ACOA Head Office either organized or provided funding assistance for a number of activities related to the implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* in 2002-2003. Here are a few examples.

- In partnership with Human Resources Development Canada and the *Centre Assomption de recherche et de développement en entrepreneuriat* at the *Université de Moncton*, ACOA completed a second project to produce and broadcast 20 television vignettes featuring young Francophone entrepreneurs from Atlantic Canada.
- Through Canadian Heritage's Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPOLC), ACOA contributed to the development of a distance training course on SME management. Its objective is to better serve the minority official language communities. The project was carried out in 2002-2003 by the DieppeNet group, the New Brunswick Community College in Dieppe and the *Collège de l'Acadie* in Nova Scotia.
- ACOA sponsored a project of the *Association de la presse francophone* in co-operation with the *Association des radios communautaires, L'Acadie Nouvelle* (a French-language daily) and FEDNOR aimed at profiling young Francophone entrepreneurs in weekly columns and radio vignettes. The objective is to encourage the Francophone media to augment their business content, which is less extensive than in the Anglophone media. The awareness campaigns will run for a duration of sixteen weeks in each of the two years of the project.
- In 2002-2003, with the assistance of ACOA, Canadian Heritage and other sponsors (the DieppeNet community access centre, the New Brunswick Community College in Dieppe and the *Collège de l'Acadie* in Nova Scotia) began setting up a young Francophone entrepreneurship portal. This portal will be a virtual window on the Internet, offering young Francophone entrepreneurs a range of services. It will be aimed initially at minority Acadians and Francophones in Atlantic Canada. It will facilitate dissemination of information about the business world and will enable young entrepreneurs to access advice on business plan development, obtain mentoring services, undertake a business skills training program, visit a virtual conference centre, and benefit from on-line financial services.
- Funding provided by ACOA to the Marketing Committee of the Atlantic Association of Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) provided CBDCs with marketing tools in both official languages. The project also enabled some promotion in both official languages in the Atlantic region's different dailies.

- ACOA provided annual funding to the Pan-Canadian Network of Community Futures Organizations for the organization of the annual Pan-Canadian meeting of CFDC/CBDCs to provide bilingual documentation and information and for simultaneous translation.
- Under the Atlantic Canada Cultural and Economic Partnership (ACCEP), concluded between ACOA and the Department of Canadian Heritage, financial support was provided to the Atlantic Canada Acadian Tourism Commission for a marketing project aimed at promoting l'Acadie as a tourism destination.
- Support was also provided to the *Société nationale de l'Acadie*, through the ACCEP, to hold the official shows of the Acadian National Holiday on August 15, 2003.
- The *Centre Acadien* at the *Université de Moncton* received financial support under the ACCEP for the creation of a network of museums and historic sites in Atlantic Canada.
- Assistance was provided to the Historica Foundation of Canada to hold the annual Youth Links/*InterJeunes* Summit in Moncton in May 2004, to hold provincial heritage fairs in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and to develop a training module on Champlain's role in the settlement of New France.
- ACOA was also among the sponsors of the *Lauriers de la PME* award ceremonies, organized by the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resources Development, which was held in Ottawa in March 2003.
- In September 2002, ACOA provided support for the participation of some 40 businesses from Atlantic Canada to *the Mondial des Amériques 2002*, a trade networking event attended by some 300 business people from the Francophone community of the Americas and from a few African countries.
- In 2002-2003, ACOA provided support for the development of the strategy to promote Acadian artists on the international scene, which aims to expand the presence of the Acadian cultural sector in the Francophone markets of Europe.
- In January 2003, under the auspices of the Joint Commission on Regional Co-operation between Canada and France, ACOA organized a trade fair with participation from some 60 Anglophone and Francophone companies from Atlantic Canada interested in doing business with companies in Saint Pierre and Miquelon.
- When Economic Development Canada for Quebec Regions decided to undertake a study of non-metropolitan regions in Quebec, ACOA took the opportunity to co-sponsor the research and extend it to the Atlantic region. As

was the case for Quebec regions under study, the areas examined in Atlantic Canada had large concentrations of Francophones and the results could change the types of programs offered in remote and in rural areas near urban centres.

ACHIEVEMENTS – REGIONAL OFFICES

(A) New Brunswick Office

(1) **Context**

According to Statistics Canada's 2001 Census, the number of persons who identified French as their first official language is 236,665 in New Brunswick, accounting for 32.9% of the province's total population. Although 90% of the French-speaking population live in the urban and rural areas of the northern and eastern parts of the province, mainly in the counties of Madawaska, Restigouche, Gloucester, Northumberland, Kent and Westmorland, there are also significant numbers in other areas of the province, especially the cities of Fredericton and Saint John.

The importance and vitality of both official languages in New Brunswick is a well-established reality, and the year 2002-2003 was very significant in terms of recognition and affirmation of the bilingual nature of the province.

- On June 4, 2002, New Brunswick Premier Bernard Lord introduced the new provincial *Official Languages Act*, aimed at modernizing the *Official Languages Act* of 1969. The new Act will ensure that the government meets its constitutional obligations under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Act also reaffirms the rights of New Brunswickers to communicate with, and receive services from, the Legislative Assembly and institutions of the government in the language of their choice.
- On February 18, 2003, Michel Carrier was appointed to the new position of Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick, established under the new provincial *Official Languages Act*. His primary responsibility is to investigate complaints submitted pursuant to the Act. He must also make recommendations regarding compliance with the Act by government institutions. The Commissioner is accountable to the Legislative Assembly for his activities and is required to submit a report to the Assembly each year.
- On March 12, 2003, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Ministers Stéphane Dion and Lucienne Robillard announced the Action Plan for Official Languages. Commissioner of Official Languages, Dr. Dyane Adam, Commissioner of Official Languages, expressed satisfaction with the plan, the result of nearly two years of intensive work. The plan is characterized by an accountability and co-ordination framework and targets three priority areas: education, community development and an exemplary public service.

(i) Education

The proposed measures will affect not only teaching in the minority language, to assist implementation of Section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but also second-language teaching as provided in the Government of Canada's Action Plan for Official Languages. This is in keeping with the government's commitments to advancing the use of both official languages within the Canadian society.

(ii) Community Development

The measures planned will make public services more accessible in both official languages, especially in the fields of health, early childhood and justice. These measures will give communities better access to the economic development tools inherent to the knowledge-based economy.

(iii) Exemplary Public Service

The improvements sought will be aimed at the delivery of federal services to Canadians in both official languages, the participation by both French- and English-speaking Canadians in the federal administration, and the use of both languages in the workplace.

(2) Overview of Activities

In New Brunswick, ACOA offers clients all of its services in both official languages and delivers the services in the official language chosen by the individual client. The Agency provides services primarily to the business and economic development sectors and to the regional development sector.

ACOA's New Brunswick office has incorporated a continuous improvement strategy for all of its divisions with regard to the use of the French language, whether spoken, written or represented. This includes public information, staffing, language training and development, in-house quality standards and distribution of appropriate work tools such as computer software, bilingual keyboards and reference tools.

The relations of ACOA's New Brunswick office with the Francophone community are built on the prompt and professional delivery of services in French.

The various divisions of ACOA's New Brunswick office work with all areas of economic development and assist regional agencies with the planning and implementation of development strategies for the Francophone regions of the province, such as those related to the Canada/New Brunswick Business Service Centre (CBSC), the Community

Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) and the Community Economic Development Agencies (CEDAs).

ACOA has long provided entrepreneurs with support through the CBDCs, which work in rural communities with small and medium-sized enterprises, providing them with loans and counselling in business matters. It should be noted that seven CBDCs, out of a total of ten, are located in regions with a Francophone majority population. ACOA also supports the Community Economic Development Agencies (CEDAs), which help communities develop their own strategic plans. There are 15 CEDAs in New Brunswick, which are also known as Enterprise Network. Over half the CEDAs offer services to Francophone communities or communities having a significant number of Francophone residents.

Turning to the Canada/New Brunswick Business Service Centre, it is important to mention that this Centre has been recognized for its excellent bilingual service: on January 28, 2003, Commissioner of Official Languages, Dr. Dyane Adam, published a study that examined the single window networks created by the federal government to serve as points of access to government services. The Commissioner cited the federal business service centres in New Brunswick and Quebec, as examples of an exemplary level of bilingual services.

ACOA offers its programs and services in local communities through its network of district and satellite offices throughout the province. Over half these offices are located in regions with large concentrations of Francophones, such as Moncton, Bathurst, Grand Falls, Tracadie-Sheila, Edmundston, Campbellton and Bouctouche.

In 2002-2003, ACOA's office in New Brunswick invested in over 75 projects targeting minority language communities under the non-commercial component of the Business Development Program, the Strategic Community Investment Fund (SCIF), the Youth Internship Program, Seed Capital ConneXion Program for Young Entrepreneurs and Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPOLC). Through use of the IPOLC, nine new projects received approval for funding in 2002-2003 for a total of \$1.1 million. The Agency also supported several other initiatives and activities in the province's Francophone communities.

The following is a brief overview of ACOA's accomplishments by strategic priority:

(i) Access to Capital and Tourism

In November 2002, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency met with the *Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick*, the *Société des gens d'affaires et des professionnels francophones du Grand Saint-Jean inc.* and the *Association régionale de la communauté francophone de Saint-Jean inc.*, to expand its co-operation with the Francophone community of Saint John and offer a presentation on its products and services.

(ii) Policy, Advocacy and Co-ordination

On June 3, 2002, ACOA and other federal departments met with representatives of the various organizations of the Acadian and Francophone communities of New Brunswick in the context of follow-up to the Atlantic Symposium on Official Languages held in Charlottetown in 2001.

The first objective of this meeting was to bring the New Brunswick Acadian and Francophone communities and federal institutions closer together. The second objective was to identify the communities' needs and priorities so as to assess the extent to which programs and services of the Government of Canada are contributing to their development.

The meeting highlighted the priorities and expectations of the communities, solidified the government's commitment to community development, and promoted the benefit of meetings between the communities and each federal institution for the purpose of determining a better way of working together and responding to their various needs.

ACOA is continuing to follow up with the Acadian and Francophone communities to work more specifically in the field of economic development.

(iii) Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development

In May 2002, the Agency took an active role in the Small Business Info-Fair in Edmundston. The Info-Fair highlighted the programs and services offered by the federal government that meet the needs of existing small businesses and those starting up.

Small business owners and potential entrepreneurs in New Brunswick were able to obtain answers to their questions about business. Federal representatives responsible for assistance programs were on hand to discuss issues relating to business and to explain services relating to start-up, financing, access to technology, strategic information and preparing for export.

The Info-Fair featured 25 display booths and eight workshops providing practical and useful information on exporting, funding support, selling to government and other business-related subjects.

On October 15 and 16, 2002, Enterprise Chaleur held a two-day seminar in the Northeastern Region on the development of export markets. This training enabled participants to learn more about how to make a sale, deal with resistance, identify potential clients and their needs, organize meetings, communicate with clients and adopt a winning attitude.

On February 27 and 28, 2003, in Edmundston, a seminar on strategic selling was held to offer businesses practical training in sales skills. Such training enables participants to increase their sales and their business profits.

In the course of 2002-2003, three individual one-day consultations on trade were held for Francophone small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) featuring specialized trade consultants. In addition, three- to six-month mentoring sessions were organized for 16 Francophone companies permitting an in-depth assessment of the commercial potential of SMEs.

(iv) Innovation and Technology

Thanks to the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF), the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPOLC) and the Business Development Program (BDP), ACOA announced funding in 2002 for the Beauséjour Medical Research Institute in Moncton. The Institute will receive \$6 million to undertake projects to identify and analyze abnormal genes that cause breast cancer and to develop genes or other biotherapies that can be used to treat the disease. It will also undertake research and development on nutraceuticals and functional foods that stimulate the immune system and will serve to prevent cancer.

Several innovative Francophone businesses, such as Groupe Savoie, in St. Quentin, and TSi Auto Solutions Inc., in Bathurst, which won the 2003 KIRA award for the most promising new company, have received financial support from ACOA through the Innovation Skills Development Initiative (ISDI) in 2002-2003.

Cube Automation, in Tracadie-Sheila, and DOVICO Enterprises, in Dieppe, are among the Francophone companies working in the technology field that have benefited from repayable loans from ACOA to implement their projects.

In 2002-2003, the *Université de Moncton* - Shippagan Campus was granted financial support from ACOA to proceed with plans to group together its research centres, i.e. the Coastal Zone Research Institute, including the Aquarium and Marine Centre, the Marine Product Research and Development Centre and the Peat Research and Development Centre.

The Housing and Environmental Technologies Centre of the *Université de Moncton* also received a contribution from the Agency to implement its innovative project, which has the potential to open the door to ecological, esthetic and technological experiments that can serve as a model throughout the Atlantic provinces and elsewhere in Canada.

On September 5, 2002, ACOA's President and Vice-President for New Brunswick, together with some Agency employees, met with representatives of the *Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* to discuss innovation and its role in New Brunswick

businesses. This meeting made it possible to share information and clarify the concept of innovation.

On October 22 and 23, 2002, a Stage Gate training session on the development of new products was held in Edmundston under the Innovation Skills Development Initiative (ISDI). Simultaneous translation was available for Francophones.

Also, within the framework of the ISDI, ACOA and the *Université de Moncton* organized a training/orientation session in March 2003 on the marketing of new technologies. The Université de Moncton, University of New Brunswick and Mount Allison University presented new technologies to SMEs. The session was conducted in both French and English, with simultaneous translation available.

On December 12, 2002, ACOA organized and sponsored a short session on “Government On-Line” at a major networking event in Moncton exploring the theme of information technologies. The bilingual presentation was given by a representative of the supply sector of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

On January 16, 2003, a longer and more detailed presentation on “Government On-Line” was given in Moncton by representatives of the supply sector of Public Works and Government Services Canada.

(v) Trade, Tourism and Investment

Throughout 2002-2003, ACOA worked in co-operation with various partners to set up a program of studies in international trade at the New Brunswick Community College in Bathurst. The program, which started up in September 2003, allowed Francophone students, especially those from the Chaleur/Restigouche Region, to obtain training in international trade. The goal of the program is to raise the level of international trade expertise in SMEs.

ACOA's Export Partnership Program enabled six *Université de Moncton* students enrolled in the Export Internship for Trade Graduates (EITG) program to work with New Brunswick businesses to prepare and implement marketing plans aimed at the New England market.

On February 25 and March 20, 2003, “Introduction to Selling to the Governments of Canada and New Brunswick” sessions were held in Fredericton and Moncton respectively.

(vi) Language of Work in ACOA's New Brunswick Office

ACOA knows that prompt, professional delivery of public services in French is directly linked to the ability of its employees to express themselves in the French language.

Promotion and awareness of rights and obligations with respect to official languages are, therefore, an integral part of the activities of the Official Languages Committee of ACOA's New Brunswick office.

The establishment of an Official Languages Sub-Committee, made up of seven members representing each of the sections, was formalized in 2002-2003. The Sub-Committee, which meets regularly, is responsible for language-related issues. Also, the members look after providing the tools employees need to ensure that speakers of both languages receive treatment of equal quality. In addition to co-ordinating the collection of information to prepare reports on ACOA's official languages activities, the Sub-Committee implemented several in-house initiatives during 2002-2003. In particular, to mark Francophonie Day on March 20, 2003, all employees in the New Brunswick office had the opportunity to participate in a dictation in French and a quiz on the French language in order to measure their knowledge and learn more.

One of the members of the Official Languages Sub-Committee represents the Agency on the Official Languages Committee of the New Brunswick Federal Council. The representative participates in the quarterly meetings, designed to discuss the challenges in the area of official languages encountered by the various federal departments in New Brunswick, find solutions and share best practices.

In November 2002, ten employees from ACOA's New Brunswick office participated in the Symposium on Language of Work in Dieppe, organized by the New Brunswick Federal Council. The objective of this symposium was to inform federal public servants in New Brunswick about rights and obligations regarding language of work in the public service. Over 95 participants attended the symposium, including the Honourable Lucienne Robillard, President of the Treasury Board; Dr. Dyane Adam, Commissioner of Official Languages; and Ms. Diana Monnet, Assistant Secretary, Treasury Board Secretariat.

Use of the minority language is encouraged in meetings of the various sections of the Agency. The Management Committee is a leader in this regard, since the language in which its weekly meetings are held alternates from one week to the next. Wednesday is dedicated to the use of French by all employees who are able to do so. These practices enable employees who have taken language training to practice their second language, and sensitize and encourage Francophones to use their mother tongue in the workplace.

As much as possible, the Agency hires bilingual personnel to staff vacant positions.

Lastly, the main work tool of many ACOA employees, the QAccess computer system, was translated in full during the year 2002-2003 to facilitate its use and encourage employees whose mother tongue is French to work in the language in which they are most at ease.

(3) *Future Directions (2003-2004)*

New Brunswick's Francophone community constitutes a major part of ACOA's clientele in this province. Determined to support the Francophone community and deliver services in French, ACOA's office in New Brunswick will continue to offer all its services to the public in both official languages. The Agency will also continue to support organizations that facilitate the development of Francophone communities.

The Agency will support the activities of minority official language communities eligible for assistance under the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPOLC) and the Atlantic Canada Cultural and Economic Partnership, in co-operation with Canadian Heritage. The Atlantic Canada Cultural and Economic Partnership is a three-year (2002-2005) funding mechanism designed to stimulate economic development in Atlantic Canada by supporting strategic cultural activities associated with the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the French in North America.

Given the emergence of new technologies, the New Brunswick office will continue to prepare the province's firms to face the challenges to come. During the next year, a number of workshops, seminars and information sessions are planned.

The Agency will continue to count on the invaluable support of the Canada Business Services Centre (CBSC), located in Fredericton, which has a mandate to provide information services and products to small and medium-sized businesses and to the province's entrepreneurs. Services at CBSCs are delivered in both official languages in all four Atlantic provinces.

Over the next year, ACOA will support the Official Languages Committee of the New Brunswick Federal Council to ensure follow-up of the recommendations included in the report of the Symposium on Language of Work.

A message will be sent out to managers at ACOA's New Brunswick office to reinforce their responsibilities in the area of official languages.

To create an environment conducive to the use of both French and English in the workplace, managers will emphasize training and awareness of both new and long-standing employees on rights and obligations relating to the language of work. Unilingual employees will be encouraged to take language training to facilitate their integration into bilingual meetings. The Agency will continue to invite staff members to use their preferred language in the workplace. Management will ensure that working tools and information documents are distributed simultaneously in both official languages.

The Agency will continue to dedicate financial and human resources (tools and translation centre, among other things) to implement the bilingualism policy and to encourage employees to use them.

The Sub-Committee on Official Languages will implement a pilot project consisting of a mentoring or twinning program, to encourage Francophones to use their language and enable those who have received language training to practice their second language. Luncheon meetings will be conducted in French on the first Wednesday of each month, so that twinned teams and other employees can socialize in French. Parlour games, card games, broadcasts of television programs, music and reading will be an integral part of the activities included in these monthly events. In addition, trips will be organized to make people aware of Francophone and Acadian culture.

(B) Nova Scotia Office and Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation

1) **Context**

Statistics Canada's census data (2001) shows that 36,740 Nova Scotians identified French as their first official language, which accounted for 4.1% of the provincial population. This ratio has remained constant compared with the 1996 Census and the total Francophone population has declined at less than one percent, which is comparable with the rate of decline in the general population. The largest concentrations of Acadians and Francophones were found in the counties of Halifax (11,200), Digby (6,600) and Yarmouth (6,360). Together, these three counties comprise over 71% of the Francophone population of Nova Scotia. Other significant Acadian communities throughout Nova Scotia are: Richmond County (Isle Madame), Inverness County (Chéticamp), Kings County (Greenwood), and Antigonish County (Pomquet). The Acadian population has not been excluded from the provincial trend of migration from rural to urban areas.

(2) **Activity Overview**

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) works closely with Francophone businesses, educational institutions and economic development organizations to ensure that Francophone communities in Nova Scotia can access and take advantage of the various programs and services the Agency provides.

A central element of ACOA interactions with Francophone communities is the delivery of bilingual services and expertise by its staff in the Halifax, Digby, and Yarmouth offices, as well as the Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre (C/NSBSC). In Cape Breton, ACOA's programs are delivered through Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC), a separate Crown corporation with an economic development mandate specifically focussed on Cape Breton Island. ECBC provides bilingual services and expertise to the Island's population through its offices in Sydney and Port Hawkesbury.

ACOA also supports the Community Development Network for the delivery of its programs. This network includes Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) that co-ordinate economic development at the local level and Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) that offer loan and consulting services to SMEs. In addition, the province's Francophones have a number of established organizations, networks, and institutions that foster community development. Key organizations representing Acadians in Nova Scotia are: *La Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (FANE); *Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (CDENE); *La Société Acadie-Nouvelle-Écosse*; *Le Centre Jodrey* and the newly amalgamated *Université Sainte-Anne-Collège de l'Acadie*.

(3) Overview of Activities by Strategic Priorities of the Agency

(i) Policy, Advocacy, and Co-ordination

Over the past year, ACOA contributed to community advocacy and co-ordination through a number of initiatives.

- ACOA representation on the Nova Scotia Federal Council Committee on Official Languages, including involvement in the development and implementation of the Official Languages Action Plan.
- ACOA sitting as an observer on the *Congrès mondial acadien 2004* Board of Directors.
- Participation in the November 15, 2002 Federal Council meeting held at *Université Sainte-Anne*. This meeting included presentations by Acadian leaders and was followed by a luncheon with community representatives.
- Participation by ACOA at the February 5, 2003 Official Languages meeting sponsored by the Federal Council. The meeting served as a forum where federal participants met with representatives from the *Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* to share information and to determine how federal departments could play a stronger role in support of the Francophone organizations' priorities.
- Participation in the *Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse's (FANE)* March 18, 2003 *Équipe Acadienne* initiative at which federal representatives were apprised of key initiatives undertaken by the Acadian Community.

(ii) Trade, Investment and Tourism

(a) Trade and Investment

Since the launch of the Trade and Investment component of the Atlantic Investment Partnership (AIP), steps have been taken to ensure the Francophone community has access to all program elements in the language of choice, including Trade Awareness training sessions and Team Canada Atlantic trade missions. ACOA's Nova Scotia Trade and Investment team has a designated bilingual officer to serve the French-speaking business community. The Agency offered a program information session in both official languages. Language options were provided for companies participating in the Export Workshops series, and facilitators were equipped with bilingual staff and

resources. With regard to mentoring services to clients, bilingual consultants have been identified to provide trade services in both official languages.

(b) Tourism

Tourism is a key economic development sector in the province. Due to its unique culture, heritage and language, Acadian tourism represents an economic growth opportunity. The Acadians of Nova Scotia have a strong cultural identity and live in many of the most scenic parts of the province. They are ideally positioned to take advantage of tourism growth as cultural tourism is part of a dominant trend in tourism today.

From 2003 to 2005, Acadians in Nova Scotia will host several events that will bolster tourism in Acadian regions throughout the province. Historic milestones to be commemorated include:

- 2003 - 350th anniversary of the founding of Pubnico, the oldest permanent, remaining Acadian community in Canada;
- 2004 - 400th anniversary of the arrival of the French to Nova Scotia and North America. Also in 2004, Nova Scotia will host the 3rd World Acadian Congress (*Congrès mondial acadien*), which is expected to attract 100,000 participants from around the world to Nova Scotia; and
- 2005 - 250th commemoration of the deportation of the Acadians.

In 2002-2003, ACOA was actively engaged with Acadian communities to support initiatives to improve their ability to take advantage of tourism opportunities arising from the upcoming Acadian commemorative events and beyond, such as:

- support for operational and marketing expenses for the *Congrès mondial acadien 2004*;
- ongoing support for “*Musique de la Baie*,” a musical review where Acadian youth are hired to showcase Acadian culture and heritage through travelling dinner theatre performances aimed at tourists;
- support to the Music Industry Association of Nova Scotia for the production of a musical revue “*La Revue Musicale Acadienne*” to promote Acadian music as well as Acadian life, past and present;
- ongoing project support to the Municipality of Clare in the implementation of its Vision 2004 tourism strategic plan including signage, Web site upgrades, and local tourism operator support services;

- ongoing assistance to promote Acadian cultural tourism through the cataloguing and preservation of historic publications at the Acadian Museum in Pubnico;
- financial support to the *Acadie 2003-2005* marketing initiative to assist community organizations in the promotion of their events;
- assistance to the *Grou Tyme* Festival to include an Acadian artisans' tent as well as various workshops on product development;
- ongoing project support for the construction and operation of a market at *Parc Joseph et Marie (Robichaud) Dugas* in Belliveau Cove;
- funding support and participation on the steering committee for the new interpretive centre at the Grand-Pré National Historic Site;
- support to infrastructure improvements to the *Village Historique Acadien de la Nouvelle-Écosse*;
- marketing and infrastructure support to the theatre troupe "*Les Araignées du Boui-Boui*." This project was funded in part through the ACOA-Canadian Heritage Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPOLC);
- In Cape Breton, funding has been provided to hire a co-ordinator to assist with *Congrès Mondial Acadien (CMA)* activities on Cape Breton Island. Francophone communities have also accessed programs for community revitalization in preparation for the CMA; and
- ECBC has provided support to cultural and economic development projects championed by the *Société Saint-Pierre* in Chéticamp and *Le Centre La Picasse* in Petit de Grat.

(iii) Innovation

ACOA assisted with multi-year funding in the development of a new Knowledge-Based Economy Incubation Centre in Digby County. Branded as IntelliCentre, this innovative partnership with *Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle Écosse* and the *Collège de l'Acadie*, will permit Francophone information technology (IT) entrepreneurs to utilize both space and services at the *Collège* in order to strengthen and grow their businesses in South West Nova Scotia.

The Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF) has ensured in-house bilingual capability at the officer level to serve Francophone clients. During Rounds One and Two of the program, a bilingual officer provided file review and client services in French. Also, bilingual science reviewers were engaged during both rounds of the program for

technical assessments of Francophone proposals. These capabilities will be available on a go-forward basis to ensure an adequate level of service to Francophone clients.

(iv) Entrepreneurship and Skills Development

One of the main initiatives supported by ACOA aimed at nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit and business development in Nova Scotia's Acadian communities is the work undertaken by the *Centre Jodrey* at the *Université Sainte-Anne-Collège de l'Acadie*, one of five University Business Development Service Centres (UBDCs) located in Nova Scotia. ACOA's regional office in Nova Scotia provides core operational support for the operations of *Centre Jodrey*. This year saw the renewal and expansion of ACOA support for the activities of the *Centre Jodrey*, which is located in Digby County and is particularly active in the Francophone communities of Yarmouth and Digby counties. The *Centre Jodrey* undertakes activities generally promoting entrepreneurship to the general public and improved business management skills throughout the Acadian business community. The *Centre Jodrey* also promotes entrepreneurial and business careers to young people in the Acadian school system and among the student body at the *Université Sainte-Anne-Collège de l'Acadie*.

The *Centre Jodrey* also offers various business support services to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs and business owners. These services include providing advice on and assistance in developing business plans and other strategic business documents to businesses and community organizations. The *Centre* also assists in the development of feasibility studies and plans, and provides management advice and other services to Francophone businesses and community organizations. The *Centre Jodrey* is an important part of the Community Economic Development network supporting the Francophone community as well as being a focus for Francophone entrepreneurship development.

The Agency also supports the activities of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED), which operates a network of youth-based Open for Business (OFB) Centres. One of these Centres is located in Yarmouth and offers counselling services and workshops for Francophone youth. This year saw the completion of a project, funded by ACOA, to ensure the OFB services and programs are completely accessible to Francophone youth. ACOA also supported CEED in the development of a two-year project to enhance the entrepreneurial courses and materials offered in the Acadian school system. This project is to be undertaken in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Education and the *Conseil scolaire acadien provincial*.

(v) Community Economic Development

ACOA participates in a wide range of activities designed to meet the economic development needs of rural Acadian communities. ACOA has two bilingual Area Account Managers located in two offices where, under the *Official Languages Act*, there

is deemed to exist a significant demand for services in both English and French: Digby and Yarmouth, both of which are located in mainland Nova Scotia. These Area Account Managers ensure the active offer of service in both languages and the provision of service in French to business and community representatives in the southwestern region of Nova Scotia.

In Cape Breton, ECBC has a bilingual development officer working from its Port Hawkesbury office who focusses on community and business development in the Island's Francophone communities.

ACOA facilitates economic development in Nova Scotia's Acadian regions through core operating support to the *Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (CDENE). The CDENE is the only province-wide French-language economic development organization dedicated to meeting the needs of Nova Scotia's Acadian communities. With offices in Clare, Argyle and Halifax, in addition to two offices in Cape Breton, the CDENE is an effective partner in helping ACOA implement its Action Plan. The CDENE's four priorities - Youth, IT, Rural Development, and Tourism - are well aligned with ACOA's strategic priorities.

ACOA also meets the economic development needs of rural areas by providing core operational funding to Regional Development Authorities (RDAs). Results during the past year include:

- French-language service delivery by bilingual staff in the RDAs serving the South West Shore and Western Annapolis Valley areas of the province; and
- ACOA sponsorship of several RDA-managed projects to improve the economies of Acadian communities.

(vi) Access to Capital and Information

a) Access to Capital

To ensure equitable service to Francophones in the counties of Yarmouth and Digby, ACOA has supported the hiring of a Francophone CBDC development officer to serve Francophones in these regions. Interestingly enough, the presence of the Francophone development officer has increased the level of funding assistance provided to Francophone businesses by the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs). This project was funded through the ACOA-Canadian Heritage MOU for the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPOLC), and in partnership with *Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse* and the *Collège de l'Acadie*.

b) Access to Information

The Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre (C/NSBSC) offers bilingual services to new and aspiring business persons from Francophone areas of the province. During the past year, special presentations and mail-outs on business information products and services of the Centre have been provided to staff of *Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse* in Halifax and Argyle and to the Centre Jodrey. As well, the C/NSBSC provided a presentation and site tour to the Grade 12 Entrepreneurship Class from *École Carrefour* in Dartmouth.

(4) Future Directions

In 2003-2004, ACOA will continue to collaborate with community stakeholders in Nova Scotia on the implementation of its Action Plan on Section 41 of the OLA. Specifically, the Agency will identify community needs and contribute to the development of economic development strategic plans to best meet these needs. This will include special emphasis on job creation in Acadian communities that would allow Francophone youth the opportunity to gain meaningful employment in their home areas. The Agency will ensure an appropriate level of service is provided in both official languages by both ACOA and its partner economic development organizations. Finally, efforts will continue to be made to take advantage of tourism opportunities arising from the upcoming Acadian commemorative events, most notably the 400th anniversary of l'Acadie.

(C) Prince Edward Island Office

(1) **Context**

According to data from the Statistics Canada's 2001 Census, the number of people in Prince Edward Island who identified French as their mother tongue totals 5,335, which is 4.2% of the province's total population. The French-speaking population is mainly concentrated in the *Évangéline* region, but is also present in West Prince, Summerside-Miscouche, Rustico and Charlottetown.

The assimilation rate of Francophones on P.E.I. is very high, especially in regions where there are no French-language schools or community school centres. The illiteracy rate in those communities is also very high. The regions with schools that teach primarily in French are Charlottetown, *Évangéline*, Deblois, Summerside and Rustico.

The economy of these regions is mainly based on tourism and primary sector activities such as fishing, agriculture and forestry, except in the Charlottetown area and, to a lesser extent, Summerside, where a fair number of Acadians and other Francophones work in the federal and provincial Public Service. Consequently, the economy of the Francophone regions is characterized by strong seasonal fluctuations, the unemployment rate is higher and the average income is lower than the provincial average.

(2) **Activity Overview**

During the 2002-2003 fiscal year, ACOA's P.E.I. regional office undertook a range of activities in support of Section 41 of the OLA. These activities were planned according to three major objectives.

(i) **To facilitate access to government services and programs**

- ACOA maintained membership in the Official Languages Sub-Committee of the P.E.I. Federal Council;
- ACOA maintained membership in a working group on Francophone development involving ACOA, HRDC, the Province of P.E.I., the Saint Thomas Aquinas Society (the province's Francophone representation organization), Baie Acadienne Development Corporation and *La Société Éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard*; and

- ACOA maintained close working relationships with parties involved in economic development and promotion of the French language and Acadian culture including the Saint Thomas Aquinas Society, Baie Acadienne Development Corporation and Economic Development and Employability Network of Prince Edward Island.

(ii) To provide access to capital

- ACOA authorized seven applications for financial assistance under the Business Development Program resulting in total repayable and non-repayable contributions of \$377,895 on total eligible costs of \$467,241;
- ACOA authorized \$100,000 for the yearly operational budget of the Baie Acadienne Development Corporation; and
- ACOA authorized 11 business studies totalling \$46,722 under the Consultant Advisory Services Program.

(iii) To enhance visibility throughout the Acadian/Francophone community

- ACOA maintained regular contact (telephone and in-person) with both commercial and non-commercial clients as well as the appropriate organization representatives involved in Acadian/Francophone economic development.

(D) Newfoundland and Labrador Office

(1) **Context**

According to Statistics Canada data from the 2001 Census, 2,180 inhabitants of Newfoundland and Labrador identified French as their mother tongue and 335 identified both French and English. The vast majority of these residents were located in three sub-regions: the City of St. John's, Labrador City, and three communities on the Port-au-Port Peninsula (Mainland, Black Duck Brook and Cape St. George). There were also 20,895 residents who considered themselves fluent in both official languages.

ACOA activities related to the implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* included partnerships with the following groups:

- the *Fédération des Francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador* – FFTNL (the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Francophones, the province's Francophone representation organization);
- *Société 2004* Society;
- the *Association régionale de la côte ouest (ARCO)*;
- the Francophone Affairs Steering Committee (FASC), comprising the provincial and federal governments and the province's Francophone community;
- *Francojeunes de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador*;
- *Le Gaboteur*, the provincial Francophone newspaper;
- the *Regroupement de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE)*;
- the *Association francophone de St. John's*; and
- the *Association Francophone du Labrador*.

The delivery of program services to the community in both official languages is an important element of ACOA's interaction with the Francophone community. This is achieved through the activities of the Regional Co-ordinator at the Corner Brook District Office and the Canada / Newfoundland and Labrador Business Service Centre (CNLBSC). The Regional Co-ordinator assists in the co-ordination, planning and implementation of economic development strategies in the Francophone regions of the

province. Similarly, this position responds to all French language business program enquiries directed to the Agency. The Canada / Newfoundland and Labrador Business Service Centre plays a significant role in the interaction between the various levels of government and the Francophone community through the provision of bilingual business information services to business and community clients.

ACOA continues to actively support service delivery mechanisms administered by the community such as the Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs), which provide support to SMEs through financial and counselling assistance, and the Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs), which assist in the development of the communities' local economic development plans and strategies for the provincial economic zones.

The Atlantic region, in general, is in transition from a resource-dependant area to a more knowledge-based economy. While this trend has also been seen in the urban areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, economic growth in the rural areas has often been attributed to increases in tourist visitation and some employment gains in the fishery sector. The rural economy continues to be challenged by the large geographic size of the province, rural isolation, continuing problems in the groundfish fishery, dwindling population due to out-migration and the general lack of business and technology infrastructure. Together, these factors constrain the economic development efforts of entrepreneurs and community groups alike while challenging strategies to maintain the vitality of the French language in the linguistic minority communities.

For these reasons the role of the *Fédération des Francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL)* and other Francophone community groups has become crucial to the survival and vitality of the French language in the province. The *FFTNL* and its partners continue to work toward the development of solid partnerships within and outside the province.

(2) Activity Overview

ACOA's Newfoundland and Labrador regional office works to support strategic service delivery priorities by responding to enquiries and providing in-person counselling and program support to Francophone entrepreneurs and community groups seeking assistance in matters relating to economic development.

(i) Policy, Advocacy and Co-ordination

Newfoundland and Labrador Francophones work within their own communities and in co-operation with the various levels of government to establish and maintain good working relations with a view to stimulate economic development activities. ACOA participates in the activities and initiatives of organizations with similar goals and objectives. Agency participation takes the form of:

- participation in the activities of the Francophone Affairs Steering Committee (FASC);
- collaboration with the *Société nationale de l'Acadie (SNA)* to promote initiatives in support of Section 41 of the OLA in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- participation in the *ARCO / RDÉE* Consultation Committee to assist in the development and implementation of the *RDÉE* economic development plan for the Francophone communities of the Port-au-Port Peninsula;
- collaboration with the FFTNL and Société 2004 Society to develop and implement strategic plans for activities and events celebrating 2004;
- collaboration with *RDÉE* to develop work plans for its Economic Development Officers located in the three Francophone regions of the province;
- collaboration with Canadian Heritage on the assessment of projects and investment of funds for initiatives from community groups to celebrate the cultural heritage of the province, especially the French history through the Atlantic Canada Cultural and Economic Partnership (ACCEP); and
- partnership with Canadian Heritage on the assessment of projects and investment of funds for initiatives originating from the Francophone minority communities through the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPOLC).

(ii) Trade, Investment and Tourism

Economic Zone 09, the Festival Coast Tourism Association, *ARCO* and *RDÉE* strategic plans recognized the need to develop tourism products, and the associated infrastructure required to support this sector. Similarly, the FFTNL, *L'Association francophone de St. John's* and *Le Gaboteur* saw the development, marketing and interpretation of existing infrastructure as crucial to tourism development. Given the importance these and other organizations attributed to these issues, ACOA assisted them in initiatives such as:

- the development and implementation of a proposal by the Festival Coast Tourism Association to carry out marketing activities for the promotion of St. George's Bay and Economic Zone 09 areas, in which the French Ancestors Route was featured;

- the development and implementation of a plan for a Francophone Heritage touring route of the Avalon Peninsula featuring highlights of a previously supported study on the d'Iberville tour;
- the development and implementation of a proposal by the FFTNL and *Société 2004* Society to plan and carry out activities specific to the Francophone celebrations of 2004;
- the development and implementation of an initiative for the creation of two theatrical scripts with French heritage themes on St. John's and Placentia, the result of which would be off-the-shelf French scripts, ready for presentation;
- the development and implementation of a proposal from *Le Gaboteur* for a French-language tour guide to promote the province's attractions and services in French;
- the development of a plan for the establishment of a series of Francophone eco-tourism events on the Avalon Peninsula.

(iii) Innovation

Through the efforts of their community groups, Francophone communities continued to access funds for their Community Access Program (CAP) sites in Cape St. George, Mainland and Labrador City. Recognizing the importance of this initiative and its potential for the distribution of information in the community, ACOA continued to work with the local groups seeking innovative methods of ensuring the best use of the equipment for the dissemination of information throughout the communities.

(iv) Entrepreneurship and Business Skills Development

ACOA continued to support the efforts of the Francophone community to stimulate and support economic development and entrepreneurship by:

- providing guidance and mentoring to Development Officers of the *RDÉE* to promote economic development activities in Francophone minority language communities;
- providing program-specific information services to entrepreneurs and community groups in both official languages through the efforts of the Regional Co-ordinator located at the Corner Brook Office; and

- providing general business information services in both official languages through the Canada / Newfoundland and Labrador Business Service Centre.

(v) Access to Capital and Information

The majority of Francophones in Newfoundland and Labrador live in rural areas. ACOA co-ordinates economic development programming in the province by providing access to information and capital in all communities through:

- business services and information delivery in both official languages by the Canada / Newfoundland and Labrador Business Service Centre (CNLBSC) and the associated network of satellite offices located in the CBDCs throughout the province to all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- granting operating funds to the regional economic development boards for the development and implementation of strategic economic plans for the economic zones, including all communities in the province;
- continuing support for the network of Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) to ensure access to capital for the province's existing and potential entrepreneurs; and
- providing information and advice to the various Francophone community groups concerning the development and implementation of CED plans for the Francophone communities of the province.

(vi) Community Economic Development

Agency interactions with the Francophone community of Newfoundland and Labrador focus on economic development issues. Most often, this relationship involves community economic development (CED) strategies and initiatives. For this reason, ACOA participated on the various committees and boards established by the Francophone stakeholder groups including ARCO, the FFTNL, *RDÉE* and others where community economic development policy and strategic directions are set. ACOA also supported CED through:

- support and guidance in the development of proposals to be submitted under the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) for the Francophone communities of the province;

- representation on LMDA Regional Boards and assessment committees, where business plans for HRDC regions are developed and the subsequent expenditure of funds decided;
- support and guidance to Francophone community groups in the development and implementation of community economic development initiatives in their regions;
- providing assessment commentary to HRDC National Headquarters on the content of the RDÉE strategic economic development plan;
- support and guidance in the development of proposals to be submitted to the Agency in support of Economic Zone priorities throughout the province; and
- working in partnership with other funding agencies in the joint development and support of proposals from rural communities, including the Francophone communities of the province.

(3) *Future Directions (2003-2004)*

While building on the achievements and partnerships realized over the past years, ACOA will continue to work with the Francophone, federal and provincial stakeholders in Newfoundland and Labrador while playing a lead role in economic development activities in minority language communities.

The Agency will take a proactive approach in working with Francophone CED groups and entrepreneurs to ensure they are aware of the various programs and services available to them in their efforts to develop their communities and economies. To meet the needs identified by the Francophone community, ACOA will make every effort to provide assistance through its program activities, and its co-ordination and advocacy role. Initiatives planned by ACOA in Newfoundland and Labrador include:

- playing an advocacy role with respect to the Francophone clientele and co-ordinating the work under its economic development leadership mandate, particularly with regards to the economic development in minority official language communities;
- distributing the Agency's 2002-2004 Action Plan to all the Francophone community groups and economic development partnership organizations in the province;
- the ACOA Official Languages Co-ordinator will meet with the Executive Director of the FFTNL to review the initiatives identified in the 2002-2004

Action Plan and determine to what extent the plan fits in with the Federation's comprehensive plan;

- continuing to collaborate with *ARCO / RDÉE* to review its CED plan relating to the Francophone communities of the Port-au-Port Peninsula;
- accepting and assessing proposals from Francophone clients for profit and non-profit initiatives;
- assisting the FFTNL / *Société 2004 Society* and its member groups to identify appropriate funding programs for their CED initiatives;
- continuing to provide information services in the official language of the client's choice at the Canada / Newfoundland and Labrador Business Service Centre;
- continuing to use the active offer of service posters in both official languages to identify Agency staff capable of providing such services in ACOA offices in St. John's and Corner Brook and at the CNLBSC;
- continuing to maintain and add information in both official languages to the CNLBSC library;
- continuing to promote entrepreneurship in the Francophone communities by providing support for workshops during Small Business Week and activities sponsored by the Francophone community;
- regularly contacting development officers and directors of Francophone groups to maintain good working relations with a view to fostering entrepreneurship and economic development in Francophone communities; and
- continuing to collaborate with other federal and provincial agencies and with groups representing the minority official language communities with a view to meet the needs of Francophones in the region. At the provincial level, the Agency will achieve this through its active participation in the Francophone Affairs Steering Committee.