

ACTION PLAN
1998-2000

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF SECTION 41 OF THE
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

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Action Plan 1998-2000
SUMMARY

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY

Responsible individual: ACOA President

Principal measures planned:

With a solid foundation, the 1998-2000 Action Plan builds on the success of previous action plans. A leader in the field of economic development in the Atlantic Region, ACOA will continue to maintain close ties with key economic players throughout the region. The Agency will continue to work closely with Francophone economic development organizations, women and young entrepreneurs and to support their economic initiatives. ACOA also gives a high priority to Francophone representation on CBEDs, CBSCs and regional development organizations. With a strong bilingual capacity, the Agency is determined to offer its services, provide support to communities and produce its information material in both official languages throughout the Atlantic Region, in compliance with the provisions of the *Official Languages Act*.

During the last two years, ACOA has actively promoted the implementation of the 1996-1998 Action Plan and the efforts of the Head Office in Moncton and ACOA New Brunswick have borne fruit, as the Official Languages Commissioner has placed them on his Merit List for the development of minority official language communities. The Agency is also a member of the National Committee for Canadian Francophone Human Resources Development.

In 1998-2000, the Agency will continue, in collaboration with the region's Francophone communities, to contribute to the development of economic development strategic plans. In New Brunswick, the 1999 Francophonie Summit will have major economic spinoffs: the Agency has already approved funding for Summit-related studies and may possibly support other projects. In Nova Scotia, ACOA has made a multi-year commitment to fund the Centre Jodrey at the Université Ste-Anne and will continue to help Francophone communities develop economic development plans. In Prince Edward Island, ACOA will follow through on its commitment to work closely with Francophone communities and various economic development organizations for the implementation of the strategic plan. In Newfoundland, the Agency will work with the *Association régionale de la côte ouest (ARCO)* to implement the economic development activities identified in the economic development plans for the Port-au-Port area. The financial assistance provided to minority language communities often depends largely on the number of applications submitted to the Agency.

NOTE: Please refer to action plan for other proposed measures.

Lucienne Godbout
National Coordinator
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Preamble
(Statement of intent: grounds, goals of proposed measures)

ACOA reiterates its commitment to the objectives of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* of:

- (a) *enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and*
- (b) *fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.*

Like the 1996-1998 plan, the 1998-2000 Action Plan builds on the successes of previous years and is enriched by feedback from the community. The report illustrates ACOA's firm commitment to the economic development of minority language communities throughout the Atlantic Region. Annex A lists the Agency's activities for the implementation of section 41 during 1997-1998.

Strengthened by its partnership with other federal departments and the Atlantic provincial governments, the Agency continues to deliver and cost-share programs designed to improve the climate for economic growth. The COOPERATION Program is an excellent partnership example.

The Agency's coordination group for the implementation of the OLA's section 41, in place for over three years, functions in a framework of consultation and cooperation. The group consists of a regional coordinator from each regional office and a coordinator from Head Office, who acts as National Coordinator. Some regional offices have been able to take advantage of their own working group in charge of implementing section 41 within their own individual regions.

ACTION PLAN
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 41
OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Part 1 General Information

1. Identification of institution (complete address including Internet)

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
P.O. Box 6051
644 Main Street, 3rd Floor
Moncton, New Brunswick
E1C 9J8
Telephone: (506) 851-2271
Facsimile: (506) 851-7403
Web site: <http://www.acoa.ca>

2. Brief description of the institution's mandate (include, if relevant, programs of interest to the official languages minority communities)

The Agency's mandate is based on Part 1 of the *Government Organization Act, Atlantic Canada, 1987*, R.S.C. ch. G-5.7, known as the *Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Act*. The Act gives ACOA a wide-ranging mandate to strengthen the region's economy by boosting job creation and earned income in the Atlantic Region.

To fulfill its mission, ACOA pursues two distinct goals:

- (a) *to ensure that a wide variety of business development tools and resources serve the real and diverse needs of the region's emerging and existing entrepreneurs; and*
- (b) *to ensure that all economic development programs and activities in Atlantic Canada are coordinated and designed to improve the climate for business growth generally.*

Since January 1996, ACOA has operated within the Industry Portfolio, which includes 13 departments and agencies that report to Parliament through the Minister of Industry. Its mandate, mission, objectives, priorities and services reflect the federal government's national *Jobs and Growth* agenda to enhance:

- small-and medium-sized business development;
- trade and foreign investment;
- technology and innovation; and
- employment opportunities for young people.

As a result, ACOA is the Atlantic region's main contact for federal government programs, services and policies.

ACOA's general approach is governed by the following six strategic priorities:

- Access to Information and Capital;
- Business Management Practices;
- Entrepreneurship Development;
- Innovation and Technology;
- Tourism; and
- Trade.

The Agency implements its strategic priorities through an array of programs and services grouped into core and non-core activities:

Core Activities

- ▶ *Business Development Program (BDP)*: designed to help SMEs establish, expand or modernize by offering access to capital in the form of interest-free, unsecured repayable contributions.
- ▶ *Community-based Economic Development (CBED)*: This program promotes grass-roots action by members of a community to improve their economic conditions. ACOA helps by making its resources more accessible and by forging links and partnerships among private and public sector stakeholders.
- ▶ *Canada Business Service Centres (CBSC)*: The CBSCs, located in all four Atlantic provinces, provide business-related services and information, by means of a 1-800 telephone line, for example, to SMEs and persons living in the rural and urban communities of the region who want to go into business.

- ▶ *ACF Equity Atlantic Inc.:* This program, which is cost-shared equally by ACOA, the provincial governments and chartered banks, addresses the deficiency in venture capital availability in Atlantic Canada.
- ▶ *COOPERATION Program:* COOPERATION Agreements consist of comprehensive federal-provincial cost-shared initiatives designed to improve the environment for economic growth.
- ▶ *Policies, advocacy and coordination:* Since its inclusion in the Industry Portfolio in 1996, the Agency has been in an excellent position to defend the interests of the Atlantic Region. It advances its advocacy function through its corporate procurement strategy, which brings in greater industrial spinoffs and more government contracts to the Atlantic Region. ACOA also commissions research on economic and socio-economic policies.

Non-core Activities

ACOA is also involved in activities that are not listed among its basic services, but that are vital to the general economic health of the region:

- ▶ The Canada Infrastructure Works Program (CIWP);
- ▶ Borden-Cape Tormentine Redevelopment Programs;
- ▶ Base Closure Adjustment activities; and
- ▶ The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) and the economic development component of the recently announced post-TAGS measures.

These measures assist communities in obtaining development project investments and in developing middle-and long-term employment opportunities for workers.

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| 3. Officers responsible (senior official, national and regional coordinators) |
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| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <i>National Coordinator:</i> | Lucienne Godbout Program Affairs Manager Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency P.O. Box 6051 644 Main Street, 3rd Floor Moncton, New Brunswick E1C 9J8 |
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NEWFOUNDLAND

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NOVA SCOTIA

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***Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation is responsible for the delivery of ACOA programs in Cape Breton.**

NEW BRUNSWICK

Regional Coordinator: Paul LeBlanc
Programs Director
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P.O. Box 578
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4. Period covered by Action Plan

The Action Plan covers the period from April 1, 1998 to March 31, 2000.

Part 2 Identification of Community Needs

5. Means used to identify needs of official-language minority communities at national and regional levels

To ensure it meets the needs of the Francophone communities of Atlantic Canada, ACOA has instituted the practice of holding regular consultations with Francophone organizations and plays an active role in workshops, meetings and consultation sessions with Francophone economic development groups in the Atlantic region. The Agency is in constant contact with its official-language minority partners throughout the region. Bilingual ACOA officials work in close cooperation with Francophone communities and organizations in order to meet their needs. ACOA also relies on its extensive network of district offices which enables full and effective participation in programs by communities in their home regions. The Agency is a member of the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resources Development. In this matter, ACOA cooperates with the Francophone communities of Canada and with the other federal departments with an economic mandate.

At the regional level, the Agency works with organizations such as the *Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick*, the *Jodrey Centre* in Nova Scotia, the *Association régionale de la côte ouest* in Newfoundland, the *Société de développement économique de la Baie acadienne* in Prince Edward Island and with regional economic development authorities, commissions and boards providing a wide range of services to Francophone entrepreneurs. In Nova Scotia, studies have been undertaken during the past year with certain official-language minority groups to properly identify their needs. In Prince Edward Island, the ACOA regional office has participated in the funding of the provincial strategic planning with collaboration from the *Société St-Thomas d'Aquin* and has been involved in the provincial Forum on this planning.

In its relations with the private sector, ACOA deals directly with corporate executives of firms, industry associations, business organizations, institutions and the academic community. It deals directly and continuously with provincial government leaders and officials. The ACOA Regional Vice-Presidents are members of the four Atlantic Federal Regional Councils which bring together heads of key federal departments; three of these Councils are chaired by ACOA Regional Vice-Presidents. As part of its efforts to ensure the transparency of the implementation of Section 41 of the OLA, ACOA has made its activity report for 1996-1997 available to the communities.

6. Principal needs identified at national and regional levels

- Need to develop and apply strategic regional economic development plans in the Francophone regions of Atlantic Canada;
- Need to access funding for Francophone-owned SMEs and Francophone organizations involved in economic development, in sectors such as aquaculture, tourism, culture and technology;
- Need to develop Francophone SMEs in the Atlantic Region, particularly among young people and women;
- Need to continue increasing Francophone representation in economic development organizations such as the Community Business Development Corporations and the Canada Business Service Centres;
- Need to build on existing partnerships with Francophone economic development organizations such as the *Conseil Économique du Nouveau-Brunswick*, the *Centre Jodrey* in Nova Scotia and the *Société éducative* in Prince Edward Island; and
- Need to develop information and communications technologies for Francophone communities in Atlantic Canada.

Part 3 Action Plan Contents and Timetable

7. (a) Measures (national or regional) proposed by the institution to respond to community needs

As in the past, ACOA will continue to collaborate with key economic players in Atlantic Canada and act as a catalyst for economic development in the region. Through its program activity as well as its coordination and advocacy role, ACOA will work to promote economic development in Francophone communities. Since ACOA's financial assistance programs are application driven, the extent to which the Agency responds to the Francophone communities' needs is greatly influenced by applications submitted by the communities.

Throughout Atlantic Canada, ACOA will:

- continue to play an economic development leadership role, particularly in the economic development of official language minority-language communities;

- continue to promote greater Francophone representation in community economic development organizations such as the Regional Development Authorities and the Canada Business Service Centres;
- support Francophone economic activity, particularly with respect to Francophone SMEs, young and women entrepreneurs, and Francophone organizations involved in economic development;
- work in cooperation with other federal and provincial departments and agencies and with groups representing Francophone communities to better meet their needs;
- promote and support human resources training and entrepreneurship development;
- continue to regularly consult with minority official-language groups, particularly in the development of the Agency's Action Plan for the implementation of Section 41 of the OLA;
- work on the development of new information and communications technologies; and
- continue to offer services and information material to its clients in both official languages in compliance with the *Official Languages Act*.

Examples of specific activities on a province-by-province basis to support the above include the following:

- ▶ In New Brunswick, ACOA will participate in activities surrounding the 1999 Francophonie Summit to maximize the economic benefits of this unique world event in Atlantic Canada.
- ▶ In Newfoundland, the Agency will continue to assist in the implementation of the economic development plan of the *Association régionale de la côte ouest* for the Port-au-Port region. Access to service in both languages will continue to be delivered.
- ▶ In Nova Scotia the office will continue to work with Francophone communities to identify and implement economic development opportunities in the tourism, culture and information technologies sectors. An accountability plan will help to evaluate the Action Plan measures.
- ▶ In Prince Edward Island, the Agency will work closely with the other signatories to the Tripartite Agreement to undertake projects that will support the further development of the Francophone community. The regional office will also work with the SSTA to help organize a Prince Edward Island entrepreneur's seminar.

- ▶ In the Head Office, ACOA will proceed with an awareness campaign to sensitize employees about the MOU (acknowledging the mechanism for mutual cooperation to govern activities aimed at enhancing the vitality of the French linguistic minority communities in Canada) signed by ACOA President, the Deputy Ministers of eight other federal departments and the Francophone community.
- ▶ Development of specific tools with access by SMEs from both linguistic groups - Internet-based benchmarking/diagnostic tools allowing SMEs the capacity to benchmark their performance against other Atlantic SMEs leading to the identification of improvements to a firm's business management practices' regime.
- ▶ Work with "*La fondation internationale des économusées*" will lead to the development of six econo-museums in Atlantic Canada (goal is to develop at least three francophone econo-museums and three from other Atlantic communities; i.e. English, Irish, etc...) and a study to determine the potential to develop and "Atlantic Network of Econo-museums" (work began in 1997-98 and is expected to continue until 2000-2001).

(b) Proposed means by which the institution will inform the official-languages minority communities of its programs and services

In addition to taking full advantage of ACOA's internal resources to consult the private sector, bilingual Agency officials will continue efforts to inform the official-language minority communities of ACOA's programs and services through on-going, regular consultations with economic development organizations.

It is essential for the Agency that the Action Plan be proactively distributed so that each economic development organization receives a copy. The 1998-2000 version of the Action Plan will also be available on ACOA's Internet site.

8. Measures proposed to evaluate success of expected results

The Agency will continue to be responsive to the needs of the community and seek on-going feedback through its network of offices, committees, contacts and partners.

As part of its official consultation process with minority language groups, ACOA will seek feedback regarding its services and programs.

The Agency is currently in the process of establishing an evaluation framework to be used in assessing the achievement of intended results of the 1996-1998 Action Plan. In addition, implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* is an integral part of the accountability accord process of the Agency and results are monitored on a regular basis.

9. Financial and other resources dedicated to completion of the Action Plan

In keeping with the Action Plan, ACOA will continue making both its financial and bilingual human programming resources available to the Francophone communities. Expenditures are dependent upon the level of activity generated by the communities themselves and the projects submitted to the Agency by local entrepreneurs.

Part 4 Communications Plan

10. Measures proposed by the institution to publicize the Action Plan and report on achievements inside and outside of the institution

As set out in its 1996-1998 Action Plan, ACOA will continue, during the next two years, to pursue a pro-active distribution of its Action Plan to Francophone organizations with an interest in economic development. Again this year, the Action Plan will be made available to all Agency employees and will be on the Internet at the Agency site.

Through its regular communication strategy, ACOA will continue to inform client groups of both official language communities about programs, policies and regulations related to economic development in Atlantic Canada. A proactive approach will be used to furnish information, undertake promotion and invite participation in economic development by clients of the official language groups and regions.

One of ACOA's priorities will be to pursue the development of its extensive network of contacts and partnerships.

Part 5 Signatures

President

Date

National Coordinator

Date

REPORT ON THE 1997-1998 ACTIVITIES

Section 41 - Official Languages Act

ACOA Offices:

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>1)</i> | <i>Pan-Atlantic</i> | <i>A-1</i> |
| <i>2)</i> | <i>Nova Scotia</i> | <i>A-2</i> |
| <i>3)</i> | <i>New Brunswick</i> | <i>A-3</i> |
| <i>4)</i> | <i>Newfoundland</i> | <i>A-4</i> |
| <i>5)</i> | <i>Prince Edward Island</i> | <i>A-5</i> |

**Pan-Atlantic
Report on Activities for 1997-1998**

ACOA Head Office has been very active regarding OLA Section 41 in 1997-1998. Here are some examples:

- ▶ The Commissioner of Official Languages acknowledged ACOA's Pan-Atlantic work, along with ACOA New Brunswick's work, by naming it on the 1996 Merit List for the development of the minority-language communities.
- ▶ ACOA is a member of the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resources Development (NCCFHRD).
- ▶ The ACOA President signed an MOU with the Canadian Francophone Community acknowledging the mechanism for mutual cooperation to govern activities aimed at enhancing the vitality of the French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting their development.
- ▶ ACOA provided funds for the fourth year, to the *Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* for the television series *Temps d'affaires*, which profiles the challenges and opportunities of being an entrepreneur.
- ▶ ACOA supported and participated in the Second Forum of Francophone Business People in Canada in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The purpose of this national forum is to establish business networks and exchange information.
- ▶ ACOA provides support for the establishment of the *Comité des collèges de l'Atlantique pour le développement de l'entrepreneuriat* (Atlantic Colleges Committee for Entrepreneurial Development).
- ▶ ACOA organized a Francophone Roundtable on Economic Development in Atlantic Rural and Coastal regions in partnership with the *Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* which included discussion papers prepared by economists at the *Université de Moncton* and was held in Bathurst.
- ▶ The Young Entrepreneurs ConneXion - Seed Capital and Counselling Program's 1-800 telephone service is available in both official languages and its services are promoted in both official languages in places such as Francophone university campus radio stations and newspapers.

- ▶ The Entrepreneurship curriculum material, being developed in association with the Atlantic provincial departments of Education, is responsive to the specific requirements of the Francophone student population in each of the four provinces.
- ▶ The small business counsellor's accreditation program offered by the ACOA-supported Institute of Small Business Counsellors Inc. is available in both official languages.
- ▶ Support is provided to the *Société Nationale de l'Acadie* for a study on tourism product match. This study identifies opportunities and areas of possible cooperation to further the Acadian tourism product.
- ▶ The project (including a Roundtable) for the development of a consensus on core business competencies is to be completed by mid-1998 and is to be preceded by focus groups one of which will be with representatives of Atlantic francophone SMEs (started in August 1997, it is expected to be completed by June 1998).
- ▶ Development of specific tools with access by SMEs from both linguistic groups to assist SMEs diagnose their training needs and assist them in choosing the right trainer for the right training.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- ▶ Continue to represent ACOA at NCCFHRD;
- ▶ Work to coordinate Pan-Atlantic economic activities surrounding Francophone Summit to maximize economic benefits to the Atlantic region from this world event; and
- ▶ Assist *La Mondiale Entrepreneuriale de la Jeunesse* during their stay in the region.

**Nova Scotia Office and
Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation
Report on activities for 1997-1998**

CONTEXT

Based on the 1996 census of Statistics Canada, the number of persons with French as their first official language totals 34,090 in Nova Scotia, accounting for 3.8% of the total population. Unlike Halifax where they are concentrated in Metro Halifax, Francophones are principally located in rural areas where the fishery dominates the local economy. In mainland Nova Scotia, the number totals 27,035, representing 3.6% of the total population. The concentration of Francophones on the mainland is in the counties of Halifax (9,295), Digby (6,930) and Yarmouth (6,200). These three counties account for 83.0% of the Francophone population on the mainland. There are approximately 7,045 Francophones on Cape Breton Island. Most live in rural communities concentrated in Isle Madame and Northern Inverness County. They represent approximately 4.5% of the Island's population.

ACOA's activities with the Francophone population of Nova Scotia are with the business and economic communities including the following:

- the general business and trade communities;
- the education community, namely, the *Université Ste. Anne*, including its *Centre Jodrey* and *Collège de l'Acadie*;
- Umbrella organizations such as *La Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse*, *Société nationale de l'Acadie*, *Chambres de Commerce*, etc.

A central element of ACOA's interactions with the Francophone communities 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 Community Development Network for the delivery of its programs and projects. This network currently exists in the province through the Regional Development Authorities (RDA) and the Community Business Development Centres (CBDC) which operate throughout the Province of Nova Scotia including Francophone regions.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

ACOA is involved on a continuous basis with its clients in improving the economy of the province. Our involvement is in a wide range of activities which are too numerous to report on in this brief account. It would be appropriate to indicate, though, that the capability of the Nova Scotia ACOA offices and its associated agencies to respond to the needs of Francophone entrepreneurs has improved considerably over the past number of years. In this report, some of the major economic development activities carried out during the 1996-98 period in the Francophone communities located in Nova Scotia as well as future activities proposed over the next two years are presented.

Economic Development

ACOA Nova Scotia and Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation continue to work on a proactive basis with Francophones to review opportunities for economic development and identify programs and activities which could potentially contribute to the development and growth of their communities. Some of the initiatives undertaken or currently underway during the past two years are:

- Multi-year funding approved for the operation of the *Centre Jodrey* at *Université Ste. Anne* which assists in the development and expansion of small Francophone businesses;
- Assistance in the establishment of a community/government coordinating committee to discuss and assist the implementation of economic development priorities of the Francophone population;
- Jointly with the Francophone community and partners, development of a plan to initiate a strategic planning process at the local community level to identify their priorities for action;
- Funding of a survey of human resources in the Acadian cultural sector of the province which will help in investigating the opportunities for the establishment of an Acadian craft/artisanal business;
- In cooperation with the *Centre Jodrey*, development of an action plan for Acadian Entrepreneurship Development in South Western Nova Scotia;
- Assistance to the elaboration of a proposal to establish a Coordinating Centre for Francophone entrepreneurs in Nova Scotia;
- Work with the community in the elaboration and finalization of a plan to revitalize the Grand Pré Historical Site;
- Regular consultations with organizations such as *La FANE* to discuss economic development projects; and

- Participation in forums, workshops and meetings in the areas of tourism development, cultural industries, historical sites and educational advancement.

Business Development

ACOA is involved on a continuous basis with its clientele in fostering the development and establishment of viable business opportunities. Our account managers and development officers located in Yarmouth and Halifax (and in Sydney through ECBC) are helping entrepreneurs and businesspeople in Francophone regions in identifying, assessing and pursuing commercially-viable ventures. Some notable Francophone initiatives are:

- Ongoing consultations held with key economic development organizations to review and implement appropriate economic development strategies;
- Funding for the establishment of an Acadian Historical Village at Pubnico;
- Funding for key initiatives in the area of entrepreneurship (*Institut de développement communautaire, Centre Jodrey*), tourism (Waterfront development for the Belliveau Cove Development Commission and Tuna Museum);
- Fostering and maintaining partnership arrangements with key organizations such as *Centre Jodrey, Collège de l'Acadie*, FANE, etc.;
- Positive actions initiated and the establishment of one project (with assistance under the BDP) as a result of a study completed in 1995 into the export potential of a number of products and services; and
- Ongoing information sessions and visits by the Canada Nova Scotia Business Service Centre to Francophone areas as part of its responsibilities to promote its services to all areas of the province.

Regional Development Authorities

The Regional Development Authorities Network has been recently established by the Province of Nova Scotia by merging the large number of local development commissions into 14 separate autonomous development agencies. ACOA, in partnership with the province and municipalities, is contributing one-third of the operational funding of these agencies for a period of five years. In the Francophone regions of the province where four of the RDAs are located, ACOA is encouraging these agencies to reflect and be representative of the population they serve. Some measures which have been initiated are as follows:

- Special funding provided to hire two bilingual officers (one for the Argyle region and one for the Clare region) to ensure that all the RDAs in the

Francophone regions have Francophone or bilingual staff (a similar proposal is currently under consideration for an RDA on Cape Breton Island);

- Francophone representation on Board of Directors of each respective RDA was increased and is now proportionate to the Francophone share of the population on three of four RDAs;
- Itinerant service established in two Francophone areas by local RDAs;
- Information available on the agencies' activities made available in both official languages; and
- An ongoing process was established (jointly with the province) to continue to explore other ways in which RDAs could provide better service to its Francophone clients.

Community Business Development Centres

Since it became responsible for the operations of these centres in 1995, ACOA has been encouraging the Community Business Development Centres to seek full participation from the Francophone communities in each respective area. Some of the results include the following:

- Increased Francophone representation on Board of Directors;
- Increased capability to serve its Francophone clientele with special arrangements made in areas where service improvements were needed; and
- Ongoing process was put in place such as regular Board meetings and semiannual workshops to discuss service in Francophone regions.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS (1998-2000)

Economic Development

* ACOA will continue to consult with representatives of key Francophone economic institutions and organizations in order to examine and to implement appropriate economic development strategies and establish partnership agreements with these organizations and the private sector which could potentially contribute to the development and growth of their communities. Specific deliverables for the 1998-2000 period will include:

- Continued regular meetings with *La FANE* to discuss economic development subjects;
- Minimum of one (1) meeting per month with business and community organizations; and
- New entrepreneurship activities targeted at Francophone communities in Nova Scotia.

- * ACOA will continue to work proactively with Nova Scotia's Francophones to identify economic development opportunities and initiatives for implementation in the areas of developing the tourism, cultural and information technology industries. Specific deliverables will include the following:
 - Finalization and implementation of business plan to revitalize the Grand Pré Historical Site;
 - Participation in discussions with *La FANE* and other interested parties to continue to identify and assist the implementation of concrete initiatives from the Nova Scotia (Acadian) Cultural Sector Development Plan;
 - Reviewing of initiatives from Atlantic Acadian Tourism study for potential implementation;
 - With the community and government partners, assist economic development initiatives related to the participation of the Nova Scotia Francophone community in events related to the Francophone Summit scheduled for Moncton in 1999; and
 - Work in cooperation with communities and other government partners in the elaboration of a strategic plan for the Francophone community.

Business Development

- * ACOA will continue to pursue with the Francophone business community and other key economic development institutions the establishment of viable commercial projects and partnership arrangements. Specific deliverables will include the following:
 - Five (5) development projects to be initiated annually; and
 - Five (5) partnership arrangements to be concluded annually.
- * ACOA will continue to ensure that the Francophone communities benefit from the programs and activities implemented under the COOPERATION Program. A greater awareness of the COOP Program has been evident as a result of two focus group sessions held in February 1997, with community and Francophone businesspeople from the Francophone regions.

Community Economic Development

- * The Community Business Development Centres (CBDCs) in Nova Scotia, which operate with financial assistance from ACOA, will continue to be encouraged to seek full participation from the Francophone communities in each of the regions. Some initiatives include:
 - Having representatives in these organizations available to discuss relevant economic issues and ensure liaison with stakeholders;
 - Holding regular workshops where Francophone representation and service improvement issues will be discussed; and
 - Monitoring the level of assistance to businesses provided by the CBDCs in Francophone regions.

- * The fourteen (14) Regional Development Authorities in Nova Scotia that operate with funding from ACOA will be urged to increase activities in the communities they serve including the Francophone regions of the province. Initiatives include:
 - Encouraging RDAs representing Argyle and Clare regions to develop action plans specific to these areas from their strategic development plans;
 - Ensuring that information on the activities of RDAs is available in both official languages in Francophone regions of the province; and
 - Implementing a Comprehensive CED Awareness Campaign aimed at informing communities and the general public of services available to them through the RDAs.

**New Brunswick Office
Report on activities for 1997-1998**

CONTEXT

Based on the 1996 census of Statistics Canada, the number of persons with French as their official language totals 241,040 in New Brunswick, accounting for 33,2% 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 Westmorland, Kent, Northumberland, Restigouche and Madawaska although they live in significant numbers in many other regions of the province such as Fredericton and Saint John.

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

- ▶ 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;
- ▶ In 1973, the New Brunswick Department of Education recognized linguistic duality;
- ▶ Since 1981, New Brunswick has had two parallel and homogeneous school systems;
- ▶ 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;
- ▶ In 1993, the Governments of Canada and New Brunswick passed a constitutional amendment guaranteeing the equality of New Brunswick's English and French-speaking communities; and
- ▶ 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.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

In New Brunswick, ACOA offers all of its services in both official languages to all clients. It provides services primarily to the business and economic development sectors and to the regional development sector. ACOA New Brunswick has incorporated a continuous improvement strategy for all of its divisions in relation to the use of the French language whether it is spoken, written or presented. This includes public information, staffing, language training and development, and in-house quality standards.

ACOA New Brunswick's relations with the Francophone community are built on the prompt, professional delivery of services in French. ACOA New Brunswick's various divisions 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.

In 1997-1998, the ACOA New Brunswick office was involved with the following projects and activities within the province's Francophone communities:

- The International Commercialization Center at the *Université de Moncton* formed a partnership with the Superior Economic Institute in the village of De Mons in Belgium. Four students from Belgium were partnered with MBA students from the *Université de Moncton* and have worked with two New Brunswick companies who are specialized in exporting to Europe. The students will then do a study on the success of exporting to the European market and also develop an exporting strategy for other companies in both New Brunswick and Belgium.
- As a follow-up to the 1997 Francophone Summit in the city of Hanoi, Vietnam, an academic partnership was formed between students at the *Université de Moncton*, professors, participating companies and the government. The government provided funding and technical and expertise support. The students were paired with the companies and prepared a marketing plan for the companies' target market. This partnership was directed at the New Brunswick companies who participated in the Francophone Affairs Forum of the above noted summit.
- The Shippagan campus of the *Université de Moncton* hosted an International Forum on Youth and the Information Highway in May of 1997. This conference was organized in collaboration with the Bathurst Campus of the New Brunswick Community College and the Office of the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. The conference was attended by 120 youths from Francophone countries around the world.

These youths gathered and outlined objectives and goals for the Information Highway in their respective countries. They then returned home to make recommendations to their Ministers concerning the development of the French Information Highway.

- A two-day seminar organized by ACOA New Brunswick was held in Mactaquac in November on the topic of managing finances. This seminar was directed towards Francophone companies and enterprises that do not particularly focus on finance. The seminar gave a practical perspective on the topic and the company owners and managers were given useful tools relating to their business. This seminar was divided into seven different parts to concentrate on the seven errors that cause failure with many companies.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Programs

ACOA New Brunswick contributed to several projects developed by Francophone clients under the Business Development Program. These projects provided our Francophone clients with the opportunity to build on their successes and provide employment for residents of the Francophone regions. Some of these projects included:

- Continuation of funding to the *Université de Moncton* and Concept Plus, a research and development center within the campus which focuses on the microelectronics field.
- Funding was also provided to the *Conseil Économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* for the implementation of business development workshops and seminars for members of the *Conseil Économique du Nouveau-Brunswick* and the Francophone business community.

Business and Regional Development

The Regional Development division of ACOA has been involved in and contributed to several projects with the Francophone community by means of the Federal-Provincial COOPERATION Program called the Regional Economic Development Agreement (REDA). This agreement provides funding for clients through a Provincial/Federal cost sharing partnership.

They have contributed to the Canada Innovation Foundation which provides funding for research, development, and training at Canadian universities.

This past year, ACOA New Brunswick approved funding for four studies totalling \$220,000 in relation to preparations for the Francophone Summit in 1999. As well, REDA approved funds totalling \$500,000 for preparations for the Summit.

The CBSC (Canada/New Brunswick Business Service Center)

This division of ACOA New Brunswick is designed to provide business-related services and products to small-and medium-size enterprises and aspiring entrepreneurs in the region.

Newfoundland Office
Report on activities for 1997-1998

CONTEXT

According to Statistics Canada, in 1996 there were 2,275 individuals with French as their mother tongue in Newfoundland and Labrador. 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 has worked with the province's French community by providing both financial and non-financial assistance. In the past, the main emphasis of Agency financial assistance was to assist in the identification of economic development opportunities and the generation of strategic plans to be used as guidelines for development specific to the Francophone communities. In general, the objective of the plans has been to enable the Francophone communities to make better informed decisions and have a stronger hand in their communities' economic development.

The most significant project involving ACOA funding continued to be the implementation of the ARCO Economic Development Plan for the French communities on the Port-au-Port Peninsula.

For the first time, however, the Agency assisted in specific initiatives geared towards entrepreneurship and small business development. This progress is thought to be a direct result of the implementation of the ARCO economic plan, the excellent working relationship between ARCO and the West Coast ACOA office and closer working relationships between the Agency and FFTNL.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

ACOA Newfoundland and Labrador undertook a broad range of activities in support of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act. A summary of the highlights include:

The Francophone Affairs Steering Committee: Canada, Newfoundland & Labrador and the Francophone Community working together

In Newfoundland, Federal departments and the Francophone Community realize working together goes a long way to opening communication lines.

For this reason ACOA became a founding member of the Francophone Affairs Steering Committee (FASC) and continues to be a strong voice in economic development matters. The FASC is comprised of Francophone community representatives and *Official Languages Act* (OLA) representatives from several Federal Government departments. The Province has also become involved through its Translation Services Unit.

The mandate of the FASC is to coordinate Governmental support for key initiatives of the Francophone community and to promote the effective implementation of the *Official Languages Act* in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The FASC has developed into an excellent conduit for information sharing between the community and the various government departments and has commented favourably on the Agency's OLA interventions.

L'Association Régionale de la Côte Ouest (ARCO) and ACOA: Working Together towards a common goal

Every community needs a primary contact point, a place easily identified as where to go to find information. Such a centre was created by the Francophone Community on the Port-au-Port Peninsula (ARCO) through the establishment of the *Centre Scolaire et Communautaire de Sainte-Anne* in La Grande Terre. This state of the art facility houses a French school, a number of community services and ARCO.

ACOA realized the importance of this facility and the dedication of the people associated with it when it funded an economic development plan for the Francophone communities of the Peninsula. Upon completion of the plan, the Agency was again called upon to assist ARCO with funding for an Economic Development Officer. Stationed at the Centre, her role is to assist the community with promotion and implementation of the plan, as well as coordination of efforts among the three communities.

Implementation of the plan is on schedule, and the Economic Development Officer and the ACOA West Coast representative meet on a regular basis to discuss the development of initiatives identified in the plan.

Community Economic Development: All the right players

Implementing a plan to develop a community takes a lot of work. For this reason ARCO and ACOA developed the concept for a local Resource Committee to provide assistance and guidance in the implementation of the Development Plan. The committee is chaired by ARCO, and agenda items and background work is carried out by ARCO and ACOA. The committee is made up of all federal, provincial and community funding agencies on the Port-au-Port Peninsula having a stake in the development plan. As well, representatives of the Zone 09 Development Board and the College of the North Atlantic are members. The committee meets on a regular basis to provide guidance on initiatives pursued and to discuss general programming issues pertinent to ARCO.

Entrepreneurship: Starting in the school

As is often the case in communities where the traditional source of employment has been tied to a resource based sector, the number of people coming forward to develop new ventures outside the fishery is not overwhelming. Though the resource is in a decline, the entrepreneurial spirit is not strong enough to take hold.

For this reason ACOA began working with ARCO and Franco-Jeunes in La Grande Terre to address the needs of the next generation by having information available for the Francophone youth who may be interested in starting their own businesses either during a summer season or more permanently.

ARCO and the Agency organized a Youth Ventures (YV) presentation for a group of potential entrepreneurs. The event was a success, having three new entrepreneurs start summer ventures, through YV counselling. ACOA also assisted ARCO to establish a resource centre through supply of French language entrepreneurial videos, information packages on entrepreneurship and profiles of young entrepreneurs. The videos were viewed and other information was displayed during Small Business Week.

Developing Partnerships with other regions

Sometimes, residents of small communities feel isolated from the services available in the larger centres and believe traditional small businesses have less of a chance to develop. This issue becomes even more problematic when the community is an official-language minority settlement.

For this reason, ACOA and ARCO partnered on an exploratory entrepreneurship and networking field trip to the Saguenay region of Quebec. Participants were exposed to numerous Quebecois small businesses in a region similar to Newfoundland's West Coast, while ARCO developed contacts with a number of Francophone associations in Quebec. FORD - Q also played a prominent role in the development of the agenda and tour of the region.

Tourism - An identified potential

Because ARCO identified tourism as a promising sector for growth, ACOA worked with the Association to develop an adventure tourism workshop for interested entrepreneurs. The interactive workshop was well received by the community and a number of potential initiatives were identified as viable in the community.

As a follow-up to the workshop, 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.

The CBSC - Responding to the Needs of the Francophone Community on the Provincial level

Realizing the importance of services in the language of choice to the Francophone community, the Agency improved access to ACOA programs through the CBSC by establishing a bilingual enquiries function through toll-free dialing.

As well, all Agency documentation emanating from the CBSC is available in both official languages.

Future directions: We have just started!

It is generally accepted that gains in community economic development cannot happen overnight. At ACOA Newfoundland we realize that working to help communities help themselves is as important as providing project specific financial assistance. We will continue to assist the Francophone community with the issues pertaining to coordination of their economic development efforts. Further to this we will continue to liaise with other Government departments to promote the interests of the Francophone community as they pertain to economic development.

ACOA Newfoundland has no obligations under the *Official Languages Act* to provide services in both official languages. Nonetheless, it is committed to providing access to clients in their language of choice. To assure access to language of choice, ACOA will continue to offer general enquiry services in both official languages through the CBSC and program services in both official languages through the bilingual Development Officer stationed at the Corner Brook Office.

**Prince Edward Island Office
Report on activities for 1997-1998**

CONTEXT

Based on the 1996 census of Statistics Canada, the number of persons with French as their official language totals 5,335 in Prince Edward Island, accounting for 4.5% 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.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

During fiscal year 1997-1998, the PEI office undertook a range of activities in support of Section 41. Some of the highlights are:

- ▶ Participation in the *Société St-Thomas d'Aquin Ltée* Strategic Planning Forum '97;
- ▶ Provision of regular itinerant services to the *Évangéline* Business Service Centre;
- ▶ Assistance in the preparation of a Self-sufficiency Business Plan for the integration of the five Regional Acadian Festivals under one coordinator;
- ▶ Partnership in the funding of a Multi-purpose facility to support the numerous festivals and events in the *Évangéline* region;
- ▶ Provision of operational funding to the *Baie Acadienne* Development Corporation;
- ▶ Signing of the Tripartite Agreement and take-up of positions on both the Management and Operations Committees. This is a ground breaking agreement between the Province, the Federal government and the Francophone community that is designed to take advantage of IT for the benefit of Island Acadians and other Francophones;

- ▶ Financial support of the *Évangéline* Tourism Association in their investigation of the Development Opportunities for the Lighthouse at *Cap Egmont* and the Dunes at Maximville;
- ▶ Support for the *Société St-Thomas d'Aquin Ltée* in their assessment of the feasibility of a business office in West Prince;
- ▶ Assistance to *La Société de développement de la Baie Acadienne Inc.* in the capital costs of the construction of an Acadian Heritage Boardwalk, which is comprised of four buildings based upon 1800's architecture and connected by a boardwalk. The project is targeted at the Tourism sector;
- ▶ Assistance to *Le Conseil Acadien de Rustico* to hire an event coordinator and incur off-Island marketing, to promote the Rendez-Vous Rustico Festival;
- ▶ Assistance to *La Société St-Thomas d'Aquin Ltée* to hire a consultant to undertake a strategic development plan to determine the socio-economic status of Acadians and Francophones throughout Prince Edward Island, and identify relevant economic opportunities; and
- ▶ Assistance to *L'Association touristique Évangéline Ltée* to hire an event coordinator and undertake off-Island marketing for a new special tourism event called Festival Folk-Acadie held at the Acadian Museum in Miscouche.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The ACOA regional office in Prince Edward Island will:

- ▶ Work with the *Société St-Thomas d'Aquin Ltée* to help organize a Prince Edward Island Francophone Entrepreneurs' Seminar;
- ▶ Work closely with the other signatories to the Tripartite Agreement to undertake projects that will support the further development of the Francophone community; and
- ▶ Continue to work closely with the *Baie Acadienne* Development Corporation to develop both business support and private initiative projects to support the prosperity of the region.