

# 1998-99 OVERVIEW

## Background

Linguistic duality has a central place in the values that define Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage has a mission to preserve and promote these values. The 1988 *Official Languages Act (OLA)* entrenched this reality by giving the Department the mandate to coordinate, in consultation with other departments, the implementation of the Canadian government's commitment to promote French and English in Canada.

Part VII of the OLA and, more specifically, section 41, commits the federal government to enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities and to promoting the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society; section 42 gives the Department of Canadian Heritage the mandate to encourage and promote a coordinated approach to the implementation of that policy.

The Government's commitment was strengthened by the establishment, in 1994, of an accountability framework for the implementation of sections 41 and 42 of the OLA. This framework provides a range of measures intended to ensure that the federal departments and agencies that are of vital importance to official-language minority communities and that have a major impact on their development prepare action plans for the implementation of section 41.

# INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION

As the following sections show, in order to ensure the implementation of this section, the Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate works with departments on their action plans and, as well, extends its coordination and awareness efforts to the cultural, economic, communications and human resource development sectors.

## Reinvestment in Official Languages

The year, 1998-99 had a particular significance for the official languages, because of the reinvestment which followed the restoration of the Government's financial health. During the austerity period that coincided with the first years of the accountability framework established by the Government in August 1994, the associations representing the official-language minority communities had to cope with the federal government's budget cuts. The recent reinvestment resulted in a range of significant achievements in 1998-99.

The cooperative effort with the Treasury Board Secretariat to host the *National Symposium on Canada's Official Languages*, which was held in Ottawa in September 1998, should be mentioned first. The focus of this event was the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1988 *Official Languages Act*, which provided an opportunity for the Canadian government to highlight the close connection between official languages and Canadian identity.

The investment of an additional \$70 million each year in the Official Languages Support Programs should also be mentioned. This significant increase will, in particular, make it possible to follow up on the recommendations of the Savoie Report (see "Highlights"), by establishing an interdepartmental partnership with the official-language communities of \$5.5 million each year, for five years. This is a matching fund which, as announced by the Minister of Canadian Heritage in March 1999, will generate some \$55 million in investments over five years. The Department will allocate these funds to interdepartmental partnership initiatives with the official-language communities to establish new cooperation mechanisms and create a long-term structural impact in federal departments and agencies, as well as within Canadian Francophone and Anglophone minority associations.

## News on the Economic Front

In 1998, the federal Budget confirmed the allocation of \$20 million over five years to the Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP). This interdepartmental initiative, led by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Rural Secretariat, focuses on assisting rural communities by encouraging the adoption of new approaches to community development based on the existing networks between rural Canada and the federal government. The Department of Canadian Heritage and its clients are participating in seven projects, totalling \$480,00 in CRP funding, almost \$350,000 of which is being used to fund five support projects for official-language minority communities.

In the spring of 1998, the *Réseau des communautés virtuelles de langue française*, set up by Industry Canada with the financial participation of Canadian Heritage, selected 34 projects from the 60 received to assist in the start-up of pilot projects focussing on the development of French-language content, services and use of the information highway in Canada.

The Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate was successful in its search for financial partners as part of the preparations for the third Forum of Francophone Business People, which was held in Bathurst in June 1999. It continued to cooperate with Human Resources Development Canada on federal-provincial labour market agreements.



## Culture Still Has the Wind in Its Sails

On June 6, 1998, the *Fédération culturelle canadienne-française (FCCF)*, the National Arts Centre, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage signed the Multipartite Cooperation Agreement on the Artistic and Cultural Development of Canadian Francophone and Acadian Communities. The agreement contains a series of specific commitments and focuses on about thirty projects grouped around major themes, such as the distribution of cultural projects, dissemination, promotion and visibility, the consolidation of infrastructures and, finally, the creation and production of cultural and artistic products by the Canadian *Francophonie*. It covers fields as diverse as music, theatre, market studies on the distribution of consumer goods (books and CDs), media arts and the performing arts in general, sound recording, the visual arts and publishing. Annual updates are planned. In January 1999, representatives of the signatory organizations and the community and sectoral delegates of the FCCF held their first annual meeting at the National Arts Centre. The discussions included an overview, future prospects, promotion and visibility, updating the action plan and follow-up.

Publishing was the subject of a Memorandum of Understanding, signed on the same day as the multipartite agreement. The Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade made a commitment through this memorandum to support publishing in Francophone minority communities. The co-signatories established a joint committee, which will coordinate this support.

In February 1999, the CRTC gave its approval for the *Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada (ARC)* to establish the first national satellite network for Francophone community radio stations. It is hoped that this network, on air in the summer of 1999, will consolidate the local programming of radio stations and encourage the production of local broadcasts for national distribution to encourage dialogue among Canadian Francophones. ARC has received support from the Department of Canadian Heritage, Human Resources Development Canada, the CBC, Canada Post, TV5 and a variety of other private and public organizations, including CANCOM and TVA.

The Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate participated in coordinating the sectoral work related to media arts, the performing arts, music and the visual arts, by providing solid support to the working groups and discussion tables established to encourage the cultural development of official-language minority communities.

# HIGHLIGHTS

- Publication of three issues of *Bulletin 41-42* (4,000 copies each) with the participation of federal departments and agencies and representatives of associations involved in the implementation of section 41 of the *Official Languages Act (OLA)*.
- Publication of the Savoie Report, *Official-Language Minority Communities: Promoting a Government Objective*, which advocates a more effective implementation of sections 41 and 42.
- Submission of the report on the first stage of the *Projet interministériel de la table de concertation des organismes nationaux francophones*, whose objective is to facilitate cooperation between national Francophone organizations and federal departments in order to improve interdepartmental strategies and encourage these departments to develop a true implementation framework for Part VII of the OLA. The author, Paul-André Baril, proposes a sectoral approach based on four focal points (culture, economy, human resources and the social-health sector), rather than a customized approach that involves dealing with each department separately.
- Submission to the Minister of Canadian Heritage of the fourth generation of action plans from the 27 federal departments and agencies targeted by the accountability framework for implementation of section 41 of the OLA; presentation of the overview on their 1997-1998 achievements.
- Sixth consultation meeting with the national organizations in October 1998; participation by the majority of key federal departments and agencies. The issues of health, the Canadian *Francophonie* Games, the information age, statistical data on the communities and the Canadian *Francophonie* were discussed.
- Initial development of a general evaluation framework of the activities of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the key federal departments and agencies for the implementation of section 41 of the OLA and establishment of an advisory committee composed of representatives from federal organizations, community associations and the Department of Canadian Heritage.
- Development of a communications plan for the activities of the Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate.
- Regular meetings with the national coordinators of the key federal departments and agencies.
- Development of a model action plan, including the identification of the objectives, the main anticipated measures and outcomes to assist the national coordinators of the key federal departments and agencies.





# FROM SEA TO SEA

## ***Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA)***

The FCFA undertook the production of a national study entitled *La santé communautaire en français*. This study, which was supported by Health Canada, will cover the various community health-care experiences of the Francophone minorities and provide suggestions for action and useful information for communities interested in developing front-line health services.

With the support of the Department of International Cooperation and Francophonie, the *Fédération* established the *Bureau francophone de coopération internationale* (BFCI). The BFCI helped the Francophone and Acadian community organizations to prepare proposals to be included in the Canadian program to be submitted to the VIII *Sommet de la Francophonie*. An Internet site ([w3.franco.ca/bfci/](http://w3.franco.ca/bfci/)) presents a catalogue of Francophone expertise and tools, including requests for proposals relating to international cooperation.

On November 2 and 3, 1998, the FCFA established *Équipe francophonie*, a campaign to sensitize federal politicians to the need to increase support to Francophone minority communities and, more specifically, to increase the budget of the Canada-community agreements, which expired on March 31, 1999. Some fifty representatives from provincial, territorial and national advocacy organizations and individuals representing more specific sectors or issues met with about forty ministers, MPs and senators. The FCFA was congratulated for this initiative when the increase in the budget for official languages was announced in March 1999.

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### **Training Sessions in the Field**

In 1998-99, the Department of Canadian Heritage supported the *Assemblée des aînées et aînés francophones du Canada* in developing specific projects in the field as part of the *Prévenir pour guérir les situations à risque* project. Workshops were held in nine provinces.

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### **Become a Multiplier**

The *Guides franco-canadiennes* set up a four-phase training program for facilitators: initiation, discovery, in-depth, and multiplier. At the multiplier effect phase, the facilitator can become a trainer for the three other training phases.

## National Network for University Education in French

The Saskatchewan component of the national network for education in French has become a reality. The *Regroupement des universités de la francophonie hors Québec*, in cooperation with the University of Regina, *Collège Mathieu*, the *Association culturelle franco-canadienne de la Saskatchewan* and the *Division scolaire francophone n° 31*, have established a video-conferencing network to offer Saskatchewan Francophones secondary school, college and university courses and diversified training. The network will, as well, encourage communication between the Saskatchewan Francophone communities.

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## Community Radio Stations

On December 17, 1998, the *Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada (ARC)* announced the creation of the *Réseau francophone d'Amérique*. This network, operational in time for the *Sommet de la Francophonie*, will provide unique programming produced by the Francophone community radio stations that are members of ARC. The 18 stations already established, along with the 10 being developed, will be able to use this programming as an addition to their own broadcasts.



## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of REFAD

The *Réseau d'enseignement francophone à distance (REFAD)* celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in August 1998. The organization, made up of French-Canadian teaching institutions and departments of education, provides training and information to educators. In addition to its *Répertoire des cours à distance*, the *Réseau* recently published a *Profil de l'enseignement à distance en français au Canada*.

## A Conference on New Technologies

The 51<sup>st</sup> conference of the *Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française* was held in the *Évangeline* region of Prince Edward Island in August 1998 with the theme *Les nouvelles technologies éducatives : des liens pour l'avenir*. The organization used this opportunity to launch its teaching activities bank ([www.acef.ca/bap/](http://www.acef.ca/bap/)), which provides access to more than 350 activities in French, mathematics, arts and sciences, for primary and secondary level students.

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## Montre-moi Kit

In March 1998, the *Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français* unveiled a kit for parents with pre-school children and people who work with parents and families to help them enhance Francophone culture for young people. The *Montre-moi* kit includes a videocassette, an audiocassette of children's songs by Daniel Lavoie, twelve shrink-wrapped activity packs, a puppet and a surprise book for children, courtesy of *Québec Loisirs*.

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## Mondial de l'entreprenariat jeunesse

The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Mondial de l'entreprenariat jeunesse* was held in September 1998. Lectures, information booths workshops, and a business centre were made available to the participants to facilitate partnership building. The 524 entrepreneurs and 1,032 participating companies, from 37 Francophone countries, concluded partnerships and trade agreements worth more than \$775 million.

