



French-language Services Plan

2024–2025

*Department of
Intergovernmental Affairs*

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French-language Services Plan
Department of Intergovernmental Affairs
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French Language Service Plan for 2024-2025

Department of Intergovernmental Affairs

Message from the Executive Deputy Minister

I am pleased to submit the 2024-2025 French Language Service Plan for the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA). This plan supports the requirements in the *French-language Services Act*.

IGA provides services predominantly to stakeholders within government as well as national and international stakeholders and we are committed to enhancing and promoting access to French-language services for all Nova Scotians. Business is conducted primarily in English and when required, IGA provides French language services.

The Department recognizes the importance of the Acadian and Francophone communities and is committed to working with them to advance their interests within Canada and at the international level. IGA works to build and promote a stronger French language public service culture within government by supporting staff with French language training to help build the organization's capacity to serve its clients and provide meaningful personal growth opportunities.

With work conditions resuming to post-pandemic normal, IGA continues engaging with federal, provincial, territorial (FPT) and international partners with a view to support Nova Scotia's priorities within Canada and internationally. As a department that is responsible for FPT and international relations, we are supportive of and actively pursuing French language connections and partnerships aimed at strengthening economic growth and actions that promote relations with French speaking entities across Canada and internationally.

The plan for 2024-2025 reflects IGA's ongoing commitment to the objectives and spirit of the legislation.

Tracey Taweel
Executive Deputy Minister
Intergovernmental Affairs

What we're doing to contribute to the growth of the Acadian and francophone community

We recognize the importance of French-language services and we endeavour to fulfil our responsibilities under the *French-language Services (FLS) Act* and Regulations. We believe Nova Scotians should have access to quality government services in French, and this plan demonstrates our commitment to ensuring our programs, policies and services address the priorities expressed by the Acadian and francophone community. To achieve this aim, we collaborate with other designated public institutions across government – including the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie – through the French-language Services Coordinating Committee. We greatly value this partnership, which ensures a continued understanding of the unique needs of our province's Acadian and francophone community.

We encourage Nova Scotians to request services from the Department in French. We also encourage Acadians and francophones to have their voices heard by participating on agencies, boards and commissions, which are regularly advertised by the Executive Council Office. As we continue to maintain and improve our French-language services, we welcome feedback on our progress, and we invite you to share with us your comments or questions by contacting our French-language services coordinator. If you wish to make a formal complaint regarding French-language services, please contact the Office of the Ombudsman.

1. French-language services coordinator:

The French Language Services Coordinator (FLSC) at IGA is Annie Khalil (annie.khalil@novascotia.ca), Tel 902-476-0857

2. Services we offer in French

- Translation from English to French (and vice-versa) for correspondence and documents is available internally.
- Training and support to staff for French classes.
- Interpretation services for phone calls when needed.
- French content on newly designed website.
- Identification of staff who can offer service in French.

3. How we communicate with the public in French

- In accordance with the FLS Act and Regulations, all verbal and written correspondence received in French was responded to in French with the help of CNS Translation Services and/or our FLS Coordinator. During the year, IGA

received numerous correspondence (emails and letters) in French from within and outside Nova Scotia. IGA responds in French to all communications received in French. We will also endeavour to propose an active service in French on our newly designed website.

- The Council of the Federation (COF) is the forum for Canada's 13 premiers representing all provinces and territories. COF maintains a bilingual website <https://www.canadaspremiers.ca> and its news conferences are held in both official languages, which underscores the commitment to Canadian bilingualism among premiers. Premier Houston assumed the Chair of COF in July 2023 until July 2024.
- The Council of Atlantic Premiers (CAP) ensures their public documents are in both official languages. Translation services are provided at their news conferences to ensure English and French media outlets can participate in their mother tongue.
- The Annual Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP) is a Premiers' forum serviced by the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat (CICS), with sessions conducted in English and French.
- Nova Scotia supports these initiatives to communicate with government representatives and officials, the media and the public in French through these premiers' forums.

4. What we did to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2023–24

Goal: Leadership and policy direction

- Implemented measures to ensure a positive environment for the provision of French language services plan.
- Supported French language services within the Department and corporately by committing a staff person to actively engage in the work of the interdepartmental French Language Coordinator Committee.
- Promoted relations with French speaking entities at national and international levels (government, regions or organizations).
- Supported departments in the areas of intergovernmental relations at national level, French language service-related strategic planning, legislation review/advice, and policy and guideline development.
- Engaged with the Consulat Général de France in Moncton, NB, and other entities at national and international levels on matters of strategic interest, including exploring opportunities for formal twinning partnerships with strategic regions in France.
- Participated in the 25th Commission for Regional Cooperation between the Atlantic provinces and Saint-Pierre et Miquelon from November 20 - 22, 2023, and established new connections with officials from the Chamber of Agriculture, Commerce, Industry, Trades and Crafts (CACIMA) and the Ministry of Cultural

Affairs, as well as with the newly appointed Expert in Decentralized Cooperation and Twinning with France.

- Organized meetings with the Ambassador of France to Canada during his official visit to Halifax from 16 to 20 November 2023.
- Participated in ongoing Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) implementation activities with the Federal Government and all EU member states, including France.
- Held the first B2B virtual session with representatives of the Brittany region of France as part of the Ocean Technology B2B meetings, on January 25, 2024, under the theme “Oceans of Opportunity” with a focus on marine communications. The session brought together industry from Nova Scotia and Brittany to learn more about their respective ecosystems and the potential of business collaborations. A second virtual session on Ocean and Autonomous Security Solutions is planned for April 9, 2024.
- Supported the coordinators of the Congrès mondial acadien (CMA) Economic Forum with the organization of the planned event. CMA has partnered with the Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNÉ) to present the Economic Forum (August 13-15, 2024) - a conference that will bring together specialists, policy makers, entrepreneurs and civil society actors from l’Acadie and abroad to explore the synergies between sustainable development and economic growth and undertake concrete actions for a sustainable future.

Goal: Accessibility of French language services

- Communicated with the public in French through the internet and press releases. IGA has a resident capacity to work with the public or other governments in French.
- Promoted training in French language and supported staff who chose to participate in French language training. During 2023-2024, one employee was enrolled in French language training courses offered by the L’université Sainte-Anne. The upcoming spring session will run from 2 April to 7 June (registrations will open on 27 February).
- Worked on the French version of the IGA website.

5. How we plan to maintain or improve our French-language services in 2024–25

Objective 1: Strengthen internal operational structures including policy, legislative and administrative frameworks

- Promote and encourage the participation of IGA employees in French-language training.
- Raise staff awareness of departmental responsibilities and obligations with respect to French language services.
- Raise awareness of Acadian culture.

Objective 2: Develop and deliver quality French-language services and programs to the public

- Respond in French to all requests in French language.
- Increase awareness of and obligation to the *French-language Services Act* and Regulations.
- Provide French content on IGA website.
- Raise awareness of services available in French and promote the Bonjour! Programme through the distribution of promotional materials received by all members of the French-Language Services Coordinating Committee (FLSCC).

Objective 3: Maintain ongoing dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community

- Engage with other provinces and territories on matters of interest to the Acadian and francophone community.
- Promote cultural, economic and trade relations with French speaking regions nationally and internationally and linking them with the Acadian and francophone community in Nova Scotia.
- Work closely with all departments to promote dialogue and consultation with the Acadian and francophone community.
- Engage with the Consulate General of France in the Atlantic Provinces to keep abreast of areas of cooperation that can be further enhanced between France and the Province of Nova Scotia and initiatives of mutual interest related to culture and the economy.
- Hold meetings with francophone organizations to explore opportunities to increase activity with francophone partners.