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Evaluation Report for the Plan on Official Languages

Official Bilingualism: A Fundamental Value

Evaluation of Year 3 departmental action plans



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Office of the Premier

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Executive Summary

This report presents the third annual evaluation of the Plan on Official Languages, *Official Bilingualism: A Fundamental Value*. It covers the first three years of the Plan, specifically the fiscal years 2015–2016, 2016–2017, and 2017–2018.

The Plan is based on the following sectors of activity:

- Language of service
- Language of work
- Development of the two official linguistic communities
- Knowledge of the *Official Languages Act* and other obligations

Having completed three full years of the Plan on Official Languages prior to this evaluation, this report is focused on an overview of the Plan to date. Year 1 involved many initiatives at the corporate level, which were required to build baseline data. Year 2 involved the implementation of the Year 1 initiatives within departments. During Years 1 and 2, GNB HR roles and responsibilities were reorganized across GNB, which included the HR responsibilities associated with Official Languages. As a result, some of the planned activities needed to be adjusted. This led to the transfer of certain official languages files from one corporate department to another. Year 3 saw the completion of the centralization exercise and the review and subsequent transfer of several key official languages files (second language training, language evaluations, linguistic profile management, and online learning modules), in addition to the ongoing departmental initiatives that were implemented in Year 2.

In the first three years of the Plan, numerous initiatives were undertaken at both the corporate and departmental levels. Highlights of completed tasks by sector of activity are:

Language of service

- A quick reference guide on official languages was completed, published online, and included in the new employee onboarding program;
- a model to prioritize employee participation in second language training was developed;
- the corporate target of achieving 90% of linguistic profile requirements was achieved each year of the Plan and,
- a clause was developed for all third-party service contracts to ensure official languages obligations are adhered to when performing services on behalf of the provincial government.

Language of work

- Through the use of various measures, departments and agencies now identify the preferred language of work of all their employees;

- all employee performance reviews are completed in the employee's official language of choice and,
- corporate and departmental (where applicable) course offerings were reviewed to ensure that there was adequate inventory of courses available in both official languages.

Development of the two official linguistic communities

- New guidelines around official languages summaries in departmental annual reports were developed and,
- departments and agencies continue to include a summary of official language activities in their departmental annual reports.

Knowledge of the *Official Languages Act* and other obligations

- Questions pertaining to official languages were included in the new employee engagement survey and,
- the Official Languages Tool Kit (online) was updated.

Plan on Official Languages, Official Bilingualism: A Fundamental Value

In 2013, the *Official Languages Act* was amended. The new section 5 of the *Act* states that the Government of New Brunswick must now develop and implement a global plan relative to its linguistic obligations. The new Government Plan on Official Languages, *Official Bilingualism: A Fundamental Value*, was developed pursuant to the new provisions in the *Act*. The Plan was implemented in 2015 by the Official Languages Coordination Unit of the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat and applies to all Part I government departments and agencies. The implementation and annual evaluations of the Plan are coordinated by the Official Languages Coordination Unit.

The Plan is based on the following sectors of activity, and each one is assigned an anticipated outcome.

1. Language of service

An active offer and services of equal quality in English and French, according to the person's choice, regardless of location in the province.

2. Language of work

The possibility for employees to work and have a career in English or French, according to their personal choice.

3. Development of the two official linguistic communities

The encouragement, through positive measures, of the development of the province's Anglophone and Francophone communities.

4. Knowledge of the *Official Languages Act* and other obligations

A thorough knowledge and understanding of the *Act*, policies, and regulations as well as the province's official language obligations, and the benefits associated with official bilingualism.

In addition to the measurable objectives that were included, the Plan provides the departments/agencies the flexibility to incorporate additional objectives as determined by the culture/environment of their department. All departments and agencies under Part I of the Government of New Brunswick completed departmental action plans for Year 3.

Summary of findings—Years 1–3

Year 1 (2015–2016)

This period was made up almost entirely of corporate-based objectives. Twenty-two departments and agencies had action plans during this period.

A priority model for second language training was developed centrally and implemented in all departments. This tool provides departments with a methodology to help departments determine which employees should have priority to be selected to take second language training. This allows for a more consistent and transparent approach across the Government of New Brunswick.

A community of practice was established centrally which provided official languages coordinators and second language coordinators from all Part I departments with an opportunity meet several times a year to discuss the Government Plan on Official Languages, departmental action plans, second language training changes and updates as well as the chance to receive updates on official languages within the Government of New Brunswick, including work being done on corporate initiatives, among other updates.

An emphasis on linguistic profile management was re-established with the intent that all departments must regularly update and maintain their departmental linguistic profiles and achieve 90% of the profiles being met.

An official languages summary was created and added to the template for departmental annual reports. This summary ensured that all departments reported on their official languages activities consistently.

A practical guide on official languages was developed to be included in future new employee orientation packages.

Year 2 (2016–2017)

Due to some overall restructuring, the total number of departments with an action plan went from twenty-two to twenty and the centralization of human resources services had begun which led to significant changes in the ownership of several key official languages files.

Community of practice meetings continued during this period providing coordinators of official languages and second language training with regular updates of new tools, etc.

A departmental achievement of 90% of linguistic profiles being met continued for a second year as departments continued the work of reconciling their linguistic profile teams even after restructuring had taken place.

The annual report template that was implemented in Year 1 was still being used by all departments for their annual reporting of official languages.

A new clause was developed for all third-party service contracts that ensured language of service requirements were adhered to by all departments employing an individual or organization providing a service on their behalf.

Year 3 (2017–2018)

The number of departments with action plans was still 20 during this evaluation period (Appendix A). The initiatives implemented in Years 1 and 2 continued within departments, with respect to the community of practice meetings, linguistic profiles being met, annual reporting on official languages and the use of the clause added to third-party service contracts and other day-to-day official languages activities according to the individual departmental action plans.

Year 3 also saw the transfer of corporate official languages files. Treasury Board maintained ownership of the language of service and language of work policies, while Service New Brunswick became responsible for second language training, linguistic profile management and the online training modules for official languages. The Official Languages Coordination Unit maintained ownership of the strategic direction of the provincial government, with respect to official languages, including all aspects of the Government Plan on Official Languages.

During this period, a baseline exercise to determine the number of bilingual employees in middle and senior management positions within the Government of New Brunswick was completed.

Also during this period, the employee engagement survey was developed that included several questions on official languages. The survey will be launched in the next year of the Plan.

Finally, employees of the Official Languages Coordination Unit, Treasury Board and Service New Brunswick established a working group which consists of regular meetings on corporate official languages files, and the corporate initiatives of the Government Plan on Official Languages. The largest group has also broken down into various subgroups to work on

additional official languages projects as required that are not included in the Government Plan on Official Languages.

Conclusion

While the first three years of The Government Plan on Official Languages—Official Bilingualism: *A Fundamental Value* took place during significant restructures and centralization exercises, work continued to move forward in several critical areas.

Year 4 will require that departments work on initiatives specific to their respective department's needs and culture. While there are common themes across some departments, there are other initiatives added to departmental work plans that are unique. Departments continue with the ongoing initiatives that are recurring from previous years.

Appendix A

Departments and agencies that are currently legislated to submit an action plan (as they were named during Year 3)

Department/Agency	Action Plan Developed
Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat	Yes
Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries	Yes
Education and Early Childhood Development	Yes
Energy and Resource Development	Yes
Environment and Local Government	Yes
Executive Council Office	Yes
Finance	Yes
Health	Yes
Justice and Public Safety	Yes
New Brunswick Police Commission	Yes
Office of the Attorney General	Yes
Office of the Premier	Yes
Opportunities New Brunswick	Yes
Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour	Yes
Regional Development Corporation	Yes
Service New Brunswick	Yes
Social Development	Yes
Tourism, Heritage and Culture	Yes
Transportation and Infrastructure	Yes
Treasury Board	Yes