

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

2024-2025

REVIEW REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PART VII OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

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Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

Canada 

Tombstone Data

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Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Institution's Code:

ACO

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Part VII of the OLA

Advancement of Equality of Status and Use of English and French

1. In addition to the programs and services offered, the institution ensured that positive measures were taken for the advancement of equality of status and use of English and French.

ALWAYS

2. Promote and support the learning of both official languages in Canadian society

NO

ACOA is committed to fostering a bilingual work environment and ensuring that employees are equipped to serve clients in both official languages. Formal and informal language training opportunities are available to all staff. Staff are encouraged to use their language of choice during meetings and presentations. And managers/supervisors undertake language training discussions with their direct reports during performance management reviews.

3. Foster an acceptance and appreciation of both English and French in Canadian society

NO

In Nova Scotia, ACOA's employee-led Cafe français is a monthly event open to all Agency staff. It provides a safe space to practice French regardless of one's linguistic profile. Initiated by two staff members, the Cafe promotes the use of NS's minority language and supports learning. In Prince Edward Island, ACOA organized a weekly one-hour "French Language Corner." This initiative provides staff with a regular opportunity to

4. Promote the bilingual character of Canada in Canada or elsewhere

YES

The Agency invested \$ 1.8 million in the CMA 2024, held in southwestern Nova Scotia from August 10 to 18, 2024. This international event celebrated Acadian culture and ties between francophone communities worldwide. The CMA 2024 promoted the bilingual character of Canada by highlighting the richness and vitality of Acadian culture, contributing to the development of francophone and Acadian communities. This event underscores the importance of bilingualism in Canada and fosters international connections among francophone communities. ACOA also supported the Societe Nationale de l'Acadie and its strategy to promote Acadian artists on the international scene in 2024 and 2025. This strategy aims to support the global export of Atlantic Canada's Francophone artistic talent. Among the methods chosen to achieve this objective, trade missions and fairs were favoured for their effectiveness in promoting local artists internationally.

5. Support the creation and dissemination of information in French that contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge (If YES, specify the scientific discipline in the mandatory clarifications)

YES

The Agency approved a \$350,000 contribution for a project to support the creation and dissemination of information in French that contributes to the advancement of science. The project supports the creation of a Science and Industry Innovation Laboratory at Universite Sainte-Anne's Church Point, NS, campus. Project activities include the modernization of an existing space at the university as well as the acquisition of specialized equipment. The

laboratory is considered vital to local industry such as agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries, and is the only one of its kind in southwestern NS.

6. Support sectors that are essential to enhancing the vitality of official languages minority communities (culture, education [from early childhood to post-secondary education], health, justice, employment) YES

ACOA provided contributions to projects that supported the tourism sector, a critical one for OLMCs in Atlantic Canada.

Administration portuaire de Pigeon-Hill Inc.

Support an infrastructure engineering study to foster rural tourism – \$24,188 in ACOA assistance.

This project involves undertaking a study to develop plans and specifications for hospitality infrastructure in connection with the lighthouse on the Pigeon Hill wharf and a bike path through the community. This includes a lighthouse near the wharf, with a harbour master's office, meeting rooms, public washrooms and an observation deck to view the 60 or so boats. It also includes hospitality infrastructure for visiting tourists, such as a patio, café, fishing equipment rental kiosk and walkway to access the beach and dune, as well as a bike path that will run through the community and link the new coastal tourist attractions planned to the Véloroute de la Péninsule acadienne cycling route.

This project aligns directly with ACOA's objectives: it will enable the Agency to invest in developing tourist destinations and enhancing destinations in Atlantic Canada, including the Acadian product on the Acadian Peninsula; improve regional tourism assets; and increase the region's competitiveness as an international destination.

This project is a remarkable opportunity to enhance the vitality of this official language minority community and incorporate it into the tourism offering on the Acadian Peninsula and in Atlantic Canada.

This project also aligns with ACOA's tourism growth strategy, strengthening the Pigeon Hill community's ability to enhance and diversify the tourism offering and experience in order to increase visitor traffic and generate new revenue streams for businesses serving tourists visiting Lamèque Island and the Acadian Peninsula region.

Acadian Peninsula Regional Service Commission

Implement a community led tourism strategy for the Acadian Peninsula – \$153,764 in ACOA assistance.

The aim of this project is to hire a consulting firm to help the eight communities on the Acadian Peninsula draw up their own community tourism action plans and, through a collaborative partnership, develop a regional tourism strategy with an implementation and investment plan. This project also aims to develop a regional tourism growth strategy for the next five years with a clear and achievable tourism development path. This strategy will use a community tourism development approach based on each community's assets, advantages and strengths. This project will create and enable community led planning among each community's tourism stakeholders, including the private, community and municipal sectors, to grow and nurture the

Acadian Peninsula's tourism ecosystem and foster an entrepreneurial tourism environment conducive to innovation, growth and competition for this official language minority community.

The asset based community tourism development approach will emphasize leadership by members of a local community, who will work together to define goals that are important to them, develop and implement plans to achieve these goals and create collaborative local relationships followed by collaborative relationships with external players.

Belle Baie

Create energy efficient local infrastructure to support rural tourism – \$98,245 in ACOA assistance.

This project aims to create a green space, powered entirely by solar energy, where artists and craftspeople can set up shop, and create and sell their work while interacting with tourists. It also aims to enhance the town's cultural offering and increase tourist traffic on the Petit Rocher wharf. This project will strengthen the Belle Baie community's ability to develop its tourism and cultural sector by creating a space where artists and craftspeople can showcase their work on the Petit Rocher wharf. This project is strategic and enhances the competitiveness of the Chaleur region's tourism sector.

Project activities receiving financial support include the acquisition and installation of two 40 foot containers with patios to create eight spaces for artists and craftspeople; solar panel installation and electrical hook up; and additional work to make the site operational. The site will be carbon neutral, with 22 solar panels generating over 10,000 kWh annually. To allow persons with reduced mobility to access the patios connected to the artists' studios, an access ramp will be built from an existing asphalt path linking the parking lot, the Quai des artisans and the Quai cuisine de rue restaurant. The infrastructure will belong to the Town of Belle Baie, which will be responsible for the operating costs and maintenance in the long term.

The Petit Rocher wharf is a key location for several tourism and cultural events, including the Festival des Rameurs (July 7–14), the Festival Blues d'la Baie (July 25–28) and the Rendez-vous acadien (August 15). By creating the Quai des artisans on the Petit Rocher wharf, the Town will establish a new tourism and cultural offering, diversify the products available and increase tourist traffic and revenue, providing a valuable opportunity to extend the tourist season on the Petit Rocher wharf.

Petit Rocher has a rich Acadian cultural heritage and has hosted many artists and craftspeople over the decades. As the head office of the Acadian Society of New Brunswick and the Association francophone des municipalités du Nouveau-Brunswick, the community has always placed its culture at the forefront of its community development priorities.

Véloroute de la Péninsule acadienne Inc.

Carry out strategic activities to support the tourism ecosystem on the Acadian Peninsula – \$228,825 in ACOA assistance.

The aim of this project is to implement the strategic and digital plans. This will include hiring specialized resources, developing digital tools, carrying out marketing activities, promoting an annual sporting event outside Atlantic Canada, establishing business partnerships to develop

visitor packages in support of regional tourism and achieving financial autonomy for the organization.

This project aims to develop and enhance the Acadian Peninsula's tourism ecosystem by:

- developing markets and promoting the Véloroute cycling infrastructure
- supporting businesses wishing to become part of the regional tourism offering for cycling tourists
- forging alliances and partnerships
- increasing networking with communities and businesses
- attracting stakeholder investment

Véloroute de la Péninsule acadienne Inc. is a non profit organization strongly committed to the development of tourism on the Acadian Peninsula. It manages a cycling route of over 310 paved kilometres (over 600 km with its 14 circuits) that links seven municipalities, official language minority communities and a rural district. The Véloroute is a unifying project for the Peninsula. It drives sustainable economic development in the region, promoting cycling tourism and improving the local population's health and well being.

Visitors come from all over New Brunswick, Atlantic Canada and Quebec. There is a significant cyclist presence outside the traditional tourist season, in June, September and October.

Hiring an events promotion officer has been deemed necessary to enhance the quality of the Véloroute experience and achieve financial autonomy. This project aligns with ACOA's tourism growth strategy, strengthening the Acadian Peninsula community's ability to enhance the Véloroute's tourism offering and experience in order to increase visitor traffic and generate new revenue streams for businesses serving tourists visiting the Acadian Peninsula region, as well as enhance the region's vitality.

This project also aligns with ACOA's Tourism Innovation Action Plan. Enhancing the quality of the region's cycling ecosystem will boost its tourism value, extending the length of time tourists stay in the region and growing New Brunswick's cycling trail network. By expanding and improving the quality of the Véloroute, this project will create increased business opportunities for tourism operators, and spur job creation and economic benefits throughout the Peninsula.

Le Pays de la Sagouine

Support global strategic marketing and product development activities – ACOA assistance of \$1,542,600

This project will support costs associated with developing global strategic marketing and enhanced product development activities over the next three years. It will involve the engagement of consultants and will assist with future planned programming investments.

In operation since 1992, Le Pays de la Sagouine is an Acadian celebration in Bouctouche, NB, founded by Antonine Maillet, who wanted to show what it was like to live the Acadian life. Le Pays de la Sagouine is both entertaining and historic. It attracts approximately 68,000 people a season, which far exceeds the population of Bouctouche (2,426).

As one of the largest Acadian employers of the performing arts, Le Pays de la Sagouine is an ambassador for Acadia, where visitors come to learn about Acadian culture. Since its opening, it has welcomed more than 1.5 million visitors and is an economic driver of tourism, which brings many economic benefits to the region, in the greater Kent County area and the province as a whole.

Le Pays de la Sagouine is one of New Brunswick's main cultural attractions. In July 2022, the federal and provincial governments announced a joint investment of more than \$35.2 million to upgrade infrastructure at Le Pays de la Sagouine and enhance visitor experience. This proposed funding will help Le Pays de la Sagouine continue to offer an authentic, immersive Acadian experience to people from all over the world. This large infrastructure project involves the construction of new buildings on the mainland, a new footbridge to l'Île-aux-Puces, a multi-purpose trail that will include a nocturnal experience, a wooden boardwalk with a lookout, and a patio with kiosks.

Le Pays de la Sagouine is in the early planning stages of this large, transformational project, which will renew this tourist destination and give it the programming necessary to carry it through the next 30 years. This project will provide Le Pays de la Sagouine with funding assistance toward the costs associated with developing a strategic marketing and enhanced product development plan, and will assist with the promotion of the large capital infrastructure project. The strategic marketing plan will include the modernization of the brand image adapted to the new realities of the tourist destination, new experiences and new targeted visitors, focusing on external markets in Central and Western Canada, as well as the United States and Europe.

Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick (TIANB)

Implementation of a marketing strategy, website upgrades and summit in support of tourism – ACOA Assistance of \$122,092

This project will support costs associated with marketing, communication and governance strategies, as well as website upgrades that will propel TIANB in a new direction. It also includes support for the 2024 New Brunswick Tourism Summit in Saint John, NB. This client represents the tourism industry, which is an important sector, across the province.

Since 1983, TIANB has worked to create a stronger tourism sector in New Brunswick by representing the industry in matters that directly affect the over 3,000 businesses that make up the sector.

This project involves the implementation of the recommendations laid out in the recently completed strategic plan. It also aims to enhance TIANB's operations and better engage its members (both anglophone and francophone), in line with the strategic plan's goals of organizational excellence and industry development support. The plan is to develop a strategic communications and marketing strategy aimed at increasing sales of TIANB's online training programs, strengthening relationships with members, and enhancing networking opportunities at the summit, all contributing to the growth and sustainability of New Brunswick's tourism sector.

This project aims to deliver substantial economic benefits for the tourism sector. By enhancing TIANB's visibility through a strategic marketing and communications plan, the client expects

increased member retention and participation, leading to higher membership revenues and improved business growth for the sector's operators. The website redesign will facilitate greater access to training programs, boosting online sales and contributing to the financial sustainability of TIANB. This project also aims to directly strengthen New Brunswick's tourism industry, supporting rural economic development and promoting a resilient and inclusive sector.

Le Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador
ACOA supported le Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador (now known as HORIZON TNL, formerly RDÉE TNL) to publish a new edition of the Guide touristique en français 2024 for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, with a print run of 15,000 copies, accompanied by a digital version on the website ExploreTNL. ExploreTNL is the French-language tourism brand owned by HORIZON TNL, NL's provincial, bilingual, non-profit economic development organization.

ExploreTNL's mandate is to promote tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador to national and international francophone markets, to introduce tourism projects as a lever of economic and social development for the benefit of NL's francophone community, and to assist francophone tourists during their stay in Newfoundland and Labrador. The organization works with the provincial and federal governments, as well as international organizations, to promote tourism in the province.

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| 7. Immigration | NO |
| 8. Protect and promote the presence of strong institutions serving official language minority communities | YES |

In Nova Scotia, ACOA approved funding for a scientific laboratory at Université Sainte-Anne and core funding for the CDÉNÉ in 2024-2025. Université Sainte-Anne is the only French post-secondary educational institution in Nova Scotia and the CDÉNÉ is the only pan-provincial francophone economic development organization in that province. Expected results for both projects include business and entrepreneurship development. These investments help protect and promote these institutions.

CCNB INNOV

Increase small and medium sized enterprises' product development and sustainable innovation expertise – \$715,952 in ACOA assistance.

CCNB INNOV is a department of Collège communautaire du Nouveau Brunswick (CCNB) focused on applied research and innovation. Since 2005, CCNB INNOV has been helping Atlantic Canadian businesses and communities innovate. It is a member of the Springboard Atlantic Inc. network and the Tech Access Canada network. Its three divisions have expertise in various fields, including beverages, bioprocessing and environment (Grand Falls campus); advanced manufacturing, the Internet of Things, automation, robotics and artificial intelligence (Bathurst campus); and advanced materials (Caraquet campus).

This project aims to implement a skills transfer service in product development and ecological design to increase sustainable innovation among New Brunswick's small and medium sized enterprises. This project will fund the salaries of two specialized resources, the fees for

accessing external expertise and their specialized training tools; travel, marketing and communication fees; and IT equipment. With the support and collaborative partnership of the Institut de développement de produits (IDP), CCNB INNOV aims to build cutting edge capacity to deliver the IDP model to Atlantic Canadian businesses. Based in Montreal, the IDP is a key player in Quebec's innovation ecosystem, with a specialized skills transfer and coaching model that has been proven in the business world. The service will be offered through the Advanced Manufacturing and Robotics divisions in Bathurst and the Bioeconomy division in Grand Falls, and two new jobs will be created.

Two innovation officers will acquire key skills in ecological design and sustainable innovation. INNOV also intends to train all its staff in sustainable innovation best practices and reinforce this mindset internally by fostering a culture of sustainable innovation and incorporating those principles into its approach to clients.

In addition to helping innovative companies with the technical aspects of proof of concept and prototyping, as well as technological solutions to various manufacturing challenges, INNOV aims to support entrepreneurs from idea conception to commercialization, filling a major gap in New Brunswick's innovation ecosystem.

Institut de recherche sur les zones côtières Inc. (IRZC)

Digitize the laboratory analysis process to improve productivity – \$11,310 in ACOA assistance. The aim of this project is to hire a consultant to develop an implementation plan to optimize sample analysis business processes and reduce paper use by deploying state of the art digital technologies. Activities include making better use of existing software, integrating new software tools and developing custom solutions (programming).

This project will enable IRZC to improve productivity by digitizing an organization providing specialized services in support of businesses in the fisheries, aquaculture, peat and agriculture sectors. IRZC, known as Valorès, works in four specific areas of activity through research and services to industry: fisheries and marine co-products, aquaculture, peat and sustainable development.

Valorès also operates analytical chemistry and microbiology laboratories that provide expertise and scientific support for all research and development projects under way at the organization, as well as for various industries, municipalities, private and governmental organizations, engineering firms and individuals.

For perspective, Valorès laboratories do business annually with 310 to 325 clients based mainly in northeastern New Brunswick and the Gaspé Peninsula. To address efficiency gaps and improve sample processing time from receipt to delivery of results to the client, Valorès aims to optimize laboratory efficiency and productivity through increased digitization of operational processes.

This project is fully aligned with the analytical laboratory's productivity improvement objectives. The client aims to increase the speed of delivery of analytical results to all its clients, as well as improve the productivity and digitization of Atlantic Canada's economy. This project will ultimately improve the laboratory's performance with regard to client expectations, while solidifying its reputation and the quality of the service it provides.

The Valorès analytical laboratory plays a very important role for the fishing and aquaculture industry, especially processing plants. Food safety for domestic and export markets, as well as reports attesting to the quality of fish and shellfish, are equivalent to passports between territories such as Canada and the United States.

9. Other

YES

The Agency approved a \$300,000 contribution through the Economic Development Initiative (EDI) to assist the OLMC of the Municipality of the District of Clare, NS, to work with local tourism operators on the development and implementation of new and enhanced Acadian cultural experiential tourism offerings.

Project activities, which will primarily be targeted at highly engaged international visitors, will include the involvement of expertise to assist with experience development, the hiring of an Experiences Coordinator for the region, community consultations and marketing activities.

Shared Services

In 2022, ACOA entered into a multi-year agreement (2022-2025) to provide \$70,506 of financial support to La Société acadienne et francophone de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard to deliver human resources to participating organizations in the PEI francophone community via shared services. This project is a cost- and time-shared model and will address human resources expertise gaps by providing access to an HR professional and HR tools to strengthen these small operations.

Entrepreneurship – Ignition Pitch Sessions

In fiscal 2024-25, RDÉE Î. P. É. was supported in the amount of \$41,249 to organize Pitch Session Training. This project supported francophone entrepreneurs who are launching or expanding their businesses to develop their “pitch.” The Province of PEI (Innovation PEI) offered a \$25,000 investment through the pitch competition to the winning company. The province partnered with the applicant to offer the training and competition in French.

The pitch competition included the following:

- Training: registered participants were granted a full day of training led by an experienced consultant who coached participants on how to pitch their businesses to a variety of investors. Participants prepared their business pitch to participate in the first round of the competition.
- First round: participants were given seven minutes to present to a judging panel comprised of members of the francophone business community.

Sales Missions

In fiscal 2024-2025, ACOA contributed \$153,033.53 to RDÉE Î.-P.-É. for a project that offered two hybrid sales missions to support 20 (11 in the spring mission and 9 in the fall mission) PEI-based francophone businesses in connecting with potential buyers in Québec. The hybrid format supported both virtual meetings via video conference, as well as a delegation that travelled to Québec for in-person meetings. The proposed project aimed to support SMEs to develop their experience in sales missions.

RDÉE Î.-P.-É. hired a business matchmaking consultant to recruit and select participants for the spring and fall missions. The consultant met with businesses to understand their needs and identified potential buyers in Québec. Participants received training on sales pitches and buyer engagement. Once trained, the hybrid sales mission took place with companies participating both virtually and in person. Each day, the consultant met individually with participants to prepare and debrief them.

Employment – PERCÉ

In fiscal 2024-2025, ACOA supported RDÉE Î.-P.-É. with \$136,510.94 as part of a multi-year funding agreement (2024-2026) to support and implement its summer employment program titled Programme d'entrepreneurship régionale, communautaire, et économique (PERCÉ). The program connected students or recent graduates who lived in, or originated from, PEI with employment for 12 weeks in their field of study. The program also offered employers an incentive to hire quality francophone/bilingual candidates.

The program aims to hire students under the age of 30 who want quality work experience, are actively on the job market, want to return to PEI for work, have francophone capabilities, and have completed or are nearing completion of their studies.

The project's overarching objectives, as identified by the client, include:

- To help Island youth recognize economic opportunities within their communities
- To provide an opportunity for young people to get work experience in their field of study
- To establish a communication and promotion strategy to publicize existing RDÉE Î.-P.-É. programs to improve students' employability in the eyes of employers
- To promote opportunities emerging from the tourism sectors, rural development, and the knowledge economy
- To clearly demonstrate confidence in local youth's potential
- To serve three clientele: young francophone students, employers and communities

10. When negotiating agreements with the provincial and territorial governments, including funding agreements, in areas of activity that may contribute to enhancing the vitality of official language minority communities, fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society, the protection and promotion of French or learning in the minority language, the federal institution had a mechanism in place to promote the inclusion in those agreements of provisions on official languages. **N/A**

ACOA does not negotiate directly with provincial governments. Rather, the Government of Canada's central agencies discuss and establish agreements with the provinces and territories for funding or other types of collaboration in sectors such as education, culture and health.

11. The institution has identified stakeholders from official language minority communities, from organizations working to protect the French language, and from organizations that promote the learning of English and French in Canada, who are relevant to the institution's mandate or the implementation of its programs. **YES**

12. The institution's programs and services enabled it to contribute to the advancement towards equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society. **YES**
13. Support and assist the development of official language minority communities. **YES**

To support and assist the development of OLMCs, Agency staff proactively engage with and regularly attend activities of key stakeholders such as the CDÉNE, Université Sainte-Anne and various municipalities and associations.

In 2024-2025, activities included webinars, lunch-and-learn activities, the Université Sainte-Anne graduation, a Université Sainte-Anne strategic planning session, the 25th anniversary celebration of the CDÉNE, a tourism planning session at the Municipality of the District of Clare, and several events during the CMA 2024. These engagement efforts provide insights into OLMC needs and opportunities.

Town of Rivière-du-Nord

Build a trail linking the Véloroute cycling network to the Village historique acadien – \$32,850 in ACOA assistance.

This project includes professional fees for consultants and involves engineering work; environmental and geotechnical surveys leading to plans and specifications; and determination of the various permits required for a possible construction project linking the Véloroute de la Péninsule acadienne cycling route to the Village historique acadien, including the Bertrand, Saint-Léolin, Grande-Anse, Anse-Bleue and Maisonnnette sectors.

The municipality of Rivière-du-Nord is a new municipal entity formed under the Province of New Brunswick's municipal reform implemented on January 1, 2023, which consolidated the former villages of Bertrand, Saint-Léolin, Grande-Anse and Maisonnnette; the local service districts of Anse-Bleue and Dugas; and part of the local service district of New Bandon. The municipality's main tourist attraction is the Village historique acadien, which has a strong reputation and is popular with tourists. Other notable tourism offerings in the municipality include the beaches of Grande-Anse, Anse-Bleue and Maisonnnette; the campsites scattered throughout the municipality; the annual Acadian Oktoberfest held in early September; and the Maisonnnette Oyster Festival. To support economic development and the growth of its tourism offering, the municipality of Rivière-du-Nord wishes to expand the Véloroute de la Péninsule acadienne trail, which currently ends in the southeast of the municipality, and to extend it toward the centre and northeast of the municipality.

This project will strengthen the Rivière du Nord community's ability to improve and diversify its tourism offering and experience in the area surrounding the Village historique acadien and the Maisonnnette and Anse-Bleue beaches, in order to increase tourist traffic and generate new sources of revenue for businesses serving tourists visiting the Acadian Peninsula.

Town of Campbellton

Upgrade the outdoor amphitheatre on the waterfront to extend the tourist season – \$63,614 in ACOA assistance.

The aim of this project is to modernize the outdoor amphitheatre so that it can be used year round, thereby extending the tourist season and providing opportunities for events outside the summer season, such as the Christmas market in December and Winterfest in February. The work includes applying new elastomeric paint to the steel structure, installing new cedar walls and installing a painted steel roof over plywood. This upgrade will improve the use of this strategic waterfront infrastructure, which is linked by a bike path in the summer and a snowmobile trail in the winter to Sugarloaf Provincial Park, downtown inns and the municipal RV park west of the interprovincial bridge.

This project aims to consolidate the infrastructure of the outdoor amphitheatre and help this waterfront site attract more regional musical and songwriting talent to foster cultural tourism. This will enable the community to extend its fall tourist season and strengthen its economic development capacity by providing visitors with an authentic tourism offering.

As one of only two land based points of entry to Atlantic Canada, Campbellton has long been committed to making its waterfront a welcoming environment and a gateway to Atlantic Canada for Canadians and international visitors.

This project will ensure the community can provide a sustainable cultural and ecotourism offering, helping make the Campbellton Regional Community dynamic and welcoming, and introducing visiting tourists to the diverse local cultures in both official languages through music and entertainment.

Restigouche Regional Service Commission

Establish and operationalize the Northern Energy Alliance – \$291,611 in ACOA assistance. The aim of this project is to finish creating and commissioning a new corporate structure called the Northern Energy Alliance using the specialized services of various consulting firms (legal, engineering, financial, communications and negotiation) for the benefit of the three northeastern regional service commissions (official language minority communities) and the Indigenous communities of Oinpegitjoig (Pabineau) and Ugpi'ganjig (Eel River Bar). This project will create a community controlled commercial corporate structure capable of investing in commercial projects and generating revenue directly for member communities. This project aligns with the federal government's priority to decarbonize our society and accelerate our transition to a green economy, as well as the Belledune Port Authority's recent strategic decision to establish a Green Energy Hub.

This project is innovative for northeastern New Brunswick in that it aims to create a community controlled commercial corporate structure capable of investing in commercial projects and generating revenue directly for member communities. It will help fund an initiative that strengthens northeastern communities' ability to capitalize on their strengths, their assets and the opportunity to become key investors in the construction of wind farms on their territory in partnership with the private sector. It will also build the capacity of northeastern communities by developing the renewable energy sector, a competitive, productive and strategic sector in Canada's current energy transition.

It supports the ability of northeastern communities and First Nations to define the scope of their direct involvement in future green energy production projects. It will benefit the economic

development of all northeastern communities, and is expected to lead to sustainable economic activity for decades to come.

There is currently no investment structure comparable to Quebec's Alliance de l'énergie de l'Est Inc. in New Brunswick's economic landscape. Creating a similar structure would be a unifying force and accelerate rural communities' integration into the energy transition.

This project is fully aligned with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 92. It will accelerate the integration of First Nations into a commercial entity that will give them decision making power and provide many economic benefits in all fairness to their lands and resources.

Inclusion New Brunswick Inc.

Engage employers to promote the benefits of hiring persons with intellectual disabilities – ACOA assistance \$231,479

The project will engage employers across the province in both anglophone and francophone communities to promote inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Through a blend of outreach, engagement and development of support materials, Inclusion NB will educate employers on the misconceptions, requirements and benefits of hiring neurodiverse individuals as valued and productive employees.

The client is a registered non-profit organization advocating for the rights and equitable opportunities (including employment) of persons in New Brunswick living with intellectual or developmental disabilities. This project will focus on employer engagement to encourage companies to consider neurodiverse individuals as potential employees so as to meet immediate and emerging labour demands of New Brunswick SMEs. Inclusion NB has more than 60 years' experience advocating on behalf of residents living with such disabilities, including for equitable employment opportunities. This project will scale up efforts to help NB employers address their workforce needs through innovative hiring and inclusion processes. Engagement activities, tool development and relationship building facilitated under this project would help to debunk misconceptions and to educate employers as to the expected needs and contributions of employees with disabilities.

The client cites a statistic that 26.7% of New Brunswickers live with some form of disability – the second highest rate of any province in Canada. The unemployment rate for such persons, historically, has been higher than that for persons without a disability. Employers unknowingly create barriers to the gainful employment of this population, due to misconceptions, lack of awareness, perceived costs and productivity concerns, limited access to support networks, concern over compliance issues, and workplace culture. This project would aim to mitigate that unintentional bias.

The primary objective of this project is to increase employer awareness of the availability of workers with intellectual disabilities, and to promote the broad scope of their capabilities and potential contributions to a work team. Under this project, the client would increase its exposure to New Brunswick employers and create a community where all employers can connect, learn and grow, using an online hub for collaboration and interaction.

The development of an online hub will enable the client to host interactive learning programs and knowledge sharing designed to create a more open and welcoming workplace. This would be supported by customized interactions between the client and employers to accelerate employment results and build the client's own network of potential employer allies. This would also include efforts to facilitate the actual integration of individuals into a work team.

14. Foster the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society YES

The Agency invested \$50,000 through EDI in support of a project that aims to foster the full recognition and use of both English and French in the OLMC community of Cheticamp, NS. The project promotes the French language and Acadian culture by hosting cultural events and festivals, involving artists and musicians, and offering tours at a community historical centre. Both francophone and anglophone guests are welcome and are served in the official language of their choice.

15. Protect and promote the French language in every province and territory of Canada. NO

16. Advance opportunities for members of English and French linguistic minority communities to pursue quality learning in their own language YES

Collège communautaire du Nouveau Brunswick

Upgrade training capacity to address the labour shortage – \$800,000 in ACOA assistance.

The aim of this project is to acquire six in class simulators, a mobile training trailer with two simulators and four heavy equipment units in order to modernize and expand the French language heavy equipment operator training program at the Bathurst campus in response to the shortage of skilled labour for infrastructure projects across all sectors.

Collège communautaire du Nouveau Brunswick (CCNB) is seeking to modernize and expand its heavy equipment operator training program. This initiative will be essential and fundamental to the green energy transition, supporting the training of a heavy equipment operator workforce to support major infrastructure projects associated with the transition, as well as to address the shortage of skilled labour in key sectors such as construction, forestry, mining and agriculture. This will also meet the federal government's zero coal target.

Modernizing and expanding training capacity using simulation (virtual reality) technologies combined with manual work on heavy equipment will have a direct impact on skills development, helping workers in communities in the greater Belledune area adapt to Canada's transition to a low coal economy. This project will produce a new generation of skilled heavy equipment operators, including for firms working on renewable energy infrastructure projects at the Port of Belledune's Green Energy Hub and at construction sites for wind farms producing green energy for the NB Power grid in northern New Brunswick and elsewhere.

With the energy transition envisioned by the federal government and recent developments surrounding the establishment of a Green Energy Hub at the Port of Belledune, the establishment of a green hydrogen production plant by 2028 and the construction of several large scale wind farms to supply industrial demand for green energy across the northern part of the province and elsewhere, we can expect a considerable increase in the need for skilled heavy

equipment operators to support the major infrastructure projects associated with the transition.

This project is a strategic opportunity for CCNB to reposition its heavy equipment operator training program. Acquiring modern simulators and equipment will not only meet current needs, but will also strengthen New Brunswick's economic competitiveness by training a skilled workforce to meet the needs of infrastructure projects anticipated in the green economic transition.

17. Other **NO**

18. In developing a disposal strategy for a surplus federal real property or a federal immovable, the institution consulted the official language minority communities and other stakeholders to take into account the needs and priorities of the English or French linguistic minority communities of the province or territory where the federal real property or federal building in question is located. **N/A**

19. Give us one or two examples of best practices implemented by your institution as part of fulfilling its commitment under Part VII of the OLA.

Part VI I of the OLA prescribes all federal institutions to actively promote the development of OLMCs and encourage the use of English and French within Canadian society.

ACOA NS initiated and coordinates monthly meetings with Official Languages Program delivery staff at Heritage Canada and the provincial Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie. These meetings aim to exchange information and collaboratively find solutions for OLMC projects and initiatives. This proactive measure is designed to enhance the vitality of OLMCs and achieve tangible results. This positive measure is deliberate and evidence-based as required by Part VII of the OLA. Project concepts are brought to the table and assigned to the most appropriate program within one or more of these departments, which provides an efficient service-delivery model.