

Study on the Quality of French Services offered by Bilingual Federal Offices in Newfoundland and Labrador

2014

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INTRODUCTION

Description of the organization leading this project...

The **Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador** (FFTNL) is a provincial, non-profit organization whose mission is to defend and promote the rights and interests of the Francophone and Acadian communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. This linguistic study was led to determine how well offices designated as bilingual in Newfoundland and Labrador are fulfilling their obligation to offer French services. For additional information regarding the parent organization of this study, please consult the FFTNL's website: www.francotnl.ca/fftnl

The purpose of this study...

Federal government institutions are, according to the Official Languages Act, responsible for providing services in French to the Francophone and Acadian communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, if desired by the client.

The Official Languages Act remains the legislation of official bilingualism in Canada. This law grants equal status to English and French within the Government of Canada. In 1969, the Official Languages Act was enacted by Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau. It was designed to meet the requirements of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. In 1988, the Act was amended in order to clarify the obligations of federal institutions with respect to service to the public (Part IV). It has clarified the concept of significant demand to enable federal institutions to identify the offices from which they must ensure the provision of services in both official languages.

Thus identified federal offices, be they national or regional, must now meet the requirement to provide services in the two (2) official languages via personnel with the ability to meet this requirement.

Too often, francophone citizens complain of not receiving services in their preferred official language.

The initiative and the approach to this issue...

Inspired by the approach taken by the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE), the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL), since 2012, has taken the initiative to shed light on the quality of current French services offered by certain offices designated as bilingual.

The Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador began its third investigation in July 2014. The results of this analysis will be available on the website of the FFTNL (www.francotnl.ca/EnquetesServicesEnFrancais) in the near future.

METHODOLOGY

All offices which make up our sample are designated as "bilingual" according to the "Burolis" database of Government of Canada facilities, maintained by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS). Please refer to the following website address for more information: www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ollo/appollo/burolis.

In order to perform these evaluations, volunteers and employees of the FFTNL visited the targeted offices under a profile of unilingual francophones seeking a service in their official language. Subsequently, these "detectives" completed a form to report their experience, observations and comments.

The results of the survey were collected through three (3) types of assessments: e-mail, visits in-person and



telephone calls. Each office was evaluated twice (2) on the service provided in person, twice (2) on the service by telephone as well as by sending two (2) emails enquiries. When the two evaluations of the same office amounted to fairly conflicting results, to avoid of false conclusions and to establish a trend, a third assessment was conducted.

I. Telephone and in person investigations

After the completion of these assessments, investigators filled the following forms:

- Appendix A in person: for investigations conducted in offices;
- Appendix B telephone: for investigations conducted by telephone;

All investigations were held during work days and at different times between 9:00 a.m nd 4: 30 p.m. (local time).

II. Email investigations

To establish a trend of waiting periods when sending an electronic question, an email requiring a response from each department on a relevant topic was sent in French as well as in English. The date and time sent were noted, as well as the hour and date of response, to compare the difference between waiting periods for each respective language.

III. Definition of terms

• Active offer – visual : an active offer – visual is one of the Official Language Act (OLA) requirements. Services in both official languages must be posted within the visual environment (exterior signs, interior poster, bilingual forms or pamphlet).

- Active offer Welcome : when a client enters a federal office designated as « bilingual », according to the OLA, the customer must have a neutral welcome in both official languages such as « Hello/Bonjour ».
- Adequate service : the customer must be served in French, either by an employee or another members of the staff who is available.

LIST OF ASSESSED AGENCIES

<u>The following list</u> consists of the eleven (11) departments in the province targeted for this investigation. All these offices are designated as "bilingual" according to BUROLIS, the official directory of the Government of Canada.

- 1. Canadian Air Transport Security Authority
- 2. Canada Border Services Agency
- 3. Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- 4. Marine Atlantic Inc.
- 5. Parks Canada Agency
- 6. Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- 7. St. John's Port Authority
- 8. Employment and Social Development Canada¹
- 9. Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- 10. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- 11. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Criteria for the selection of the assessed agencies:

Departments which have been targeted meet the following criteria:

- ✤ Importance of the agency in the everyday life of a citizen
- Realism concerning the logistics for on-site verifications

¹ Formerly, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Some additional information regarding the agencies:

- Employment and Social Development Canada does not receive electronic messages. It is impossible to evaluate them on this aspect of the investigation.
- Several agencies don't have any phone numbers on Burolis. It is not possible to evaluate them on this aspect.

RESULTS

Telephone evaluations

Agencies evaluated	Active offer – Welcon	me Adequate service	
Canadian Air Transport Security Authority	*	*	
Canada Border Services Agency	Yes	Yes	
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	*	*	
Marine Atlantic Inc.	*	*	
Parks Canada Agency	Yes Yes		
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	No	Yes	
St. John's Port Authority	Yes	Yes	
Employment and Social Development Canada	*	*	
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	*	*	
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	* *		
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Inconclusive assessment		
Average	75 %	100 %	

* Notes :

Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, Marine Atlantic Inc., Employment and Social Development Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation don't have a phone numbers listed on Burolis. These agencies only have 1~800 phone numbers with a bilingual service.

- ✤ Fisheries and Ocean's local phone number lead directly to the language choice. Therefore, we could not evaluate the service.
- ✤ Agriculture and Agri-food Canada has a local phone number on Burolis. The first evaluation was conclusive and we received a good quality French service. However, it was impossible to confirm this service a second time. After many trials, on different days and times, they remained unreachable.

Analysis of the results

The evaluation of telephone services yielded positive results : 75 % of the agencies have a neutral welcome and 100% of the agencies have adequate service in French.

In-person evaluations

Agencies evaluated	Active offer ~Visual	Active offer ~ Welcome	Adequate service
Canadian Air Transport Security Authority	Yes	Yes	Yes
Canada Border Services Agency	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Yes	No	Yes
Marine Atlantic Inc.	Yes	No	No
Parks Canada Agency	Yes	Yes	Yes
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	Yes	No	Yes
St. John's Port Authority	No	Yes	Yes
Employment and Social Development Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	No	No	No
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ²			
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	Yes	Yes	No
Average	80 %	60 %	70 %

 $^{^{\}rm 2}$ Canada Mortage and Housing Corporation does not offer an in-person service

Analysis of the results

The results of the in-person evaluation are relatively positive. The active offer-visual reached a respectable rate of 80% whereas the active offer-welcome needs to be improved with a rate of 60%. Finally, 70% of the agencies offered an adequate service.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency distinguished itself by a total lack of French service in all aspects of the evaluation.

Some agencies, like *Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Canada, Border Services Agency, Parks Canada Agency, Employment and Social Development Canada* offered a very good French service in all aspects.

E-mail evaluations

Agencies evaluated	Time question- answer in French	Time question- answer in English	Difference between waiting periods
Canadian Air Transport Security Authority	36h14min	21h45min	14h29min
Canada Border Services Agency	14h31min	16h17min	-1h46min
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	148h06min	47h24min	100h43min
Marine Atlantic Inc.	13h22min	11h57min	1h25min
Parks Canada Agency	85h36min	51h32min	34h05min
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	70h49min	72h28min	-1h40min
St. John's Port Authority	No answer given	No answer given	Non-applicable
Employment and Social Development Canada ³			
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	200h16min	117h44min	82h32min
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	2h47min	4h11min	-1h24min
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	94h57min	13h32min	81h25min
Average	74h04min	39h39min	34h25min (almost one and a half days)

³ Employment and Social Development Canada does not receive electronic messages.

Notes :

- The St. John's Port Authority was evaluated three times by e-mail. The first time, we received an answer in French and in English. The second time, we received only an answer in French. Finally, the last attempt was not conclusive because we received no answer.
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency didn't answer the first e-mail sent in English. As for the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, they didn't answer the second French e-mail. Then, as explained in the methodology, these agencies were tested three times in order to yield a result.

Analysis of the results

✤ Average time saved in 2014 when the e-mail is sent in English:

34 hours and 25 minutes, almost one and a half days.

- ✤ Canada Border Services Agency, The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation have a shorter response time in French than in English.
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada showed a noticeable gap between response times in English and in French.

Important aspects of the assessment: waiting time

Agencies evaluated	Time on hold Phone calls	Waiting period <u>Visit in person</u>
Canadian Air Transport Security Authority		1 minute
Canada Border Services Agency	0 minutes	0 minutes
Fisheries and Oceans Canada		13 minutes
Marine Atlantic Inc.		0 minutes
Parks Canada Agency	0 minutes	0 minutes
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	0 minutes	10 minutes
St. John's Port Authority	3 minutes	19 minutes
Employment and Social Development Canada		0 minutes
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency		12,5 minutes
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation		
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada		4 minutes
Average	1.5 minutes	6 minutes

ANNUAL FLUCTUATION OF RESULTS

The Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL) launched this annual political analysis in 2012. For this third edition, it is possible to follow-up on the progress or degradation of the service currently offered in comparison to results collected the last three years. This is done for the purpose of awareness by providing concrete data to the Francophone and Acadian communities as well as for the assessed agencies of the province targeted in this study. It should be noted that, the FFTNL added the electronic aspect to the investigation in 2013. This makes it possible to compare the results the agencies have got for three years.

• Comparison of the agencies evaluated two years

Evaluation of Telephone Service

List of agencies evaluated in two consecutive years :

- 1. Canada Border Services Agency (2013, 2014)
- 2. Canada Post (2012, 2013)
- 3. St. John's Port Authority (2013, 2014)
- 4. Employment and Social Development Canada (2012, 2013)
- 5. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (2012, 2013)
- 6. Marine Atlantic Inc. (2012, 2013)

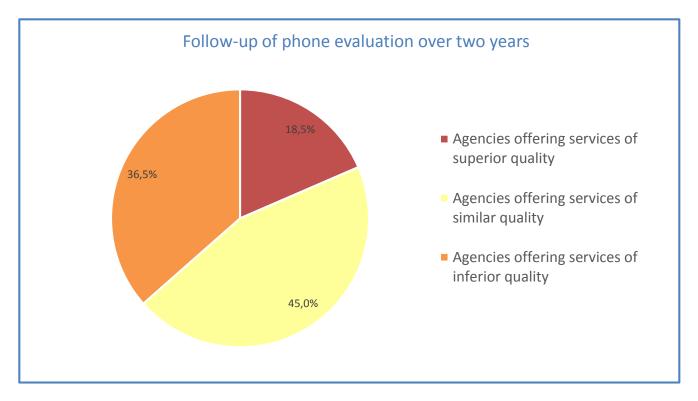
	Activ	Active offer ~ welcome			Adequate service		
Agencies evaluated	Superior quality +	Similar quality Ø	Lower quality -	Superior quality +	Similar quality Ø	Lower quality -	
Canada Border Services Agency		\approx			\approx		
Canada Post		\approx				\approx	
St. John's Port Authority	\approx			\approx			
Employment and Social Development Canada			\approx	4			
Fisheries and Oceans Canada			\approx				
Marine Atlantic Inc.		\approx			\approx		
Average results	17 %	50 %	33 %	20 %	40 %	40 %	

On average, 18.5 % of the re-evaluated agencies offered service in French of superior quality to that of the previous year during telephone evaluations.

- On average, 45 % of the re-evaluated agencies offered service in French of similar quality to that of the previous year during telephone evaluations.
- On average, 36.5 % of the re-evaluated agencies offered service in French of inferior quality to that of the previous year during telephone evaluations.

⁴ A full evaluation of Employment and Social Development Canada was not completed in 2012.

Summary diagram :



Evaluations of in-person Service

List of agencies evaluated in two consecutive years in-person :

1. Canada Border Services Agency (2013, 2014)

2. Canada Post (2012, 2013)

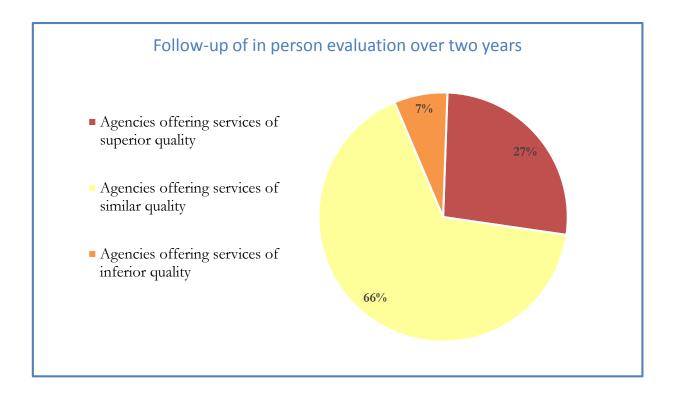
- 3. St. John's Port Authority (2013, 2014)
- 4. Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (2013, 2014)
- 5. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2012, 2014)
- 6. Marine Atlantic Inc. (2013, 2014)

	Activ	re offer ~ V	'isual	Active	offer ~ we	elcome	Ade	quate servi	ce
Agencies	Superior quality	Similar quality	Lower quality	Superior quality	Similar quality	Lower quality	Superior quality	Similar quality	Lower quality
evaluated	+	0	-	+	0	-	+	0	-
Canada Border Services Agency		\bigotimes			\bigotimes			\bigotimes	
Canada Post		\bigotimes			\bigotimes				\bigotimes
St. John's Port Authority		\approx		\approx			\bigotimes		
Canadian Air Transport Security Authority		\approx			\approx			\bigotimes	
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	$\langle \rangle$			$\langle \rangle$				\bigotimes	
Marine Atlantic Inc.		\bigotimes			\overleftrightarrow			\approx	
Average results	20 %	80 %	0 %	40 %	60 %	0 %	20 %	60 %	20 %

- On average, 27 % of reassessed agencies offer services in French of superior quality to that of the previous year during in-person visits.
- On average, 66 % of reassessed agencies offer services in French of similar quality to that of the previous year during in-person visits.

On average, 7 % of reassessed agencies offer services in French of inferior quality to that of the previous year during in-person visits.

Summary diagram:



Agencies evaluated	Difference between waiting period (French-English)		Compariso	n of service 1	for 2 years
	2013	2014	Superior quality +	Similar quality Ø	Lower quality -
Canada Border Services Agency	Oh24min	-1h46min			
Canadian Air Transport Security Authority	14h36min	14h29min		\approx	
Marine Atlantic Inc.	14h40min	1h25min	\approx		
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	254h46min	-1h40min	\approx		
Parks Canada Agency	-13h08min	34h05min			\approx
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	9h03min	100h43min			\approx
Average	47h06 (almost two days)	34h25 (almost one and a half days)			

Analysis of the results

- Generally, we can observed an improvement in French service by e-mail between 2013 and 2014 in the agencies evaluated. The average difference between the French and English waiting period was reduced by 12 hours and 41 minutes.
- Congratulations to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who distincly improved their French service (-255h) and to Marine Atlantic Inc. as well as Canada Border Services Agency who offered better service than last year.
- Parks Canada Agency had a slight deterioration of their French services by e-mail. Moreover, it's sad to remark that Fisheries and Oceans Canada increased their difference between waiting period French-English of more than 90 hours between 2013 and 2014 !

• Comparison of the agencies evaluated in three consecutive years

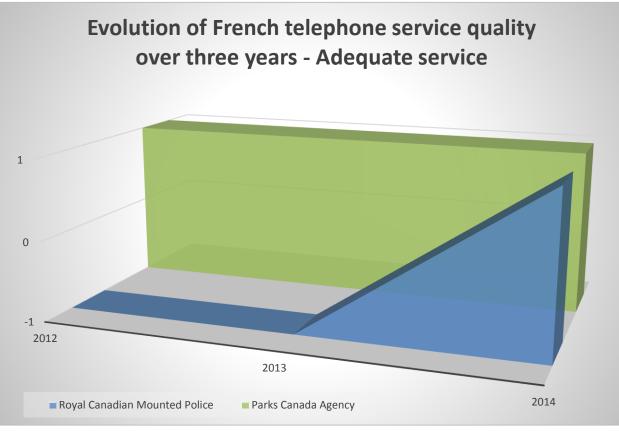
Evaluation of Telephone Service

List of agencies evaluated in three consecutive years :

- 1. Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- 2. Parks Canada Agency



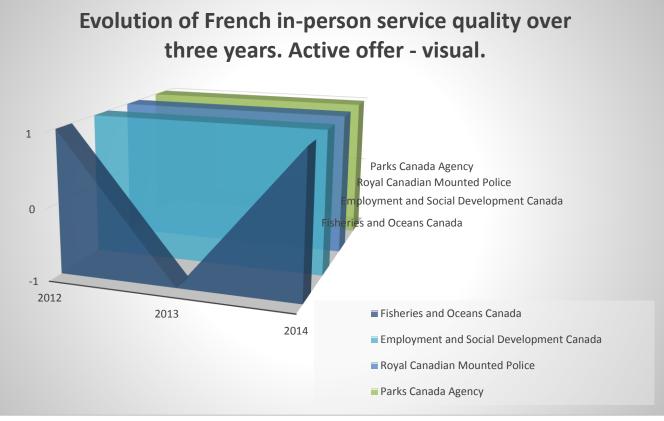
1 = Adequate active offer – welcome / ~1 = Inadequate active offer ~ welcome



1 = Adequate service / ~1 = Inadequate service

List of agencies evaluated in three consecutive years :

- 1. Employment and Social Development Canada
- 2. Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- 3. Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- 4. Parks Canada agency

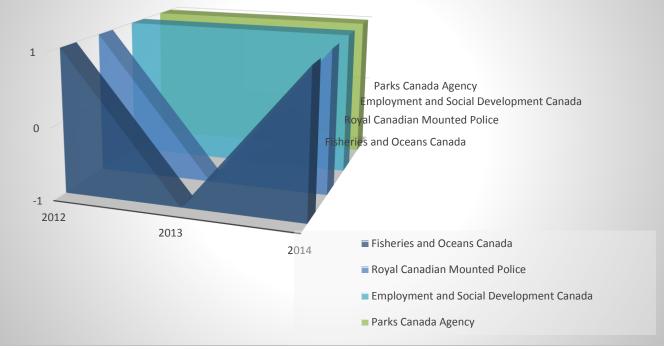


1 = Adequate active offer - visual / -1 = Inadequate active offer - visual



1 = Adequate active offer – welcome / -1 = Inadequate active offer – welcome

Evolution of the French in-person service quality over three years. Adequate service



1 = Adequate service / -1 = Inadequate service

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

For the third consecutive year, our study on the quality of services offered in French in the bilingual federal offices in Newfoundland and Labrador is quite satisfactory. The evaluation of telephone and in-person service are not perfect but they reached respectable rates (up to 50%). However, French service by e-mail still requires improvement. Indeed, we still have to wait about one and a half days longer to receive an answer in French.

The follow-up of the evaluation for three years shows that, generally, French services in evaluated agencies were improved or remained a satisfactory level of quality compared to previous years.

All results gathered in the report shall be communicated (in both official languages) by the FFTNL to all federal offices assessed in this investigation, and to the members of Newfoundland and Labrador Federal Council.

Also, the FFTNL will inform the Treasury Board Secretariat of the results of this study, and request that urgent necessary measures be taken, so that the BUROLIS directory:

- becomes better known to citizens.
- be properly updated and revised due to its many present errors.
- ✤ be made easier to use.

These measures are taken in order to encourage clients to use this directory as it is all too aften not being used.

The FFTNL also requests that the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages treats all the shortcomings listed in our study as formal complaints from the community. Lastly, the FFTNL strongly encourages that these complaints be made public in 2015.

In conclusion, the FFTNL wishes to congratulate the two agencies who offered impeccable service in French:

- Canada Border Services Agency
- Parks Canada (for the third consecutive year)!





Parcs Parks Canada Canada



USEFUL LINKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following links offer more information about the context of this study. Only major points were highlighted in this report.

Commissioner of Official Languages: <u>www.ocol-CLO.GC.ca/</u>

Official Languages Act: <u>http://Lois-laws.Justice.GC.ca/FRA/Lois/o-3.01/</u>

Burolis: http://www.TBS-SCT.GC.ca/ollo/appollo/burolis/search-Recherche/search-Recherche-FRA.aspx

Act Respecting Services in French (2004): http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/frenchla.htm

Acknowledgements: The FFTNL would like to thank all the anonymous volunteers who kindly agreed to give their time for the benefit of this survey, and to serve our community. Thank you very much!

APPENDIX A – Template, in person evaluation form

Ministère évalué :
Bureau évalué (ville) :
Date de l'évaluation :
Heure de l'évaluation :
Nom de l'enquêteur:

Partie 1 – Offre active visuelle

Une offre active visuelle fait partie des exigences de la Loi sur les Langues Officielles (LLO); l'offre des services dans les deux langues officielles doit être évidente tout simplement en regardant le milieu. Est-ce que l'établissement en question se conforme aux règlements établis dans les manières suivantes?

La signalisation à l'extérieur du bureau est bilingue	OUI	NON
L'affichage à l'intérieur du bureau est bilingue	OUI	NON
La présence d'une version française de n'importe quel		
document, formulaire, ou dépliant offert en anglais	OUI	NON

Partie 2 – Offre active de la part du personnel

En entrant dans un bureau fédéral désigné « bilingue », selon la LLO, le client devrait avoir un accueil neutre dans les deux langues, semblable à « Hello/Bonjour ». Est-ce que l'établissement en question se conforme aux règlements établis dans les manières suivantes?

Accueil neutre et bilingue au premier contact

OUI	NON
0.00	

COMMENTAIRES :_____

Note :

*Si l'on est dirigé vers un préposé (agent du ministère) par un commissionnaire (agent d'accueil d'un édifice multi-ministère), on juge notre étude sur l'accueil du préposé pour remplir cette section. Préciser si vous avez parlé à un préposé ou à un commissionnaire.

*si un(e) réceptionniste (personne physique ou système électronique) nous dirige vers une file d'attente particulière pour les services en français, on juge notre étude sur l'accueil de la personne qui nous a transférés.

APPENDIX A (page 2)

Partie 3 – Service adéquat en français

Le client doit être servi en français, soit par le préposé ou par un autre membre du personnel qui est disponible au moment de la visite.

OUI NON

Service rendu en français au moment de la visite

Temps écoulé lors de l'attente :

COMMENTAIRES :

Note :

*Les services seront jugés inacceptables si :

Dû à une absence de personnel adéquat, un nouveau rendez-vous est fixé;

L'utilisation d'un(e) interprète est nécessaire;

Dû à la limitation de la langue française, le service est incompréhensible et donc mieux géré en langue anglaise; Malgré la demande spécifique d'être servi en français, l'attente est longue.

Ministère évalué :
Bureau évalué (ville & numéro de téléphone) :
Date de l'évaluation :
Heure de l'appel :
Nom de l'enquêteur :
Nom de l'enqueteur :

Partie 1 – Offre active de la part du personnel

En faisant appel à un bureau fédéral désigné bilingue, selon la LLO, le client devrait avoir un accueil neutre dans les deux langues, semblable à « Hello/Bonjour ». Est-ce que l'organisme en question se conforme aux règlements établis dans les manières suivantes?

OUI NON

Accueil neutre et bilingue au premier contact

COMMENTAIRES : _____

Partie 2 – service adéquat en français

Le client doit être servi en français, soit par le personnel répondant même ou bien par un autre membre du personnel qui est accessible au moment de l'appel.

Accueil neutre et bilingue au premier contact	OUI NON
Service rendu en français tout au long de l'appel	OUI NON

Temps passé en attente :

COMMENTAIRES :

Note :

*Les services seront jugés inacceptables si :

Dû à une absence de personnel adéquat, un nouveau rendez-vous est fixé;

L'utilisation d'un(e) interprète est nécessaire;

Dû à la limitation de la langue française, le service est incompréhensible et donc mieux géré en langue anglaise;

Malgré la demande spécifique d'être servi en français, l'attente est longue

Name of agency :

- 1. Canadian Air Transport Security Authority
- 2. Canada Border Services Agency
- 3. Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- 4. Marine Atlantic Inc.
- 5. Parks Canada Agency
- 6. Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- 7. St. John's Port Authority
- 8. Employment and Social Development Canada
- 9. Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- 10. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- 11. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Email address

Online forms : https://www.acsta.gc.ca/questionscommentaires-et-plaintes

Contact@cbsa.gc.ca

info@dfo~mpo.gc.ca

customerrelations@marine-atlantic.ca

information@pc.gc.ca

Online forms : http://www.rcmpgrc.gc.ca/cont/comment-fra.htm info@sjpa.com

No email address

information@acoa~apeca.gc.ca

chic@cmhc~schl.gc.ca

info@agr.gc.ca

