

Interdepartmental Work on Labour Needs and Economic Development in Official Language Minority Communities

By the Interdepartmental Working Group on Labour Needs and Economic Development in Official Language Minority Communities



October 2024

Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
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Employment and
Social Development Canada

Emploi et
Développement social Canada

Innovation, Science and
Economic Development Canada

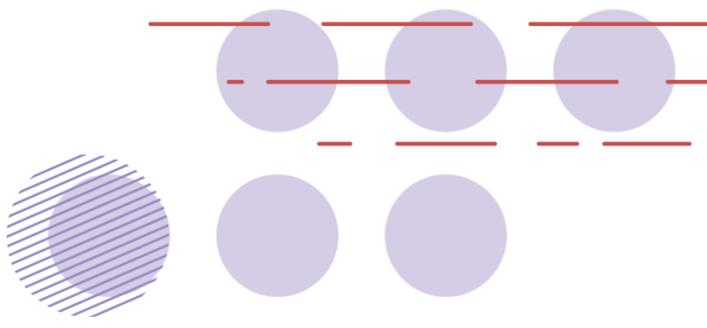
Innovation, Sciences et
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Objectives of presentation



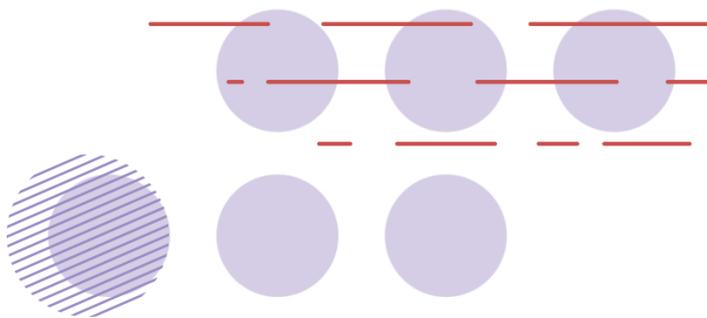
This presentation consists of three parts: a survey of the issues, an update on a new interdepartmental initiative in Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028 and an overview of existing measures, in order to set the stage for a discussion.

At the end of this presentation, you will have a general understanding of:

- the context behind the establishment of the Interdepartmental Working Group on Labour Needs and Economic Development
- the potential priorities of that interdepartmental working group
- the existing or planned labour-related and economic-development projects within the Government of Canada

You will also have the opportunity to comment on how your priorities align with the working group's planned lines of discussion, and to advise us of any other issues you would like the group to address.

Part 1: What we heard

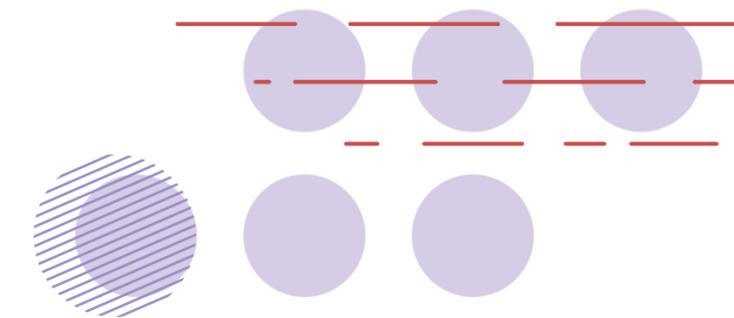


What we heard during consultations conducted by Canadian Heritage (PCH) and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) between May 2022 and April 2024:

Employment

- Overall, English-speaking community members in Quebec have lower incomes than Francophones, higher unemployment rates, a high proportion of people in temporary employment and a high percentage of people below the low-income cut-off.
- Unemployment rates are highest in regional communities, particularly in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Côte-Nord and Nord-du-Québec regions. However, in absolute numbers, Montreal has the highest number of unemployed English-speaking people, with an over-representation of visible minorities, who face more barriers to employment.
- Employment opportunities for Quebec's English speakers are limited by the language of work and the lack of supports in the minority language. They therefore need access to education and training opportunities, more support services (coaching, career counselling) and French language training in the workplace and at school.

What we heard



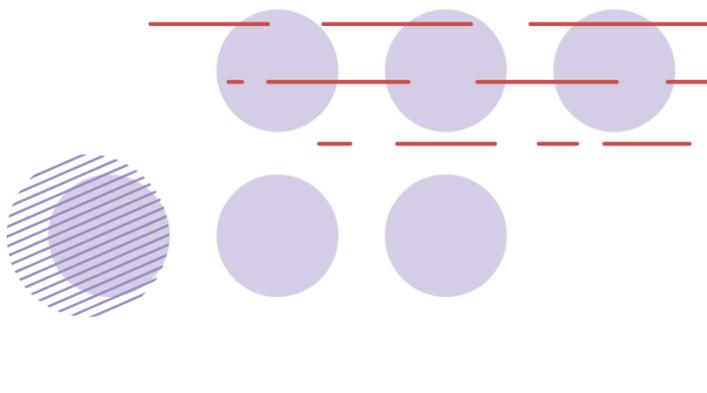
Entrepreneurship and economic development

- In the English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCOs), entrepreneurship is especially important in order to support initiatives that meet community needs.
- Community vitality depends on economic development, which should be strengthened through an economic development strategy coordinating provincial and federal measures.

Cross-cutting issues

- Mental health too has been, and continues to be, a major issue since the pandemic. Organizations want to provide holistic services but are not necessarily equipped to provide mental health supports.
- English speakers in the regions are often the least mobile and have a greater need for integrated and pre-employability supports before entering the job market.
- About a third of Quebec's English-speaking community are immigrants and/or visible minorities, and are less likely to self-identify as members of the English-speaking community and seek out services targeted to that community.

Part II: A new interdepartmental initiative in the Action Plan

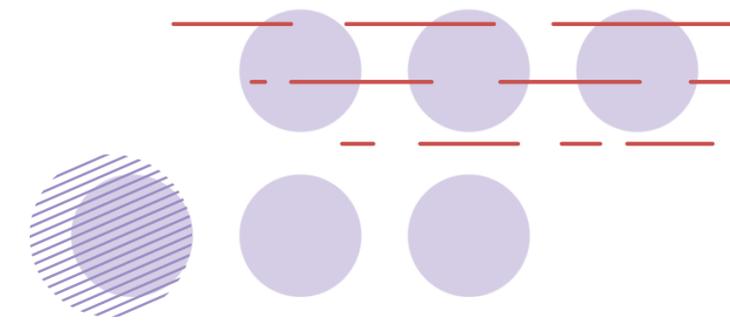


The Partnerships to strengthen Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* (the Act) is a new investment in Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028 being undertaken in partnership between Canadian Heritage and the Treasury Board Secretariat. Ultimately, the goal is for the Government of Canada to embody best practices in the area of official languages, with a view to advancing the substantive equality of English and French in Canadian society.

The Partnerships seek to:

- strengthen leadership within the federal administration
- coordinate federal efforts and support collaboration between federal institutions
- foster greater collaboration with official language minority communities (OLMCs), for the benefit and visibility of our official languages

Partnerships to strengthen Part VII of the Act : Mandate



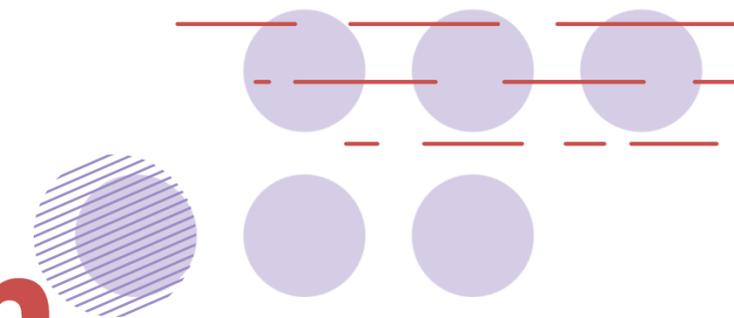
CANADIAN HERITAGE

- Develop horizontal federal official languages strategies and coordinate and promote their implementation
- Engage internal and external stakeholders in order to support consistency, efficiency and results for Canadians

TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT

- Develop, implement and interpret policy instruments to enable federal institutions to fulfil the commitments and duties in Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*
- Mobilize and equip official languages communities of practice within the Government of Canada

Partnerships to strengthen Part VII of the Act : Approach



As part of the Partnerships to strengthen Part VII of the Act , two new interdepartmental working groups are identifying opportunities to develop, align or integrate public policy strategies on official languages:

Restoring the Demographic Weight of Francophones Outside Quebec

Objective: In partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the group aims to support demographic growth and retention in FMCs.

Members: Canadian Heritage; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Employment and Social Development Canada; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Health Canada; Statistics Canada; Global Affairs Canada; Department of Justice Canada; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat; Public Services and Procurement Canada; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada; Women and Gender Equality Canada

Meetings: monthly, as of April 2024

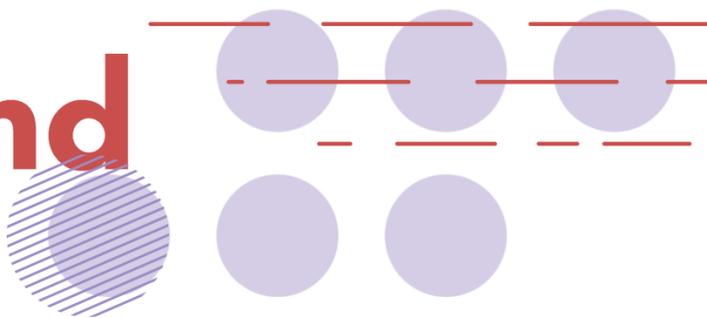
Labour Needs and Economic Development in OLMCs

Objective: In partnership with Employment and Social Development Canada, the group aims to support economic development and employment in FMCs and the ESCQs.

Members: Canadian Heritage; Employment and Social Development Canada; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Health Canada; Statistics Canada; Transport Canada; Canada Council for the Arts; Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency; Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions; Prairies Economic Development Canada; Pacific Economic Development Canada; Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Meetings: every 6–8 weeks, beginning in October 2024

Working Group on Labour Needs and Economic Development



Co-chairs Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Canadian Heritage (PCH)

Mandate: Contribute to the implementation and coordination of positive measures supporting the efforts of federal institutions—on the basis of community needs expressed through a “by and for” approach—in order to address labour-market and economic-development issues in OLMCs.

Types of initiatives

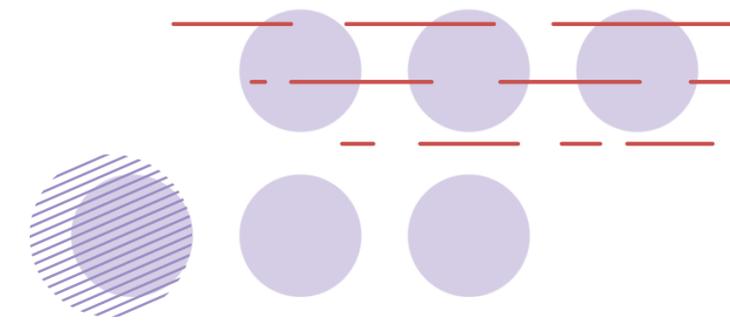
- Developing interdepartmental strategies
- Facilitating collaboration among federal institutions
- Developing new positive measures
- Organizing dialogue days with OLMC stakeholders

Potential priorities

- Employment from a horizontal perspective
- Entrepreneurship from a horizontal perspective
- Retention of immigrant workers in communities

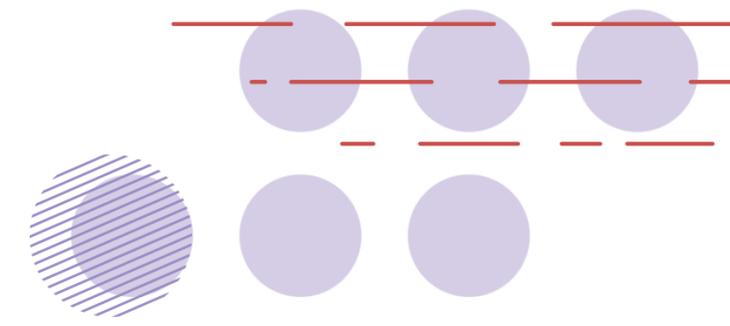
Part III: Existing measures

Employment



- The Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities (EF-OLMC) is ESDC's flagship program supporting employment and skills development in OLMCs.
- The program achieves its objectives by funding organizations in order to:
 - strengthen OLMCs' capacity in the areas of community economic development and human resources development
 - promote partnerships
 - provide employment assistance services
- The EF-OLMC follows the "by and for" approach that considers the needs and priorities of OLMCs in the design and delivery of initiatives.
- The new Employment Assistance Services stream will help people living in OLMCs to find, obtain or keep a job.
- Across Canada, OLMCs face labour market challenges, and the EF-OLMC program works with other government departments to address these challenges.
- In addition, Canadian Heritage is working to strengthen teacher recruitment and retention in minority French-language schools and French second-language programs.

Existing measures: Entrepreneurship



- The Economic Development Initiative (EDI) has been renewed under Action Plan for Official Languages 2023-2028 with a budget of \$30.5 million over five years. It aims to support the sustainable growth of official language minority communities (OLMCs) through innovation, diversification, partnerships, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Regional development agencies (RDAs) administer regional contributions to strengthen capacities, expertise and partnerships necessary for the vitality of OLMCs and the growth of local businesses.
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) coordinates the initiative at the national level, managing reporting activities, consultations and evaluations. ISED also conducts research to improve data availability on OLMC businesses and to better understand economic challenges and opportunities in these communities. Check out our latest study produced by Statistics Canada titled: [A Comparison of Investments of Official Language Minority-Owned Businesses in Rural and Urban Areas](#).

Existing measures: Integrated supports and vitality of ESCQs

Education

- PCH has increased its funding:
 - in support of minority-language education, in order to expand program offerings and create more enriching learning environments
 - in support of post-secondary education in the minority language, so that the resulting bilingual professional workforce can contribute to the vitality of the ESCQs
 - in support of French second-language learning, including French immersion programs

Arts and heritage

- PCH has created a new action component involving the development of Quebec's English-speaking communities through the arts, heritage and citizen participation.

Community support

- To meet the growing needs of ESCQ organizations, which currently face pressures to provide an ever-expanding range of services to meet demand (e.g. mental health), PCH is providing an increase of up to 25% in core funding as well as targeted funding based on need.

Interdepartmental components

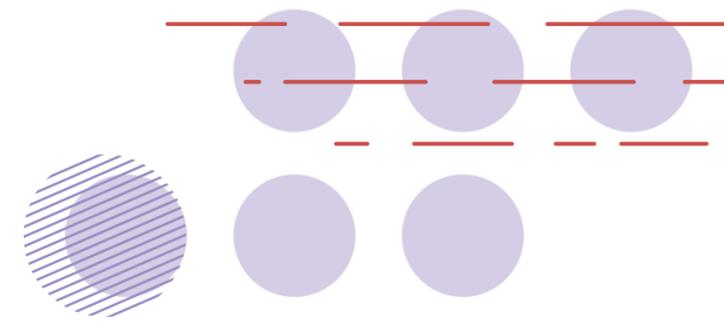


The Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028 is an interdepartmental commitment underpinning our ongoing efforts to achieve substantive equality of English and French in Canada. To fully implement that commitment, we need OLMC stakeholders and the various federal institutions to contribute. The interdepartmental working groups and dialogue sessions with communities will help to break down silos while ensuring that the measures taken are in line with community needs and that the federal family's own measures are properly coordinated.

The working group seeks to support community vitality by pooling the efforts of federal institutions in order to develop the workforce in communities. This calls for coordination of measures across the employment continuum:

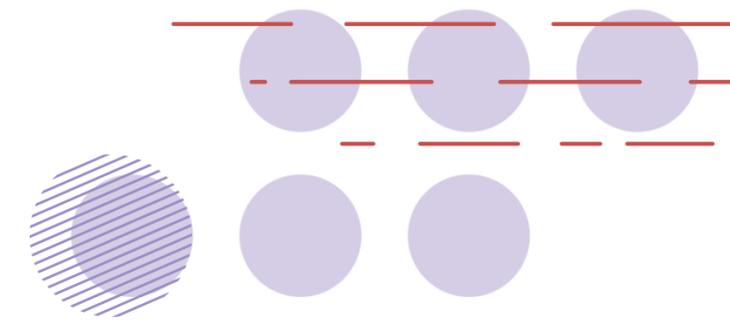
- Integrated support and pre-employability measures (e.g. early childhood, enabling fund)
- Training in fields facing labour shortages (e.g. health, education, culture)
- Job placement and retention of workers in communities

Discussion



- Do the three themes proposed for the Interdepartmental Working Group on Workforce Needs and Economic Development (employment, entrepreneurship, Integrated supports and vitality of ESCQs) correspond to your priorities?
 - Are the issues mentioned in connection with the three themes still relevant today?
 - Are there other issues to mention?
 - How could the themes be prioritized?
- What are your expectations for interdepartmental cooperation on official languages?

Contact info



In order to contact:

The Partnerships to strengthen Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*
and

The Interdepartmental Working Group on Labour Needs and Economic Development in OLMCs

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