**ESDC Interdepartmental Collaboration and Initiatives Supporting Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC)**

Objective

To provide an overview of Employment and Social Development Canada’s (ESDC’s) engagement in interdepartmental collaborative initiatives focused on meeting the needs of official language minority communities (OLMCs) and to respect its obligations under the *Official Languages Act* (OLA).

**Strategic Context**

The Government of Canada is committed to building a strong and inclusive Canadian economy that supports job creation, including for OLMCs. Streamlining government operations and reinvesting in the people and businesses that drive economic growth are among its priorities

The modernization of the OLA has strengthened Part VII (Advancement of Equality of Status and Use of English and French), thereby increasing support for the vitality of OLMCs. Through its employment and social development programs, ESDC actively contributes to these priorities and its obligations under the OLA.

OLMCs play an essential role in regional economic vitality, particularly through entrepreneurship, by supporting a bilingual workforce and the creation of economic opportunities in all regions of Canada. Strengthened federal collaboration with OLMCs makes it possible to better respond to their needs and design more inclusive programs.

ESDC works with several federal departments, including Canadian Heritage, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED), and Health Canada, through horizontal initiatives, committees and interdepartmental working groups to advance OLMC issues.

**ESDC's Contributions to the Action Plan for Official Languages (APOL) 2023-2028**

The 2023-2028 APOL provides for investments totalling $4.1 billion, including $1.4 billion in new funding for 32 new or enhanced measures. ESDC contributes to its implementation, including through the management of $394 million across several programs:

* Enabling Fund for OLMC, including the Employment Assistance Services stream
* Skills for Success with the OLMC Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative
* Early Learning and Child Care in OLMCs
* Social Partnership Initiative for OLMCs

**Mechanisms for interdepartmental collaboration**

There are several interdepartmental mechanisms and committees in which ESDC participates to meet its obligations under the OLA. In 2024, two interdepartmental working groups were created to better meet the needs of OLMCs:

* **Interdepartmental Working Group on Labour Needs and Economic Development in OLMC**
* Committee co-chaired by ESDC and Canadian Heritage
* Coordination of positive measures related to labour and economic development based on the needs expressed by OLMCs.
* Dialogue sessions and engagement with stakeholders, representing English-speaking communities of Quebec (ESCQ) and Francophone minority communities (FMC).

* **Interdepartmental Working Group on Restoring the Demographic Weight of Francophones outside of Quebec**
* Committee co-chaired by IRCC and Canadian Heritage
* Identification of positive measures and federal levers that could have a positive influence on the evolution of the demographic weight of Francophones outside of Quebec, in particular natural increase (including the intergenerational transmission of French), immigration and Francophone mobility, as well as the linguistic attraction of French.
* Dialogue sessions with stakeholders representing FMCs on the factors influencing the demographic weight of Francophones.

**Strategic Mapping Project of Interdepartmental Federal Initiatives**

Since April 2025, ESDC has been collaborating with other government departments on a strategic mapping project to:

* Identify existing initiatives related to restoring the demographic weight of Francophones outside Quebec, as well as the workforce and economic development of OLMCs
* Identify program/activity overlaps, gaps, and opportunities for improvement

In parallel, the Skills and Employment Branch has also analysed its programs to assess the integration of positive measures such as:

* Language clauses in funding agreements with provinces and territories
* Engagement of OLMCs in program design
* Impact assessment on OLMCs

This large-scale project, requested by OLMC organizations, allows ESDC to collaborate with other government departments and consolidate interdepartmental initiatives for the next APOL 2028–2033. The results will inform the development of the next APOL as well as other public policies related to official languages and OLMCs. The project findings will be presented to external stakeholders in early 2026.