

# Strategic Plan

## To Foster Immigration To Francophone Minority Communities



September 2006

Document prepared by the *Citizenship and Immigration Canada—Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee* and presented to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

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## Message from the Minister



It is with great pleasure that I present the *Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, a long-term plan to work toward achieving the overall objectives of the *Strategic Framework* released by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada–Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee in November 2003.

The *Strategic Plan* takes stock of the challenges of Francophone immigration outside Quebec and identifies key priorities to guide the choice and development of the various initiatives to be implemented over the next five years.

Because it flows directly from the *Strategic Framework*, this long-term plan pursues the same objective set out in the government's *Action Plan for Official Languages* in terms of promoting immigration to Francophone communities throughout Canada.

Thanks to the participation of many dedicated individuals, communities and partners, we have made tremendous progress, but much remains to be done. Immigration in itself—particularly immigration to Francophone minority communities—poses significant challenges. For that reason, we need to continue to work together with the other key federal government departments, with the provinces and territories, and with the communities.

The history of our country and our roots tell us that we have a duty to preserve what we have already built—linguistic duality.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the members of the Steering Committee on their work. Once again, they have shown their commitment by developing a document that the communities and partners will be able to use to guide their actions in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monte Solberg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monte Solberg  
Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

# Message from the Co-Chairs

The Citizenship and Immigration Canada—Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee (Steering Committee) and its partners have put a great deal of time and energy into the efforts to increase Francophone immigration, and we are proud of the progress that has been made across Canada at both the national and regional levels.

In November 2003, the Steering Committee released the *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, which set out key objectives: increase the number of French-speaking immigrants to Francophone minority communities, and facilitate the reception and the economic, social and cultural integration of those immigrants into the communities. In March 2005, the Steering Committee published a summary of the initiatives undertaken between 2002 and 2006 titled *Towards Building a Canadian Francophonie of Tomorrow*. Those initiatives flow directly from the objectives set out in the *Strategic Framework*.

The *Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities* more clearly identifies the challenges and issues to be addressed, proposes focused actions for the next five years and sets a course for the long term. While recognizing the need for national coordination to foster collaboration and coherence, the Plan recommends an approach that focuses more on local networks so as to ensure the involvement of all key stakeholders.

We want to thank all of the federal, provincial, territorial and community partners for their contribution to the development of the *Strategic Plan*. Without their commitment and that of the institutions they represent, the task would have been extremely difficult. The implementation of the Plan, like its development, will require continued commitment from all of the various players.

In closing, we invite all of our partners to continue to work together to implement the *Strategic Plan* in every region of the country.



Daniel Jean  
Co-Chair  
Government side



Marc C. Arnal  
Co-Chair  
Community side

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Since Canada was founded, immigration has always had an important impact on our country's economic and social landscape.

Every year, Parliament determines the number of immigrants that can be accepted in Canada. The figure for 2006 has been set at between 225,000 and 255,000. More than three million new immigrants settled in Canada between 1990 and 2004.

This *Strategic Plan* addresses immigration to Francophone minority communities (FMCs).

All Francophones living in provinces and territories other than Quebec are considered part of the FMCs. Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* grants these communities educational rights, while section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* (OLA) confirms the federal government's commitment to enhancing their vitality.

The term "Francophone communities" encompasses all the driving forces behind civil society that contribute to the establishment and development of FMCs. These include community organizations, school systems, post-secondary institutions, credit unions and the private sector.

The fight to obtain French-language school systems and to have certain fundamental rights recognized has sapped the communities' energy and has caused them to be somewhat closed off from others for several decades.

Under section 41 of the OLA, adopted in 1988, and after obtaining the right to manage their own schools in the 1990s, FMCs experienced tremendous growth in several areas, including community development, the economy, health, justice and immigration.

In 1991, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) published the study *Facing Pluralism: The Future of Francophone and Acadian Communities in a Pluralistic Society*,<sup>1</sup> which sparked an openness to a broader view of the Francophonie and recognized the importance of diversity within FMCs.

In 1999, the FCFA organized a process of in-depth reflection on the future of the Francophone and Acadian

communities and initiated a large-scale bridging exercise with other components of Canadian society. Dubbed *Dialogue*, this process continued until 2001. The Dialogue project revealed the potential of immigration for enhancing the vitality of these communities and made it a basic component of its work.

In March 2002, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration announced the creation of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada–Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee (Steering Committee), which brought together community representatives, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) executives, and representatives of other federal and provincial departments.

The Commissioner of Official Languages has also contributed to increasing immigration to FMCs. In 2001 and 2002, she published two in-depth studies on the subject: *Immigration and the Vitality of Canada's Official Language Communities: Policy, Demography and Identity*,<sup>2</sup> and *Official Languages and Immigration: Obstacles and Opportunities for Immigrants and Communities*.<sup>3</sup>

In 2002, important provisions on language were introduced in the new *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*.<sup>4</sup>

The federal government's Official Languages action plan,<sup>5</sup> launched in March 2003, committed \$9 million over five years to help community and government partners develop pilot projects to foster immigration to FMCs.

In November 2003, the Steering Committee released the *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities (Strategic Framework)*.

The Framework has five objectives:

1. Increase the number of French-speaking immigrants to give more demographic weight to FMCs.
2. Improve the capacity of FMCs to receive Francophone newcomers and to strengthen their reception and settlement infrastructures.
3. Ensure the economic integration of French-speaking immigrants into Canadian society and into FMCs in particular.

4. *Ensure the social and cultural integration of French-speaking immigrants into Canadian society and into FMCs.*
5. *Foster the regionalization of Francophone immigration outside Toronto and Vancouver.*

In March 2005, the Steering Committee published *Towards Building a Canadian Francophonie of Tomorrow: Summary of Initiatives 2002–2006 to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, which outlines the initiatives undertaken and planned for these communities in the area of immigration.

The arrival of a considerable number of French-speaking immigrants to FMCs in the late 1980s was a spontaneous phenomenon. Most of the Francophone communities and institutions did not prepare adequately for receiving and integrating these newcomers.

Experience since 2002 shows that the projects implemented have provided valuable lessons and a better understanding of the Francophone immigrants' situation. Projects were undertaken in Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary and Edmonton, to name only a few cities. The *Summary of Initiatives* outlines some of the projects put forward to facilitate the recruitment, selection, reception and integration of immigrants to FMCs. Nevertheless, it is clear that an approach centred on sporadic, short-term projects alone will not enable any significant inroads to be made in fostering Francophone immigration to FMCs.

Armed with this experience, the Steering Committee is proposing this strategic plan to step up and better coordinate the efforts being made to achieve the five objectives set out in the *Strategic Framework*. The Steering Committee estimates that it will take 15 years to reach the annual target of 8,000 to 10,000 French-speaking immigrants to FMCs, as proposed in the *Strategic Plan*. According to forecasts, approximately 15,000 French-speaking immigrants will settle outside Quebec in the next five years.

The *Strategic Plan* calls for the proactive management of a series of long-term initiatives. The section on the implementation of the Plan proposes, for 2006 to 2011, strategies for better integrating French-speaking immigrants who already live outside Quebec, as well as the recruitment, integration and retention of new French-speaking immigrants.

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<sup>1</sup>*Study conducted by Stacy Churchill and Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, 1991.*

<sup>2</sup>[http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst\\_es/2002/immigr/immigr\\_2002\\_e.htm](http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst_es/2002/immigr/immigr_2002_e.htm)

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst\\_es/2002/obstacle/obstacle\\_e.htm](http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst_es/2002/obstacle/obstacle_e.htm)

<sup>4</sup><http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-2.5/245769.html>

<sup>5</sup>*The Next Act : New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality.*



# Current Challenges

Successful immigration involves three major steps:

- Attraction: recruiting and receiving newcomers to a given community;
- Integration: ensuring the successful economic and social integration of newcomers;
- Retention and settlement: ensuring the settlement and long-term establishment of newcomers.

The analyses that support this *Strategic Plan* have identified the main challenges in the area of immigration to FMCs. These challenges have been organized into four key themes:

- The number and make-up of French-speaking immigrants to FMCs;
- Immigrant mobility;
- Integration difficulties for immigrants;
- FMCs' lack of capacity to recruit, receive and integrate French-speaking immigrants.

## CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE NUMBER AND MAKE-UP OF FRENCH-SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS TO FMCs

According to the 2001 census, 4.4 percent of the Canadian population residing outside Quebec had French as their mother tongue.

Objective 1 of the *Strategic Framework* indicates that, if FMCs are to benefit from immigration and maintain their long-term demographic weight, they will have to attract and retain at least the same percentage of French-speaking immigrants (4.4 percent). The *Strategic Framework* defines the term "French-speaking immigrants" as "persons born outside Canada and residing in Canada whose mother tongue is French or who have knowledge of the French language", and proposes to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants from the 2001 rate of 3.1 percent to 4.4 percent by 2008.<sup>6</sup>

However, the figure of 3.1 percent is based on unverified voluntary declarations. The reliability of this number is therefore unknown. The *Strategic Plan* modifies the definition of the term "French-speaking immigrant" as an immigrant whose mother tongue is French, or whose first official language is French if the mother tongue is a language other than French or English.

In order to determine a more precise number of French-speaking immigrants, we have analysed skilled workers' knowledge of both official languages. These immigrants must objectively demonstrate their knowledge of French or English. We believe that this measurement is reliable. The analysis of data on skilled workers in 2002 and 2004 shows that 75 percent and 89 percent, respectively, of skilled workers who said that they knew French and English had English as their dominant language; that is to say, they had a greater knowledge of English than of French. On the other hand, according to Statistics Canada, the number of immigrants who settle outside Quebec and whose mother tongue is French has varied between 1 percent and 1.5 percent for several years.

CIC must improve its capacity to measure immigrants' knowledge of Canada's official languages in order to determine more precisely the changes in demographics for immigration to FMCs. Between 2000 and 2004, an average of 194,000 immigrants settled outside Quebec every year.

The target of 4.4 percent set out in Objective 1 of the *Strategic Framework* represents from 8,000 to 10,000 French-speaking immigrants, based on the immigration level determined by the Canadian government. The proportion will remain stable, but the number will vary depending on the immigration level announced each year.

According to CIC's 2004 annual report, 57 percent of the newcomers were economic class immigrants, 14 percent were refugees (and other protected persons), 26 percent belonged to the family class, and 3 percent were accepted on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

Of the total number of newcomers to Canada each year, approximately 14 percent are refugees (and other protected persons). The analysis in the appendix shows that the percentage of refugees is relatively higher among immigrants to FMCs, which poses considerable challenges. The road to successful economic integration is usually longer for refugees than for economic class immigrants. In addition to the difficulty of finding employment, refugees must face long waits for family reunification.

## CHALLENGES RELATED TO IMMIGRANT MOBILITY

The second group of challenges relates to immigrant mobility. An immigrant population is highly mobile. People who have uprooted themselves and moved 15,000 kilometres from their place of birth will not hesitate to move again within Canada if they cannot integrate into their host province.

The immigrant retention rate varies from one region to another in Canada. Between 1981 and 1995, the percentage of immigrants who still lived in their initial province of destination was 85 percent for all of Canada, 53 percent for Atlantic Canada, 71 percent for Quebec, 90 percent for Ontario, 68 percent for Manitoba, 50 percent for Saskatchewan, 74 percent for Alberta, and 79 percent for British Columbia.

Groups working in immigration indicate that this high level of mobility has many consequences—in particular, uprooting children from their schools, needing to establish new contacts in order to find a job, and dealing with costs associated with finding housing. All of these consequences contribute to the integration difficulties that immigrants to FMCs face.

However, there are early indications that this problematic situation could become an important advantage in terms of the regionalization of French-speaking immigrants. People who are highly mobile and not firmly established can travel more easily to places that have succeeded in developing an environment that suits them better.

No data on the mobility rate of French-speaking immigrants within Canada are available. Observations in the field confirm that a certain number of French-speaking newcomers to a given region is due to secondary immigration. Their initial point of arrival may be Montréal, for example, but they move to other provinces afterward.

More in-depth analyses on the places where French-speaking immigrants settle were carried out.

According to CIC administrative data for immigrants admitted to a province other than Quebec who declared, on their application, that they had knowledge of French only or of both French and English, approximately 45 percent (4,222 immigrants) chose

Toronto as their place of residence and 11 percent (1,055) chose Vancouver in 2004. The data is subjective since it is based on the applicants' voluntary statements.

However, if we extrapolate the above data to that of an analysis of qualified workers whose language skills were evaluated (see appendix), the percentage of French-speaking immigrants, based on the definition of this document, who choose to live in Toronto or Vancouver greatly decreases, down to 5 percent (464) for Toronto and to one percent (116) for Vancouver for 2004. It would therefore seem that these cities attract French-speaking immigrants far less than originally thought.

Regionalization remains a key element of the *Strategic Plan*. Attracting French-speaking immigrants to FMCs is vital for their development. Given the situation in Toronto and Vancouver, regionalization should not be detrimental to these cities. This *Strategic Plan* therefore eliminates the reference to Toronto and Vancouver in Objective 5 of the *Strategic Framework*.

Recent field observations indicate that a spontaneous regionalization is taking place. The high cost of housing in those two cities is pushing many French-speaking immigrants—and others—to settle in the surrounding areas.

## CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS

The third group of challenges involves the economic and social integration problems experienced by French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec.

Many studies that were published between 2000 and 2005 and given significant media attention recognize the serious difficulties that immigrants face in integrating into the economy and the labour market. No information is available on the specific difficulties faced by French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec, but experience shows that the situation is much the same for them.

Sometimes, the situation for French-speaking immigrants is more difficult because they do not come from countries belonging to the British Commonwealth.

Therefore, they know less about Canada's system of government, common law, and the customs and traditions of Commonwealth countries. These difficulties are even greater for refugees.

Economic integration challenges often go hand in hand with social integration challenges. It is difficult to find a job without a network of contacts and without knowledge of the host society's values and customs. Conversely, it is difficult to integrate socially if one's basic economic needs have not been met.

In addition to the problems relating to foreign credential recognition, weak or non-existent English language skills are at the root of many of the problems French-speaking immigrants encounter while looking for employment.

Sometimes, weak French language skills are an added problem for French-speaking newcomers because not all of them have French as their mother tongue.

## CHALLENGES RELATED TO FMCs' LACK OF CAPACITY TO RECRUIT, RECEIVE AND INTEGRATE FRENCH-SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS

A 2004 study by the FCFA<sup>7</sup> noted gaps in the capacity of FMCs to receive and integrate French-speaking immigrants in their midst.

The study identified several deficiencies, including:

- A lack of recruitment capacity and a lack of means to promote FMCs;
- A lack of reception services in French; and
- A lack of integration services in French.

Since 2003, reception services have been implemented in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Ottawa. These reception services need to be consolidated, and efforts must continue in other FMCs where local capacities to receive and integrate French-speaking immigrants still need strengthening.

*<sup>6</sup>CIC data regarding immigrants' knowledge of Canada's official languages are organized into four categories: knowledge of English only, knowledge of French only, knowledge of French and English, and no knowledge of either French or English. This indicator is based on voluntary declarations regarding knowledge of one or both of Canada's official languages.*

*<sup>7</sup>Evaluation of the Ability of Minority Francophone Communities to Host Newcomers (final report). March 2004.*

Before we determine the best strategies for increasing the number of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec, it is important to reaffirm why the Canadian government, FMCs, and their provincial and territorial governments should work to do so.

Attracting, integrating and retaining French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec contributes to enhancing the vitality of communities by strengthening Canada's linguistic duality and increasing diversity within the communities, provinces and territories.

Immigration alone will not reverse the trend of English language transfer in FMCs or compensate for the rural exodus, for example. Immigration is, however, a major component of community development and must be included in an overall development strategy for these communities.

The *Strategic Plan* proposes the following three major directions to guide the choice and development of the various initiatives to be implemented over the next five years:

- Improving the integration of immigrants who have already settled in the communities;
- Recruiting new immigrants; and
- Integrating new immigrants into the communities, helping them become established, and retaining them.

Of course, the implementation of this *Strategic Plan* relies on the creation of solid partnerships between community organizations, the federal government and its departments, provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, schools, the private sector, credential recognition organizations, and others.

## BETTER INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES ALREADY SETTLED IN FMCs

Since the 1990s, a number of FMCs have received a significant wave of French-speaking refugees from sub-Saharan Africa. These communities include Ottawa, Toronto, southern Ontario and a few others, such as Edmonton and Saint-Boniface. Many of the newcomers filed refugee claims at the Canada–U.S. border and stayed in Canada without status until their claim was heard by the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB).<sup>8</sup>

Today, the majority of those refugees have obtained permanent resident status or Canadian citizenship and are now permanently settled in Canada.

A number of factors contribute to the major economic and social integration problems that many of these people experience, including their inability to integrate into the labour market. Other factors reflect the same barriers that many visible minorities in Canada encounter, regardless of whether they are recent immigrants or Canadian-born citizens.

The following are examples of some of the greatest barriers that accentuate these difficulties and affect different groups of immigrants in different ways:

- Lack of work experience in Canada, which is required by many employers;
- Lack of foreign credential recognition;
- Lack of models among the faculty in schools and post-secondary institutions;
- Lack of health services in French for immigrants;
- Discrimination by people who are prejudiced against visible minorities;
- Problems communicating clearly at work;
- Lack of English language skills;
- Difficulties adapting to Canadian culture.

Family ties are known to play a major role in attracting immigrants. The thousands of immigrants already in Canada may be a sort of anchor point for recruiting, receiving and integrating new immigrants, as long as they are already established and integrated into their communities. Therefore, the integration of immigrants who currently live in FMCs should be improved while new recruitment efforts are increased.

Examples of initiatives in this regard:

- Continuing to support promising initiatives that are already in place;
- Offering reception and information services in French;
- Providing intensive language training in English or French, depending on need, tailored to the workplace;
- Offering training and extended internships to upgrade professional skills and to improve employability;

- Implementing policies and services relating to diversity in schools;
- Continuing to support entrepreneurship and the creation of small businesses;
- Continuing to support family adaptation;
- Continuing to support family reunification for refugees;
- Continuing to support vulnerable clients, including women and youth;
- Offering legal services in French;
- Offering adequate health services in French.

Examples of performance indicators:

- Amount of time between arriving in Canada and finding employment;
- Processing time for applications from foreign dependants of refugees in Canada;
- Supply and quality of community and government initiatives.

## RECRUITMENT OF NEW IMMIGRANTS

The *Strategic Plan* proposes that the recruitment of French-speaking immigrants to FMCs take place within the immigration targets established by Parliament each year. This means taking action within the existing mechanisms to increase, among immigrants who choose to settle outside Quebec and who have knowledge of both French and English, the number of people whose mother tongue is French and the number of people whose first official language is French.

To increase the number of French-speaking immigrants, the *Strategic Plan* proposes increasing the numbers of economic class immigrants and of foreign students, and maintaining the number of government-sponsored and privately sponsored refugees in compliance with operational and government objectives.

### Economic class immigrants

Local communities must establish the conditions required to attract economic immigrants according to each community's particular needs and characteristics. This process cannot be imposed from above or from outside.

Communities that want to receive economic immigrants must increase their capacity to participate in the recruitment activities organized by the federal government and by their provincial or territorial governments. They must also increase their reception, integration and retention capacities for those immigrants.

Each community must establish its own target and the means to achieve its objectives. Given the modest number of immigrants in the beginning, such an approach will require careful planning and sustained investment for a number of years. Normally, an immigrant recruitment initiative bears fruit two or three years later, when all the steps in the process are running smoothly. The *Strategic Plan* proposes to increase the existing efforts of local communities in this area.

Completing this component of the *Strategic Plan* will require sustained efforts, including the following:

- Raising awareness in local communities of the potential benefits of immigration;
- Creating partnerships to optimize the use of available resources in recruiting, integrating and retaining immigrants;
- Establishing connections abroad with potential immigrants;
- Promoting FMCs abroad;
- Setting up reception services in French in the communities that receive immigrants;
- Establishing solid links between the communities and the government stakeholders;
- Inserting language clauses into all federal-provincial/territorial immigration agreements and developing methods and tools to assess the impact of those clauses;
- Updating information about Francophone minority communities on the CIC Web site.

Examples of performance indicators:

- Recognition by local communities of the potential benefits of immigration for enhancing their vitality;
- Participation of French-speaking immigrants in a province's Provincial Nominees Program;<sup>9</sup>
- Human and financial resources that enable community and government stakeholders to implement Francophone immigration initiatives;

- Number of French-speaking economic immigrants who settle in provinces or territories other than Quebec.

Target outcome: Increase to 6,000 a year the number of French-speaking economic immigrants who settle outside Quebec.

## Students

French post-secondary institutions outside Quebec are an obvious means of increasing the number of French-speaking permanent residents. After spending two, three or four years at one of these institutions, a foreign student establishes a network of contacts that will facilitate his or her economic and social integration. Furthermore, credential recognition is no longer an issue in such cases.

The *Strategic Plan* proposes to support the efforts of French-language schools and post-secondary institutions that want to recruit foreign students. Those efforts include the following:

- Increasing foreign recruitment capacities;
- Offering additional training for foreign students at the institution during their program;
- Supporting the social integration of foreign students into the community;
- Supporting foreign students in improving their French and English language skills;
- Supporting the economic integration of students in their field of study after their graduation.

Examples of performance indicators:

- Range of foreign recruitment efforts made by French-language post-secondary institutions outside Quebec;
- Number of foreign students enrolled in French-language post-secondary institutions outside Quebec;
- Employment rate of foreign graduates in the Canadian labour market.

Target outcome: Recruit 2,000 foreign students a year for French-language post-secondary institutions outside Quebec.

## Refugees

French-speaking refugees represent major and immediate human, linguistic and cultural capital for FMCs, as well as potential economic capital.

There are two categories of refugees. The first category consists of people identified under the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program who are sponsored by either the federal government or private sponsor groups. The second category consists of people who file claims at the border and ask to be accepted as refugees in Canada.

Generally, between 25,000 from 30,000 refugees are admitted to Canada each year. From 2001 to 2004, an annual average of 11,023 refugees a year who obtained landing were sponsored by the government or by private sponsoring groups. In that same period, an annual average of 16,806 people who arrived at the port of entry were granted refugee status. Some 5,000 dependants are admitted to Canada as refugees every year.

The situation of refugees is unpredictable and irregular, which makes it difficult to formulate a recruitment strategy.

For these reasons, the *Strategic Plan* recommends supporting the communities' efforts to support French-speaking refugees, in the following ways.

- Establishing immediate reception and emergency settlement services;
- Providing legal support;
- Providing health support;
- Offering English and French language training, as required;
- Providing employment support;
- Assisting with family reunification.

Examples of performance indicators:

- Communities' capacity to receive French-speaking refugees;
- Proportion of French-speaking refugees out of all French-speaking newcomers in FMCs.

This component of the *Strategic Plan* involves some uncertainty. It is impossible to establish specific targets for the number of refugees that can be received in official language minority communities.



This number could be as high as 1,600 refugees a year. The *Strategic Plan* proposes to maintain the number of government-sponsored and privately sponsored refugees in compliance with operational and government objectives, and to assist community efforts to support French-speaking refugees.

## INTEGRATION, RETENTION AND SETTLEMENT OF NEW FRENCH-SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS IN FMCs

Many factors contribute to the successful integration of immigrants, including their level of education and their work experience in Canada. The initial economic and social integration of newcomers is vital to successful overall integration and long-term settlement.

Integration will require the participation of many stakeholders, including the private sector, employers, school boards, municipalities and community organizations, as well as the immigrants themselves. Regionalization will develop as a result of the plans that the communities implement locally.

It is accepted that the number of newcomers will start out small in many communities. For many FMCs, those small numbers mean a great deal. For example, the arrival of eight or ten French-speaking families in places such as Regina or St. Leonard, New Brunswick, would have a significant impact on the local Francophone community.

Also, many immigrants choose to settle in cities. The implementation of the *Strategic Plan* will not necessarily reverse this trend. The relevant data are presented in the appendix.

For the integration and retention of French-speaking immigrants in FMCs to be successful, the *Plan* proposes the following three strategies:

- Adopting a focused approach;
- Fostering the employability of workers trained abroad; and
- Ensuring a functional methodology for teaching both official languages and an effective method of delivery.

### Adopting a focused approach

It is unrealistic to encourage the recruitment and

integration of immigrants in all FMCs. Such an approach has little chance of success.

The *Strategic Plan* proposes to support a certain number of FMCs that can develop conditions for successfully recruiting, integrating and retaining French-speaking immigrants. These conditions vary from one place to the next. They can include

- The willingness of the communities to receive immigrants;
- Approaches that involve all potential partners;
- Access to services in French (education, health services, etc.);
- The participation of municipalities; and
- The participation of provincial and territorial governments.

The FMCs that are interested in fostering immigration to their communities must identify themselves and establish the necessary partnerships and collaborative relationships. There are greater chances of success when a group of organizations invests in the process and creates a kind of catalyst for the integration of French-speaking immigrants. Several organizations can play a lead role in such a group. The municipalities should be involved and, in some cases, they can even lead at the local level.

Examples of initiatives to be implemented:

- Strengthening the communities' capacities by identifying or creating a local catalyst;
- Implementing initiatives that bring together potential partners;
- Increasing awareness in host communities;
- Supporting the successful integration of immigrant children into the French-language school system.

Examples of performance indicators:

- The number of cities or regions that develop a sustained capacity for reception and integration;
- The number and effectiveness of initiatives that bring together several partners;
- The number and effectiveness of the partnerships created;
- The proportion of French-speaking immigrants who choose to settle in Francophone communities compared to the trends observed among most immigrants;

- The retention rate of immigrants in FMCs;
- The proportion of French-speaking immigrants who register their children in the French-language school system.

## Fostering the employability of workers trained abroad

The recognition of the foreign credentials and experience of newcomers is a vital asset in promoting their employability.

In April 2005, the Government of Canada launched the Internationally Trained Workers Initiative, which is aimed at accelerating the entry of immigrants and foreign-trained Canadians into the Canadian labour market in jobs that make full use of their skills and experience. This initiative involves facilitating the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials, delivering advanced job-specific language training, and providing better information and tools to immigrants before they come to Canada.

Within the framework of this initiative, FMCs could put considerable effort into foreign credential recognition for a variety of professions. With regard to French-speaking immigrants settling outside Quebec, it would be to the communities' advantage to target particular fields. The *Strategic Plan* proposes that the fields of health and education be given priority. Other fields could be added, as necessary.

The French-speaking health sector has grown significantly in the communities in the last few years, and the lack of qualified bilingual staff is apparent. The focused approach in the health field would help bring together a number of strategic approaches to recruitment, retention and regionalization. These efforts should be combined with the federal and provincial initiatives undertaken in this sector over the last few years.

The education sector is also a priority target because it must offer immigrants' children successful integration models of people from their own communities. Therefore, we must rapidly increase the number of immigrants who teach or work in French-language schools in communities where there are no such models.

Experience<sup>10</sup> shows that many immigrants who have repeated all their studies in Canada have not been able to find employment in their field. This indicates that this strategy must include French-speaking people from abroad who have obtained Canadian citizenship.

Examples of initiatives to be implemented:

- Establishing and maintaining a dialogue with the appropriate stakeholders in the health and education fields in order to recognize foreign credentials;
- Planning and offering the training required to upgrade the skills of target clients;
- Increasing the awareness of potential employers.

Examples of performance indicators:

- Immigrants' degree of knowledge about the labour market;
- The degree of support for employability or entrepreneurship;
- The degree of economic activity of French-speaking immigrants.

## Ensuring a functional methodology for teaching both official languages and an effective method of delivery

For some immigrants, successful economic integration involves mastering the English language so that they can earn a living in that language. In Ontario, for example, 67 percent of Francophones never use French at work. In British Columbia, more than 80 percent of Francophones never use French at work. It is therefore reasonable to assume that a similar proportion of French-speaking immigrants would work in English in these provinces.

Recent studies show that the lack of English language skills is a major obstacle to French-speaking newcomers finding a job.

Despite access to free language courses for immigrants, language is still an obstacle. Existing programs may not be fulfilling the needs of French-speaking immigrants, which means that a targeted assessment of the programs is required.

The *Strategic Plan* proposes implementing a learning methodology for English or French, as the case may

be, that is quick, effective and functional. This methodology should be accredited by a post-secondary institution, and course participants should obtain post-secondary credits upon successful completion of each step of the program.

Examples of activities that could be implemented:

- Evaluating the current effectiveness of English-as-a-second-language programs for French-speaking immigrants;
- Developing the appropriate training;
- Developing and providing access to the necessary instructional material;
- Supporting the upgrading of French-language skills, where necessary.

Examples of performance indicators:

- Availability of adapted language training;
- Extent to which French-speaking immigrants use language training;
- Knowledge of English, spoken and written;
- Knowledge of French, spoken and written.

<sup>8</sup>*IRB hearings can take place months after refugee claims are filed (approximately one to two years).*

<sup>9</sup>*Most provinces and one territory in Canada have signed an agreement with the Government of Canada that allows provincial and territorial governments to play a more direct role in selecting immigrants who want to settle in a given province or territory. A person wanting to immigrate to one of Canada's provinces as a provincial nominee must first apply to that province. The province evaluates the application based on its immigration needs and on the applicant's intent to settle there.*

<sup>10</sup>*This experience has not been validated by research or studies. It is based on different focus groups and workshops held in the community.*

# Canadian Immigration Policy for FMCs

Many laws, regulations, announcements and government agreements address the linguistic component of immigration to FMCs. Here are a few examples:

- In various Speeches from the Throne since January 2001, the federal government announced its intention to take measures to promote Canada's linguistic duality and to enhance the vitality of Canada's official language minority communities, particularly in the area of immigration.
- The new *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* became law in June 2002. It contains certain key provisions for Francophone immigration, such as:
  - “3.(1) The objectives of this Act with respect to immigration are  
[ . . . ]  
(b.1) to support and assist the development of minority official languages communities in Canada;  
[ . . . ]  
3.(3) This Act is to be construed and applied in a manner that  
[ . . . ]  
(d) ensures that decisions taken under this Act are consistent with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, including its principles of equality and freedom from discrimination and of the equality of English and French as the official languages of Canada;  
(e) supports the commitment of the Government of Canada to enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada;  
[ . . .].”
- The *Action Plan for Official Languages*, announced in March 2003, provides a framework for the continued and coordinated support of Canada's linguistic duality in many areas, including immigration.
- Federal-provincial immigration agreements contain language clauses whose scope, range and implementation vary from one region to the next.

Successful immigration will require concerted and coordinated efforts from a number of stakeholders. In this respect, the *Strategic Plan* highlights the necessity of developing and adopting a Canadian policy on the recruitment, integration and retention of French-speaking immigrants in FMCs over the next five years.

The essential components of such a policy will include:

- Objectives;
- Principles governing interdepartmental cooperation at the federal level;
- Principles governing intergovernmental cooperation;
- Principles governing government and community cooperation;
- Main means of implementing the policy;
- Linkage with the *management framework of the Official Languages Program*, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and immigration agreements between the federal and provincial or territorial governments.

# Implementation of the Five-Year Plan

The implementation of the five-year plan will require:

- Coordination mechanisms;
- Priorities for 2006–2011;
- Financial considerations.

## COORDINATION MECHANISMS

### Coordination at the local and provincial levels

Local or provincial coordination structures will emerge from the communities themselves as required, according to the scope of the initiatives implemented and the number of immigrants received. Since the *Strategic Plan* proposes a focused approach, the number of these structures will be limited. The extent of their roles and the range of their activities will be determined locally.

Support provided under the *Strategic Framework* has enabled certain communities to implement initiatives in this regard. The *Strategic Plan* proposes to continue to build on these foundations.

### Coordination at the national level

The present structure of the Steering Committee is effective on several levels. It allows for ongoing dialogue among all groups of stakeholders, and it fosters the synergy required for implementing certain initiatives.

Several stakeholders have joined the Steering Committee since it was created. As of June 2006, the Steering Committee consisted of 42 representatives from the FMCs and various government organizations. Representatives from other organizations can be added as work continues.

It is proposed that the mandate of the Steering Committee be renewed and that an Implementation Committee be established to support its efforts. The mandate of the Steering Committee will be to validate the strategic directions adopted by the Implementation Committee, and to define new strategic directions. It would meet once a year.

The mandate of the Implementation Committee will be to coordinate and promote the implementation of the *Strategic Plan's* priorities for 2006 to 2011, which are

identified in the *Strategic Plan* and adjusted annually, as required, by the Steering Committee.

The Implementation Committee will consist of representatives from the following organizations and groups:

- Privy Council Office;
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada;
- Canadian Heritage;
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada;
- Health Canada;
- Officials in charge of Francophone affairs in the provinces;
- The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada;
- Francophone minority communities.

In addition to these structures, ad hoc working groups will be established as needed. CIC will also solicit the participation of the provincial and territorial governments in implementing this Plan.

## PRIORITIES FOR 2006–2011

The following initiatives have been identified as priorities for 2006 to 2011. They aim to improve the integration of French-speaking immigrants who are already living outside Quebec and to recruit, integrate and retain new French-speaking immigrants.

### Implementing and supporting local networks

This initiative does not involve creating new organizations. The networks could consist of existing organizations.

Each network will have to accomplish two main tasks:

- Ensuring the coordination of Francophone immigration to its city, region, province or territory;
- Ensuring the implementation and maintenance of a reception and settlement service for French-speaking immigrants in the community.

### Increasing awareness of the local community

The *Strategic Plan* will support awareness initiatives in the cities and regions that will receive a significant number of French-speaking immigrants.

## Implementing language training in English and/or French

Three major activities are planned:

- Targeted assessment of existing language training programs for French-speaking immigrants;
- Implementation of a teaching methodology tailored to the needs of immigrants and, eventually, accredited;
- Increased supply of language training to immigrants.

## Providing training to upgrade professional and employability skills

The *Strategic Plan* provides for the implementation of three major pilot projects over a period of five years in at least two fields—health and education.

## Research

The preparation of this *Strategic Plan* has confirmed that the governments and communities must conduct more field research to better understand the realities of Francophone immigration. For example, the notion of French-speaking immigrants is modified. CIC must also develop the necessary tools for understanding the linguistic capacity of immigrants who settle in FMCs.

## Supporting the creation of micro-businesses

The *Strategic Plan* provides for the creation and/or support of five business incubators whose main activity will be to support minority French-speaking immigrants in creating businesses.

## Supporting French-language post-secondary institutions in the recruitment and integration of foreign students

The term “foreign students” includes both students who have obtained a study permit and students from abroad who are permanent residents. Often, both groups require similar services.

The *Strategic Plan* proposes to support the initiatives of 10 post-secondary institutions. These initiatives will, in particular, enable the institutions to offer foreign students support services during their studies (reception, guidance, counselling), and social and economic integration services after their graduation.

## Promoting immigration and selecting potential immigrants

The *Strategic Plan* proposes the implementation of initiatives to promote immigration and recruit potential immigrants, as well as the creation of links between the communities and potential immigrants, together with a number of partners, including provinces, territories and employers.

## Supporting refugees

The *Strategic Plan* proposes to maintain the number of government-sponsored and privately sponsored refugees in compliance with operational and government objectives, and to assist community efforts to support French-speaking refugees.

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

A portion of the implementation cost of these initiatives will be eligible for funding under existing programs. To support the implementation of the initiatives, focus must be placed on the leveraging effect that can be created by promoting partnerships. This approach could lead to recruitment, retention and integration processes in the targeted communities. A certain number of communities with the best conditions for success will be selected first; others can be added later.

The first approach focuses on using available “leveraging funds” to launch pilot projects in the target regions. These funds will be used to initiate and validate recruitment, retention and integration processes.

The second approach involves identifying available “support funds” that would back the efforts of the local networks in the communities that will work to promote Francophone immigration.



A series of analyses were carried out in the preparation of this *Strategic Plan*. The relevant data are as follows.

## Source countries according to CIC

The following 16 source countries alone accounted for 58 percent of the 2,300,000 new permanent residents of Canada between 1994 and 2004:

1. People's Republic of China
2. India
3. Pakistan
4. Philippines
5. Republic of Korea
6. United States
7. Iran
8. Romania
9. United Kingdom
10. Sri Lanka
11. Russia
12. Taiwan
13. Vietnam
14. Hong Kong
15. Yugoslavia (former)
16. Bosnia-Herzegovina

The pool of French-speaking immigrant candidates is quite small. Only two countries on the above list—Romania and Vietnam—are members of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). The OIF is an organization founded on a shared language and common values. Its members are accepted based on their commitment to the national and international Francophonie.<sup>11</sup>

Potential French-speaking candidates are mainly in Europe, the Maghreb, subtropical Africa, and some countries in the Caribbean. A significant portion of French-speaking immigrants in FMCs are likely to be of African origin.

A few other factual observations demonstrate the challenges related to Francophone immigrants in Canada in general, and in FMCs in particular.

- Five Francophone countries figure among the top 10 source countries for immigration to Quebec, but more immigrants to that province come from China than from France.

- None of the 50 top source countries for immigrants who settle outside Quebec have French as an official language. France ranks 56th. Of the top 50 source countries, six have French as a working language and are members of the OIF: Romania, Vietnam, Egypt, Albania (Associate Member), Lebanon and Bulgaria.

## Assessment of immigrants' knowledge of Canada's official languages

Many immigrants who settle outside Quebec each year claim that they know French, or French and English.

For example, in 2001, about 3.1 percent of immigrants outside Quebec said that they knew French, or French and English. According to CIC's numbers, this proportion dropped to 2.9 percent in 2002, increased to 4.7 percent in 2003, then reached 4.9 percent in 2004. At first glance, it would seem that the target set out in the *Strategic Framework* has been reached, but this is not the case. We have already demonstrated in the *Strategic Plan* that this figure is not reliable. Additional analyses give us a better understanding of this phenomenon.

It is impossible to verify the level of French and English language skills for all classes of immigrants. We count on the voluntary declaration of immigrants to measure their knowledge of Canada's two official languages. This unverified voluntary declaration does not give us an accurate picture of the situation.

This declaration is not verified in all immigrant categories. However, skilled workers' language skills are verified. They must complete an official French or English language test. When drafting the *Strategic Plan*, CIC carried out additional analyses of candidates' scores in these tests in 2002 and 2004. The data are summarized below in Table 1.

Although it has methodological restrictions, this analysis is still useful in showing the trend.

# Appendix: Relevant Statistics

**Table 1: Superior French or English language skills, tests for skilled workers, 2002 and 2004**

	2002	2004
Number of immigrants settled outside Quebec who claim to know French and English	1,889	2,287
Superior knowledge of French as opposed to English	472 (25%)	251 (11%)
Superior knowledge of English as opposed to French	1,416 (75%)	2,035 (89%)

*Citizenship and Immigration Canada*

These figures are significant for two reasons.

From the pool of skilled immigrant workers who claimed they knew French and English, the proportion of those with greater abilities in French dropped between 2002 and 2004. However, the data should be verified over a longer period in order to be significant.

Despite the methodological restrictions, this analysis leads us to assume that 75 percent of the immigrants in this class who took the tests in 2002 and 89 percent of those who took them in 2004, and who claimed to know French and English, have English as their dominant language—that is to say, they have a greater knowledge of English than French.

Between 2000 and 2004, approximately 10 percent of all newcomers (regardless of language) who settled outside Quebec were refugees.

For this same period, 1,927 refugees with knowledge of French and 2,844 refugees with knowledge of French and English settled outside Quebec. This represents approximately 25 percent of all French-speaking newcomers in the provinces and territories.

## Place of residence

The following table provides an overview of the places settled by immigrants who declared they knew French, or French and English in 2004. It clearly shows the great power of attraction that cities have.

Based on the analyses carried out during the preparation of the *Strategic Plan*, we can estimate that several hundred French-speaking immigrants, as defined in this *Strategic Plan*, settle in Toronto and Vancouver each year.

<sup>11</sup><http://www.francophonie.org/>

## Appendix: Relevant Statistics

Table 2: Place of residence of immigrants who claim to know French, or French and English, 2004

REGION OR CITY	Number of immigrants who made a voluntary declaration that they knew French only	Number of immigrants who made a voluntary declaration that they knew French and English	Total
Toronto	551	3,671	4,222
Vancouver	89	966	1,055
Ottawa	400	711	1,111
Calgary	86	363	449
Edmonton	63	227	290
Kitchener	12	200	212
Windsor	46	165	211
Winnipeg	55	159	214
Hamilton	46	152	198
London	27	142	169
Halifax	18	138	156
Saskatoon	7	64	71
St. Catharines - Niagara	17	54	71
Victoria	15	54	69
Moncton	20	46	66
Regina	6	45	51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>7,157</b>	<b>8,615</b>
Total number of immigrants in provinces other than Quebec who said they knew French, or French and English	1,570	7,865	9,435
Percentage of immigrants in the 16 cities who said they knew French, or French and English	9%	91%	91%

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

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