

Summary of the Horizontal Evaluation of the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023: Investing in our future



Overview

The Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023: Investing in Our Future is the Government of Canada's fourth five-year horizontal strategy for official languages. It represents funding of \$2.7 billion over five years, including an increase of nearly \$500 million starting in 2018.

The activities of the Action Plan are divided into three pillars:

- 1 Strengthening our communities
- 2 Strengthening access to services
- 3 Promoting a bilingual Canada



The new funding for 2018-2023 includes the following seven federal partners:

- Canadian Heritage (PCH)
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Health Canada (HC)
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
- Justice Canada (JUS)
- Statistics Canada (StatCan)

The horizontal evaluation of the Action Plan focuses on its relevance, design and implementation, effectiveness, and efficiency, with an emphasis on the achievement of results.

Relevance

The Action Plan remains well aligned with the trends, needs and priorities identified during its design. It also remains well aligned with the provisions of the *Official Languages Act (OLA)* as well as the federal government's commitments regarding official languages. However, the context has changed since 2018. The Action Plan does not meet all the needs identified, in particular:



The digital shift of official language minority communities (OLMCs) organizations.



The exodus of young people from OLMCs.



Access to justice services in the official language of one's choice.



Access to quality education equal to the majority.



Access to health services for Anglophones in Quebec as well as for OLMCs seniors.

Design and implementation

Overall, the design and implementation of the Action Plan are adequate. Key stakeholders perceive the Action Plan as an indispensable tool and believe that there is a clear complementarity between the Plan's pillars and components. However, the logic of the expected results deserves to be reconsidered to be more coherent.



Effectiveness

Since the evaluation was carried out at the midpoint of the Plan, the analysis of its effectiveness was limited.

Most short-term results are on track to be achieved for 2023.

8 of the eleven short-term expected results are being achieved, while one is already completed.

2 results do not have enough data to measure their progress.

SHORT-TERM RESULTS	STATUS	MINISTRY INVOLVED
Support for Francophone immigration		IRCC
Support for early childhood		EDSC
Support for minority language education		PCH
Support for community voices		PCH, EDSC, HC, JUS
Support for community culture and gathering spaces		PCH
Access to justice		JUS
Access to health services		HC, PHAC
Maintaining English and French as a second language		PCH
Promoting a bilingual Canada through opportunities for youth		PCH
Support for second language learning		PCH
Support for Statistics Canada's Language Statistics Section		StatCan

LÉGENDE:
 Being achieved Missing data Achieved

The majority of the medium-term results are also progressing in the desired direction. However, the nature and scope of the Plan's programs and initiatives are insufficient to :

- Achieve certain expected medium-term results, particularly those related to the ability to live in the minority language and to the rate of bilingualism outside Quebec.
- Establish a trajectory towards the desired long-term results.

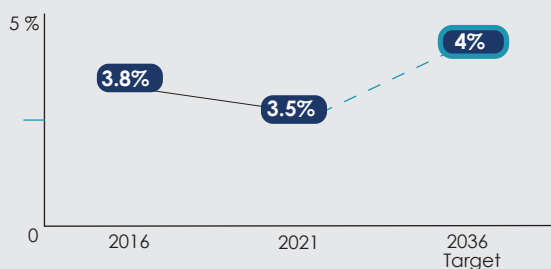
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Relative weight of Francophones outside Quebec, 2016 to 2021

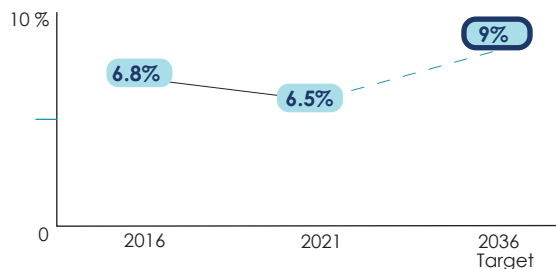
Decline in the proportion of Canadians living outside Quebec whose first official language is French, from 3.8% in 2016 to 3.5% in 2021, while the Action Plan target was to reach 4% by 2036.



Sources: Statistics Canada, National censuses

Bilingualism rate, 2016 to 2021

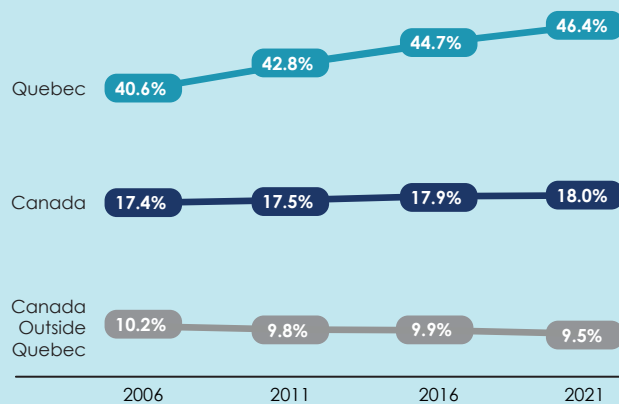
The bilingualism rate of Anglophones outside Quebec is declining, going from 6.8% in 2016 to 6.5% in 2021, while the target was to reach 9% by 2036.



The proportion of bilingual Canadians remains virtually unchanged from 2016, going from 17.9% to 18% while the target was to reach 20% by 2036. Moreover, this slight increase is due to Quebec. In fact, between 2016 and 2021, the bilingualism rate in Quebec rose from 44.7% to 46.4%, while the bilingualism rate of Canadians outside Quebec decreased from 9.9% to 9.5%.



Bilingualism rate of Canadians, 2006 to 2021



Sources: Statistics Canada, National censuses

Efficiency

The Action Plan uses efficient means to achieve the expected results and generates a leverage effect for its partners. In particular, the increased funds, the “by and for” communities model, and the creation of units dedicated to official languages within federal institutions have made a positive contribution to the efficiency of the Plan.

However, some issues limiting the efficiency of the Action Plan have been identified:

- Lack of adequate financial data to measure efficiency.
- Presence of shortcomings in accountability, particularly the lack of uniformity of inputs transmitted by partners.

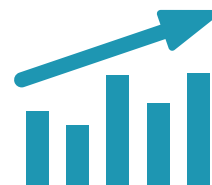
Recommendations

In order to improve certain components of the Action Plan, the evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Official Languages, Heritage and Regions:

Recommendation 1

Review the Plan's pillars and components to increase the likelihood of achieving expected medium- and long-term results. Particularly those related to the following:

- increasing the relative weight of Francophone and Acadian minority communities;
- support for the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking OLMCs; and
- the increase in the bilingualism rate of English-speaking Canadians outside Quebec.



Recommendation 2

Identify ways to produce and ensure accountability and the availability of financial data that would help to better assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Action Plan and any subsequent plan.



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