

Western Economic Diversification Canada
REVIEW ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES 2012-13
(Part VII)

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7 – Development of official language minority communities and promotion of English and French in the Canadian society (part VII of the OLA)

Ongoing Dialogue

(consultations / discussions / formal or informal exchanges)

1. How does your institution ensure that it is aware of the priorities and needs of **French-speaking communities** outside Quebec and **English-speaking communities** in Quebec? Please specify the methods used, the organizations involved and the tangible **results** of initiatives taken by your institution on/in the communities.

Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) consistently ensures awareness of the priorities and needs of the French-speaking communities in Western Canada through a variety of activities. Two significant developments in 2012-13 were the launch of WD's bilingual Twitter Account and WD's Official Languages (OL) News Clips Service.

In this first year of activity, WD's Twitter ([@WD_Canada](#)) attracted 775 direct followers and 21 percent of these followers used the francophone feed. WD's followers include organizations and/or individuals involved in the economic development of Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC). These followers can reply to provide feedback, or re-tweet to their followers amplifying WD's message to new audiences.

WD partners with the Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs) in the economic development of western Canadian OLMCs. There is one FEDO in each of the four western provinces. La Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique; Le Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta; Le Conseil de la coopération de la Saskatchewan; and Le Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba.

WD OL News Clips Service was created to gather OL-related news from across Canada for dissemination to the OL Team and the FEDO Director Generals on a regular basis. This facilitates the ability of WD and its partners to keep up-to-date and share views on OL issues in Canada.

Dialogue and interaction is a commitment WD integrates in its business practices. Ongoing dialogue activities WD undertakes include regular communications and consultations with the FEDOs to stay current on western OLMC issues, activities and economic initiatives. WD senior management maintains a strong working relationship with the FEDOs in their role as members of WD's Western Canada Business Services Network (WCBSN), as well as maintaining oversight of WD's OL activities ensuring coordination throughout the organization. WD's OL Team interacts regularly with the FEDOs and other OLMC economic development stakeholders at provincial, regional and national levels.

This continuous communication strengthens the teamwork between WD and the FEDOs, and improves our common understanding of OLMC issues. The information gathered can be used to support the development of federal policies and programs such as the Roadmap for Official Languages and the Economic Development Initiative (EDI) that WD delivers in Western Canada.

Key Collaborations (*Coordination and liaison*)

2. Did your institution collaborate with **other federal institutions** as part of a program, project or other initiative aimed at the development of official-language minority communities (OLMCs) or the promotion of English and French in Canadian society? Describe this collaboration or partnership. Who were your partners and what are the tangible **results** for OLMC development or the recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society?

WD collaborated extensively with Industry Canada (IC), the other regional development agencies (RDAs), Canadian Heritage (PCH), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and other federal institutions in the development of the federal \$1.1 billion 2013-2018 Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages and specifically the EDI.

WD, IC and the other RDAs (the EDI partners) worked in partnership to coordinate management and implementation of the past 2008-13 EDI across Canada. This effort included joint formal consultations with OLMCs from across Canada, policy and program development, reporting of results, and sharing of best practices. An additional benefit from this collaboration was the sharing of EDI project ideas that could have potential applicability for western Canadian OLMCs. The successful collaboration amongst EDI partners will continue for the 2013-18 EDI.

These collaborative efforts provided WD and the EDI partners with better understanding of other federal activities that support economic development and gave all parties the opportunity to explore areas for further collaboration to better meet the needs of OLMCs.

WD's regional offices also collaborated with the western offices of the Regional Federal Councils to coordinate promotion of French in Western Canada during events such as Linguistic Duality Day and Les Rendez-Vous de la Francophonie. This collaboration allows WD to leverage resources, and enhance efficiency and effectiveness of its OL activities.

3. Did your institution collaborate with **other stakeholders** (municipalities, provinces, territories, private sector) as part of a program, project or other initiative aimed at the development of OLMCs or the promotion of English and French in Canadian society? Describe this collaboration or partnership. Who were your partners and what are the results for OLMC development or the recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society?

The FEDOs have been valued members of WD's Western Canada Business Service Network for the past 12 years. WD and the FEDOs collaborate in the development of western Canadian OLMCs and the promotion of French and English in Canadian society.

WD also works with provinces, municipalities, universities, other industry or OLMC organizations to promote economic development of OLMCs, to support use of learning technology and new media, to promote trade and tourism, and to strengthen community infrastructure. For example, WD supported a project of an industry association to develop bilingual information for an industry event to reach out to francophone entrepreneurs and industry players located in Quebec and francophone countries. WD also supported a project led by an Alberta francophone university campus to develop two vocal acoustics/phonetics analysis prototypes with the goal of marketing the products worldwide.

WD also engages in committees, networks or groups that promote the use of Official Languages and development of OLMCs such as the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, the Ministers' Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, the Ontario Official Languages Interdepartmental Network, and Le Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité de la francophonie canadienne. Information from these forums helped to elaborate upon western OLMC issues and provided WD with extra tools to promote English and French in Canadian society.

Tangible Support

4. Within your institution, are there **programs or initiatives of particular interest to OLMCs**? Describe these programs or initiatives and explain their impacts on OLMC development and the promotion of official languages in Canadian society.

WD works to strengthen western innovation, business development, and community economic growth. Moreover, WD has a number of programs or initiatives that can be accessed to support the economic development of OLMCs.

First, the FEDOs receive funding support from WD that enables them to provide enhanced business services to western Canadian francophones that include training, business and community economic development, access to capital, information services, marketing advice, networking and mentoring. As a member of the WCBSN, the FEDOS have access to a network of 100 economic development partners in all four provinces of Western Canada with whom they can work to build relationships, promote French in Canadian society, and share expertise.

Second, WD has several programs that can support OLMC development. The WDP is WD's main contribution program. WD has incorporated an "OL Lens" in its project due diligence process. This tool ensures that OLMCs economic development is taken into consideration during project assessment. This lens is also applied to the Economic Development Initiative (EDI), and the Community Infrastructure Improvement Fund (CIIF). The EDI is incremental, targeted G&C funding for OLMC priorities and the promotion of official languages in Canadian society. The CIIF was a national community infrastructure program that sunset in March 2013. WD delivered the CIIF in Western Canada. The program invested in the rehabilitation and improvement of existing community infrastructure across Canada to help modernize infrastructure and provide broad-based economic benefits to western communities, including the OLMCs.

5. Did your institution provide **funding for projects or activities** organized by OLMC organizations or organizations dedicated to the promotion of English and/or French in Canadian society? Describe the most significant projects or activities and explain their impacts on OLMC development and the promotion of official languages in Canadian society.

WD continues its commitment to support OLMC economic development by providing OLMCs access to its programs, and by promoting OLMC priorities in new ones such as the 2013-18 Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages.

As the 2008-13 Roadmap and the EDI drew to a close in 2012-13, a highlight for WD was that the department supported seven EDI projects for a total of \$2.8 million. This leveraged \$4.6 million in other stakeholder funding. The EDI projects supported areas such as the use of technology to foster technology adoption in OLMCs, and giving citizens the choice to become educated in their official language of choice; tourism and promotion of Western Canada as an international destination; fostering international trade and investment attraction; rural diversification green initiatives; and commercial immigration.

As well, a number of projects with beneficial impacts for western francophone communities were supported under the WDP and CIIF. A number of CIIF projects in francophone communities funded improvements to francophone community centres, tourist attractions and other community infrastructure such as arenas and parks which support tourism and economic development. Several WDP projects supported promotion of prairie and western francophone companies at industry events; the development of multi-media laboratories; leveraging the capabilities of a francophone lab to develop new prototypes for market; and trade advisory services for exporters.

6. Does your institution provide forms of support other than funding to OLMC organizations or organizations dedicated to the promotion of English and/or French in Canadian society?

Describe these types of support and explain the impacts for OLMC development and the promotion of official languages in Canadian society.

Above and beyond the funding it provides to western OLMCs, WD fosters ongoing networking and information sharing with its OLMC organizations. These relationships give the FEDOs and the communities they represent access to policy makers in WD and in Ottawa, and raise the profile of Official Languages and OLMC priorities. Efforts are also made to scan OLMC projects in other regions of Canada for applicability to western Canadian OLMCs; and WD distributes to the FEDOs economic studies and research that may be useful in their work.

As well, WD's corporate publication, Access West, is published three times per year and features stories and articles about western Canadian entrepreneurs, business success stories and news on innovative activities across the West. In 2012-13, an OLMC-related article was prepared for consideration in an upcoming edition. Promotion of French and English in Canadian society is maximized by the broad and diverse distribution of Access West.

Tangible Results

7. If your institution had to highlight only one key initiative in relation to the **development of OLMCs**, which one would it be? What are the tangible impacts of this initiative on/in the communities? What do you think is the determining success factor for this initiative?

The FEDO that WD partners with in Manitoba, le Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM), developed a multi-year, multi-pronged EDI project to support initiatives in rural diversification and green projects; youth retention and entrepreneurship; and business export development and advisory services for new Canadians.

A key highlight is the initiatives for rural diversification and green projects that focused on sustainable economic development of OLMCs. CDEM took a holistic approach to sustainable economic development, and worked with a variety of OLMC stakeholders such as the francophone municipalities themselves, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Province of Manitoba, Environment Canada and WD.

First, CDEM supported the renewal of a number of municipal "Green Vision Plans". These plans were produced in collaboration with municipalities, and in some cases included collection of data and creation of inventories on greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

Subsequently, action plans and initiatives were considered and projects developed that would generate economic value, diversify the community, support environmental sustainability, and allow communities to adopt new technologies. In all, eight GHG Inventories and five community-led Emission Reduction Plans were developed in eight different francophone communities.

This groundwork led to 14 community projects totalling over \$8.6M. One project at a college campus involved the installation of a biomass heating system that used waste straw from local farms to produce energy. This resulted in a reduction of GHG emissions by almost 200 tons a year. Another notable project launched by the four rural municipalities of Saint-Pierre-Jolys, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, La Broquerie and De Salaberry implemented a comprehensive composting program that integrated the needs of the municipalities, residents and the agriculture sector.

In the future, CDEM plans to expand on these successes by sharing their model and knowledge throughout the other three western Canadian provinces. The goal will be to provide OLMCs information

and resources to enable their future growth in a sustainable manner and to mitigate the climate impacts of GHG emissions.

8. If your institution had to highlight only one key initiative in relation to the **promotion of English and French in Canadian society** (do not confuse with obligations related to service to the public or language of work, e.g. bilingual Web site, language training for staff), which one would it be? What are the tangible results of this initiative in Canadian society? What do you think is the determining success factor for these initiatives?

WD's approach to promotion of English and French in Canadian society is twofold.

First, since 2001 the FEDOs have worked with WD in the promotion of French in Western Canada and in responding to the economic development needs of OLMCs, including providing a variety of business development services to OLMCs. In 2012-13, the FEDOs provided 120 training sessions to 1,119 participants, provided advice to 1,732 clients and responded to 2,966 information requests. WD is proud to have renewed this partnership and related funding for 2013-14.

The FEDOs work both within the francophone communities to help their SMEs grow and expand their markets, and with economic development stakeholders across different sectors domestically and internationally to promote the success of Canada's linguistic duality abroad. For example, CDEM is partnering with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Canada International Development Agency to apply its model for local economic development in the francophone African nations. The goal is to establish a network of FEDO-like organizations and an economic corridor between these two countries. The Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique collaborated with Air Transat on a tourism attraction initiative to promote tourism from France to British Columbia. This entailed a two-week billboard campaign in 18 Paris train stations. It also included a six-week cinema campaign in Paris with 20-second ad spots, resulting in 16,600 broadcasts that reached 934,148 viewers.

Second, WD promotes French and English in the workplace by raising the awareness of staff and clients of the OLMCs in Western Canada. WD has embedded this obligation in its project due diligence process in the form of an "OL Lens" mentioned earlier. The tangible result is that project officers are aware of the need to promote French and English in their daily work as the OL Lens must be considered in all projects. WD staff can pass this understanding on to project proponents as they work together on projects.

9. What key achievement with a **regional impact** (success stories or results on/in the community or on the promotion of English and French in Canadian society) does your institution want to highlight?

From a policy and program perspective, a key achievement was WD's participation in the renewal of the Government's Roadmap for Canada's Official Languages 2013-2018. WD contributed to the renewal of the EDI component of the Roadmap and this will allow western OLMCs to build on the results of the previous 2008-2013 Roadmap.

From a project perspective, one key initiative WD would like to highlight is the Tourism Smartphone Application that the four FEDOs developed to promote francophone tourism in Western Canada. This pan-western project was launched in the spring of 2012. The project used innovative new media technology involving multi-stakeholder collaboration to promote Canada internationally, and foster tourism to Western Canada.

The potential market for the application is estimated to be nearly 250,000 French-speaking users who own smartphones and tablets. As of March 2013, the application has been downloaded over 4,000 times and 15,346 research sessions have been completed by users from North America, Europe and other countries. Ultimately, this application will contribute to the economic vitality of francophone communities

and small and medium tourism enterprises throughout the West by increasing the number of francophone tourists.

This initiative has the potential for other spin-off impacts. Given its scalable nature, other benefits can accrue to communities over the longer term as more businesses participate. By using this application and visiting Canada, tourists may be encouraged to see other parts of the country. Also, the project has created tourism infrastructure that can be the foundation for other initiatives. Tourism can attract immigration and foreign students, and raise Canada's profile and reputation on the global stage in other economic sectors.