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*Executive summary*

# Typology of Canada's Francophone minority communities

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## Summary

### Objectives

The objective of this research is to learn more about the diversity of Francophone minority communities (FMCs) in Canada and the factors that determine their vitality by establishing a typology for FMCs and a classification system based on the identified criteria. To do this, we sought to further understand the criteria used by CIC and the other federal institutions involved in delivering services aimed at revitalizing and enhancing the growth potential of official language minority communities (OLMCs) for Anglophones in Quebec and for FMCs outside of Quebec. The objective was also to gain insight from the communities themselves with respect to the factors that contribute to their vitality and the differences between them.

### Methodology

Three data **sources** were used and summarized in this research: the existing literature, which has already put forward several methods to characterize FMCs and analyze their vitality; the information on language policies available from the departments concerned; the communities themselves, through several interviews; the information available on the Internet, the official documents and the available community portraits.

The research began with a systematic analysis of the available information, particularly through the websites of the key departments and the communities concerned. It continued with a series of interviews, which were mostly conducted in Toronto, Ottawa, Montréal and Moncton. In all, we met with and interviewed about 20 people from the departments and from other government bodies, and about 15 people from a number of community organizations in Whitehorse, Moncton, Halifax and Ottawa. In addition, an informative bibliography outlines the main texts, articles, reports and sites consulted. The results were summarized into three sets of portraits: 1 – key departments concerned; 2 – specialized Francophone organizations; 3 – portrait of five Francophone communities.

### Departmental portraits

Organization or department missions generally do not create distinctions between regions and communities but, rather, between projects and initiatives. Similarly, agreements with the provinces are apparently not based on pre-established criteria, but on the missions being pursued by the various actors and on the needs and challenges faced by each province. Each department seeks to meet its obligations under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*, but based on a national and global approach within the framework of its mission.

This notwithstanding, several factors that appear to play a key role in communities' needs assessments and the assistance and support provided by the departments were identified:

- A community's capacity to organize and ability to ensure a form of representation to support its participation in the consultative and collaborative mechanisms put in place by the departments. Assistance from the departments may also aim to strengthen this organizational capacity.
- A community's capacity to express its priorities with regard to linguistic vitality and to specific needs, which may vary according to the community's characteristics. Each

department has programs, and their application depends in part on a community's initiative and ability to defend its project.

- A community's capacity to demonstrate the positive impact of the projects being submitted for both the Francophone community and the society as a whole, as per the department's missions.
- The development of an infrastructure for and expertise on implementing and managing community projects and reporting (accountability).
- Cooperation at the provincial level on implementing specific joint programs in areas under provincial jurisdiction.
- A community's capacity to target their requests based on the missions and mandates of the department concerned. In this context, the sectoring of a number of services proposed by the departments depends both on the mission being pursued and the community's needs (particularly in the health, economic development and immigration sectors).
- Demographic criteria: number and proportion of Francophones present in a given region and, more broadly, the portraits put forward by Statistics Canada (language proficiency; first language, first official language spoken; Francophilia).
- The existence of Francophone and bilingual services and institutions in the region concerned (schools, universities, clinics, hospitals, municipal services, and so on).

Generally, beyond the socio-demographic criteria, our understanding is that departments respond based on criteria related to the **organizational capacity** of the communities concerned and on the **context** in which these communities are changing. Opportunities are offered to the communities, and they are responsible for making the proper arrangements to take advantage of these opportunities based on need, ad hoc challenges, and the missions being pursued by each department. This dynamic is further reflected by the development of a sector-based, specialized community organization in which collaborations between communities and departments take place.

## Specialized Francophone organizations

Several Francophone organizations were either consulted or subject to a document review: the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada (FCFA), the Réseau des Sociétés santé en français, the Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) and the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RÉDÉE). Each network is organized on the basis of its mandate and its missions, but also on local community dynamics.

### *Organization*

The organization of each network provides a good indication of the criteria for distinguishing one community from another. Canada's federal structure makes distinguishing communities by **provincial boundaries** an unavoidable factor.

### *Criteria*

The criteria for distinguishing communities within these four networks generally fall within four categories:

- **Geographic** (provincial, regional, urban/rural)
- **Socio-demographic** and language practices
- **Organization** and organizational capacity of the community in various sectors (culture, economic development, health, education), particularly the sector related to the network in question.
- **Subjective vitality**: identity, perceptions, relationship to the language, community and linguistic representations

## Portraits of selected communities

Five communities are part of the study. **Moncton** shows a stronger vitality than the other regions. This vitality is characterized by the **institutional completeness** that marks the political organization of the Francophonie in NB; the status of the French language at the municipal, regional and provincial levels; the importance of the **identity discourse** and the **sentiment of belonging** to a distinct community, and; the language **practices** that characterize the Acadian community. While the region is not only made up of strengths and must face a number of challenges (**geographic**, namely, the distance from the major centres; significance of diglossia, economic challenge), several factors make a decisive contribution to the vitality of the French language in the Greater Moncton area. Francophone immigration has remained particularly weak, despite the establishment of Francophone welcome centres. Nevertheless, the Greater Moncton area has become a magnet for Francophone **immigration** in the Atlantic region.

The **Ottawa** region also has its strengths: a **close community** network driven by national capital status; many **institutions** for education, health, and arts and culture; urban vitality; a conducive social and linguistic **context** that **recognizes** French at the federal and municipal levels; the presence of the **bordering** and mostly Francophone Gatineau; the importance of the administrative sector, which strengthens the knowledge of French beyond the group of French-as-mother-tongue Francophones, and; **economic vibrancy**, which makes the community particularly attractive. However, the strong **sense of community** seems less pronounced in the Ottawa region than in Southeastern New Brunswick. Furthermore, the province of Ontario is not

officially bilingual and therefore does not grant French the same status as NB. Marked by its diversity, the Ottawa **region** attracts most Francophone immigrants coming to Canada outside of Quebec. To properly gauge Francophone migration in the Ottawa region, immigrants who contribute to the linguistic vitality of the national capital region's Francophonie by moving to Gatineau and working in Ottawa would have to be taken into account.

**Halifax** and **Whitehorse** seem to be within the same category, but different factors influence the linguistic vitality of these two communities. Whitehorse is a **small community**, far from the major centres, marked by strong Francophone **migration**, with a weak sense of community belonging. However, French has a very satisfactory status (official language status), a good level of **institutional completeness** with regard to education (school board, schools, daycares, and so on) and strong community involvement (resources, infrastructures). Halifax has its strengths with respect to the **identity discourse** (Acadianness), its presence in an economically vibrant and culturally diverse region. Furthermore, several Francophone communities in the Atlantic region strengthen the vitality of the Francophone community in Halifax. On an immigration level, Yukon is a **migrant Francophonie**, with over 80% of its Francophones born outside the territory. This community is specifically marked by cultural diversity and is particularly attractive to young people seeking an alternative to the more conventional Canadian experience of settling in Quebec or the other Canadian provinces.

Finally, **Winnipeg** is facing a number of specific challenges consistent with those being faced in a large number of particularly vulnerable communities in Western Canada. Despite its major strengths (vitality of the Francophonie, particularly around Winnipeg and St. Boniface; presence of a **university** and undeniable cultural vitality; **strong economy**), the status of the French language is not as favourable as it is in Whitehorse or Moncton (legislative level, linguistic landscape, visibility). Also, the Francophone **fraction** is particularly weak and is continuing to decline, despite the migration processes of Manitoba's Francophones to Winnipeg and despite the presence of schools, higher education institutions and **services** in French.

Based on these three sets of portraits, we have proposed a criteria matrix for distinguishing the communities based on their community and linguistic vitality.

3 Groups/ Categories	10 Dimensions	38 Criteria
<b>Community Aspiration Group</b>	Political	Presence of recognized advocacy organizations Presence of representative advocacy organizations All available resources in use Collective capacity Identity building
	Institutional: Institutional completeness	Community synergies, cross-sector collaboration and growth of targeted and served clientele Progress of institutional completeness, education Progress of institutional completeness, health Progress of institutional completeness, economic development Progress of institutional completeness, immigration Progress of institutional completeness, media sector Progress of institutional completeness, culture sector Progress of institutional completeness, youth sector
<b>Social Environment</b>	Geographic: society and the major centres	Centre/periphery Urban/rural Large society / small society
	Socio-economic: regional vitality and integration of Francophones	Overall economic vitality Overall cultural vitality Overall social vitality
	Linguistic: regional status of the French language	Linguistic landscape Official status of French/bilingualism Knowledge of the French language in the society Identity and cultural representations
	Community: position of the Francophone community in the society	Community visibility Community representations Community participation/engagement
<b>Francophone Linguistic Group</b>	Territorial	Proximity / distance to Quebec or major Francophone centres Territorial breakdown (region)
	Numeric	Small community / large community Density of the local community / diglossia
	Linguistic (linguistic vitality)	Demolinguistic portrait Changes in the French-mother-tongue population Language practices, by sector Linguistic representations, image of the language
	Community (Community vitality)	Community portrait Community practices Community representations : community image Community story

## Toward a typology of FMCs adapted to CIC

The multiple factors that have a particular impact on community vitality suggests that it is very difficult to propose a formal typology for distinguishing one community from another. To propose such a typology, we would need to give some criteria for vitality precedence over others. However, the great diversity of FMCs' situations in Canada demonstrates the extent to which the vitality of each community does not depend necessarily on similar criteria. Rather, it is the specific **configuration** of factors that contributes (or not) to a community's ethnolinguistic vitality.

That being said, we are proposing a draft continuum of the ethnolinguistic vitality of FMCs in Canada. Canadian communities marked either by a "particularly weak" or "particularly strong" vitality are on opposing ends of the continuum, with most FMCs falling within the three intermediate categories. This classification is of course not final and remains tentative.

Vitality				
Weak		Strong		
	Winnipeg, MB	Halifax, NS Whitehorse, YK	Ottawa, ON	Moncton, NB
1	2	3	4	5

## Perspectives

- Through our interviews and documentary research, we came across few explicit and formal criteria in the communities or in the departments. It was very often explicitly stated that the department does not make formal distinctions between communities; reference was also made to a national mandate (reinforced under the terms of the last Roadmap). In many cases, the guidelines adopted by the departments were very broad and did not have particular formulations other than in local, regional and provincial contexts, in the regional offices and agencies, which are particularly responsible for distributing government assistance through the various programs offered to all FMCs in Canada, without distinctions.
- Despite the presence of formal criteria, the interviews and the documents consulted more often than not referred to a number of factors which sometimes explained the situational differences from one community to another. A number of factors identified appear to play the role of implicit criteria, such as:
  - **Socio-demographic** (the number of Francophones, or the number of potential clients for a given program);
  - **Socio-political** (community context and engagement; claims; political attitudes of provinces and territories);
  - **Institutional completeness and community infrastructures** (community expertise in project design and management, community cohesion, community autonomy, relations with the other levels of government: provinces, presence of action plans; presence –or absence–of service centres, including health or education infrastructures);
  - **Reference to center-periphery and urban/rural dynamics**, particularly for departments concerned with economic development and planning;
  - **Political opportunities offered** (whether or not there are programs through which communities can be engaged).



3. This lack of formal criteria can be explained and is one of the key arguments from the interviews: the national policy on official languages focuses on universalizing access to services in the language of the minority. Rather than favouring a community approach, it favours a project approach that is based on the needs expressed and on more formal criteria for awarding assistance. Communities have less to do with the evaluation than the projects being submitted, which are based on the needs expressed by the organization dealing with these applications and the mandates of the granting body.
4. During this process, departments were usually less often responsible for implementing policies and granting public funding than community-related agencies and regional services. Differences between communities could be identified at the local rather than national level. This reflects the complexity of the federal framework in its relationship with the other levels of government and the need for the various levels of government to work collaboratively. The immigration file exemplifies the features of an evolving legislative framework.
5. Beyond regional agencies and offices, the study on criteria distinctness should focus more narrowly on public funding allowance mechanisms, application forms and the selection criteria used. Due to a lack of time and resources, we could not compile and summarize this type of data; however, this activity would be worthwhile. A systematic study of the basis for granting government funding to community projects is necessary to more clearly identify the criteria applied by each department.
6. Three other areas should be covered in further research:
  - Public policy “evaluation”
  - Legal aspect: How do the courts interpret the obligations in terms of vitality, and how do they perceive the criteria for vitality?
  - The role of provinces and municipalities and the importance of the local status of French (differences in terms of rights, recognitions, visibility, and so on).

However, it must be stressed that no single criterion or dimension can determine the vitality of a community. Each community responds to a configuration, in terms of specific linguistic and community representations, practices, context and organization. Furthermore, in each context, the criteria will have different impacts, revitalizing or even weakening the communities in question. Migration processes are no exception: communities have a wide variety of responses to the challenge that this “new Francophonie” poses in their efforts to promote their specific identities, language and culture.