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Establish a Foundational Pillar on
Economic Vitality and Shared
Prosperity Within the 2028-2033
Official Languages Action Plan

Initial Policy Submission to

Honourable Marc Miller

Minister of Canadian Identity
and Culture and Minister
Responsible for Official
Languages

October 2026

October 16, 2026

The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and
Minister responsible for Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC), I am pleased to formally submit, for your consideration, our initial policy proposal entitled *Establish a Foundational Pillar on Economic Vitality and Shared Prosperity For the 2028–2033 Official Languages Action Plan*.

This submission constitutes CEDEC's initial contribution to the Government of Canada's 2026 Cross-Canada Official Languages Consultations and served as the basis for my contribution to the National Consultation in Québec City yesterday.

At the centre of our proposal is the conviction that **the long-term vitality of Official Language Minority Communities, and of the languages that define them, depends fundamentally upon their economic vitality**. Accordingly, CEDEC proposes that the renewed 2028–2033 Official Languages Action Plan (OLAP) incorporate a dedicated, foundational **Economic Vitality and Shared Prosperity Pillar**, supported by coherent federal policies, coordinated and sustained investment, community-led implementation, and meaningful accountability for economic and linguistic results.

The enclosed submission establishes the policy rationale for this proposed Pillar and articulates three distinct, mutually reinforcing objectives: **sustained economic prosperity, substantive economic equality, and linguistic vitality**. Together, these objectives recognize that generating economic opportunity, addressing demonstrable disparities, and expanding opportunities for the meaningful use of minority Official Languages in economic life are complementary, yet independently necessary, conditions for enduring community vitality.

To advance these objectives, the submission outlines a preliminary economic-development architecture encompassing collaborative partnerships and community-led economic development capacity; an Economic Vitality Lab and Venture development; strengthened workforce development and labour-market participation; targeted measures to reduce economic disparities; and a shared sectoral framework for measuring results, informing policy decisions, and supporting continuous improvement.

These proposed components are presented as an initial framework for further examination and collaborative development, rather than as finalized program measures. CEDEC intends to refine this architecture through continued research, stakeholder engagement, practical implementation experience, and dialogue with relevant federal departments and agencies, with a more fully developed and costed policy submission anticipated in the summer of 2027.

Minister, we respectfully seek your recognition of Economic Vitality and Shared Prosperity as a foundational policy priority for the renewed OLAP, the inclusion of this submission in the formal consultation and policy development record, and your support for an interdepartmental examination of the proposed architecture as it is further developed. We believe that such an approach would strengthen the Government of Canada's capacity to translate its Official Languages commitments into coordinated, measurable, and enduring economic and linguistic benefits for the communities concerned.

Given the inherently cross-cutting nature of this policy proposal, and the essential contribution of federal economic development, employment, and regional development mandates to its realization, **copies of this submission will also be shared with two of your Cabinet colleagues: the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Jobs and Families, and the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions.** We consider their respective portfolios particularly relevant to the collaborative policy development process contemplated in our proposal.

CEDEC looks forward to maintaining a constructive and substantive dialogue with you and your colleagues as the Government advances the renewal of its Official Languages Action Plan. Our objective is to contribute to a policy framework that recognizes economic vitality not simply as an accompanying benefit of community development, but as an indispensable foundation for the sustained prosperity, substantive economic equality, and linguistic vitality of Canada's Official Language Minority Communities.

Please accept, Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.

John Buck

President and Chief Executive Officer

Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)

Copies to:

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Jobs and Families

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions

POLICY POSITION

CEDEC proposes that the Government of Canada include a dedicated, foundational Pillar on Economic Vitality and Shared Prosperity in the renewed 2028–2033 Official Languages Action Plan (OLAP).

This pillar would be foundational because economic vitality drives community and linguistic vitality. It would link federal Official Languages commitments to a coherent, coordinated set of economic policies, increased and sustained investment, community-led implementation, and meaningful federal accountability for economic and linguistic results.

This initial brief signals that CEDEC and its Partners plan to actively pursue this policy direction and maintain an ongoing policy-development dialogue with relevant federal government departments and agencies. They aim to establish this policy pillar within the 2028-2033 Official Languages Action Plan (OLAP).

This brief outlines the rationale, intended results, and preliminary structure of the policy position.

THE POLICY CASE

COMMUNITY VITALITY REQUIRES ECONOMIC VITALITY

Canada's Official Languages draw their strength largely from the people, institutions, and communities that use them and pass them on. These communities need the material resources to sustain themselves. Jobs, income, enterprise development, investment, and meaningful economic participation help people build livelihoods, keep institutions relevant and effective, and create conditions for communities to retain members and plan for the future.

Economic vitality is not a minor point in Official Languages policy. It supports Official Language Minority Communities' (OLMCs) ability to thrive. A credible commitment to community and linguistic vitality must include a foundational commitment to their economic development and future.

However, economic gains don't automatically strengthen linguistic or community vitality. Economic measures should be intentionally designed and assessed for how they

contribute to community institutions, opportunities to use the minority Official Language, and longer-term community and linguistic vitality. Counting services delivered or jobs obtained provides necessary information, but these alone don't prove that a community's circumstances have improved.

To ensure economic vitality continues to support linguistic and community vitality, a three-part policy push is necessary: a) strengthen the conditions for sustained prosperity; b) address material economic disparities and unequal opportunities where they exist; and c) expand legitimate recognition and use of the minority Official Language in economic life. Each goal supports the others but cannot replace them.

A Coherent Expression of the Official Languages Act

Official Languages policy is not a zero-sum game.

The Official Languages Act recognizes concurrent federal commitments: enhancing the vitality and supporting the development of minority linguistic communities; fostering recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society; and protecting and promoting French. In Quebec, strengthening the English-speaking minority and collaborating with the Francophone majority are legitimate, complementary goals. Part VII requires federal institutions to take concrete positive measures. These measures must consider OLMC circumstances and needs, involve dialogue and consultation, and be based on research and evidence. Federal institutions must also consider potential effects and provide for evaluation and monitoring.

The Act explicitly recognizes employment and strong community institutions as relevant to community vitality. Its list of sectors is not exhaustive. CEDEC's analyses therefore make a strong, purposeful policy argument for treating economic, workforce, and labour-market development as essential aspects of OLMC vitality.

The proposed Part VII regulations reinforce the value of clear objectives, implementation arrangements, and mechanisms to examine effects. The structure outlined here is CEDEC's proposed practical response to these responsibilities in economic development. Federal institutions must maintain their statutory accountability. CEDEC and participating organizations would provide evidence, design, delivery, and evaluation, and account for their own resources and results.

Three Proposed Policy Goals

GOALS	INTENDED RESULTS AND TEST
A. Sustained economic prosperity	• Better employment and retention. • Improved incomes. • Productive enterprise development. • Investment. • Economic productivity and participation. Test: Do economic benefits extend beyond isolated projects and provide for a community-wide (OLMC) and systematic approach to economic development, adaptation, and growth?
B. Substantive economic equality	• Reduced demonstrated disparities. • Fairer opportunities to enter, remain in, advance within and benefit from economic life. • More effective use of community assets. Test: do differentiated measures respond to actual barriers and improve the conditions of the OLMCs as a whole?
C. Linguistic vitality in the economic space	• More legitimate opportunities to use and sustain the minority Official Language through employment, enterprise, networks, markets and institutions. Test: do economic interventions strengthen language-use opportunities and institutional capacity, rather than merely increase activity?

THE ARCHITECTURE PROPOSED TO SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC VITALITY PILLAR OF THE NEXT OLAP

A foundational Pillar must be more than a heading or a collection of unrelated projects. CEDEC proposes an integrated structure that specifies how institutions, investments, community leadership, implementation capabilities, and results measurement would work together. Five initial architectural components warrant joint design and validation:

- **ECONOMIC VITALITY ECOSYSTEM CAPACITY.** Sustain community-led capacity to identify and connect assets and opportunities, convene public, private, and civil society Partners, organize shared work, and support implementation across linguistic communities.
- **ECONOMIC VITALITY LAB AND VENTURE DEVELOPMENT.** Develop, prototype, assess, improve, and, where evidence warrants, scale economic interventions. The Lab would be community-led and complement and support, not assume, institutional positive-measures duties.
- **STRENGTHENED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND LABOR MARKET PARTICIPATION.** Connect employer demand, education, skills, employment assistance, placement, retention, and advancement through more coherent pathways, building on existing services rather than duplicating them.
- **TARGETED REDUCTION OF ECONOMIC DISPARITIES.** Develop tailored responses to well-evidenced barriers affecting particular people, regions, sectors, or enterprises, with a clear account of the additional value beyond existing programs.
- **SECTORAL RESULTS FRAMEWORK.** Prototype shared economic and linguistic goals, suitable indicators, data, learning, and reporting across relevant economic institutions and funding recipients, in a way that complements existing federal accountability arrangements.

The above are preliminary recommendation areas, not five approved measures. CEDEC is finalizing their fit, scope, interdependencies, and costs. It will progressively develop a coherent final package of three to five actionable measures by summer 2027.

WHY COMMUNITY-LED AND COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT

A policy meant to strengthen an Official Language Minority Community (OLMC), and the use of its Official Language in Canada, should give that community a meaningful role in defining needs, choosing priorities, shaping interventions, and assessing outcomes. The "by and for" OLMC principle protects the purpose of the work. It does not require community organizations to act alone or to replace government responsibilities.

Public institutions contribute mandates, policy tools, and investment. Businesses and investors provide job opportunities, market knowledge, and capital. Educational institutions contribute talent and research. Civil society and community institutions bring relationships, local intelligence, and implementation capacity. Collaboration links these contributions around economic opportunities that no single organization could fully achieve independently.

In Quebec, that also means active collaboration between English-speaking Quebecers and the Francophone majority within their shared economy. Community leadership and shared prosperity reinforce each other; they are not competing principles.

EXISTING FOUNDATIONS AND THE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

CEDEC is not proposing to begin from zero.

- Its 2023–2033 OLMCQ Ten-Year Plan provides a longer-term direction.
- The 2026–2028 Collaborative Economic Development Roadmap provides an economic development opportunity pipeline.
- CEDEC's EASCDI work supplies experience in supporting community employment-assistance Partners and developing workforce connections.
- Its applied research program has examined the rationale for economic vitality measures, economic disparities, and education-to-employment pathways.
- CEDEC is also renewing the Community Development Plan's Economic Prosperity Pillar, leveraging its research, expertise and experience, and undertaking stakeholder engagement and public-opinion research to complement and complete the pool of information and data it needs to complete this assignment.

Through the remainder of 2026 and 2027, CEDEC will organize and complete the above work as a connected demonstration case. It will

- Complete and interpret its economic disparity and education-to-employment pathways research.
- Implement selected, authorized Roadmap Ventures, and examine their early results and lessons learned; engage Partners in all aspects of its work; and use what is learned to strengthen its recommendations to improve federal policy options.

RESULTS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT

The proposed Sectoral Results Framework will help relevant institutions and funding recipients answer a more significant question than whether activities were carried out. More precisely, the Framework will propose an assessment tool to determine whether combined actions contribute to sustained economic prosperity, substantive economic equality, and linguistic vitality.

Its development will begin with common goals, plausible causal links, and a limited set of feasible indicators. Where suitable data allow, economic measures might draw on Canada's Quality of Life Framework, including employment, income, skills, business, and deprivation measures. Linguistic indicators could examine lawful and practical opportunities for minority-language use in workplaces, enterprises, and networks.

It will distinguish resources and activities, immediate outputs, benefits to individuals and enterprises, and longer-term community and linguistic change. Regular monitoring, documented learning, and periodic review will also support ongoing adjustments. The framework will supplement existing federal government and departmental Official Languages reporting frameworks, rather than create a separate government-wide accountability bureaucracy.

A STAGED FEDERAL POLICY-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, 2026–2027

CEDEC proposes a progressive dialogue with relevant federal departments and agencies, especially those with economic, workforce, business-development, and regional-development mandates. Initial discussions would allow for exchanges on core policy questions, community needs, evidence gaps, and implementation requirements. This dialogue will also enable individual institutions to assess how they can contribute more meaningfully to a more robust, coordinated Economic Vitality Pillar within the 2028-2033 OLAP.

Over 2026–2027, as its research is completed and its Roadmap implementation experience is gained, CEDEC plans to provide evolving departmental and cross-departmental briefs.

A more developed, costed submission is targeted for summer 2027. It will recommend positive measures, identify responsible federal institutions, identify recipients and Partners, map out delivery models, outline intended economic and linguistic results, specify data needs, assess risk management, and build out costing for recommended measures.

CEDEC will also assess the implications of different funding levels, including Core, Strategic, and Transformational scenarios for 2028–2029 through 2032–2033.

THE DECISIONS REQUESTED NOW

CEDEC respectfully asks the Minister to:

- Immediately recognize economic vitality as a foundational policy pillar for the 2028–2033 OLAP.
- Accept this initial submission into the 2026 consultation and subsequent policy-development record, without treating its preliminary components as finalized federal measures.
- Work with economic development-relevant departments and agencies to assess CEDEC's final Economic Vitality Pillar architecture when it is presented in summer 2027.

CEDEC's objective is not merely to have its proposals heard. It aims to contribute to a renewed OLAP that enables federal institutions to act more effectively, account more meaningfully for their positive measures, and help produce sustained economic and linguistic benefits for the communities the Official Languages Act supports.

CONCLUSION

A Foundational Commitment to Economic Vitality and Shared Prosperity

A credible commitment to the future of Canada's Official Languages must include a credible commitment to the economic future of the communities defined by them and who sustain them. Employment, incomes, enterprise development and investment provide more than individual benefits. They underpin communities' capacity to retain their people, strengthen their institutions and carry their language into the future. Economic vitality, therefore, belongs at the foundation of Official Languages policy, not at its margins.

That connection must be made deliberately. Greater prosperity does not automatically reduce disparities, and increased economic participation does not automatically strengthen linguistic vitality. The proposed Pillar would therefore pursue three explicit,

mutually reinforcing goals: **generate sustained economic prosperity, advance substantive economic equality and strengthen linguistic vitality.** Each is essential; progress toward one cannot substitute for progress toward the others.

Achieving these goals requires more than assembling individual programs under a new heading. It requires coherent policies, coordinated and sustained investment, community-led development, complementary Partner contributions, and the capacity to assess results and improve action. CEDEC's proposed economic vitality architecture would connect these functions so that research informs interventions, collaboration strengthens delivery, and evidence guides subsequent policy and investment.

This is a shared-prosperity proposition, not a competition between languages or communities. Protecting and promoting French, supporting Quebec's English-speaking minority, and advancing Canada's two Official Languages are commitments to be pursued together. Community leadership and collaboration with Francophone Quebec offer a practical way to strengthen the OLMCQ's economic and linguistic vitality while expanding its contribution to the prosperity of Quebec and Canada.

CEDEC's purpose is also to help the Government of Canada and federal institutions succeed more fully in fulfilling their Official Languages responsibilities. Federal institutions would retain their statutory accountability; CEDEC and its Partners would contribute knowledge, design, implementation and evidence. The test would not be simply whether activities were funded, but whether the efforts of the Government of Canada demonstrably advance the three goals mentioned above and strengthen the vitality of Official Language Minority Communities, and, of course, the Official language that defines them.

CEDEC brings substantial foundations to this undertaking: its Ten-Year Plan, Collaborative Economic Development Roadmap, applied research, employment-assistance experience and relationships.

Through the remainder of 2026 and throughout 2027, CEDEC will strengthen its demonstration case to support establishing an Economic Vitality Pillar in the next iteration of the OLAP. The more advanced submission targeted for summer 2027 will provide a further basis for federal assessment and decision.

CEDEC therefore invites the Minister to recognize Economic Vitality and Shared Prosperity as a foundational pillar of the renewed 2028–2033 Official Languages Action Plan, and to

engage relevant federal institutions in assessing the proposed architecture to support the achievement and implementation of this policy direction.

The opportunity is to turn a shared commitment into a shared capacity to act: to build lasting prosperity, make economic opportunity more equitable, and strengthen the communities through which Canada's Official Languages live and endure.