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Formative Evaluation of Industry Canada's Action Plan 2004–2008 (Section 41) and the Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities (EDOLMC)

Final Report

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Minor editorial changes were made to this report in order to prepare the document for posting to the Industry Canada's Website (including removal of standard Appendices such as list of interviewees and questionnaires). Readers wishing to receive a copy of the original version of this report should contact the Audit and Evaluation Branch at Industry Canada.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a formative evaluation of the implementation of two initiatives by Industry Canada (IC): the Action Plan 2004–2008 on Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* (OLA); and the Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities (EDOLMC) component of the Government of Canada's Action Plan for Official Languages. The evaluation was conducted by Goss Gilroy, Inc from February to June 2006.

Relevance

The data collected during this evaluation indicate that the EDOLMC and Action Plan 2004–2008 components are generally compatible with the priorities of the federal Action Plan for Official Languages and with IC's priorities of fostering Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC) economic development and ensuring access to the knowledge-based economy for minority French and English speakers. These activities correspond to IC's sustainable communities strategic objective.

With the exception of the *Francommunautés virtuelles* and EDOLMC initiatives, no IC program is designed specifically for OLMCs. The 15 programs targeted for implementation of Section 41 are worthy initiatives, but they are not sufficient to meet the economic development needs of OLMCs. These communities have specific needs associated with the fact that they consist more of non-profit organizations and small enterprises (many with a social focus) than of medium-sized and large enterprises.

Development and Implementation

The work of the national co-ordination team was found to be effective and relevant, and the full-time regional advisors put in place under EDOLMC play an outreach and information-sharing role that is vital to laying the groundwork for the development of a network serving OLMCs. However, the full-time regional advisors need additional information on existing IC programs and services and require promotional tools to support their information-sharing role. The national co-ordination team recently responded to this request by developing a joint work plan to be put into effect this

year. Regional advisors need additional tools to fulfill their “counselling” function for OLMC members.

The role played by regional development agencies (RDAs) in implementing some EDOLMC components (the Youth Internship Program and Pilot Projects) was found to be adequate. Owing to their range of programs, presence in the regions and history of partnerships with enterprises, RDAs are in some ways better equipped than IC to promote the economic development of OLMCs. This shows the importance of close co-operation between IC and RDAs, and not only when it comes to EDOLMC components.

IC does not currently have a strategy for the ongoing measurement of initiative performance. Current data gathering and reports are limited to lists of activities and incomplete data from programs about the clientele they serve. This data cannot be used to draw conclusions about whether initiatives are achieving the expected results in terms of benefits for their clientele. In response to this shortcoming, the Department recently began developing a system to monitor the performance of its official languages activities. Specific objectives now need to be set to establish the progress to be made by the date of the next evaluation, as well as in the medium and long terms.

Results

The data gathered during this evaluation indicate that IC has made real progress in achieving its expected results, but some shortcomings remain.

The creation of full-time advisor positions in the regions is a distinct improvement, as it enhances IC’s presence in the regions and helps IC better understand OLMC needs.

However, OLMC representatives still lack familiarity with IC programs and services and do not always make a distinction between the roles of RDAs and that of the Department.

In spite of all efforts, discussion group participants generally do not see an appreciable difference in IC’s contribution to the development of their community over the past two years. However, an anecdotal study examining 16 IC projects has established a

causal link between these investments and the strengthening of economic development in the communities.

While it is obvious that much work remains to be done when it comes to raising awareness among IC managers, there has nonetheless been some improvement in the response of program managers to the information provided in recent years. The co-ordination team and other IC representatives (regional advisors/co-ordinators and designated co-ordinators) have undertaken four types of awareness activities: presentations, the designation of a co-ordinator in each program to support the national co-ordination team, the Section 41 Lens document, and research projects. These four types of activities are relevant, although they still require sustained effort. In addition, it was found that the 15 programs and services targeted by IC for Section 41 implementation are worthy activities but are insufficient to meet the economic development needs of OLMCs.

The Youth Internship Program has had beneficial effects on the young people who have taken part in it: work experience in their own language, skills development and the creation of community networks in the minority official language. The host agencies have also benefited through capacity building.

For the most part, the Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects are in the process of achieving the expected results, owing to sustainable partnerships established with other educational institutions and financial backers. Their expected contribution is to address shortcomings in the Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Programs offered in the various provinces.

The *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program is generally valued and well known by OLMC representatives. To date, it has benefited both the Department and communities, particularly in its role as an effective social and economic lever for generating investments from new financial backers and as a capacity-building tool for OLMC agencies. However, it is too soon to assess the impact of the program's recent move toward projects that are more economic in nature and more closely aligned with IC's mandate. Some IC representatives have questioned the program's relevance, while others feel it should continue and be allowed to evolve in response to community needs.

Lastly, the Canadian Heritage representatives responsible for reviewing action plans and IC achievement reports have testified to the Department's determined efforts to regularly attend meetings of the various intergovernmental official languages committees, consult OLMCs and tailor projects and services to the needs of the communities. In the context of the constraints and challenges faced by federal agencies affected by Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*, and in spite of some shortcomings, IC is proving to be an exemplary student.

Cost-effectiveness

The service delivery and co-ordination structures of both the EDOLMC activities and the Action Plan 2004–2008 appear to be effective and do not require measures to improve their cost-effectiveness. A single area for improvement was identified: better communication and co-operation among the various stakeholders, particularly regional advisors/co-ordinators and RDAs, so as to ensure better information management in each region with respect to the various projects under study or under way for similar clientele.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, Goss Gilroy, Inc has formulated the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: That IC consider starting special projects, including communications products, to support regional co-ordinators and advisors.

Recommendation 2: That IC develop precise indicators to measure the impact of activities on OLMCs, as well as a data collection strategy to help regional advisors and RDAs (for the EDOLMC components) estimate how the demand for services is changing and measure the impact of their services on the target clientele. IC should identify precise targets for each Section 41 Action Plan, as well as medium- and long-term targets in connection with its official languages obligations.

Recommendation 3: That the managers of the 15 priority programs and services identified in the IC Action Plan 2004-2008 on Section 41 of *Official Languages Act*,

be responsible for providing data on communities of interest and the official language of clientele served in these programs and services.

Recommendation 4: That the co-ordinators designated in each program to support the national co-ordination team hold meetings more frequently.

Recommendation 5: That IC continue its internal awareness and external communications activities and explore the possibility of broadening the range of IC programs and services that are being promoted.



1.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a formative evaluation of the implementation of two initiatives by Industry Canada (IC): the Action Plan 2004–2008 on Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*; and the Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities (EDOLMC) component of the Government of Canada’s Action Plan for Official Languages. The evaluation was conducted by Goss Gilroy, Inc from February to June 2006.



2.0 Background

This section first presents an overview of the backgrounds of the EDOLMC component and IC’s Action Plan 2004–2008. It then explains the objectives and how each of the two initiatives is to be carried out.

2.1 General Background

Linguistic duality has long been a defining characteristic of Canadian society. Ever since Canada’s founding in 1867, its languages have influenced the way Canadians see themselves and are perceived by the other nations of the world.

Over the years, the federal government has taken on the duty of promoting linguistic duality. To understand the legal foundation for the obligations of the federal government, it is necessary to go back to the *Constitution Act* of 1867 and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. These fundamental laws guarantee the equality of status of English and French within the institutions of Parliament and the Government of Canada, and grant language rights to all Canadians.¹

To ensure the full implementation of these constitutional rights, Parliament passed the *Official Languages Act* in 1969. The *Act* was amended in 1988 to clarify the obligations of federal institutions. The scope of the 1988 *Act* was broadened, most notably through the adoption of Section 41, which sets out the government’s commitment to “enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.”²

In spite of this consolidated legal framework, official language minority communities are showing worrisome signs of decline: lower demographic weight, chronic

¹ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Official Languages in Canada: Taking On the New Challenge, Annual Report 2005-2006*, p 26.

² In 2005, the *Official Languages Act* was strengthened by Bill S-3. Federal institutions are required to put in place “positive measures” to enhance the vitality of English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and foster the full recognition and use of both English and French and Canadian society.

unemployment, weakening sense of belonging and migration toward urban centres, to name but a few.³

In recent years, with a view to better supporting the implementation of the Canadian language system, the federal government has adopted a number of key measures. In 2003, it announced a five-year plan entitled *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality – The Action Plan for Official Languages*. IC is one of the departments that must play a role in implementing the plan, particularly with respect to the economic development of official language minority communities (thus the EDOLMC acronym).

Over the years, the federal government has also adopted a departmental accountability framework for the implementation of Part VII (including Section 41) of the *Official Languages Act*. The departmental framework decrees that designated federal institutions must consult official language communities to develop an action plan, which must then be submitted to the Department of Canadian Heritage. IC is one of the 34 federal institutions covered by the federal accountability framework on the implementation of Section 41.⁴ Since that time, the Department has been drawing up action plans, including the one for the period of 2004 through 2008.⁵

An initial evaluation of the implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* was conducted by IC in 2001. This study concluded that:

- IC managers had very limited awareness of OLMC needs and a limited understanding of the Department's official languages commitments, although the level of awareness was on the rise owing to awareness campaigns.
- Considerable progress had been made with respect to integrating Section 41 into program and service development.
- The approach and national and regional co-ordination team, the official languages champion concept, awareness campaigns within the Department, the

³ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Official Languages in Canada: Taking On the New Challenge, Annual Report 2005–2006*, p 25. See also *Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF), Economic Development of Official Language Minority Communities*, Industry Canada, July 2003, p 2.

⁴ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Official Languages in Canada: Taking On the New Challenge, Annual Report 2005–2006*, p 6.

⁵ Industry Canada, *Action Plan 2004–2008. Implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act*.

Francommunautés virtuelles Program and the Department's participation in the Year of La Francophonie activities were key factors in the implementation.

- IC's approach of taking stock of OLMC needs was a good start but ultimately insufficient, as it was not systematic or based on the specific needs of the regions.
- The implementation of Section 41 had not been sufficiently integrated into the Department's mandate and operations, and some Department official languages objectives exceeded the Department's mandate and the capacity of its key programs and services.
- IC programs and services were poorly understood and little used by OLMCs.
- IC was not investing enough resources to achieve the desired results.
- Integrating Section 41 into operations in the regions remained difficult.

It was recommended that:

- A systematic, ongoing consultation approach be developed to define OLMC needs in each region.
- A departmental Section 41 implementation strategy be developed in which the Department's vision and OLMC measures would be clearly articulated.
- The structure and roles of the Department's key stakeholders be defined.
- The evaluation framework and expected results be reviewed.
- More resources be invested in the implementation, particularly with respect to increasing resources in the regions.
- An internal and external awareness strategy and tools be developed.
- Results monitoring and reporting mechanisms be put in place.

The following sections provide details on IC's role with respect to each of the two initiatives that are the subject of this evaluation.

2.2 EDOLMC Component

Launched in 2003, the Action Plan for Official Languages is a broad government initiative aimed at adding new momentum to the linguistic duality of official language minority communities. The plan is spread out over five years and involves an

investment of over \$750 million, of which \$33 million is earmarked for the economic development of OLMCs.⁶

The EDOLMC component includes the following activities:

- Outreach, communications and counselling (\$8M).
- Internships in minority environments (Youth Internship Program) (\$2M).
- Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects (\$10M).
- Extension of the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program (\$13M).⁷

The outreach, communications and counselling services are provided by IC and FedNor. The *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program is administered by IC. The internships and pilot projects are provided by RDAs, namely the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec (CED), Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario (FedNor) and the Department of Western Economic Diversification (WD).⁸

Memoranda of Understanding between IC and each of the RDAs define the role of RDAs in implementing the EDOLMC components. RDAs are primarily responsible for establishing requirements for internships, seeking and evaluating applications, managing internship agreements and carrying out pilot projects.⁹

FedNor is an exception, however, insofar as the organization has reached an agreement with the IC regional office for the joint management, in partnership, of the EDOLMC components. FedNor and the Ontario regional office jointly administer the Tele-Learning Pilot Project initiative. FedNor's programs already include a Youth Internship Program for Northern Ontario. The management of this component is therefore entrusted to the IC regional office, which has reached an agreement with the

⁶ Government of Canada, *The Next Act: New Momentum for Canada's Linguistic Duality – Action Plan for Official Languages*, pp 74-75.

⁷ Source: ProAction41 site, http://icweb.ic.gc.ca/epic/intranet/icpa41-pa41.nsf/en/h_pa00221e.html

⁸ Industry Canada, *Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF), Economic Development of the Official Language Minority Communities*, July 2003, p 7.

⁹ *Memorandum of Understanding Between Industry Canada and Western Economic Diversification Canada: Program Delivery for the Economic Development of the Official Languages Minority Communities*, January 28, 2004.

Chambre économique de l'Ontario to ensure the implementation of the Youth Internship Program.

However, it should be noted that even though RDAs are responsible for implementing internships and pilot projects, IC remains responsible for these components and must report on all EDOLMC achievements to the Official Languages Secretariat. For that reason, the components have been included in this evaluation.

2.2.1 Department's General Objectives for the EDOLMC Component

The Department's programs and services are intended to achieve the following immediate results for the EDOLMC component of the Action Plan for Official Languages:

- **Outreach, Communication and Counselling**
 - Increase in program information and advice availability; heightened program opportunities and benefits awareness among OLMC businesses, consumers, associations and others to help them participate in the knowledge-based economy.
 - Greater use of government programs and information by OLMCs.
- **Internships**
 - Skills training and work experience in the language of choice.
 - Enhanced management and business practices (particularly in the areas of engineering, communications technology, business administration and research) in the language of choice.
 - Increased opportunities to work in the language of choice.
- **Pilot Projects**
 - Increase in partnerships.
 - Expansion in availability of content and applications for Tele-Learning and Tele-Training.
 - Demonstrations of the feasibility of increasing access to leading edge technologies and services.
- ***Francommunautés virtuelles***
 - Increase in Francophone e-content, Web applications and on-line services, information and communications technology (ICT) skills and partnerships and networking among Francophones in Canada.

- Increase in uptake and use of the Internet and in support and creation of Francophone e-networks.¹⁰

In addition to these EDOLMC-related objectives, *Francommunautés virtuelles* is also intended to achieve the following general objectives:

- Encourage ICT development and use in Francophone and Acadian communities throughout the country in order to bridge the digital divide in Canada.
- Create and promote networks of Web sites by expanding co-operation and partnership within Canada's Francophone and Acadian organizations, with the aim of contributing to the socio-economic and cultural development of their communities.
- Develop French-language Web applications, content and services, and make them visible and available through major Canadian portals, including government portals.¹¹

2.2.2 Expected Results

The initiative is accompanied by a results-based management and accountability framework that provides details on the logic model and performance measurement, evaluation and reporting strategies.

Program activities are aimed at achieving the following intermediate results:¹²

- Increase in OLMC participation in existing federal economic development programs.
- Increase in the number of skilled workers, new or enhanced businesses and the adoption of emerging technologies through youth employment in OLMCs.

¹⁰ Industry Canada, *Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF), Economic Development of the Official Language Minority Communities*, July 2003, p 5.

¹¹ http://francommunautes.ic.gc.ca/apropos_e.asp

¹² Industry Canada, *Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF), Economic Development of the Official Language Minority Communities*, July 2003, p 10.

- New businesses or business expansions in OLMCs.
- Increased OLMC participation in the knowledge-based economy.

Lastly, these results must lead to positive changes in the following areas:

- Enhanced community potential.
- Economic growth and job creation.
- Community viability and autonomy.
- Development and diversification of local OLMC economies.

2.2.3 Implementation Mechanisms – Program Components and Elements

The Department has put in place some basic program and service delivery building blocks on which OLMC economic development is based. The building blocks are:¹³

- ***Institution building*** to provide information and advice for OLMCs to maximize their participation in available government programs (associated with IC's Outreach, communication and counselling program component).
- ***Rural and community development*** to create job opportunities in such areas as business management and information technology. This enables young people to remain in their communities by creating partnerships with private sector companies and community organizations (associated with RDA Youth Internship Program component).
- ***Participation in the new economy*** to provide access to cutting edge technologies, particularly by extending the *Francommunautés virtuelles* program (associated with the IC *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program component and the RDA Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Project initiative).¹⁴

¹³ Ibid, p 3.

¹⁴ The *Francommunautés virtuelles* program has been extended by offering internships in companies, improving access to on-line services, and allowing communities to benefit from existing economic development programs.

Table 1

EDOLMC Program Components

Component	Aspect	Description	Resources
Creation of institutions	<i>Outreach, communication and counselling (IC)</i>	Provide information and advisory services for consumers, enterprises and associations concerning existing programs and services, eligibility criteria for funded programs and the best steps to take for each OLMC's specific situation. These services are aimed at helping these communities better understand innovation and adopt new procedures and products to improve their export capacity.	\$8M
Rural and community development	<i>Youth Internship (RDAs)</i>	This program is being jointly delivered in Ontario by the Ontario Regional Office and FedNor, and in the other regions by the RDAs. The program consists of work experience projects to promote the hiring and training of minority language young people from the OLMCs in their minority language, in francophone communities outside of Quebec and anglophone communities in Quebec. The purpose of the program is to help increase the number of qualified workers and new or improved enterprises and promote the adoption of new technologies.	\$2M
Participation in the new economy	<i>Francomunautés virtuelles (IC)</i>	Initiative aimed at encouraging the country's French-speaking and Acadian communities to develop networks and partnerships to enable them to develop and submit projects encouraging French-language Internet use, Web application content and on-line services.	\$13M
	<i>Tele-Learning and Tele-Training pilot project initiative (RDAs)</i>	This initiative is run jointly by the Ontario Regional Office and FedNor and by the RDAs in other areas of the country. These are distance learning and training pilot projects to provide access to state-of-the-art technology and service provided using technology. The purpose of these projects is to stimulate OLMC participation in the knowledge economy by increasing tele-learning content and applications. IC used existing infrastructure to launch projects in partnership with universities, colleges, the private sector and non-profit community organizations that primarily serve OLMCs. Partners are encouraged to contribute at least 10% of project costs (minimum \$2 million investment over five years).	\$10M

2.3 The IC Action Plan 2004–2008

The IC Action Plan 2004–2008 consists of a series of measures taken by the Department to support the implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*. The plan was preceded by an extensive consultation process during which views were collected from both official language minority communities and key departmental stakeholders.¹⁵

Unlike the EDOLMC component, the Action Plan 2004–2008 pertains to IC only. The RDAs (WD, ACOA and CED) have their own Section 41 implementation plans.¹⁶

2.3.1 General Action Plan 2004–2008 Objectives

In accordance with its mandate and the federal government’s Action Plan for Official Languages, the Department’s mission with respect to implementing Section 41 is as follows:

- Make departmental programs and services more accessible to OLMCs, thereby supporting their participation in the economic development of Canada in the minority language.¹⁷

In carrying out this mission, the Department has four general objectives:

- Establish lasting working relations between IC and the OLMCs and the organizations that represent them.
- Provide information and services related to economic development that are useful to the OLMCs.
- Facilitate community access to departmental programs and services.

¹⁵ Industry Canada, *Action Plan 2004–2008. Implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act*, p 4.

¹⁶ Ibid, p 7.

¹⁷ Ibid, p 6.

- Increase community participation in departmental programs and services.¹⁸

2.3.2 Expected Results

The IC Action Plan 2004–2008 is intended to achieve three immediate results:

- Enhanced understanding of the requirements of Section 41 by senior officers and managers of priority programs.
- Enhanced working relations between OLMC organizations and the Department.

Increased understanding of the Department’s programs and services by OLMCs.¹⁹

Achieving these three direct results will lead to two intermediate results and one final result. The intermediate results are:

- Enhanced participation by OLMCs in the departmental programs and services that are most likely to contribute to their vitality.
- An increase in the use of knowledge-based resources that promote the vitality of OLMCs.

These results will lead to “An increase in the contribution of OLMCs to Canada’s economic development.”²⁰

2.3.3 Implementation Mechanisms

Since Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* involves all IC programs, the Department has chosen to organize its Action Plan around three priority action areas: internal awareness, enhanced community participation in IC programs and services and ongoing OLMC consultations.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid, p 7.

¹⁹ Ibid, p 12.

²⁰ Ibid, p 13.

²¹ Ibid, p. 13.

- **Internal awareness** – The Department has developed three approaches directed toward enhancing knowledge of IC’s role and obligations toward its managers and development officers. The purpose of this action area also involves promoting communication between the Department and OLMCs.
- **Enhanced community participation in IC programs and services** – The Department is employing a variety of measures in conjunction with the communities and economic development-related community organizations with respect to their priorities and the Department’s new initiatives, policies and programs.
- **Ongoing OLMC consultations** – With the help of regional advisors and co-ordinators, this action area will be used to inform OLMCs about departmental programs and services. It also includes annual formal consultations with the communities during IC departmental consultations and Privy Council Office consultations, as well as the Department’s participation in a number of joint and interdepartmental committees.

In developing its Section 41 Action Plan 2004–2008, the Department identified *15 priority programs* whose contribution to implementing the above action areas would be particularly crucial:

- FedNor Programs
- Community Access Program
- Broadband Services
- Student Connections
- Computers for Schools
- Canada’s SchoolNet
- Canada–Ontario Infrastructure Program
- Canada–Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund
- Canada Business Service Centres
- Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) in Ontario
- Information/Information Technology Management
- Language Industry
- CommunAction.ca
- *Francommunautés virtuelles*

- Youth Internship Program (implemented by the RDAs)
- Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects (implemented by the RDAs)



3.0 Evaluation Objectives and Scope

The purpose of this evaluation is to comply with Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat requirements as specified in the EDOLMC *Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF)* and with performance requirements identified in the IC Action Plan.

The evaluation focuses on two separate initiatives: the IC Action Plan 2004–2008 and the EDOLMC component of the federal government’s Action Plan for Official Languages.²² Different activity or program components were implemented for each of these initiatives. Some components intersect, as the table below shows.

Table 2

Program Components Evaluated

Components	EDOLMC	Action Plan 2004–2008
Participation in the new economy		
• <i>Francommunautés virtuelles</i>	X	X
• Tele-Learning and Tele-Training	X	
Rural and community development		
• Youth Internship Program	X	
Institution building		
• Outreach, communication and counselling for OLMCs	X	X
Enhancing community participation (Web sites and other IC programs)		X
Enhancing internal awareness		X

The evaluation of both initiatives focusses on the 2004–2005 and 2005–2006 fiscal years.

²² The evaluation involves only those EDOLMC components for which IC is responsible. It does not involve the activities of regional development agencies (RDAs) except in relation to their partnership role in implementing activities for which IC is responsible. This evaluation component also excludes the Language Industry Initiative, which was evaluated separately.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Evaluation Questions

This study answers the following evaluation questions, as indicated in the Evaluation Terms of Reference:

- **Relevance:** To what extent are the initiatives (including their activities, programs and services) still relevant and appropriate?
- **Relevance:** To what extent do the initiatives (including their activities, programs and services) meet the needs of the stakeholders?
- **Relevance:** What changes do you propose as a way of improving the initiative?
- **Development/implementation:** To what extent were the development and implementation of the initiatives satisfactory? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Areas for improvement? Suggested changes?
- **Development/implementation:** To what extent is the co-ordination of initiatives satisfactory? How could the decision-making structures be improved?
- **Results:** To what extent are the initiatives achieving or have they achieved the expected results?
- **Results:** What factors furthered and/or slowed the implementation/progress of the initiatives?
- **Results:** To what extent did the initiative reach its intended clientele? Raise awareness?
- **Lessons learned:** What are the lessons learned?
- **Cost-effectiveness:** To what extent was the initiative cost-effective? Do you have any suggestions for improving cost-effectiveness?

4.2 Methods

The data used in this study were primarily gathered using the following five methods:

- An examination of program documents and data. **Appendix A** of this report contains a list of documents obtained and examined.
- Interviews with key representatives concerning all the components of the study (n=39). **Appendix B** contains a list of people interviewed.

- Discussion groups composed of five or six OLMC representatives in each of the following cities: Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Sudbury, Montreal and Moncton (n=6). **Appendix C** contains summaries of the discussions.
- Interviews with Youth Internship Program clients (n=7). **Appendix D** contains a list of people interviewed.
- The development of project profiles for the Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects (n=5). **Appendix E** contains a list of project profile reports.

Appendix F contains interview guides and the protocol used for discussion groups.

Appendix G contains a table linking the various data gathering methods to each of the questions examined.

4.3 Limitations

This formative evaluation has a number of limitations with respect to its methodological approach and scope.

First, the EDOLMC program components are clearly defined and thus easier to evaluate, while the number of program components targeted by the IC Action Plan 2004–2008 is high (15). The large number of programs precluded a detailed examination of each one.

Second, the methods used in this study provided only indirect access to the ultimate beneficiaries of the initiatives through OLMC representatives. We were not able to consult other types of regional advisor/co-ordinator service users (such as entrepreneurs) because no list of users exists and it is difficult to develop a survey tool to consult a large number of individuals with a variety of needs who received a broad range of services. We also could not consult users of other IC services, such as Student Connections, Computers for Schools, Community Access Centres, etc, because the administrative databases of these programs are rarely designed to identify users based on membership in a linguistic community.

In consultation with the Consultative Committee for this study, we concluded it would be premature to attempt to consult the final beneficiaries of the Youth Internship Program (the interns), the Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects (the

students), and the new *Francommunautés virtuelles* projects (2005 competition), as these initiatives were implemented too recently to have had measurable effects on EDOLMC activities.

We also examined the possibility of contacting all the organizations listed in the database of groups taking part in OLMC development.²³ In the end, this option was rejected because the database in question is not limited to organizations that received funding from IC or took part in departmental consultations or activities, making it difficult to gauge their knowledge of the Department and their ability to attribute results to the initiatives being evaluated.

Lastly, the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program was not examined in detail in this evaluation despite the substantial investment made and the fact that it is the only IC program (apart from EDOLMC activities and the CommunAction.ca and ProAction41 sites) designed specifically for OLMCs. This decision was made because a specific evaluation of this program is planned for 2006–2007.

²³ See Ronald Bisson et Associé.e.s. *Ébauche. Rapport descriptif de la base de données de tous les groupes participant au développement des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire*, February 28, 2005.

5.0 Evaluation Findings

The evaluation results in this section are presented in the order of the evaluation questions. For each evaluation question, we examine the key IC program components pertaining to official languages, namely:

- Outreach, communication and counselling activities for OLMCs (EDOLMC and Action Plan 2004–2008).
- Internal awareness activities (Action Plan 2004–2008).
- *Francommunautés virtuelles* (EDOLMC and Action Plan 2004–2008).
- Tele-Training and Tele-Learning (EDOLMC).
- Youth Internship Program (EDOLMC).
- Web sites and other IC programs (Action Plan 2004–2008).

5.1 Relevance

This section answers the following evaluation questions:

- To what extent are the initiatives (including their activities, programs and services) relevant and appropriate?
- To what extent do the initiatives (including their activities, programs and services) meet the needs of the stakeholders?
- What changes do you propose to improve the initiatives?

5.1.1 Compatibility with Government Priorities

IC and government priorities

Most of the stakeholders consulted within the Department feel that both the Action Plan 2004–2008 and EDOLMC are compatible with governmental and departmental priorities. First, the Action Plan 2004–2008 directly meets the requirements of Section 41, which requires the designated departments to consult OLMCs and develop an action plan. It is also particularly compatible with IC's sustainable communities strategic priority.

Economic development is both a governmental and departmental priority, and EDOLMC activities stem directly from the federal Action Plan for Official Languages with respect to OLMC economic development. EDOLMC activities pertaining to technology and succession planning are particularly important economic development levers.

However, some degree of uncertainty exists within the Department with respect to the new governmental priorities and, consequently, those of the Department. The new government's position on renewing the federal Action Plan after 2008 has yet to be announced; the future of ministers' and deputy ministers' official languages committees hangs in the balance.

Moreover, Bill S-3, *An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act (Promotion of English and French)*, which came into effect November 24, 2005, has resulted in changes to the official languages obligations of federal institutions. Most notably, federal institutions are now responsible for putting in place positive measures to implement their commitment to enhancing the vitality of English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting their development. Moreover, federal institutions that fail to meet their obligations under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*²⁴ leave themselves open to lawsuits before the Federal Court.²⁵

The tangible impact of these legal changes on IC has yet to be established. However, we have noted that the Department is currently meeting the requirements set out in section 17 of the official languages accountability and co-ordination framework in the Action Plan for Official Languages (2003). IC is already putting in place activities to:

- Raise employee awareness of community needs.
- Determine if its policies and programs are having an effect on linguistic duality and community development.
- Consult the clients in question.
- Be able to describe the steps taken.

²⁴ Justice Canada PowerPoint presentation prepared for the annual meeting of IC program regional advisors and co-ordinators, February 2006.

²⁵ However, complaints must first be heard by the Commissioner for Official Languages. Legal proceedings may be instituted once he has handed down his conclusions and recommendations or declined to investigate.

- Submit results and develop results evaluation mechanisms.²⁶

Potential for overlapping

In general, consulted departmental and RDA stakeholders do not feel that IC activities as part of its Action Plan 2004–2008 or the EDOLMC overlap the activities of other departments or organizations. First of all, it was emphasized that IC offers few programs directed specifically at OLMCs, which reduced the chances of overlapping.

With respect to EDOLMC program components, FedNor has its own Northern Ontario internship program, management of which was turned over to the IC regional office. FedNor works in partnership with the IC regional office to implement its Internship Program and those of the Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

It might initially appear that there is some overlap between the Youth Internship Program and the Internship Program run by Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).²⁷ However, the EDOLMC program is aimed at a more targeted clientele, namely young graduates (having completed their studies less than three years previously), and provides internships in the minority language.

Memoranda of Understanding ensure that there is no overlap between IC and RDA activities. However, RDA mandates and areas of activity and those of IC regional advisors/co-ordinators seem to generate confusion among OLMC representatives who participated in the discussion groups. Some participants tend to confuse activities stemming from IC's mandate with those of the RDAs.

Some departmental stakeholders expressed doubts about the relevance of the CommunAction.ca Web site. The site was designed in 2003 to provide OLMCs with

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The HRSDC Youth Employment Strategy provides funding for employers to help post-secondary graduates obtain career-related work opportunities in Canada to support their development of advanced skills, to help them make career-related links to the job market, and to assist them in becoming leaders in their field. The HRSDC Skills Link Program provides funding for community organizations to help young people aged 15 to 30 who are facing barriers to employment – such as single parents, Aboriginal youth, young persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, youth living in rural and remote areas and high school dropouts – develop the broad range of skills, knowledge and work experience they need to participate in the job market.
<http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/epb/yi/yep/newprog/yesprograms.shtml&hs=eic>

information on IC and RDA programs and services. However, it is little known or used (according to OLMC representatives), and it duplicates information already available on similar sites, such as the Canadian Heritage site on official languages. Some participants suggested creating a site shared by all designated departments that would make all the information for OLMC use available in one spot.²⁸ This idea was part of the initial project, but so far, informal discussions with other departments have failed to yield concrete results. It should be noted, however, that the IC Achievement Report 2004–2005 shows a clear increase in the number of visitors to the site, which rose from 3,000 in 2004 to 8,076 in 2005.²⁹ However, it is impossible to determine how many of those visitors were OLMC members.

Similarly, it has been suggested that the OLMC consultations required of the designated departments be consolidated to eliminate work duplication, reduce the impact on the communities, and promote the integration of government response to the needs expressed by the communities. It should be noted, however, that the RDAs already take part in IC's annual consultations.

5.1.2 Compatibility with OLMC Needs

The EDOLMC components (regional advisors, *Francommunautés virtuelles*, pilot projects and Youth Internship) are all generally considered relevant by OLMC representatives who took part in the discussion groups. The Youth Internship Program in particular meets the communities' need to groom the next generation of workers in the minority language. For example, the internships offered through the *Chambre économique de l'Ontario* help to ensure succession planning by enabling young Franco-Ontarians to gain experience in business management and the integration of information and communications technologies. Overall, the internships provide relevant experiences for young people and enable them to build networks in their own language community. According to representatives of the organizations consulted, without these internships, most interns would have been forced to seek work experience in the majority language or move to major urban centres to find work in their own language.

²⁸ Not everyone agrees with this idea; one respondent pointed out that each department has to maintain its own site, as all the departments are accountable under Section 41.

²⁹ Industry Canada, *Achievement Report 2004–2005. Implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act*, p 15.

The Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects are seen as having a narrower focus, as they are primarily known by educational institutions. However, it should be noted that the pilot projects were only recently implemented and that their outreach to OLMCs likely has yet to make itself felt. It is also possible that OLMC members are not aware of this program's role in some of the tele-learning and tele-training initiatives in their community, as it was never publicized by the RDAs owing to its status as a one-time pilot initiative.

Francommunautés virtuelles, together with the Community Access Program, was most often cited by discussion group participants as being helpful to the OLMCs. However, some IC representatives have expressed doubts about whether there is still a need for this program, which was launched in 1998. Others feel the program has evolved over time to meet changing needs and is still doing so. Early on, cultural/associative projects were primarily needed, while today, the economic projects that are needed are more in line with IC's mandate. Consultations with regional advisors/co-ordinators and RDA representatives have shown that most of the organizations that received support from the program to build Web sites and portals are now faced with having to maintain them without government financial support. In response to this challenge, *Francommunautés virtuelles* covers only 50% of project expenses and asks the organizations to submit a financial plan and a strategy for maintaining the Web site or portal. This criterion ensures the diversification of funding sources.

With respect to general IC programs, most respondents expressed the observations that follow. First, most stakeholders consulted are familiar with the Community Access Program and consider it relevant; however, the uncertainty as to its renewal is creating concern and anxiety in the communities. Also, broadband services are still a necessity in some rural and remote communities that are not yet connected to the Internet.

Some discussion groups questioned the relevance of the Computers for Schools Program. The obsolete equipment provided and problems associated with upgrading it are some of the factors that explain the program's inadequacy. Other OLMC representatives, particularly those from Sudbury (Ontario) and in Quebec, felt the program was still making a vital contribution.

Lastly, a number of program and service components are unknown or poorly known. This is true of the Language Industry Program and the CommunAction.ca Web site, which has never been the subject of a promotional campaign. However, these services are more recent than the programs discussed previously.

5.1.3 Unmet Needs/Suggested Changes

A number of OLMC representatives expressed the general opinion that IC programs are not sufficiently tailored to the needs of community groups. A number of representatives felt that IC was not a real presence in their community. Several would like to see more flexible funding mechanisms and greater awareness and understanding on the part of public servants with respect to the situations of official language minority communities.

Community needs that remain unmet, as expressed by discussion groups participants and representatives of national agencies (the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA)*, Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN), Community Table and the *Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE)* Canada), centre on the following areas:

- Labour shortages and the exodus of young people from rural areas. A number of discussion groups expressed the need to promote the benefits of life in these communities. “We need social marketing.”
- Greater recognition on the part of IC of the economic role of community organizations. “There has to be a broader definition or notion of economic development—one that would include the concept of a social economy.”
- Better support for new arrivals, particularly with respect to learning the two official languages.
- Promotion of cultural tourism.
- Improved support for small and medium-sized enterprises.
- Easier access to IC programs for OLMC community organizations.

According to RDÉE Canada, IC’s economic development strategy for the communities is limited to putting information and consultation services in place; these “cannot replace a genuine economic development strategy within that Department”, and the Department should establish a synergistic partnership with the

RDÉEs.³⁰ They constitute a Canada-wide network dedicated to optimizing the economic potential of Francophone and Acadian communities by providing a variety of services to support the creation of sustainable enterprises and employment. RDÉE Canada brings together representatives from the business world and economic development organizations in every province and territory outside Quebec.³¹

The idea of greater community group involvement in the IC program and project planning processes has also been recommended by the Quebec Community Table, which works with the 11 Community Economic Development and Employability Committees (CEDECs). These are regional committees set up in Quebec by the National Human Resources Development Committee for the English Linguistic Minority Community. The CEDECs are comprised of volunteers and provide a link between the National Committee, the Community Table, and members of Quebec's Anglophone community. Their mandate is to promote and co-ordinate action in their communities by organizing mobilization events and capacity-building activities within their communities.³² It should be noted, however, that Community Table representatives have recognized the substantial benefits of the creation of a full-time regional advisor position and visits by this advisor to all the CEDECs.

The FCFA has suggested creating a joint committee with IC to ensure better information sharing, which would improve IC programs and better meet OLMC needs.

These concerns have resonated with many of the IC representatives consulted. They also felt that IC programs are aimed more at large businesses and are therefore poorly tailored to the needs of OLMC small enterprises and community organizations. They also noted that IC's definition of economic development could be broadened to include the notion of a social economy: a number of community organizations create jobs, even if their purpose is not strictly economic.

³⁰ RDÉE Canada. *Document de réaction à la comparution d'Industrie Canada devant le comité parlementaire sur les langues officielles*. Undated.

³¹ ProAction41 site, http://icweb.ic.gc.ca/epic/intranet/icpa41-pa41.nsf/en/h_pa00011e.html

³² Ibid.

In general, IC delivers very few programs aimed specifically at OLMCs, and all the stakeholders consulted agree that programs intended for Canadian communities as a whole are poorly adapted to the specific economic development needs of OLMCs.

Two stakeholders suggested that the Department create a program for OLMCs similar to that for Aboriginal communities (Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy).

Lastly, a number of respondents pointed out the need to address shortcomings in services in Eastern, Central and Southern Ontario caused by the lack of RDAs responsible for those areas. According to the respondents, Northern Ontario is generally well served by FedNor. The rest of the province falls within the purview of the regional IC office in Toronto. Existing program components and service delivery mechanisms are not tailored to current needs, particularly those of immigrants.

5.2 Development/Implementation

This section answers the following evaluation questions:

- To what extent are development and implementation of the initiatives satisfactory? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Areas for improvement? Suggested changes?
- To what extent is the co-ordination of initiatives satisfactory? How could the decision-making structures be improved?

5.2.1 Co-ordination of Initiatives

A national co-ordination team has been set up to oversee the implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* at IC. The team, which reports to the Director General, Operations and Small Business Financing Branch, co-ordinates activities aimed at OLMCs and provides a link between Department managers, other federal departments and national OLMC representatives.³³ In addition to maintaining the CommunAction.ca and ProAction41 sites, the team identifies unmet needs and approves one-time projects that meet them and that could benefit from funding by the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official Language Communities (IPOLC). The

³³ Ibid.

national co-ordination team and regional advisors and co-ordinators hold monthly conference calls and meet in person at least once a year.

The work of the national co-ordination team was identified as one of the strengths of the implementation of IC official language initiatives. The vision, leadership, commitment and support provided by the co-ordination team are valued by the regional advisors/co-ordinators. The consultations with OLMC carried out in recent years are perceived as having led to a better understanding of the work of officers in the regions and better equipping them to perform their functions with OLMC representatives.

The regional advisors/co-ordinators have nonetheless identified two areas where they need more support from the national co-ordination team. First, they are still waiting for promotional tools and additional information on existing IC programs and services to support their counselling and information work with the OLMCs. This need has been recognized by the national co-ordination team: at the annual meeting of regional advisors and co-ordinators and IC managers in February 2006, a workshop focussed on the specific identification of their internal and external communication support needs. A strategy was developed and will be implemented during the 2006–2007 fiscal year.

A number of regional advisors/co-ordinators also said they needed to be better equipped with respect to ongoing monitoring of their achievements to make it easier for them to gauge the impact of their activities on their target clientele.

5.2.2 Initiative Implementation and Delivery Structure

Regional co-ordinators and advisors are responsible for implementing Section 41 in their respective regions. At the regional level, they co-ordinate initiatives aimed at OLMCs and provide a link with IC managers and program officers in their region. They also liaise with the RDAs. The role of full-time regional advisors is to provide information for OLMCs and IC managers on the Department's responsibilities with respect to official languages and IC programs and services likely to affect OLMCs.³⁴

³⁴ ProAction41 site, <http://icweb.ic.gc.ca/epic/intranet/icpa41-pa41.nsf/en/pa00057e.html>

Outreach, communication and counselling for OLMCs

EDOLMC activities generally started off very gradually and were only implemented recently, in spite of the 2003 announcement of the initiative. This slow start is attributed to the time required to put in place the structures needed to implement the activities (ie, hiring full-time advisors in the regions and developing co-operation agreements with the RDAs) and to the lack of resources to fulfill the “counselling” aspect of their mandate, which requires more energy than the “information” function. In general, advisors were able to carry out their activities steadily over the past year. Also, the midterm report on the implementation of the federal government’s Action Plan for Official Languages made public in 2005 concluded that the structures required for implementation were now in place and that it was “well under way and should pick up speed from now on.”³⁵

It was universally acknowledged that the network of advisors and co-ordinators was an essential and necessary step to ensuring the development of a network that would meet OLMC needs. It was noted, however, that knowledge levels varied from province to province and that economic development needs therefore vary greatly from region to region. For example, Anglophones in more remote areas of the Lower North Shore often depend on the services of other departments such as Canadian Heritage, Fisheries and Oceans and Health Canada. Advisors and co-ordinators play a key role in meeting OLMC needs, but they require more flexible funding tools and a wider array of programs and services. Advisors and co-ordinators would like to be able to distribute venture capital-type funding, for example, to help individuals from minority communities start businesses.

Role of RDAs

The IC representatives consulted felt the role assigned to RDAs in implementing EDOLMC program components was effective. Similarly, relations between IC and the RDAs, while not always clearly understood by OLMC representatives (particularly in Quebec), did not seem to present any major problem. The two organizations have signed memoranda of understanding to divide up the roles.

³⁵ Government of Canada. *Update on the Implementation of the Action Plan for Official Languages – Midterm Report*. 2005, p 2.

It should be noted that in British Columbia, one person fulfills the roles of both regional advisor and WD representative. This dual role is a good way to ensure effective communication between IC and the RDA, but it also involves the risk of creating confusion among OLMCs concerning the respective roles of each institution and the attribution of results to one or the other.

Lastly, OLMC representatives in the Sudbury area felt that FedNor officers were unfamiliar with IC programs and therefore did not consistently promote them. It should be noted that FedNor has its own range of programs and does not offer IC programs, which may explain why the officers rarely promote them. Moreover, FedNor's mandate does not include the explicit function of promoting IC programs, and the organization does not receive any budget envelope to enable it to do such promotional work.

In spite of these challenges, a number of IC and RDA respondents pointed out that FedNor has a wider range of programs and services to offer the communities and greater presence in the regions: since they are already responsible for implementing two EDOLMC programs, they might be better positioned to receive EDOLMC funds should the federal Action Plan be renewed.

Pilot Projects

The Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Project Program was generally implemented as planned. The educational institutions approached by the RDAs to develop these pilot projects rose to the challenge and generally had little difficulty finding partners and additional sources of funding.

Quebec is the exception. The implementation of the program was slower in Quebec, and the eligibility criteria had to be amended to make allowances for the province's jurisdiction over education. Originally, the program was intended to provide educational institutions across the country with funds for the pilot projects. However, in Quebec, these establishments were not allowed to receive funds from the federal government. The terms of the program therefore had to be altered to enable community organizations to be approached to implement the projects. Moreover, in Western Canada, the program is managed by WD. This becomes a problem when it

comes to projects covering the Yukon and the territories, as WD is confined to provinces in Western Canada.

Program participants, RDA representatives and regional advisors/co-ordinators are concerned over the uncertainty of the funding allocated for this component. Some pilot projects were designed in several phases, in the expectation that subsequent phases would be carried out when IC funding was renewed.

Lastly, IC representatives noted that the funding allocated for the pilot projects and Youth Internship Program is identical in each of the five regions (Pacific, Prairie, Quebec, Ontario and Atlantic) regardless of the proportion of OLMC members in each of the regions. It should be noted, however, that this arrangement for the two EDOLMC programs was part of the budget parameters set out in the federal Action Plan for Official Languages.

Youth Internship Program

According to interviews conducted with organizations that received funds under the program, Youth Internship Program implementation varies widely from region to region. Each region was allocated an annual budget of \$200,000 to fund internships. These amounts were allocated differently by region. The internships varied in length from a few months to two years. According to one interviewed participant, it takes close to two years to integrate an intern into organization operations, and internships of shorter duration are not as beneficial.

Given the program's limited budget and uncertain future, the RDAs did not promote it to all potential candidates for fear that such promotion would result in excessive demand. Instead, the RDAs targeted specific organizations. To date, 22 internships have been offered in the provinces of Western Canada. In Ontario, the *Chambre économique de l'Ontario* receives funding to administer the program and oversee the placement of 14 young Franco-Ontarian graduates in management or business management internships. In Quebec, Montreal's Youth Employment Services (YES) has received the same mandate to ensure placement of 24 Quebec Anglophone interns in companies and organizations whose language of work is English. According to the program database, no internships have been arranged to date in the Atlantic provinces.

Francommunautés virtuelles

Under the federal government's Action Plan, a total of \$13 million in additional funding was allocated to the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program with a view to helping the program respond to substantial demand for financial support. In the preceding years, the program had only been able to fund 20% of the project proposals received.

The program therefore has a new budget to provide approximately 200 non-refundable contributions over five years, which represent 50% of eligible costs, according to needs expressed by the communities. The contributions are capped at \$250,000 for national projects and \$75,000 for local or regional projects. Three competitions are expected to be held over the program's five-year run.³⁶

The current funding cycle (competition announcement, project submissions, evaluation, reaching of agreements and project execution) anticipates a 9-month duration for regional projects and a 14-month duration for national projects. A complete funding cycle therefore takes 20 months. The most recent cycle ran from 2003 to 2005. A new round of funding was approved in spring 2006 for another 20-month cycle.

The program is also changing its funding criteria to focus on more economically oriented programs with a view to turning technical tools over to the communities (eg, for networking and service delivery activities) as opposed to projects with the cultural or identity affirmation themes that characterized the program in its early stages. The decision to make the shift was taken in consultation with the National *Francommunautés virtuelles* Consultative Committee, which is composed of IC and OLMC representatives from every province and territory. Since the program's inception, the committee has helped to define and review the program's orientations on the basis of OLMC needs and departmental objectives. According to stakeholders consulted within the Department, it would be appropriate to place greater emphasis on

³⁶ Industry Canada, *Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF), Economic Development of the Official Language Minority Communities*, July 2003, p 6.

economic development rather than Francophone content. This dovetails with the Department's sustainable communities strategic objective.³⁷

The challenges reported by OLMC representatives include the complexity of the applications and the competitive nature of the submission process, which makes it impossible to obtain assistance from the program to rework and resubmit rejected applications within the same funding cycle (such applications are eligible for the next round, however). This difficulty is attributed to the high number of applications in relation to the funds available.

Representatives of Quebec's Anglophone communities also feel it is unfair that the program is not offered to Anglophone Quebec. The purpose of the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program, however, is to close the reported gap between Francophone and Acadian OLMCs and Anglophone communities when it comes to participation in the knowledge-based economy. The program does accept applications from Quebec organizations and applications submitted in English, provided their purpose is to develop French-language content or applications for the benefit of Canada's Francophone and Acadian communities.

The additional funds allocated to the program under the Action Plan 2004-2008 have enabled the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program to respond to a greater number of projects or proposals from OLMCs; this has raised the project funding rate from 20% to approximately 50%, while actively contributing to the sustainable economic and community development of the groups in question.

The spinoffs of the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program will be explored in greater detail during a formative evaluation scheduled for 2006–2007.

Awareness activities

In the past four years, a number of activities have been implemented to raise awareness among IC managers with respect to the Department's official languages responsibilities and OLMC needs the programs are expected to address.

³⁷ <http://www.ic.gc.ca/cmb/welcomeic.nsf/ICPages/Mandate>

In 2002, the national co-ordination team launched the first component of a major awareness campaign. About 15 presentations were made to the management committees of key sectors and branches. The ProAction41 site was created to meet information needs identified during the presentations. The second component of the campaign was another series of more closely targeted presentations. A co-ordinator, whose role would be to support the national co-ordination team, was subsequently designated for each of the 15 programs and services identified as priorities in the IC Action Plan 2004–2008. The co-ordinators were expected to take part in internal awareness activities and circulate relevant information. Their role was to help their respective managers incorporate IC official languages responsibilities and OLMC priorities into the program planning, development and implementation process.³⁸ The designated co-ordinators must meet periodically to report on the internal awareness function. According to some IC representatives, these meetings should take place more often if they are to be genuinely effective.

Also with a view to supporting ongoing and ad hoc awareness among the Department’s managers, officers and senior managers, the Action Plan 2004–2008 envisioned the development of a “Section 41 Lens”, ie, an administrative tool that would make it easier to incorporate OLMC priorities into program and service planning, development and implementation.³⁹ The Department of Canadian Heritage asked the federal institutions designated for Section 41 implementation to use a tool like the Section 41 Lens to identify barriers to OLMC access to federal services. A draft of the Lens was developed and submitted to the Department’s senior management⁴⁰ but was not adopted. The document remains in limbo.

Over the last two years, IC has also funded the creation of a database on groups taking part in OLMC development. As a result, 938 groups were identified, including 125 from Quebec’s minority Anglophone community and 813 from Canada’s Francophone and Acadian minority communities.⁴¹ IC also funded a study to quantify

³⁸ Source: ProAction41 site, <http://icweb.ic.gc.ca/epic/intranet/icpa41-pa41.nsf/en/pa00057e.html>

³⁹ Source: ProAction41 site, http://icweb.ic.gc.ca/epic/intranet/icpa41-pa41.nsf/en/h_pa00260e.html

⁴⁰ Ronald Bisson et Associé.e.s. *Development of a lens for Industry Canada initiatives related to the implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act - Proposal for a Section 41 Lens - Draft for validation purposes*. June 6, 2005.

⁴¹ Ronald Bisson et Associé.e.s. *Ébauche. Rapport descriptif de la base de données de tous les groupes participant au développement des communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire*. February 28, 2005.

IC and RDA investments in the OLMCs. A CD-ROM with a map of the OLMCs is also being produced. These tools are intended to help managers better tailor their service offers to OLMCs.

Lastly, the regional advisors/co-ordinators contribute to internal awareness by establishing ties with and making presentations to managers in the regions.

Other IC programs and services

As previously mentioned, both IC and OLMC representatives agree that the range of programs and services provided by IC for OLMCs is extremely limited. Moreover, certain OLMC representatives in some provinces have complained about the inability of some senior IC manager and officers to communicate in French. A number of them claimed to have been forced to communicate in English (orally and in writing) to make themselves understood. In many cases, they must assume the costs of having their correspondence translated. According to IC representatives, this difficulty is perhaps attributable to the fact that a number of IC services are delivered in partnership with other organizations which are not always able to communicate in French.

A number of OLMC representatives have also complained about the slowness of the funding application process, which they described as “burdensome.” Some representatives suggested a mechanism to co-manage IC programs and services with the communities.

5.2.3 Performance Measurement

Current performance measurement mechanisms are fairly rudimentary. The regional advisors/co-ordinators submit annual reports to the national co-ordination team detailing their various activity components. These reports are used to draft the annual report on the Department’s official languages achievements. The annual report is prepared by the national co-ordination team and makes no distinction between EDOLMC and Action Plan 2004–2008 components. The reports submitted by the regional advisors/co-ordinators are based on a template provided by headquarters and present achievements in five categories (internal awareness, consultations, communications, co-ordination, and program and service delivery) with respect to

expected results, activities, outputs, and expenses incurred. The designated co-ordinators in each IC program are also required to submit an annual report using the same template. However, only partial data is collected about IC programs because they rarely or never track the official language of their clientele.

The information that emerges from this exercise is therefore limited to a list of investments in each activity category, the number of projects funded, and a list of activities carried out over the course of the year. The information collected does not show to what extent these activities reached their target clients and/or met the economic development needs of OLMCs. These shortcomings were pointed out in the 2004 evaluation and by Canadian Heritage in its review of IC's achievements.

The RDAs in charge of administering EDOLMC programs are also required to submit annual reports. These reports contain a statement of expenses and a list of clients served by the programs, along with a short description of the approved projects.

Lastly, the *Francommunautés virtuelles* program also produces an annual report that is likewise limited to statistics on the number of approved projects and funds spent.

As previously mentioned, some regional advisors/co-ordinators expressed the need for better tools to report on the effects of their activities on their target clientele. In addition, a number of IC representatives would like to see managers required to report and produce more specific data showing how the OLMCs were served by their program. The data should include the official language of the individual clients or, if companies or organizations are being served, whether they are designated as Anglophone or Francophone.

FedNor has developed such criteria and provided specific data on the clientele served by its programs.

5.2.4 Changes Proposed by Respondents

In light of the preceding results, here is a summary of the changes proposed by respondents with respect to the development and implementation of these initiatives:

- That amounts for pilot projects and the Youth Internship Program be proportional to the official language minority population and the institutions/facilities implementing them in each region.⁴²
- That advisors/co-ordinators in the regions have a larger discretionary budget and a flexible budget envelope (grants and/or contributions) to approve small ad hoc projects (studies, meetings, forums).
- That advisors/co-ordinators in the regions obtain better promotional tools and information on IC programs from the national co-ordination team.
- That the number of regional advisors be increased to ensure appropriate counselling services.
- That IC develop a more detailed OLMC economic development strategy and couple it with programs that are better adapted to the situation of OLMCs. The idea is to broaden the definition of economic development to include the notion of the social economy.
- That IC consider joint co-management of its programs and services with OLMCs to simplify funding processes and ensure that programs and services are properly tailored.
- That IC take steps to ensure its managers in the regions are able to provide OLMC members with services in both official languages.
- That IC make effective use of the RDÉEs and CEDECs as service or information distribution points at the community level.
- That a more elaborate performance measurement strategy be implemented to better document the effects of the activities of regional advisors/co-ordinators and that IC managers be made more responsible for providing data on the OLMC clients served.
- That longer internships (1 to 2 years) be funded in Ontario under the Youth Internship Program.
- That the Section 41 Lens document be adopted by IC managers.
- That the IC program application processes be simplified.
- That IC officers continue to work with OLMCs to better identify needs and priorities.

⁴² This suggestion was contested by representatives of some RDAs who explained that the number of pilot projects and interns approved was not limited by a lack of candidates, but rather by the limited budget and duration of these initiatives. Since these initiatives were never promoted, it is impossible to determine actual demand for these services.

5.3 Findings

This section answers the following evaluation questions:

- To what extent are the initiatives achieving or are in the process of achieving the expected results?
- What factors furthered and/or slowed the implementation/progress of the initiatives?
- To what extent did the initiative reach its intended clientele? Raise awareness?

5.3.1 Results Achieved/Target Clientele Reached

Given the fact that this is a formative evaluation and that the initiatives examined were implemented in the past two years, we will be examining to what extent the initiatives have achieved or are in the process of achieving their immediate results.

Action Plan 2004–2008

The IC Action Plan 2004–2008 involves three direct results:

- 1) A better understanding of the requirements of Section 41 among the managers and senior managers of priority programs.
- 2) Stronger working relations between organizations representing OLMCs and the Department.
- 3) A better understanding of the Department's programs and services on the part of OLMCs.

Views are divided among those consulted for this study with respect to the success of efforts to raise awareness among IC managers, particularly senior managers. While we recognize that much remains to be done in this area, we have observed some degree of improvement in program managers' response to the information provided in recent years. Although they could not determine whether IC managers are more aware, Canadian Heritage representatives interviewed felt there had been real improvements in the Department's communications.

It is evident that OLMC and national agency representatives lack familiarity with IC programs and services. On average, discussion group participants were familiar with only one or two programs; the most widely known were *Francommunautés virtuelles* and the Community Access Program. Lesser-known programs included Broadband Services and Computers for Schools. The least known programs or services were the Language Industry Program and the CommunAction.ca Website, which only two or three participants identified.

This result is partially attributable to the fact that participants have difficulty distinguishing among the various departments and levels of government. The regional advisors/co-ordinators also explain this by the fact that these programs often have uncertain or limited life spans and resources, meaning that advisors/co-ordinators and program managers are often hesitant to promote them too aggressively, for fear of building expectations they may not subsequently be able to meet.

IC's Achievement Report 2004-2005 describes a number of steps taken by the programs to better reach OLMC clientele. For example, in its contribution agreements with program beneficiaries, the Student Connections Program emphasized the need for a proactive approach toward OLMCs. A language clause was also included in the Broadband Services contribution agreement regarding services in French in areas where there was significant demand.⁴³ It is estimated that 115 OLMCs will be receiving broadband services following program investments in 2004–2005. The report also indicates that the Computers for Schools Program delivered over 3,563 computers to Anglophone and Francophone minorities in that same year.⁴⁴ The Community Access Program invested \$1,207,961 to enhance the network encompassing 254 Francophone centres outside Quebec and 16 Anglophone centres in Quebec.⁴⁵

In spite of these efforts, discussion group participants generally saw no appreciable difference in IC's contribution to their community in the past two years.

In 2004-2005, the national co-ordination team mandated an outside consultant to conduct a study to pinpoint as accurately as possible the financial expenditures of the

⁴³ Industry Canada, *Achievement Report 2004–2005. Implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act*, p 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p 21.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p 21.

Department and regional development agencies in OLMCs. The study covered the years 2002–2003 and 2003–2004 (2004–2005 was covered in an update produced in February 2006) and includes data for 26 IC programs. It examined fund expenditures in the communities on a geographic basis and funds provided for organizations dedicated to enhancing community vitality. The study tallied IC's investments at \$21.6 million for 2002–2003 and \$37.5 million in 2003–2004 and found that the funds were generally allocated to the linguistic communities (or communities of interest) proportionately to the communities' demographic weight. However, the report noted that if FedNor and *Francommunautés virtuelles* were eliminated, IC programs reached OLMCs solely on a geographical basis and not as communities of interest.⁴⁶ It is nonetheless clear that infrastructure programs help OLMCs just as much as majority communities and likely affect them as significantly. Broadband Service, for instance, seems to have reached all OLMCs, with the exception of some remote areas. Lastly, according to the Bisson report, the Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) is the only other program that substantially reaches OLMCs as communities of interest, although its catchment area could not be determined owing to a lack of data.⁴⁷ It should be noted, however, that while the Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs) set up in each of the Western provinces could also assume this role, their potential for doing so was not measured in this evaluation.

In addition, following the above mentioned study, a series of interviews was conducted with 16 project managers regarding the impact of IC and RDA investments in small and large localities across Canada. This anecdotal study identified a number of tangible examples of the direct and immediate impact of IC and RDA activities on OLMC development. The analysis enabled its authors to draw a causal or at least influential link between the projects and the following results and aggregate indicators:

- Enhanced economic development in the communities.
- Strengthening of language industries.

⁴⁶ Ronald Bisson et Associé.e.s. *Rapport Final Ébauche 6, Recherche en vue de déterminer les dépenses d'Industrie Canada et des organismes de développement régional dans les communautés de langue officielle en situation minoritaire pour les années 2002-2003 et 2003-2004*. March 9, 2005, p 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p 17

- OLMC infrastructures enabling their members to live, learn and work in the community.
- Greater awareness among Canadians of the benefits of linguistic duality.⁴⁸

EDOLMC: Outreach, communications and counselling

The creation of full-time advisor positions in every region to provide outreach, communications and counselling services for OLMCs was intended to raise awareness among and inform OLMC members of the opportunities and benefits associated with IC programs that help them participate in the knowledge economy. By providing that information, it was hoped that the OLMCs would make greater use of the programs and information provided by the government.

As the previous section shows, the comments of OLMC representatives did not reveal any improvement in their knowledge of IC programs and services. However, the interviews also revealed that overall, the creation of full-time advisor positions in the regions was a distinct improvement because it increased IC's presence in the regions and improved the Department's understanding of OLMC needs. According to CEDEC and Community Table representatives, the creation of the full-time advisor's position in Quebec transformed the relationship between Anglophone community groups and IC and helped IC managers better understand the needs of these groups.

According to program managers, the regional advisors have kept OLMCs abreast of what IC can and cannot do for them.

The regional advisors themselves are aware that their outreach work with the communities is well under way but that their counselling functions are not fully operational. They define this component of their role as assisting OLMC members in their efforts to find funding to carry out projects. Given the limited opportunities provided by IC programs and the lack of a discretionary budget, they feel that in order to better perform this role, they need to be better informed about the programs of other departments and agencies. They also feel that increased human resources will be

⁴⁸ Ronald Bisson et Associé.e.s. *Faits saillants. Étude : Liens entre les investissements du ministère et des organismes de développement régional et les cartes géographiques. Synthèse finale.* March 31, 2006.

needed, as will promotional tools and information about existing programs. This component will also require working closely with RDAs.

EDOLMC: Youth Internship Program

The Youth Internship Program was created to help young Canadians aged 16 to 30 gain work experience and skills, improve their management and business practices (particularly in the fields of engineering, communications technology, business administration and research) and increase their opportunities to work in the language of their choice.

Interviews carried out with a sample of organizations that received funding to hire young interns demonstrated the program's positive impact on both the interns and the host organizations.

In Quebec and Ontario, interns not only gained relevant work experience, but a number of them (in Quebec, 18 of the 24 interns) were hired by their host organizations. This was an unexpected effect of the program, as this was not one of the objectives for internships. In other cases, besides providing interns with work experience in their language, the internships also raised their awareness of the fact that jobs in their official language minority community do exist; helped them build a network of contacts in the community; gave them a professional vocabulary in their own language; brought them out of the isolation in which some of them found themselves as members of a minority language group; enhanced their confidence as job seekers; and taught them new technical skills.

Unexpected results were also observed within host organizations, which increased their capacity to operate and provide services in the minority language, evaluate candidates for potential positions, and train the next generation of workers in the minority language, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship.

EDOLMC: Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects

The pilot projects were designed to promote partnership building, increase the availability of distance learning and training content and applications and demonstrate the feasibility of increasing access to leading edge technologies and services.

The interviews conducted with a sample of representatives of the institutions that carried out the pilot projects showed that, for the most part, the projects are in the process of achieving the expected results. The projects carried out all serve to address shortcomings in existing distance learning and training services in the various provinces. They primarily allow people living far from universities with programs in their official language to take distance learning courses. For example, Université Sainte-Anne (in Nova Scotia) is currently computerizing its advanced paramedic courses to enable French-speaking paramedics from across Canada, whatever their place of residence, to complete their professional training. The service is particularly valuable because paramedics' work schedules often prevent them from leaving home to take courses.

Similarly, the University of Alberta's Campus Saint Jean is currently integrating technology to provide Western Canada's Francophone population with greater access to distance education by making a series of French-language university courses available on-line. The Virtual Campus project run by Éducacentre (in British Columbia) is intended to do the same for college-level courses.

The program seems to have had the desired effect with respect to partnership building. All the projects involve partner participation, and some have even received contributions from other financial backers. For example, Université Sainte-Anne received assistance from Ottawa's La Cité collégiale, which shared its expertise on distance learning technology. Université Sainte-Anne can now develop its own distance learning courses without relying on outside experts, provide assistance for other institutions or generate revenue with its new expertise.

In addition, TFO-TVOntario received assistance from the Regroupement franco-ontarien de développement économique et d'employabilité (RDÉE Ontario), Collège d'Alfred, La Cité Collégiale and the Commission de formation de l'Est ontarien for its Destination Ontario français project.

Some 14 government and non-profit organizations contributed to Éducacentre's Virtual Campus project.

Lastly, the current pilot projects will likely generate an increase in the institutions' student population.

The potential effects of Quebec's Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP) are less obvious, as the project had to reposition itself following an erroneous evaluation of the needs and capacities of its intended clientele. The results will depend on the success of the efforts of the *Réseau d'investissement social du Québec (RISQ)* and its partners to stimulate interest on the part of Quebec's Anglophone entrepreneurs with respect to the proposed new social economy enterprise approach.

EDOLMC: Franccommunautés virtuelles

The *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program is intended to increase Francophone e-content, Web applications and on-line services, information and communications technology skills and partnerships and networking among Francophones in Canada. In doing so, the hopes is that the program will increase Internet uptake and use, support and help create Francophone e-networks, and promote Internet use for sustainable economic and community development.

OLMCs are generally familiar with and appreciative of the program, which is known for its contributions to a number of growth-generating projects for the communities, such as the Francoboutique and the creation of a Francophone version of e-Bay. All stakeholders feel this program is still very much a necessity.

According to program representatives, to date, the program's impact on the Department and the communities has been positive. It has proved to be an effective lever for generating investments from other financial backers. The number and quality of applications submitted to the program have increased. The applicant organizations are better able to mobilize and work in partnership with other stakeholders in the OLMCs. The program has also provided some organizations with tools to help them obtain subsequent funding from other programs.

For example, in 2005, Université Sainte-Anne and the New Brunswick Community College Dieppe Campus launched a new program focussing on the management of non-profit organizations. The project was made possible through a financial contribution from IC's *Francommunautés virtuelles* program and Canadian Heritage's Canadian Culture Online Funding Programs. An effective partnership was built between Université Sainte-Anne, the New Brunswick Community College Dieppe Campus, the Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and the Société éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. The anticipated effects of the program are more effective Francophone and Acadian non-profit organizations.⁴⁹ One immediate effect was that the Université Sainte-Anne faculty taking part in the project developed new expertise in the field of e-training, which it was then able to share with the university's other faculties and organizations throughout the region.

It is too soon, however, to assess the impact of the program's new direction under the current Action Plan. The first competition that put into effect the new criteria emphasizing a new economic direction ended in spring 2006. Its theme was "Moving from access to adoption, innovation and integration within the economic sector using information and communications technology." A quick look at the projects submitted under the current competition shows the new direction is being reflected in the composition of the new applications.

5.3.2 Factors Hindering Implementation/Progress

Many OLMC members are still unfamiliar with most IC programs and services. On average, discussion group participants were only aware of one or two programs. In some cases, this can be explained by the recent appointment of some of the regional advisors. According to a number of respondents, another explanation was the sometimes extensive territory to be covered by regional advisors. This emphasizes the need to increase human resources in the regions to deal with this issue.

The lack of RDAs in the Territories and Ontario (FedNor being an economic development initiative) limits the service offer for OLMCs in those regions.

In addition, staff turnover at IC's regional offices seems to have halted some projects.

⁴⁹ http://www.francommunautés.ic.gc.ca/communiqués/cdp2005-09-12_e.asp

According to a number of stakeholders, IC seems to favour large-scale projects, making the programs difficult for smaller organizations to access. This is the case with *Francommunautés virtuelles*. While they felt it was valuable, some OLMC respondents added it was also difficult and demanding. Another concern was the program's competitive nature, which was felt by some to be a problem. These stakeholders favoured a co-operative process with the Department allowing applications to change until their adoption.

The federal election and new government also raised uncertainty as to the future of EDOLMC program components. Some projects involve potential subsequent phases and would need a second round of funding to continue. This is the case for the Éducacentre Virtual Campus Pilot Project in British Columbia.

Lastly, the selection of 15 programs for the implementation of departmental official languages responsibilities is limited and not always tailored to OLMC economic development needs, particularly owing to the limited resources of these programs and their uncertain future.

5.3.3 Factors Contributing to Implementation/Progress

The factors identified as having contributed to the implementation or progress of EDOLMC and Action Plan 2004–2008 initiatives are:

- Partnerships created to carry out Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects resulted in capacity building for the participating institutions, contributed to project longevity and ensured the distribution of project information and results.
- The leadership of the national co-ordination team and senior IC managers in some regions was instrumental in raising the visibility of the official languages issue within IC and in the initiation and development of an ongoing dialogue with the OLMCs.
- Consultations with OLMCs carried out by the regional co-ordinators in the past two years helped to raise IC's visibility and create a basis for dialogue. This approach has been identified by Canadian Heritage interviewees as a good practice and one of the strengths of IC's approach.
- Language training for IC employees and managers was a factor in raising official languages awareness among program managers.

- Combining the Pacific Region representative's roles as regional advisor and WD representative was an integrated service and information approach that OLMC members greatly valued.
- The creation of a consultative committee composed of IC and OLMC representatives from every province and territory for the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program proved to be an excellent way to bring the program into line with both the Department's objectives and community needs. This formula gave program representatives an additional OLMC consultation mechanism that was more timely than the annual consultations carried out by the national IC co-ordinating team.

5.4 Lessons Learned

This section summarizes the lessons learned to date during the implementation of initiatives.

In Quebec, the implementation of the Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects made IC aware of the importance of involving and consulting the provinces when planning new programs or initiatives as a way of preventing jurisdiction conflicts and maximizing the provincial departments' potential contribution to activity funding. In this particular case, the way the program was implemented had to be changed, which delayed its launch.

The Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Project (CEDTAP) pilot project put in place by RISQ in Quebec has also demonstrated the importance of basing a new project on a sound demonstration of needs and the ability to carry out the project. In CEDTAP's case, changes had to be made mid-project because it had been based on the erroneous premise that there were Anglophone social economy enterprises that could benefit from the training provided by RISQ.

The RISQ project also illustrates the importance of consulting and involving key local groups in the needs identification process to ensure the necessary infrastructure exists to perpetuate the project—a necessary condition for project longevity.

A number of examples provided by OLMC representatives and Youth Internship clients demonstrate the importance of low turnover among RDA representatives and regional advisors/co-ordinators. This continuity prevents service interruptions and

proper representation for projects within the RDAs and IC program administrations in the regions. It helps to establish a relationship of trust and sound communications channels, which foster information sharing and, consequently, project success.

The financial lever role played by the Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects can be a double-edged sword insofar as an increase in financial backers also means differing reporting requirements. This can prove problematic for participating institutions, who feel they are being punished for successfully obtaining funding. The Department should perhaps consider negotiating similar reporting requirements with other financial backers or simplifying its own requirements.

According to participants interviewed, in some cases it takes nearly two years to properly integrate an intern (under the Youth Internship Program) into corporate operations. The participants felt that shorter internships were not as beneficial.

One of the important keys to the future success of these initiatives is building and enhancing collaboration between federal and provincial departments. There are many governmental stakeholders and two major associative networks—one run by Canadian Heritage, the other by HRSDC. A number of respondents emphasized the importance of co-operation and cohesiveness.

5.5 Cost-effectiveness

This section examines how cost-effective the initiatives have been and looks at measures that could be taken to boost their cost-effectiveness.

Most respondents felt that service delivery and co-ordination structures for both EDOLMC and Action Plan 2004–2008 activities were effective. Respondents could not imagine how the structures could be made more efficient and pointed out that since the allocated resources are limited, there is little room for waste. A need for more human resources in the regions was reported, however, to maximize efforts and better fulfill the mandate of the full-time regional advisors.

In the absence of a study of needs and numbers to quantify the demand for EDOLMC and Action Plan 2004–2008 services, it is difficult to determine whether existing services are meeting the demand. The sole exception is *Francommunautés virtuelles*, which is currently responding to 40% to 50% of applications; this is a clear

improvement in its response rate, which had been only 20% prior to the EDOLMC envelope.

The *Francommunautés virtuelles* data also show that the program is an effective lever for multiplying funds invested in its projects. For each dollar provided by the program, \$2.35 is invested by other financial backers. This means that the \$9.5 million invested to date by *Francommunautés virtuelles* (excluding the competition that ended in Spring 2006) has generated \$29.2 million in additional investments.

Potential alternatives to the current service delivery model were suggested during the consultations for this evaluation. In Newfoundland, a single-window pilot project is currently being tested (this is similar to the Bilingual Service Centres provided by the three levels of government in Manitoba), in partnership with the federal departments and agencies that also service OLMCs, such as Service Canada, Canadian Heritage, Fisheries and Oceans and ACOA. A single-window approach would be an effective way to channel relevant information on IC programs of interest to OLMCs. However, this option would not allow IC to conduct surveys of OLMCs to determine their economic development needs and priorities; the importance of maintaining an IC presence in each region was also emphasized as a means of maintaining the link with OLMCs. The comments of the Community Table and QCGN regarding the significant contribution of the IC's regional advisor in Quebec confirm this view.

National agency and OLMC representatives suggested the possibility that the outreach, information and counselling work could be done by other organizations already in the OLMC networks that have a sound understanding of economic development needs: these would include the CEDECs, CFDCs and RDÉEs. At the very least, we recommend that IC seek out more partnership opportunities with these organizations to improve activity planning and implementation.

Lastly, some respondents mentioned the possibility of RDAs taking over part of IC's current role as regards OLMC services, since the RDAs already have a broader range of programs in the regions and networks in the communities. One concern was raised: the lack of an RDA in Canada's northern territories.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section presents the conclusions of the study and evaluators' recommendations.

6.1 Relevance

The EDOLMC and Action Plan 2004–2008 program components are generally compatible with the priorities of the federal Action Plan for Official Languages and with IC's priorities for fostering OLMC economic development and ensuring access to the knowledge-based economy for English and French communities. These activities correspond to IC's sustainable communities strategic objective. The relevance of these activities is likely to be enhanced by the coming into effect of S-3, which makes federal institutions more accountable for their obligations under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

With the exception of *Francommunautés virtuelles* and the EDOLMC initiatives, no IC program is designed specifically for OLMCs. These communities have specific needs associated with the fact that they consist more of non-profit organizations and small enterprises (many with a social focus) than of medium-sized and large enterprises. OLMC clients need more flexible funding mechanisms, a concept of economic development that focusses on the notion of a social economy, and programs aimed at small enterprises. However, social economy enterprises are specifically identified by IC in its strategic objectives as an excellent means to promote industry competition and sustainable communities.⁵⁰

In addition, the Francophone populations of Eastern, Central and Southern Ontario are poorly served by current program and service delivery structures: there is no RDA for this region (FedNor serves only Northern Ontario and rural areas in the south of the province included in the community development program).

The EDOLMC program components, Broadband Services, Community Access Program and Canada Business Service Centres (in Quebec) were found to be still relevant when it comes to meeting some OLMC needs with respect to tele-learning, succession planning, connectivity and economic development.

⁵⁰ [tp://www.ic.gc.ca/cmb/welcomeic.nsf/ICPages/Mandate](http://www.ic.gc.ca/cmb/welcomeic.nsf/ICPages/Mandate)

6.2 Development/Implementation

The work of the national co-ordination team was found to be effective and relevant.

Regional advisors/co-ordinators expressed the need for additional information on existing IC programs and services and promotional tools to support their information-sharing role. The team recently responded to this request by developing a joint work plan to be put into effect this year.

The regional advisors put in place under EDOLMC play an outreach and information-sharing role that is vital to laying the groundwork for the development of a network serving OLMCs. Given the limited number of IC programs focussing specifically on OLMCs, regional advisors need to be better equipped to fulfill their outreach role, which is defined as a process whereby clients receive assistance in finding the information or funding they need to start a business or economic development initiative.

Recommendation 1: That IC consider special projects, including communications products, to support regional co-ordinators and advisors.

The role of RDAs in implementing some EDOLMC components (the Youth Internship Program and Pilot Projects) is felt to be satisfactory. Owing to their range of programs, presence in the regions and history of partnerships with enterprises, RDAs are in some ways better equipped than IC to promote the economic development of the OLMCs. This shows the importance of close co-operation between IC and RDAs, and not only when it comes to EDOLMC components.

IC does not currently have a strategy for the continuous measurement of initiative performance. Current data gathering and reports are limited to lists of activities and incomplete data from programs about the clientele they serve. This data cannot be used to draw conclusions about whether initiatives are achieving the expected results in terms of benefits for their clientele. Although the implementation of EDOLMC components is still too recent to measure their impact, evaluation theory and practice have shown the importance of establishing, as early as possible in the life of a program, data gathering mechanisms aimed at monitoring its evolution and gauging its performance. It is also important to document the current situation and define

targets to achieve in the short, medium and long term with respect to IC's official languages obligations.

Recommendation 2: That IC develop precise indicators to measure the impact of activities on OLMCs, as well as a data collection strategy to help regional advisors and RDAs (for the EDOLMC components) estimate how the demand for services is changing and measure the impact of their services on the target clientele. IC should identify precise targets for each new Section 41 Action Plan, as well as medium- and long-term targets in connection with its official languages obligations.

Recommendation 3:

That the managers of the 15 priority programs and services identified in the Action Plan 2004-2008 on Section 41 of OLA, be responsible for providing data on communities of interest and the official language of clienteles served in these programs and services.

6.3 Findings

The data collected during this evaluation indicate that IC has made genuine progress in achieving the expected results, but that some shortcomings remain.

The creation of full-time regional advisor positions is a distinct improvement, as it ensures greater IC presence in the regions and has helped IC improve its understanding of OLMC needs.

OLMC representatives still lack awareness of IC programs and services and often fail to distinguish between the Department's role and that of the RDAs.

In spite of the efforts made, discussion group participants generally do not seem to perceive any real difference in IC's contribution to the development of their community over the past two years. An anecdotal study examining 16 IC projects has established a causal link between these investments and the strengthening of economic development in the communities.

While we recognize that much work remains to be done with respect to awareness among IC managers, we have observed some improvement in the response of

program managers to the information provided in recent years. The awareness efforts of the co-ordination team and other IC stakeholders (regional advisors/co-ordinators and designated co-ordinators) fall into four categories: presentations, the designation of a co-ordinator in every program to support the national co-ordination team, the “Section 41 Lens” document, and research projects. These four types of exercises are relevant, although they require even more sustained effort. Moreover, we feel that the 15 programs and services targeted by IC for Section 41 implementation are a good start, but are insufficient to meet OLMC economic development needs.

Recommendation 4: That the coordinators designated in each program to support the national coordination team hold meetings more frequently.

Recommendation 5: That IC continue its internal awareness and external communications activities and explore the possibility of broadening the range of IC programs and services that are being promoted.

The Youth Internship Program has had a positive impact on the young people who took part in it: they gained work experience in their language, developed skills and built networks in the minority language community. It has also benefited the host organizations through capacity building.

For the most part, the Tele-Learning and Tele-Training Pilot Projects are in the process of achieving the expected results, most often through sustainable partnerships with other educational institutions and financial backers. Their intended contribution is to address shortcomings in the tele-learning and tele-training services offered in the various provinces.

The *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program is generally valued and well known by OLMC representatives. To date, it has benefited the Department and the communities, particularly in its capacity as an effective social and economic lever for generating investments from other financial backers. It has also contributed to capacity building among OLMC organizations. However, it is too soon to evaluate the effects of the program’s recently announced move toward projects with a more economic focus that is closer to IC’s mandate. Some IC representatives have questioned the program’s relevance, while others feel it should be maintained and continue to evolve in response to community needs.

Lastly, the Canadian Heritage representatives responsible for reviewing action plans and IC achievement reports have testified to the Department's determined efforts to regularly attend meetings of the various intergovernmental official languages committees, consult OLMCs and tailor projects and services to the needs of the communities. In the context of the constraints and challenges faced by federal agencies affected by Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*, and in spite of some shortcomings, IC is proving to be an exemplary student.

6.4 Cost-effectiveness

The service delivery and co-ordination structures of both EDOLMC activities and the Action Plan 2004–2008 appear to be effective and do not require measures to enhance their cost-effectiveness. A single area for improvement has been identified: greater communication among the various stakeholders, particularly the regional advisors/co-ordinators and the RDAs, to ensure improved information management in each region with respect to projects under study or under way for similar clientele.

A number of alternative service delivery models have been suggested, such as a single-window arrangement in conjunction with other federal departments, and the delegation of IC program delivery to the RDAs, RDÉE, CEDEC or CFDCs. However, none of those options is unanimously preferred by the various categories of stakeholders consulted.

6.5 Progress Made Since the Previous Evaluation

As indicated at the start of this report, an initial evaluation of IC's implementation of Section 41 of the *Official Languages Act* was submitted in 2001. The data collected under the current evaluation show that while some shortcomings remain, IC has made progress in achieving the expected results of Section 41 implementation.

Most notably, respondents reported that IC managers seem to be demonstrating increased awareness of OLMC needs and the Department's official languages commitments.

Through the EDOLMC components, IC has been able to invest additional resources in the regions. These investments facilitated the forging of closer relations with

community organizations and the implementation, in conjunction with the RDAs, of two programs targeting OLMCs. Another effect was an increase in resources for the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Program. These measures, added to the yearly consultations conducted by the national co-ordination team, allow IC to be more aware of OLMC needs, foster a better understanding of IC services among OLMC members, and better incorporate Section 41 into regional operations.

That being said, it is still too early to evaluate the concrete effects of the implementation of these measures. To date, OLMC representatives say they are not familiar with all IC services, which they feel could be better tailored to their particular needs.

The Department's official languages vision has still not been translated into concrete results, and the list of 15 programs and services targeted for Section 41 implementation seems inadequate for the achievement of its objectives.

The Department has undertaken the development of external communication tools, an internal communication plan, and a system to measure the performance of its official languages activities. Specific targets need to be set to specify the progress IC intends to make before the next evaluation, as well as the progress anticipated in the medium and long terms.