

Strategic Plan for **Ontario's**
Francophone Community

TOWARDS
2030

ENTER →

L'ASSEMBLÉE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE DE L'ONTARIO

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PROPOSAL FOR A REVISED FRAMEWORK FOR 2030



A SHORTER AND MORE PRECISE VISION STATEMENT

While maintaining the themes of Vision 2025, we suggest a new, tighter version:

Suggestion for Vision 2030: Welcoming, vibrant, creative and engaged, Ontario's Francophone community – a bilingual province – enjoys sustained demographic and economic growth, is proud of and unfettered by its language and its plural culture, and fully benefits from the richness of its diversity

The community is recognized for its unique place in our country's history, its essential contribution to the province's vitality, and the exemplary nature of its leadership within the Canadian and international Francophonie.

REORGANIZED AND SIMPLIFIED STRATEGIC PILLARS

We propose to restructure the strategic framework around three pillars. These three strategic pillars reflect the areas where the need for intervention for the development of the Franco-Ontarian community is greatest: vitality, pluralism and sustainability. These themes go hand in hand, they are simple, and they cover the actions of the 2015 Community Strategic Plan (CSP), but also include, following the 2020 consultations, new actions to which to commit as we look towards the 2030 horizon.



1 | VITALITY

To provide members of Ontario's Francophone community with an environment that promotes socio-economic well-being, personal growth and quality of life in French.

STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

- 1.1 Employability
- 1.2 Accessibility and use of French-language services
- 1.3 Socio-economic integration



2 | PLURALISM

To attract and retain a vibrant Francophone community across the province that adequately adapts to its environment and makes the most of its diversity.

STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

- 2.1 Immigration
- 2.2 Retention and transmission
- 2.3 Inclusion and diversity



3 | SUSTAINABILITY

To maximize the effectiveness of the community's actions, keeping our efforts in line with the CSP objectives, and ensuring ongoing and broader citizen engagement.

STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

- 3.1 Institutional capacity-building
- 3.2 Consultation, mobilization and visibility
- 3.3 Pride, celebration and participation

The following pages describe for each pillar and strategic orientation, actions identified in 2015 (reassigned according to the new three-pillar breakdown) as well as additional and adjusted activities as per the suggestions made during the consultations.

1 | VITALITY

In order to **provide members of Ontario's Francophone community with an environment that promotes socio-economic well-being, personal growth and quality of life in French**, the community will devote sustained efforts to improving employability, accessibility and use of French-language services, as well as socio-economic integration.



1.1 EMPLOYABILITY

CONTINUITY OF THE AREAS OF ACTION IDENTIFIED IN 2015

- To increase the **employability** of community members across Ontario by:
 - Creating and offering jobs (including coming up with better ways of communicating opportunities to certain areas).
 - Training.
 - Assisting entrepreneurial endeavours — mentoring.
- To operationalize the notion of “**entrepreneurial community**” (i.e., an integrated approach to economic development that links different key dimensions, such as supporting private and collective entrepreneurship, establishing long-term partnerships, facilitating access to markets and to sources of funding, facilitating Francophone succession when transferring businesses, focusing on sustainable development, aligning the legislative and regulatory framework).
- To encourage Francophone involvement in **private sector** decision-making bodies (e.g., boards of directors, chambers of commerce).
- To foster **innovation**.
- To pay special attention to Francophones with **disabilities**, living in **disadvantaged** and/or **vulnerable** situations (whether physical, mental, social, economic, age-related or belonging to a minority group) and ensure their socio-economic inclusion.
- To promote **gender parity**.
- To promote **Francophone expertise** as well as excellence of products and services.
- To demonstrate the **economic contribution** of the Francophone community to the whole of the province (e.g., value added of the Francophone contribution to the economic development of Ontario; impacts at the commercial level, in tourism, in technological development and in exports; etc.).

2020 ADDITIONS

- To recognize the difficulty for Francophone businesses finding qualified staff and impress upon stakeholders the need to develop sustainable solutions to this crucial issue.
- To have a labour-focused dimension — including connecting with those who have graduated from immersion programs, who represent a high-potential pool.

1.2 ACCESSIBILITY AND USE OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

CONTINUITY OF THE AREAS OF ACTION IDENTIFIED IN 2015

- To continue to increase the **Francophone space** across the province.
- To increase access to public, parapublic and institutional services by:
 - Strengthening active offer (government services, health, justice, education).
 - Increasing infrastructure (schools, health centres, etc.).
 - Increasing the number of designated positions and of bilingual civil servants providing French language services across the province.
- To increase **services offered in the private sector** (businesses, professional services, etc.) by:
 - Engaging entrepreneurs and service providers to convince them of the economic value of offering services in French.
 - Raising awareness among the community of the impact of “consuming in French” every day.
- To increase **access to French culture** (multiply cultural venues across the province, diversify cultural products offered, increase the number of artistic and cultural events, engage media, etc.) and facilitate **artistic and cultural creation**.
- To increase access to **entertainment, sports and recreational activities** offered in French
- To ensure that the **particular needs of specific segments of society** (e.g., seniors, immigrants, youth, etc.) are addressed and met.
- To conduct an **evidence-based** needs and demand analysis and, in particular, to reinforce Francophone identification mechanisms (e.g., school taxes, health cards).
- To align **supply capacities** (e.g., training of skilled workers) with needs and demand.
- To strengthen the ability — and willingness — of the community members to practice “**active demand**”.

2020 ADDITIONS

- To increase service provision and referral capacity.
- To modernize the Official Languages Act (federal) and the French Language Services Act (Ontario) — which provide the foundation for service delivery — and give them more teeth.
- To include digital (online) services in the “basket” of French-language services; address inequities in digital access; and build expertise (both that of providers and users) in this area.
- To continue to expand active supply and demand.
- To strengthen and increase the supply of French-language services to newcomers, while understanding that for many of them, employment often requires fluency in English.

1.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

CONTINUITY OF THE AREAS OF ACTION IDENTIFIED IN 2015

- To facilitate **economic and cultural integration** of newcomers (including, for example, the recognition of diplomas).

2020 ADDITIONS

- To put more emphasis, in the context of community efforts, on the **wellness/economic health** dimension of Francophones and on the recognition that the ability to earn a living is, in certain circumstances and/or regions, difficult for some Francophones because employment opportunities in French are scarce.

2 | PLURALISM

In order to **attract and retain a vibrant Francophone community across the province by providing a proper living environment and thriving on the richness of its diversity**, concerted action will be taken as part of strategies to attract and welcome immigrants; retain children and youth in the regions as well as in the Franco-Ontarian education system; and improve community cohesion.



2.1 IMMIGRATION

CONTINUITY OF THE AREAS OF ACTION IDENTIFIED IN 2015

- To increase the **number** — and the **ratio** — of French-speaking immigrants in Ontario (from other countries) as well as migrants (newcomers from other Canadian provinces).
- To improve **reception** capacities and facilities.
- To develop **differentiated regional strategies**, such as:
 - Central: Focus on solidarity and harmonization.
 - North: Focus on attraction — employability and living environment.

2020 ADDITIONS

- To highlight the fact that while there is progress in terms of the number of French-speaking immigrants, it remains a drop in the ocean compared to the number of English-speaking immigrants.
- To build care, support and referral capacities.

2.2 RETENTION AND TRANSMISSION

CONTINUITY OF THE AREAS OF ACTION IDENTIFIED IN 2015

- To increase access to education within communities along the **education continuum** by:
 - Strengthening the quality of French and providing students with a linguistic and cultural base to counter linguistic insecurity and serve as an incentive for growth and economic development.
 - Increasing childcare and early childhood services capacities.
 - Increasing the number of elementary and secondary schools — and programs at the secondary level — where demand exists.
 - Improving access and availability of postsecondary education programs.
 - Strengthening bridging programs between college and university studies.
 - Retaining students in the French language school system.
 - Reducing financial barriers that could represent obstacles to pursuing studies (e.g., implementation of scholarships — to study and travel).
 - Promoting the principle of parity (at the end of their schooling, Ontario students, regardless of their mother tongue, are perfectly bilingual and open to the realities of others).
- To provide more **economic opportunities** to counter the exodus to urban centres
- To provide more opportunities for activities appropriate to the needs of a young clientele — reflecting as much as possible the notion of “by and for” youth — particularly for **extracurricular and leisure activities**.
- In addition to physical spaces, to develop and offer an adapted **virtual Francophone space** (e.g., digital platform, social networks, etc.) allowing youth to express themselves in French, and fully assume their cultural identity.

2020 ADDITIONS

- To add an “anti-assimilation” dimension to the main actions.
- To continue to invest in the education continuum — including early childhood, which is an initial cornerstone.
- To introduce a dimension of care/support for parents/families, particularly when it comes to the transmission of the French language and culture — with a specific approach to exogamous couples.
- To involve young people more in thinking about the future of the community as well as in taking action, and to provide them with suitable role models, including for youth from diverse backgrounds.
- To take into account the fact that youth out-migration is now leading to an out-migration of grandparents who want to join their grandchildren.

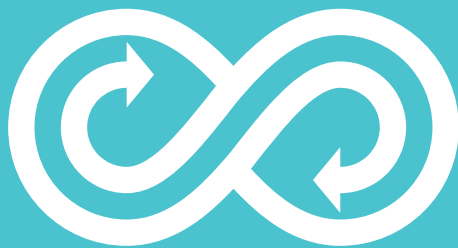
2.3 INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

2020 ADDITIONS

- To foster recognition of the fact that the Franco-Ontarian community is enriched by the addition of diverse cultures and perspectives from around the world.
- To highlight the importance of immigrant reception and inclusion, as well as diversity management. Tackling discrimination (racism, workplace discrimination, etc.) and, in particular, thriving on the richness of the community's diversity, are integral to this approach.
- To recognize that rising immigration requires adaptation on the part of both newcomers and those already living in the province, thus a need for support for inclusion and cohesion.
- To try to find common links between the different communities that make up Ontario's Francophonie, and to avoid the fragmentation of the population into different groups, particularly with respect to immigrants (e.g., African/Caribbean/European).
- To adopt a diversified approach to culture in accordance with target audiences. Indeed, target audiences do not all use the same communication tools/channels nor do they have the same reference points, contexts or motivations. (For example, the need to celebrate Franco-Ontarian history and heritage while avoiding their folklorization co-exists alongside the importance of recognizing that today's Francophonie has diverse sources of inspiration.)

3 | SUSTAINABILITY

In order to **maximize the effectiveness of the community's actions, keeping our efforts in line with the CSP objectives, and ensuring ongoing and broader citizen engagement**, the community will carry out activities in the areas of institutional capacity-building; consultation, mobilization, and visibility; and community pride, celebration and participation.



3.1 INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

CONTINUITY OF THE AREAS OF ACTION IDENTIFIED IN 2015

- To ensure the [sustainability](#) of institutions and organizations working for community development (e.g. funding, skill development, governance structures, infrastructure and living spaces, etc.).
- To plan and support community agencies' [continuity](#) and [succession](#).
- To strengthen the [physical presence of community workers](#) — particularly in rural and remote areas — to facilitate the on-site advancement of community priorities.
- To strengthen the inspirational capacities of community [champions](#) and to develop their skills to:
 - Effectively represent and promote the interests of the community to government decision-makers (elected officials, political advisors and civil servants at the municipal, provincial and federal levels) ;
 - Establish a sustainable and constructive dialogue with the private sector and other interest groups ;
 - Trigger engagement and mobilization from the community.
- To strengthen Francophone (Franco-Ontarian) representation on [governmental and paragonovernmental decision-making and advisory bodies](#).
- To consolidate the [dialogue between the different levels of government](#), and to promote [greater collaboration between them](#) — as well as between different institutions of a same government level — regarding Francophone issues.
- To strengthen the [capacity to collaborate with governments](#) (municipal, provincial, federal) in a proactive and concerted manner, and especially to develop a structured approach for the identification, framing and promotion of clear requests to government authorities (e.g., respect

for language and constitutional rights, establishment of accountability and reporting frameworks between governments and the community, achieving bilingual status for the province). This would replace a vertical approach where the government simply passes on its priorities to the community.

- To strengthen [interaction and partnership mechanisms with the private sector](#).
- To train community leaders in new communication mechanisms and information, social networking and mobilizing technologies (e.g., creation of a virtual Francophone space) in order to discuss, share, provide information, engage and mobilize
- To support [Franco-Ontarian media](#) to adapt to the changing media landscape.
- To review procedures for [applying and granting funding](#):
 - Share experience and knowledge with regards to applying for funding.
 - Obtain ongoing funding to allow community organizations to fulfill their missions
 - Receive funding not only to plan, but also to operate, communicate and interact with community members.

2020 ADDITIONS

- Undertake research and analysis on the factors, trends and dynamics underlying the reality (realities) of Ontario's Francophonie (the "why") and thus develop strategies to respond to these phenomena (how they could be tackled).
- To further strengthen capacities for ongoing representation and political influence — in other words, beyond a crisis response — and to contribute to strengthening government infrastructure supporting the development of Francophone communities in Ontario, at the provincial, federal and municipal levels.
- To build technological and digital capacities.
- To provide guidance on new forms of communication in the digital age.
- To find a way to better remunerate professionals in community organizations in order to help strengthen the sector's attraction and retention capacities.
- To increase marketing and funding capacities — which also implies a capacity to "translate" the CSP and its priorities into terms and objectives that align with the priorities of funders (including recognized standards and community vitality indicators), and to question the relevance for the community to be more tangibly active in different sectors identified as important by these funders (e.g., environment, sport, etc.).

3.2 CONSULTATION, MOBILIZATION AND VISIBILITY

CONTINUITY OF THE AREAS OF ACTION IDENTIFIED IN 2015

Within the community

- To build on existing initiatives in order to improve **consultation between community organizations** — and institutions (e.g., universities, school boards, hospitals, etc.) — to make their actions more coherent and therefore more effective (within and between regions).
- To encourage opportunities for **exchange, networking and sharing of information and expertise**.
- To consolidate governance structures within the community (e.g., relationships between l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) and the regional associations (ACFOs).

Between communities

- To build **bridges between the community and other groups** (notably Anglophones, Francophiles, Quebecers, Indigenous peoples and newcomers) in order to foster a closer relationship and a greater sense of solidarity.
- To actively engage in dialogue with the Anglophone majority and encourage greater **recognition** of the contribution of the Francophonie in public opinion.
- To strengthen **bridges** and **collaborative spaces between the Ontario and International Canadian Francophonie**.

2020 ADDITIONS

- To add an explicit reference to First Nations, Métis and Inuit under the heading “Building bridges between the community and other groups”, in order to develop closer ties and to foster a greater sense of solidarity.
- To strengthen the capacity to effectively communicate the CSP — especially with individuals.
- To clarify and consolidate the “governance structure” involved in the implementation of the CSP (AFO, Regional Roundtables, ACFOs, etc.).

3.3 PRIDE, CELEBRATION AND PARTICIPATION

CONTINUITY OF THE AREAS OF ACTION IDENTIFIED IN 2015

- To improve **communication** with community members (in the broader sense of the word, including unidentified Francophones, spouses of exogamous couples, Francophiles, etc., rather than meaning only those who already identify as Francophones); to better inform them of their rights and the need to exercise them (to reinforce, for example, the practice of “active offer”); and to better inform them of the availability of services, the existence of opportunities in the regions and the contribution of community organizations that represent them.
- To expand the **pool of volunteers** (at the managerial level as well as spokespersons, service providers or even philanthropists).

- To **renew leadership** (e.g. empowering young people and giving them opportunities where they may engage in large numbers and assume leadership both at the political and at the community level; without forgetting to appeal to young adults/young professionals and in mobilizing recent retirees to convince them to engage in community action).
- To **celebrate peer successes** (approachable models).
- To foster a **culture of inclusion** to facilitate the participation of all groups beyond identity differences.
- To strengthen the **participation** and community **engagement** of the youth.
- To ensure the **transmission** and outreach of the **French language** and of the **diverse culture** of Ontario's Francophone community to future generations. Among other things, by committing schools and teachers to the quality of written and oral French as well as the teaching of history and the discovery of the Francophone cultural richness, by engaging seniors and by collaborating with cultural, artistic and heritage communities.
- To put in place measures to counter **linguistic insecurity** at all levels, in particular for Francophone professionals in our communities.
- To use **arts and culture as a means of socialization** in order to reduce the distance and remoteness between various groups within the community, and eventually, to build bridges between Francophiles, Allophones and members of the English-speaking community.
- To develop platforms to further **disseminate** our Francophone artists and to increase opportunities to identify with inspiring role models (from the artistic community and others — sports, business, politics, etc.).
- To take advantage of the increasing number of schools offering **immersion programs** to expand the mass of potential customers for Francophone products and activities; to encourage their compliance to the importance of a French presence in Ontario; and to raise awareness of the difference between bilingualism and linguistic and cultural duality, thus countering the phenomenon of assimilation.

- To promote the **symbolism** of the contributions of the Francophone community of Ontario. For instance, the contribution to popular events such as the International Day of La Francophonie, Franco-Ontarian day, monuments, and commemorative cultural and heritage events.
- To increase **multisector projects** for joint action by various community organizations.
- To develop and promote **a brand image** for the Francophone community of Ontario.
- To remain open to various aspects, realities and lessons learned about the **Canadian and international Francophonie**.

2020 ADDITIONS

- To strengthen the approach suggested in order to address the issue of **continuity** and to counter the fact that “it’s always the same old tune” or the “same people who get involved” by encouraging much wider participation.
- To adopt a **diversified approach** to this pillar, since regional differences (e.g., the North and the East differ greatly due to distances, traffic levels, etc.) as well as target audience (see Pillar 2) need to be taken into account.

SUGGESTED COURSE OF ACTION FOR THE NEXT STEPS OF IMPLEMENTATION:



The consultations were clear on one very specific point: the CSP remains relevant in guiding the community's actions and, therefore, has the ongoing support of key players.

Its implementation, however, falls far below expectations.

In addition to the need for a fundamental re-thinking of communication, all planning, prioritization, progress-monitoring, governance and accountability practices related to the implementation of the CSP need to be consolidated.

Successful implementation of the CSP depends not only on solid content, but also on a first-rate infrastructure that would allow the right resources to be allocated to the right place; a truly concerted approach; an appreciation of progress made; and, if necessary, the ability to make comprehensive adjustments when required.

As such, if we need to adjust the “What” — as identified in previous sections of this paper — we need to revisit the “How”!

In light of these points, we have outlined various proposals:



COMMUNICATION:

- Develop and implement a communication strategy to disseminate and make the plan known within the community, using a variety of intermediaries/champions according to the target audience and, possibly, relying on “new faces” that are more representative of a plural Francophonie.
- Maintain good links with funders so that they encourage and favour initiatives that are aligned with the provincial and regional objectives of the CSP — including funding for the support and monitoring of their implementation.



PLANNING AND PRIORITIZATION:

- Break objectives down into a few concrete goals to ensure a clear vision and purpose for province-wide action; for example:
 - To create X number of French-speaking jobs across the province;
 - To achieve Francophone immigration targets and ensure that X% of newcomers settle permanently in regions outside Toronto and Ottawa;
 - To ensure the integration of minorities into Francophone life and their participation within organizations;
 - To increase by X% the number of students in French-language educational institutions and infrastructure by Y%, in collaboration with educational institutions and other organizations in the education field;
 - To increase the Francophone presence in the Ontario Public Service by X%;
 - To adapt and strengthen legislative tools, in particular to make Ontario a bilingual province.
- Develop, as a means to support the CSP and these high-level objectives, a provincial action plan and specific regional plans addressing priorities, objectives and main lines of action for

- a short-term horizon of two to three years maximum. Such operational plans would be more tangible.
- Ensure a clear prioritization of objectives and of precise and tangible actions. “One cannot be all things to all people all the time”, especially with limited resources. This prioritization could vary from region to region.



CONTRIBUTION, MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Establish an approach — both provincially and regionally — whereby organizations (including the AFO) are encouraged to clearly indicate how they will support the implementation of the plan and what their respective contributions will be.
- Give the AFO a champion (pivotal) role in analyzing, consolidating and integrating proposals for contributions and highlighting potential hot spots (e.g., too much focus on certain components, lack of initiative on others that have been identified as priorities, etc.).
- Implement progress evaluation, including providing clear indicators (which would need to be defined by the Roundtables) and give the AFO responsibility for monitoring, analyzing and providing feedback on these indicators (on an informative and constructive basis only — and not as a performance audit).
- Establish a progress assessment cycle that would allow for fine-tuning and upgrading once or twice a year.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE:

- Modify the nature and mission of the Roundtables to have them focus more on regional strategies, genuine consultation (coordinated mobilization of efforts around common objectives and lines of action/ projects), and on monitoring/assessment/evaluation (thus making them less operational / transactional, while keeping a perspective on networking and sharing of best practices).
- Conduct a review of the overall governance structure — AFO, Regional Roundtables, ACFOs, member organizations, etc. — and ensure that the various stakeholders have a common understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities within this governance structure.
- Introduce, at the provincial level at least — and possibly at the regional level — bodies (committees, roundtables, etc.) that would allow for progress monitoring in accordance with the thematic approach of the three strategic pillars.
- Ensure accountability to the community for progress made collectively by pillar, at least once a year at the AFO Annual Conference.
- Obtain the appropriate tools for the supervision and management of implementation.



CULTURE:

- Complement “structural” initiatives (tools, indicators, governance, roundtables and committees, etc.) with measures that can enhance inter-organizational relationships within the community, thereby fostering greater consultation and community cohesion around common objectives (e.g., systematic implementation of joint projects, sharing knowledge at roundtables and progress-monitoring consultations).



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