



# The Franco-Ontarian Economy

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WHITE PAPER

June 2022

*Assemblée*  
de la francophonie de l'Ontario



Fédération des gens  
d'affaires francophones  
de l'Ontario



# A joint message from the presidents

### ***Seizing the Francophone advantage means being open for business!***

The Franco-Ontarian community is a community of entrepreneurs and an economic force. In Ontario, there are over **30,000 Francophone businesses**. Francophone and bilingual workers contribute over **80 billion dollars to Ontario's gross domestic product**; that is **12% of the province's GDP**.

Now that the world is emerging from pandemic lockdowns, the Franco-Ontarian community and various levels of government need to work together to capitalize on our assets and reinforce our foundations. Domestic and international competition will be fierce and inflation is affecting many countries to varying degrees, but after two challenging years, the global economy is recovering. The international Francophone community presents significant growth potential and could help Ontario to bolster its position as Canada's economic engine, because export levels by the province's Francophone businesses are currently below the provincial average. Seizing Ontario's Francophone advantage helps to deliver the message that Ontario is open for business!

### ***Ontario should capitalize on its Francophone advantage. After geography, language is the factor that has the greatest influence on trade.***

This white paper will show that Ontario's Francophone businesses are not lagging behind their peers. The percentage of Francophone businesses remains **stable** and represents half of all Francophone businesses outside of Quebec. Many are **flourishing**, as proportionally more Francophone businesses generate revenues above \$50,000.

Our study indicates that the Franco-Ontarian economy is in good health, but there are challenges on the horizon. We note that Francophone women and immigrant business owners have been harder hit by the pandemic and need specific aid. The shortage of Francophone and bilingual workers has worsened, hindering the expansion of private sector businesses and making life difficult for governments looking to recruit people who can work in French. Business succession is also an issue to address in the near term, as our businesspeople are aging, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Because little information and data are available on the Franco-Ontarian economy, producing this economic profile was an important endeavour. Under the leadership of the Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario (FGA), the business community identified the need for a first profile of the Franco-Ontarian economy in order to identify potential measures to stimulate both the growth of our businesses and the province's economy. The FGA and the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO) decided to join forces to present this white paper.



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***We hope that this document will help Ontario's Francophone community in its efforts to prosper and to play a part in the economic success of their province and country.***

Sincerely,

Carol Jolin, president  
Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario

Dominic Mailloux, president  
Fédération des gens d'affaires  
francophones de l'Ontario



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# Summary

La Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario (FGA), a new businessperson's organization founded in January 2021 which already represents more than 4,000 Francophone SMEs across the province, has partnered with the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario in the summer of 2021 to write a white paper on the Franco-Ontarian economy.

Ontario's Francophone economy is composed of businesses with one or more owners whose mother tongue is French or who speak French, as well as bilingual workers. For the purposes of our analysis, **we use the term 'Francophone business' to refer to businesses that are wholly or partially owned by Francophones.** A report produced by Statistics Canada in January 2022 states that 4.3% of all incorporated businesses in Ontario in 2017 had at least one owner belonging to the official language minority community. The total number of these businesses is 30,150, which represents almost 50% of all Francophone businesses in Canada outside of Quebec.

In the agricultural sector, the percentage of farms with Francophone owners in 2016 was lower than the percentage of the province's Francophone businesses in general, namely 3.6% of all farms, that is, 1810 agricultural businesses. In comparison, Statistics Canada data indicate that 4.1% of Ontario's population in 2016 was Francophone.<sup>1</sup>

As for bilingual workers, almost 1 million members (908,420) or 11.6% of the province's workforce were Francophone or bilingual in 2016. Their contribution to the economy totalling almost \$80 billion represents 12.1% of the province's GDP.

Our analysis yielded a number of observations.

The percentage of Francophone businesses in the province remained stable from 2010 to 2017, but in Northern Ontario, the percentage of businesses with at least one Francophone owner is slightly lower than the percentage of the Francophone population in the region.

The percentage of job-creating businesses is higher among Francophones than among non-Francophones. Moreover, a greater percentage of these businesses generate revenues greater than \$50,000. However, Francophone farm operators tend to generate lower revenues compared to the

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<sup>1</sup> According to Statistics Canada data, 4.1% of Ontario's population belonged to the official language minority in 2016.



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provincial average for farms, despite the fact that their properties have more acreage than farms operated by non-Francophones.

The age of Francophone agribusiness entrepreneurs and operators is a concern, particularly in the province's northern and eastern regions. Estimates indicate that the percentage of Francophone SMEs involved in exporting is lower than provincial average. The participation of women in ownership is similar for Francophone and non-Francophone SMEs, but much lower than the percentage of women in the general population. Moreover, other current information indicates that the pandemic may have impacted Francophone women business owners more severely than men.

There is no precise data on the number of businesses that belong to Francophone immigrants in Ontario. The percentage of business owners born outside of Canada, regardless of language, is comparable to their percentage in the general population, but many more of these businesses have just one employee or none at all. Studies indicate that the pandemic has greatly impacted immigrant employees, as also noted for female entrepreneurs.

Although Francophone or bilingual workers are an essential component of the province's economy, an initial sector analysis indicates a major shortage of workers in administration and education, as well as an under-representation of bilingual workers in primary sectors, construction, public services, commerce, transportation and distribution, and tourism. Sector studies done in recent years indicate significant shortages in health and in early childhood education in many regions of the province.

In light of the data and observations discussed earlier, we have defined five priority issues for the development of the Franco-Ontarian economy:

- Increasing the pool of bilingual workers in crucial sectors
- Building up the next generation of Francophone entrepreneurs
- Creating favourable conditions to capture French-speaking markets
- Fostering entrepreneurial growth among women
- Fostering entrepreneurial growth among immigrants

For each of these issues, we present targets to aim for, avenues to follow and recommended actions.



# I. Background

The Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario (FGA) was founded on January 1, 2021. Business associations from across the province decided to work together to create a flagship organization tasked with developing Ontario's Francophone economy. A year and a half later, the FGA's members include 14 associations, 28 corporations or institutions and numerous individuals. With this initial membership, the FGA already represents over 4000 Francophone SMEs across the province.

One of the FGA's key projects is to develop a profile of the Franco-Ontarian economy in order to define priority issues for strengthening the province's Francophone economic ecosystem. A first analysis of information was done in the spring of 2021, based on data from the Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises. After that, the FGA produced additional analyses which target SMEs more precisely.

In the summer of 2021, the FGA partnered with the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO), the organization representing Ontario's 744,000 French-speaking citizens, to develop a White Paper on the Franco-Ontarian economy.

Since October 2014, the AFO has published six White Papers in collaboration with community partners in various sectors. They discuss issues in the areas of health (2), immigration, arts and culture, media, and seniors.

To produce this White Paper on the Franco-Ontarian economy, the AFO and FGA obtained the services of the advisory firm Axion, which authored the *Profil sommaire de l'économie franco-ontarienne*<sup>2</sup> (Summary Profile of the Franco-Ontarian Economy), published in the spring of 2021, on behalf of the FGA. For the present White Paper, the goals are as follows:

- Develop a profile of Ontario's Francophone economy using evidence-based information specific to the province;
- Further develop the issues identified in the Summary Profile of the Franco-Ontarian Economy;
- Propose an economic recovery strategy for Ontario's Francophone economy.

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<sup>2</sup> Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario. *Profil sommaire de l'économie franco-ontarienne*, March 2021, <https://fedefranco.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FGA-Profil-sommaire-de-leconomie-franco-ontarienne.pdf>, retrieved April 2022.





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### Methodology

The methodology consists in analyzing the data published by Statistics Canada, obtaining data specific to the province from national studies and analyzing information obtained by special order from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

The information comes from four sources:

- Portrait of French-speaking Workers in Ontario's Agriculture and Agri-food Industries, 2006 and 2016,<sup>3</sup> published by Statistics Canada;
- Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises<sup>4</sup> (from 1 to 499 employees and with a gross annual revenue of \$30,000 or more), produced by Statistics Canada in collaboration with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada;
- English-French Bilingualism Outside Quebec. An Economic Portrait of Bilinguals in Canada,<sup>5</sup> produced by the Conference Board of Canada and the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC) in November 2018;
- A report produced by Statistics Canada for Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada in January 2022 on the potential and limitations of definitions of official language minority businesses in Canada.<sup>6</sup> This analysis is based on the Canadian Employer Employee Dynamics Database (CEEDD) and uses mostly data from 2017.

Special requests made to Statistics Canada provided additional information regarding businesses with 1 to 499 employees in which the mother tongue of the decision-making person is French, as well as Francophone and bilingual workers aged 15 years or older in Ontario. These data were used to develop the profile of the Francophone economy in Ontario and to validate the issues identified in the Summary Profile of the Franco-Ontarian Economy in the spring of 2021. The proposed

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, *Portrait of French-speaking workers in Ontario's agriculture and agri-food industries, 2006 and 2016*, January 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2021001-eng.pdf?st=tZD3x-Hc>, retrieved April 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, *Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises 2017*, November 2018, [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/061.nsf/vwapj/SFGSME-EFCPME\\_2017\\_eng\\_revised\\_March-21.pdf/\\$file/SFGSME-EFCPME\\_2017\\_eng\\_revised\\_March-21.pdf](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/061.nsf/vwapj/SFGSME-EFCPME_2017_eng_revised_March-21.pdf/$file/SFGSME-EFCPME_2017_eng_revised_March-21.pdf), retrieved April 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Conference Board of Canada. *English-French Bilingualism Outside Quebec. An Economic Portrait of Bilinguals in Canada*, April 2019, [http://acufo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ReportConferenceBoard\\_BilingualismQC-EN.pdf](http://acufo.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ReportConferenceBoard_BilingualismQC-EN.pdf), retrieved April 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, *Official language minority business definitions – potential and limitations*, January 2022 (unpublished document), retrieved April 2022.



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economic recovery strategies are related to these issues. The strategies were validated by key players in Ontario's Francophone economy.

### Limitations

The definition of a Francophone company was set out in 2012 by RDÉE Canada in collaboration with academic researchers:

“A Francophone company is an organizational unit where the effective direct or indirect control of resource allocation and activities is mainly carried out by directors and officers who live in minority communities and whose first official language spoken is French.”<sup>7</sup>

Government agencies continue to question the practicability of attributing linguistic characteristics to businesses. In the meantime, it continues to be difficult to obtain detailed data about Francophone businesses.

The Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises, conducted in 2017 and revised in 2019 by Statistics Canada in collaboration with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, identifies businesses according to the mother tongue of the primary decision maker.

More recently, in the winter of 2021, Statistics Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada published the Portrait of French-Speaking Workers in Ontario's Agriculture and Agri-food Industries, 2006 and 2016, using the first official language spoken of the first farm operator indicated on the Census of Agriculture form. This study allowed us to identify the farms operated by Francophones.

Lastly, in the winter of 2022, a study produced by Statistics Canada for Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada examined the feasibility of relating linguistic characteristics derived from population data to businesses in order to identify businesses that could be associated to official language minorities. Three definitions were used to calculate the number of Francophone businesses: the mother tongue of one of the owners; the first official language spoken by one of the owners; and the language spoken in the home of one of the owners.

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<sup>7</sup> RDÉE Canada. *White Paper: The Economic Prosperity of Francophones and Acadians*, January 2016, p. 30.



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In this White Paper, we analyze and compare the data obtained from those three sources to give the most complete picture possible of Francophone businesses in Ontario.

In addition, there is a distinction to be made between self-identifying as bilingual and a bilingualism requirement for a given position. The report produced by the Conference Board of Canada and the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC) considers the number of bilingual persons and not the number of people who use both official languages at work. With the data at our disposal, it will not be possible to determine with certainty the number of positions or sectors requiring bilingual staff in Ontario. That is why we will complete our analysis with other data compiled by local or regional training boards or other economic development agencies.



Credit: Société économique de l'Ontario

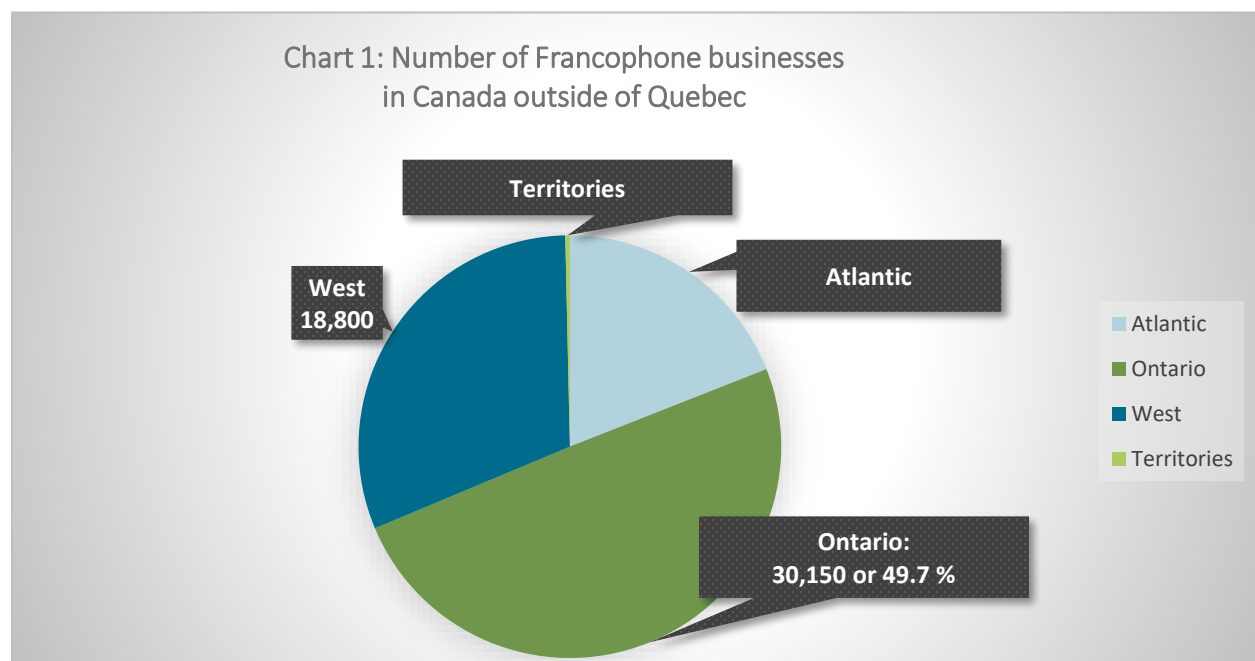


## II. Overview

Ontario's Francophone economy consists of businesses that have one or more owners whose mother tongue is French or who speak French, as well as bilingual workers. For the purposes of our analysis, we will use the term 'Francophone business' to designate a business owned in whole or in part by Francophones.

### 2.1 Profile of Francophone businesses in Ontario

The report produced by Statistics Canada for Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada in January 2022 states that 4.3% of incorporated businesses in Ontario in 2017 had at least one owner belonging to an official language minority. That percentage represents a total of 30,150 businesses, which is almost half of all Francophone businesses outside of Quebec.<sup>8</sup> From 2010 to 2017, the percentage of Francophone businesses in Ontario has remained steady at 4.3%. Comparatively, 4.1% of Ontario's general population in 2016 was Francophone.<sup>9</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada, *Official Language Minority Business Definitions – potential and limitations*, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. *Infographic: The French Presence in Ontario*. <https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/statistics/infographics/french-presence-ontario>, retrieved April 2022.



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The FGA's report published in March 2021 estimated the number of Francophone businesses to be 18,875, which represents 4.2% of the province's 449,398 businesses<sup>10</sup> employing 1 to 499 workers. Francophone businesses are those in which the mother tongue of the decision-making person is French.<sup>11</sup>

In its January 2022 analysis, Statistics Canada widened the scope to include incorporated companies with no employees or with revenues of less than \$30,000. Statistics Canada adds the criteria of the first official language spoken by at least one of the owners, rather than limiting the scope to just the mother tongue of the decision-making person.

The Canadian Employer-Employee Dynamics Database (CEEDD) used in the January 2022 analysis also includes non-incorporated companies, such as single-owner companies (e.g. convenience stores, caterers, housekeeping services, etc.). The authors of this report did not include those businesses, because their ownership structure is more complex and their financial information is less reliable.<sup>12</sup> However, the authors estimate that the percentage of Francophone businesses would still be approximately 4.3% if those types of companies were included.<sup>13</sup>

In the agricultural sector, the percentage of farms owned by a French-speaking person in 2016 was less than the percentage of Francophone businesses in the province, namely 3.6% or 1810 farms.<sup>14</sup>

The following graphic represents the proportion of SMEs in Ontario, in northern regions of the province (2 census metropolitan areas or CMAs), in southern regions (14 CMAs, including eastern and central Ontario) and the Toronto CMA, according to the mother tongue of the decision-making person. These numbers are drawn from the Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises 2017 published by Statistics Canada.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Government of Canada. *Key Small Business Statistics – 2020*  
[https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/061.nsf/eng/h\\_03126.html](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/061.nsf/eng/h_03126.html). retrieved April 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario. *Profil sommaire de l'économie franco-ontarienne*, March 2021, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada, *Official Language Minority Business Definitions – Potential and Limitations*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

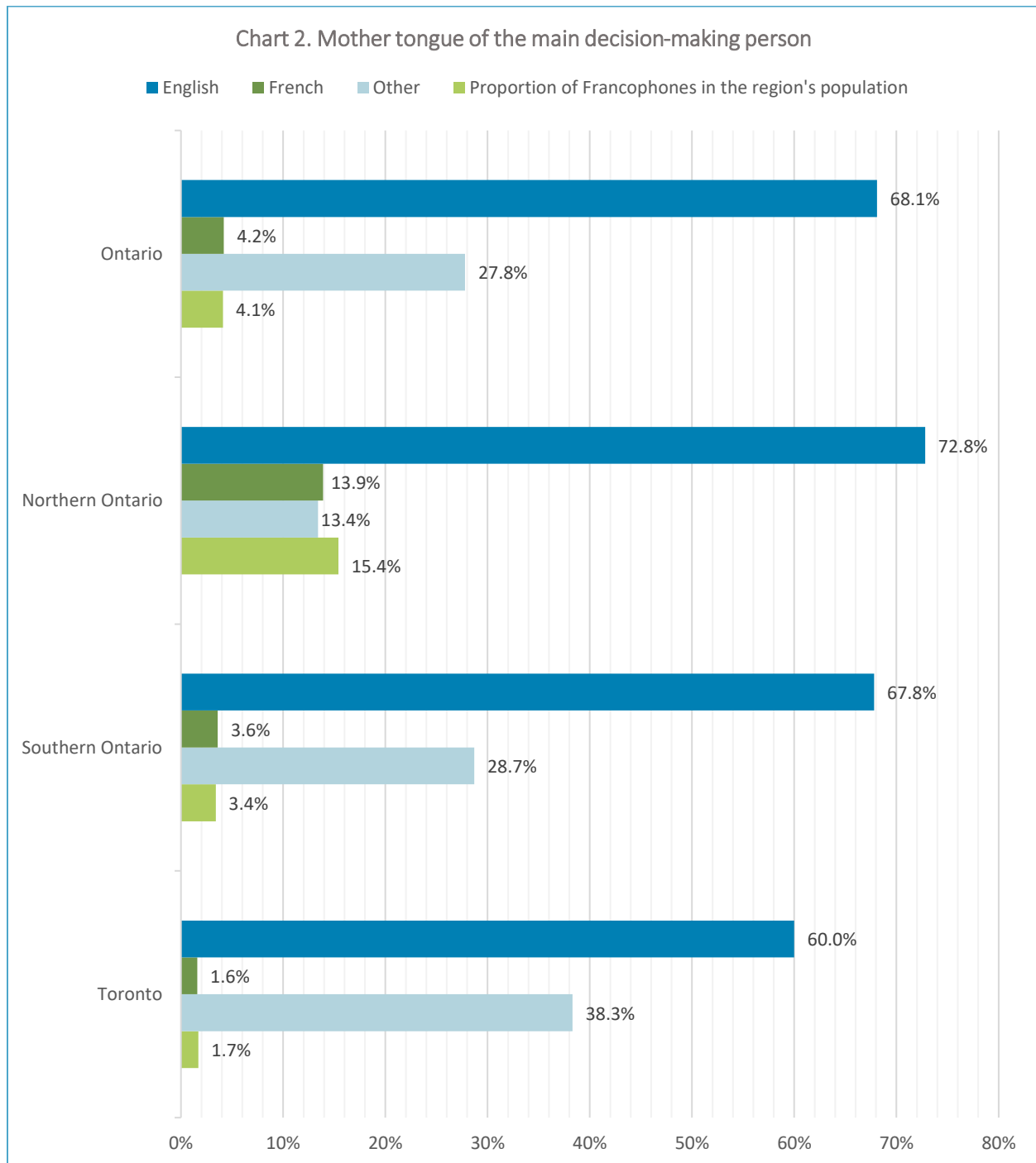
<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada, *Portrait of French-speaking Workers in Ontario's Agriculture and Agri-food Industries, 2006 and 2016*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, *Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises 2017*, *op. cit.*, table 30.



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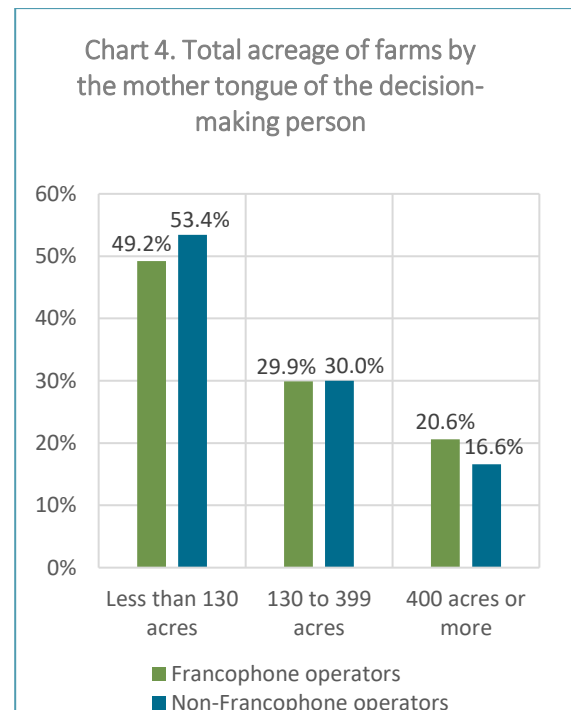
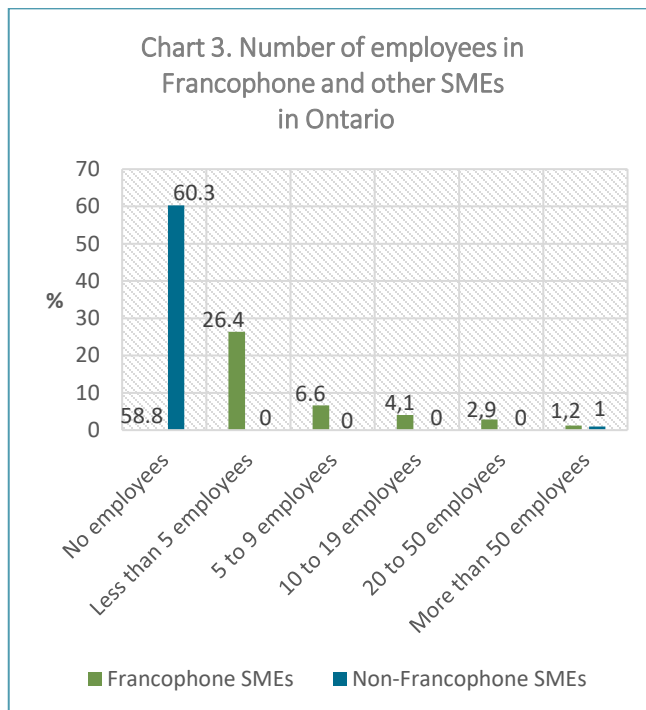


We note that the percentage of Francophone businesses at the provincial or regional level is about the same as the percentage of the Francophone population. However, in Northern Ontario, the percentage of Francophone businesses (13.9%) is slightly lower than the percentage of the Francophone population (15.4%).



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The following charts present the size of businesses as determined by the number of employees or the total farm acreage. It shows that almost 9 in 10 businesses in Ontario, regardless of language, have five employees or less. In this respect, there is little difference between Francophone SMEs and others. Across the board, there are slightly more Francophone businesses in each of the categories of 5 to 50 employees (13.6% Francophone businesses vs 10.7% non-Francophone businesses).



The situation is slightly different in the agricultural sector, where approximately one in two farms, regardless of language, has more than 130 acres. Proportionally, there are slightly more Francophone farm operators in the category of farms above 400 acres.

As for business revenues, more non-Francophone SMEs had revenues of \$10,000 or less in 2016. More than one third (34.3%) of Francophone SMEs had revenues above \$50,000 in 2016, compared to 28.2% of non-Francophone SMEs.

The situation is different for farms whose main operator is Francophone. In their case, 41.7% declared revenues of less than \$25,000 in 2016, compared to 35.9% of non-Francophone operators. As noted above for Francophone SMEs, the percentage of farms and agricultural businesses with revenues of more than \$500,000 is slightly higher among Francophones than non-Francophones.



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Chart 5. Business revenues by the language spoken by one or more owners

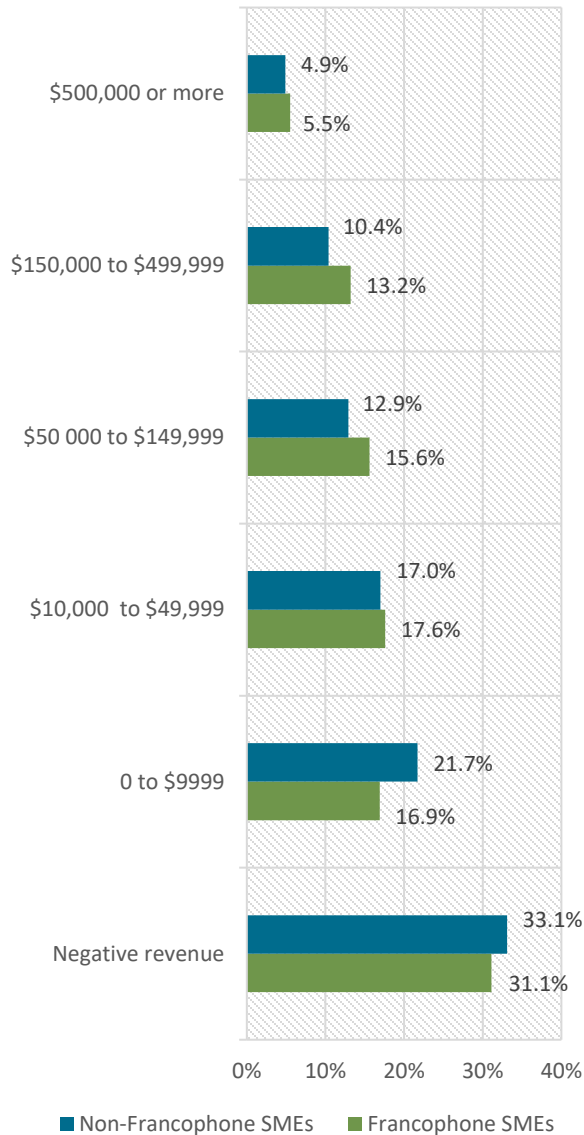
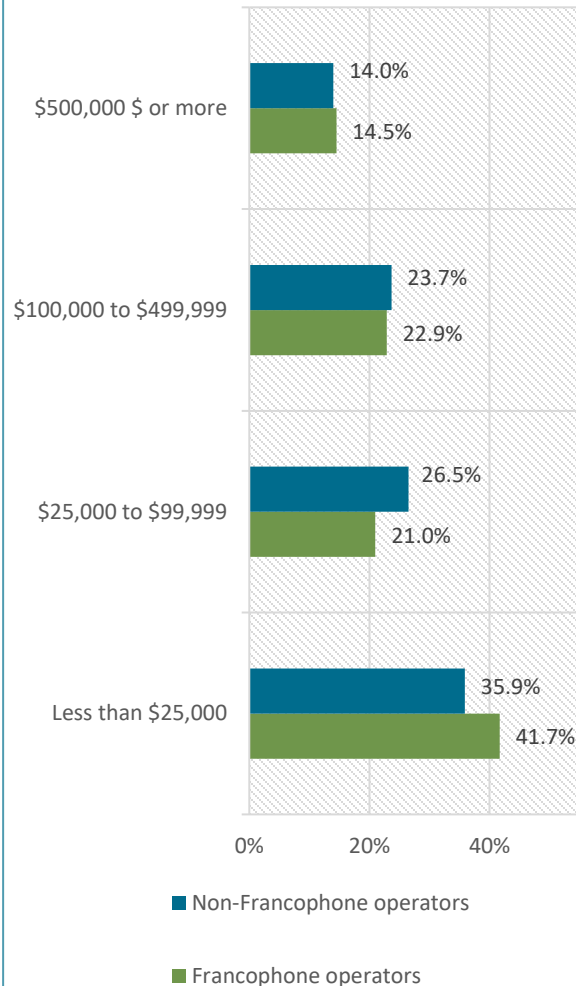


Chart 6. Farm revenues by the main operator's language



Looking at the age of operators, we see that the percentage of owners aged 50 or more is similar for Ontario's Francophone and non-Francophone SMEs. Almost six out of 10 SMEs are operated by persons aged 50 and over, regardless of language. The percentage of SMEs owned by persons aged 30 or less is similar among Anglophones (7%) and Francophones (8%).





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Chart 7. Age of SME owners by first official language spoken

Below age 30   Age 30 to 39   Age 40 to 49  
Age 50 to 64   Age 65 or over

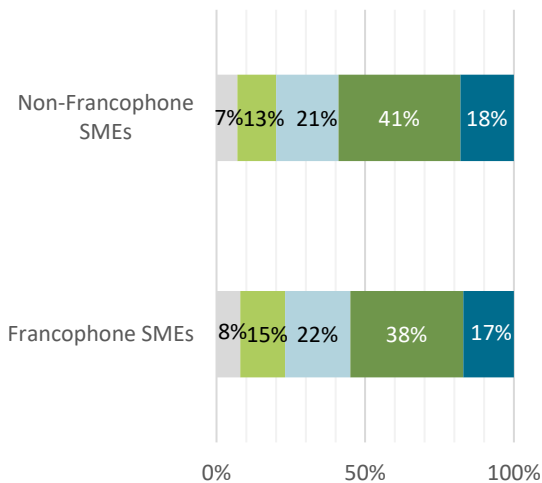
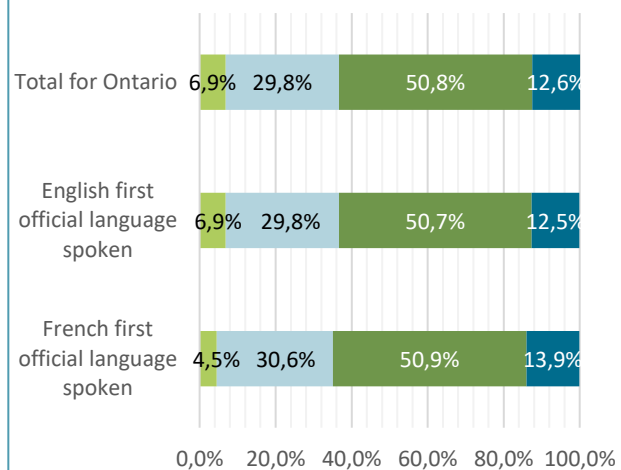


Chart 8. Age of farm operators by first official language spoken

Below age 35   Age 35 to 54  
Age 55 or above   Several age categories



The age profile in the agricultural sector is very similar to the age profile of SMEs in general, as more than half of the province's farms are headed by persons of age 55 or more, regardless of the first official language spoken.<sup>16</sup> The percentage of farm operators of age less than 35 (the upcoming generation) is lower among Francophones (4,5%) compared to Anglophones (6,9%). The percentage of multi-generational farms is practically identical among Francophones (13,9%) and Anglophones (12,5%).

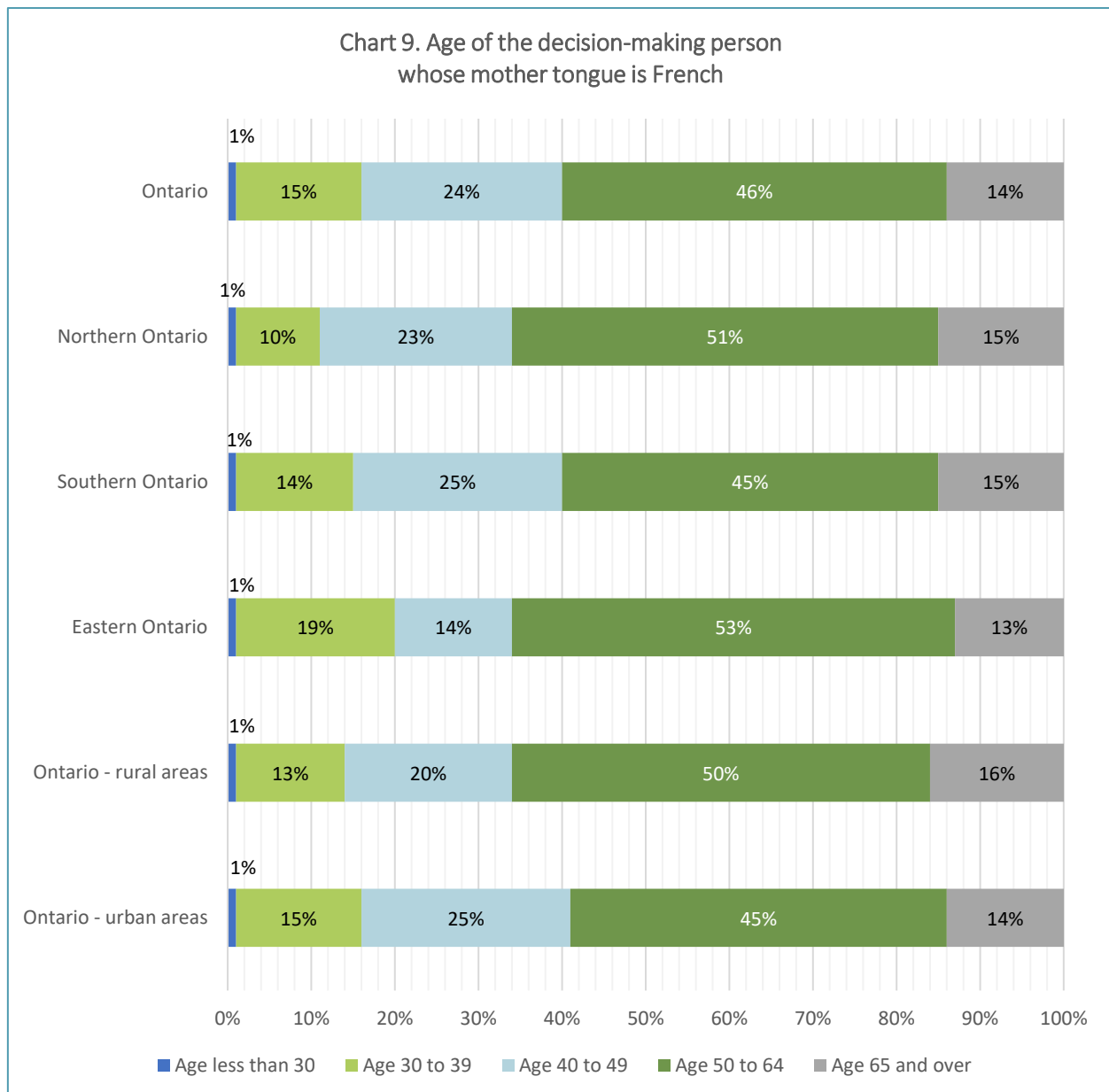
An analysis by region obtained by special order from Statistics Canada indicates that entrepreneurs aged 50 and over whose mother tongue is French are proportionally more present in northern and eastern Ontario compared to southern Ontario. The southern region includes central and southwestern Ontario, as well as metropolitan Toronto.

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada, *Portrait of French-speaking Workers in Ontario's Agriculture and Agri-food Industries, 2006 and 2016*, op. cit., p. 9.



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We also see that the percentage of entrepreneurs whose mother tongue is French and who are 50 years old or more is greater in rural areas (66%) than in urban areas (59%). Only the eastern region has a higher percentage of entrepreneurs below the age of 40, namely 20%, compared to the provincial average of 16%.



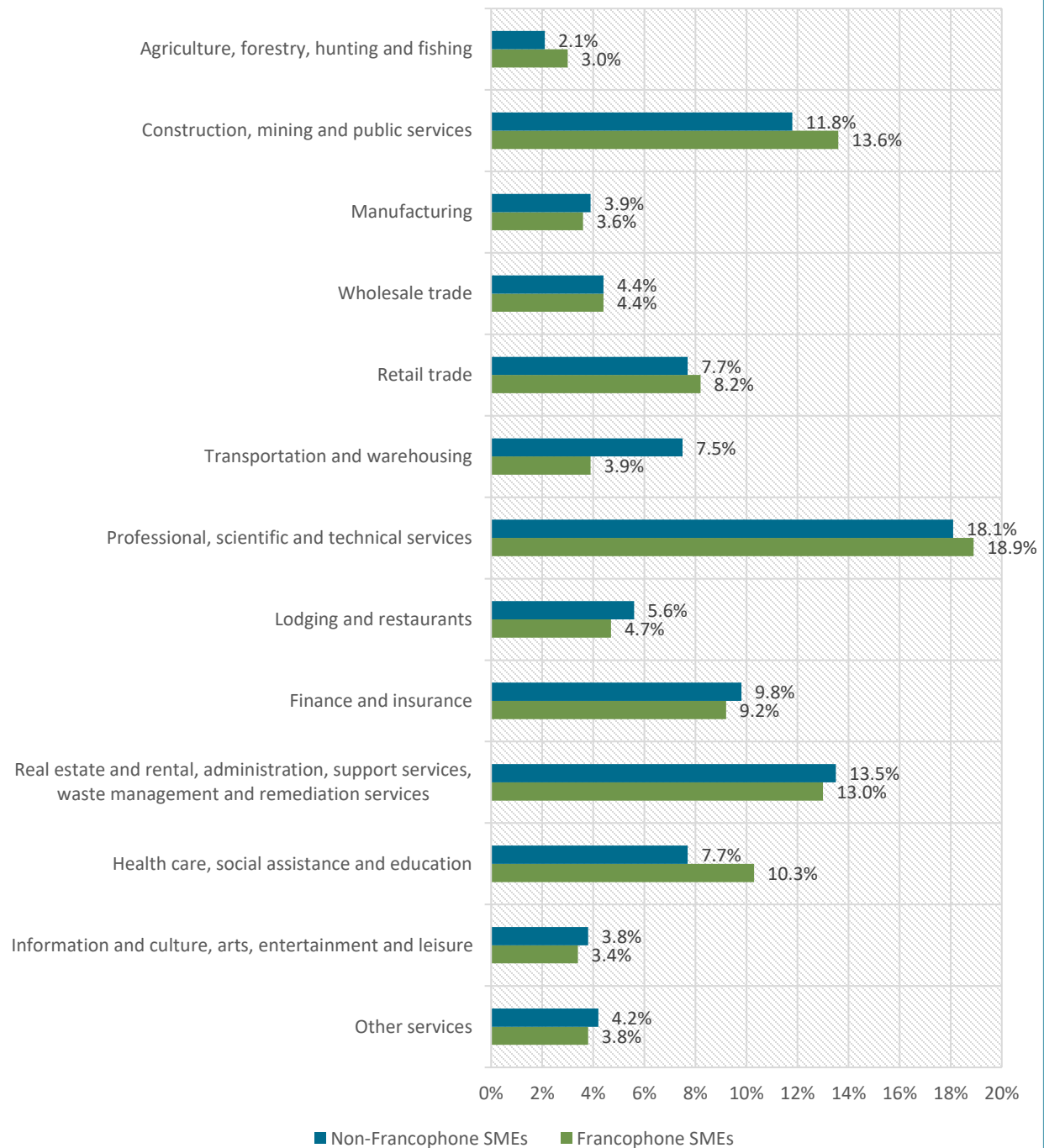
The graph below shows that the highest number of Francophone businesses are in the following sectors: professional, scientific and technical (18.9%); construction, mining and public services (13.6%); real estate and rental, administrative, support services, waste management and remediation



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services (13%); and health care, social assistance and education (10.3%). These sectors account for more than half of the province's SMEs, regardless of language.

Chart 10. Sectoral distribution of SMEs

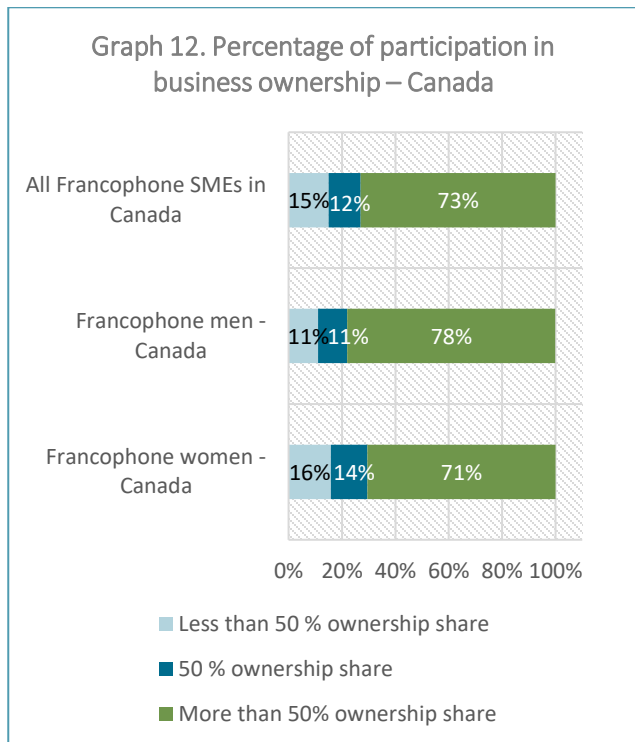
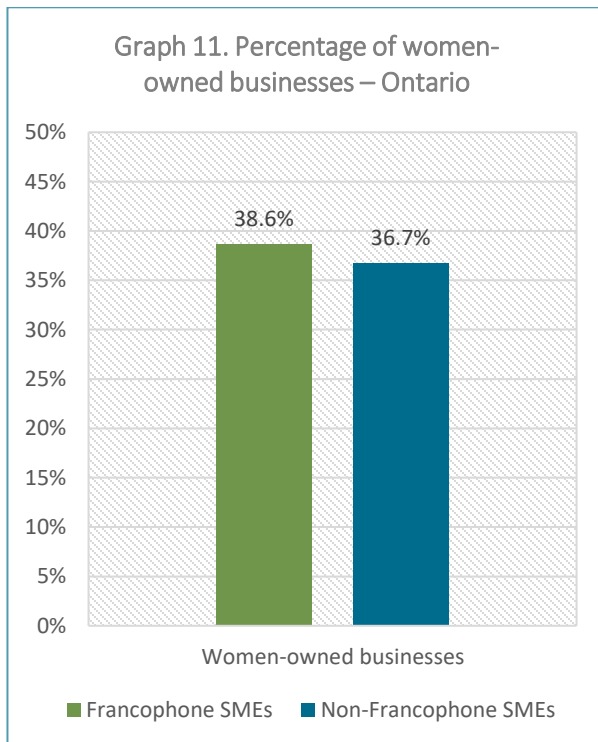




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The proportion of Francophone SMEs is greater than the proportion of Anglophone SMEs in these sectors: professional, scientific and technical services; construction, mining and public services; health care, social assistance and education; agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing; and retail trade.

More than one third of SMEs in Ontario, regardless of language, are managed in whole or in part by women. The percentage of businesses with female owners is very similar among both Francophone and non-Francophone SMEs. Of note, women represent 51% of the population of Ontario, regardless of age, while among Francophones the percentage of women is slightly higher at 53%.



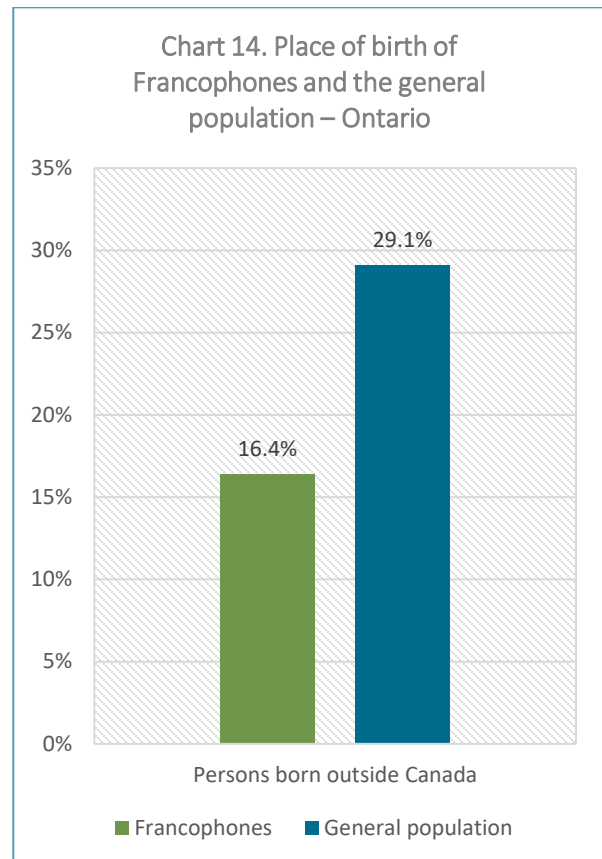
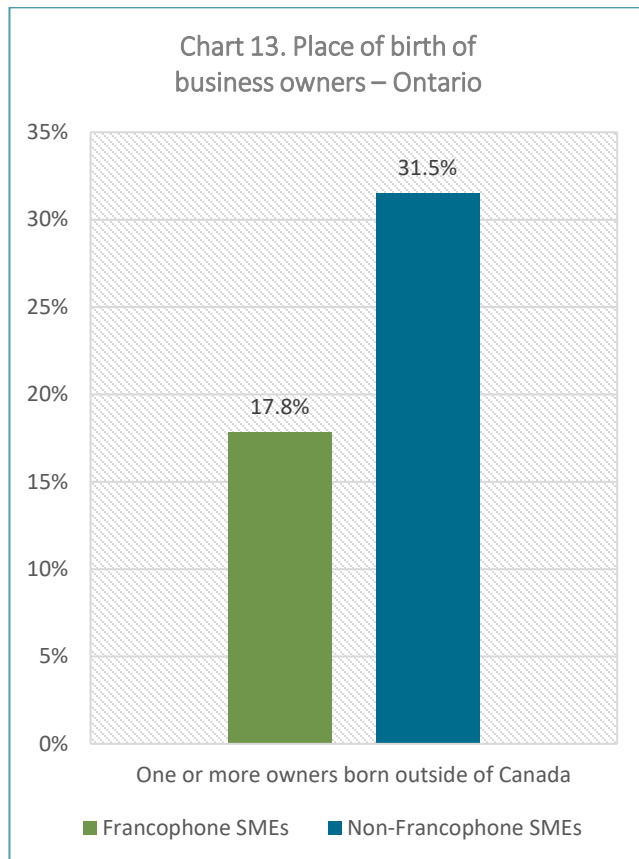
No data is available on the percentage of participation of Francophone women in business ownership in Ontario. Only national-level data is available. Graph 12 indicates that the percentage of women who own more than 50% of a business is slightly lower than is the case for men across the country. Seven out of 10 Francophone women entrepreneurs in Canada own more than 50% of a business.

The data indicates that the percentage of businesses owned by persons born outside of Canada is much lower among Francophones (17.8%) compared to Anglophones (31.5%). However, it should be noted that this difference is consistent with the composition of the population of Ontario. The 2016



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Census found that 16.4% of Francophones in the province were born outside of Canada<sup>17</sup> in comparison to 29.1 % of the general population<sup>18</sup>.



The numbers show that the percentage of persons born outside of Canada who own a business, regardless of language, is higher than their demographic weight. A nationwide study conducted by Statistics Canada in 2016 delivered the same findings. In fact, the study shows that after several years in Canada, immigrants are proportionally overrepresented as owners of incorporated private businesses or as independent workers compared to people born in Canada.<sup>19</sup> This explains in part why the percentage of business owners born outside of Canada, regardless of language, is higher than their demographic weight.

<sup>17</sup> Government of Ontario. *Profile of the Francophone Population in Ontario – 2016*, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/profile-francophone-population-ontario-2016>, retrieved June 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Government of Ontario. *Fact Sheet 8: Immigration*, <https://www.ontario.ca/document/2016-census-highlights/fact-sheet-8-immigration>, retrieved April 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada. *Immigration, Business Ownership and Employment in Canada*, March 2016, [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2016375-eng.pdf?st=L\\_-kmK6-](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2016375-eng.pdf?st=L_-kmK6-) p. 6.

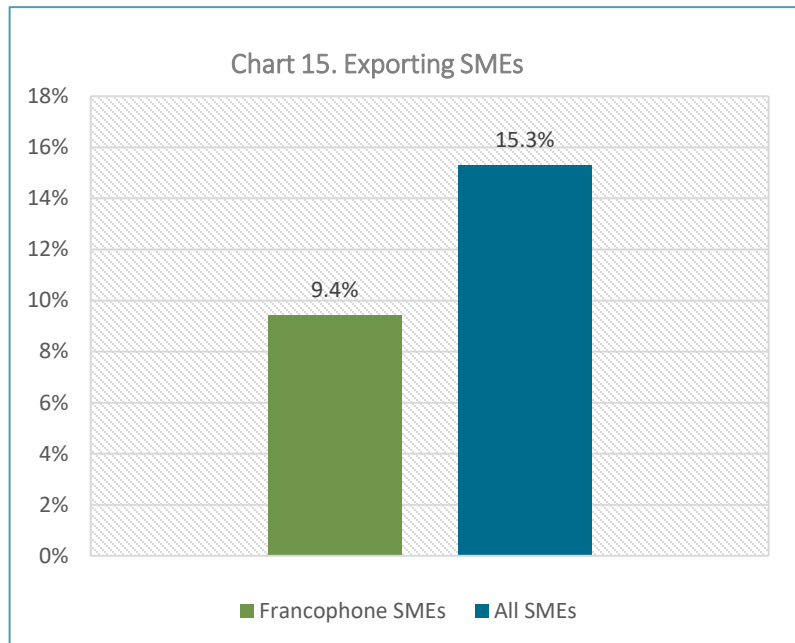


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This same study also shows that incorporated private businesses belonging to immigrants, regardless of language, are found mainly in five major industries in 2010, namely professional, scientific and technical services; retail trade; accommodation and food services; transportation and warehousing; and construction.<sup>20</sup>

In order to determine the percentage of Francophone exporting businesses in Ontario, we consulted the data of the 2017 Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises. This survey is aimed only at SMEs with 1 to 499 employees and gross annual revenue of \$30,000 or more. The data from the CEEDD provided to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada did not include that type of analysis.

According to that survey, approximately 14,557 Francophone businesses in Canada (including Quebec) in 2017 were exporting businesses. 'Exporting' means sales outside of Canada. By weighting this data according to the number of Francophone businesses in each province and territory, it can be estimated that approximately 9.4% of Francophone SMEs in Ontario targeted by this survey (approximately 1000 SMEs) in 2017 were exporting businesses, compared to 15.3% of the SMEs in the province, for a difference of six percentage points.



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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



### 2.2 Profile of Francophone or bilingual workers in Ontario

Ontario is the economic engine of Canada. With over 14 million inhabitants, Ontario represents 40% of the country's population and 37% of its GDP. About one in three Ontarians was born outside of Canada and over 200 ethnic origins are represented in the province's population.

Ontario also has the largest Francophone population in Canada outside of Quebec, with more than 550,000 people, and 1.5 million Ontarians are bilingual (able to speak French and English). Almost one quarter (24%) of all bilingual persons in Canada live in Ontario. If Quebec is excluded, the percentage rises to over 56%.<sup>21</sup>

In Ontario in 2016, over 1 million workers (908,420 persons), or 11.6% of the workforce, were Francophone or bilingual. Their economic output represents 12.1% of the province's GDP, or nearly 80 billion dollars.<sup>22</sup>

***In 2016, Ontario's bilingual workers produced 12.1% of the province's GDP, or 76.5 billion dollars.***

In Ontario in 2016, 63% of employed Francophone or bilingual workers had a university degree, compared to 47% of Anglophone workers. Moreover, once in the labour market, bilingual workers earned on average \$8464 more than unilingual Anglophone workers.<sup>23</sup>

The 2016 data indicates that in Ontario, more than half of all Francophone or bilingual workers are found in five main sectors: education services (13.1%), public administration (13%), healthcare (10.4%), retail trade (9.4%) and professional, scientific and technical services (9%).

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<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada. *Ontario [Province] and Canada [Country]. Census Profile, 2016 Census*, catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001. Released November 29, 2017, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>. Retrieved April 2022.

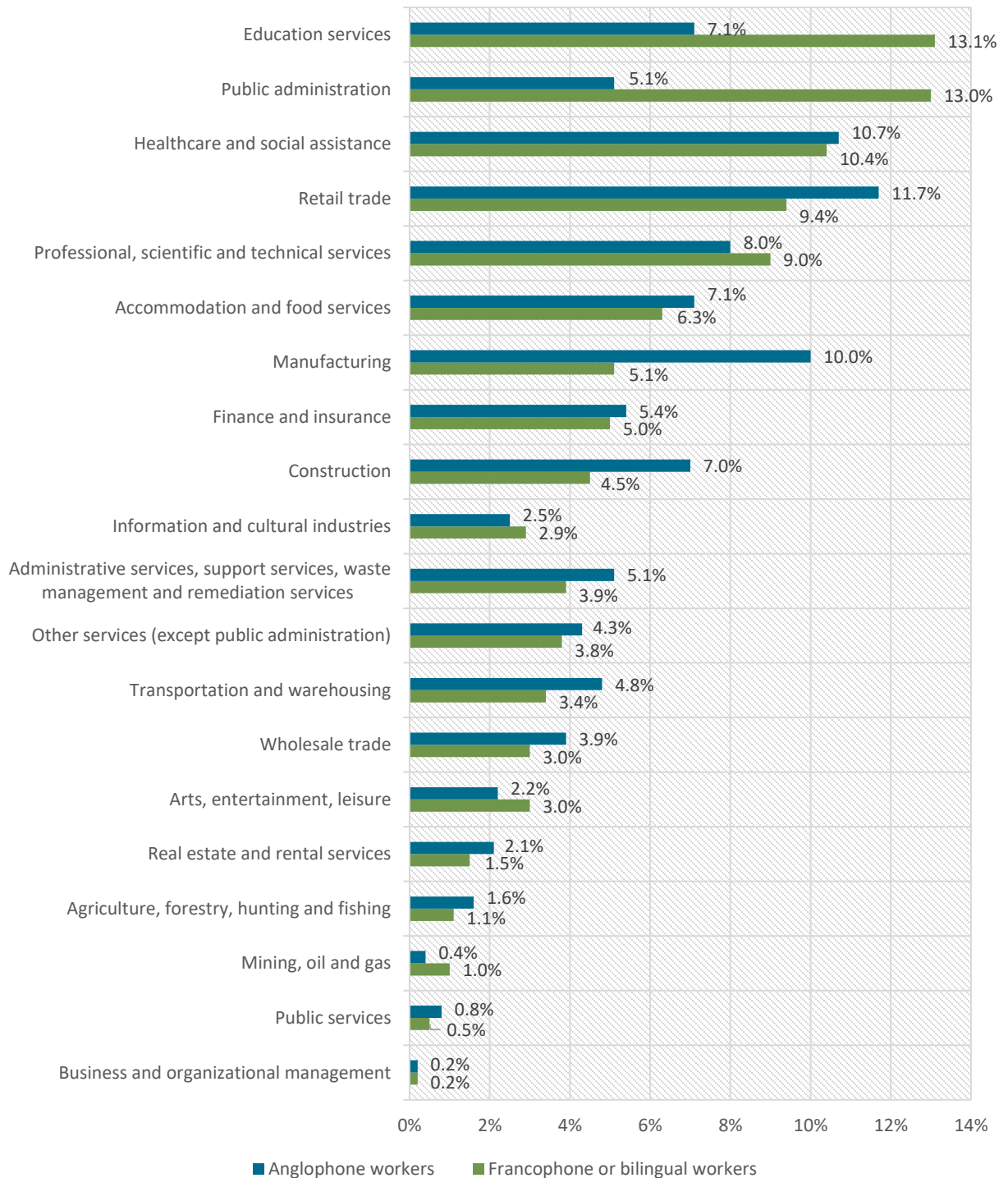
<sup>22</sup> Conference Board of Canada. *English-French Bilingualism Outside Quebec. An Economic Portrait of Bilinguals in Canada*, op. cit., p. 31 and 61.

<sup>23</sup> Statistics Canada. *Sex, Industry, Income, Work Activity, Highest Certificate, Field of Study, Knowledge of Official Languages for the population aged 15 and over in Canada and Ontario*, [Data tables: customized total calculations].



## ECONOMY

Chart 16. Employment sector of Francophone or bilingual workers and Anglophone workers



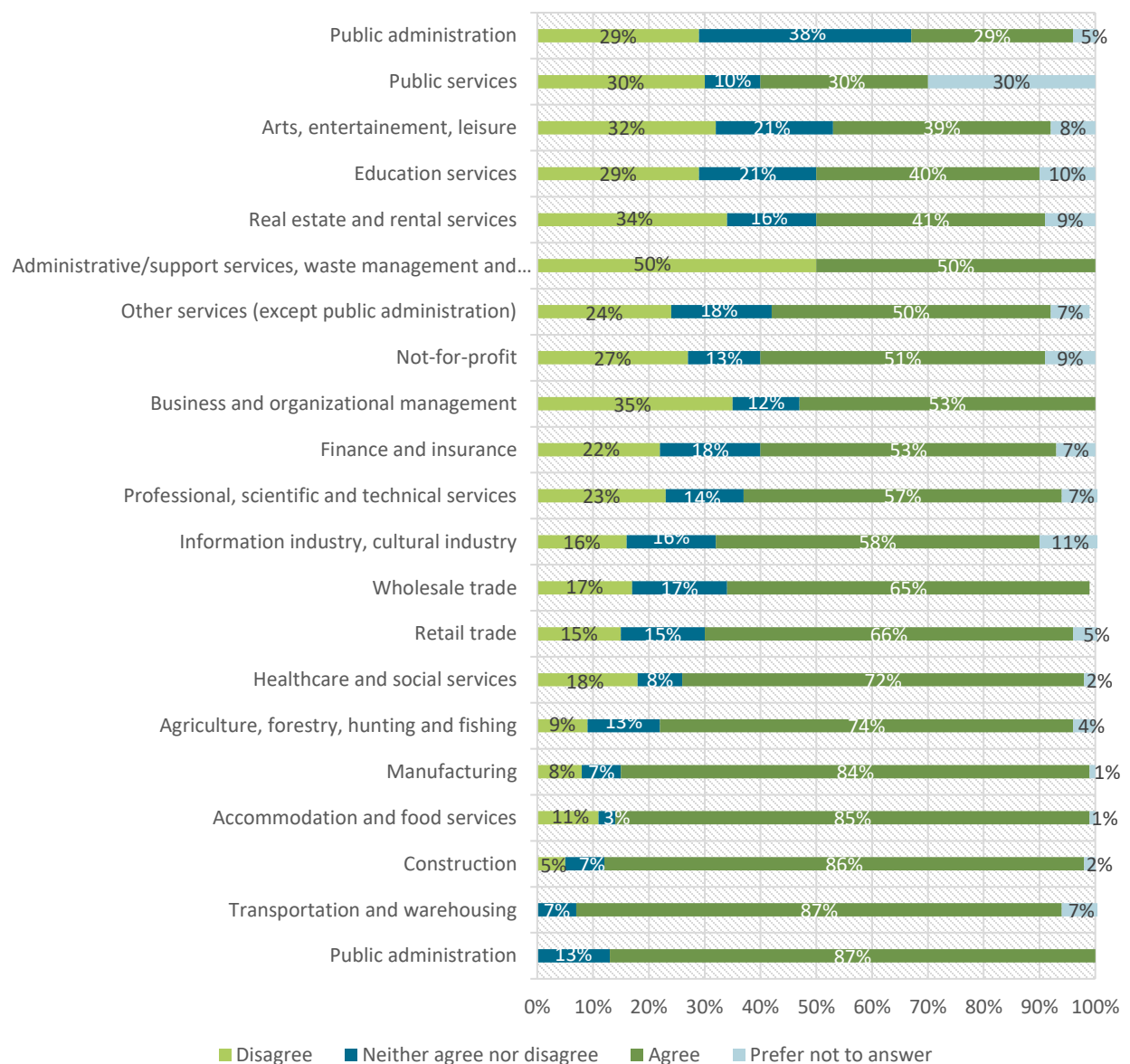




## ECONOMY

In a report by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in 2022 which includes results from an online survey of its members conducted between October 6 and November 19, 2021, three of the five sectors with the highest percentage of bilingual workers, namely healthcare, professional/scientific/technical services, and retail trade, are experiencing a major shortage of workers.

Chart 17. Respondants' opinion on whether their sector is facing a shortage of workers





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The respondents also state that they expect the shortage to continue in the long term.<sup>24</sup> The data related to the education and public administration sectors should be interpreted with caution, seeing as school boards and government representatives are generally not members of a Chamber of Commerce and did not take part in the survey.

This same study also indicates that the sectors with the most serious shortages of workers, according to the respondents, are mining, oil and gas (87%); transportation and warehousing (87%), construction (86%); lodging and restaurants (85%); and fabrication (84%). As shown in Chart 18, all sectors, except mining, oil and gas, are sectors where Francophone and bilingual workers are underrepresented compared to their percentage within Ontario's workforce as a whole (11.6%).

The high percentage of Francophone or bilingual workers in the mining sector (25.3%) can be explained by the fact that most mines are in the northeast region of the province, where 22.6% of the population is Francophone.

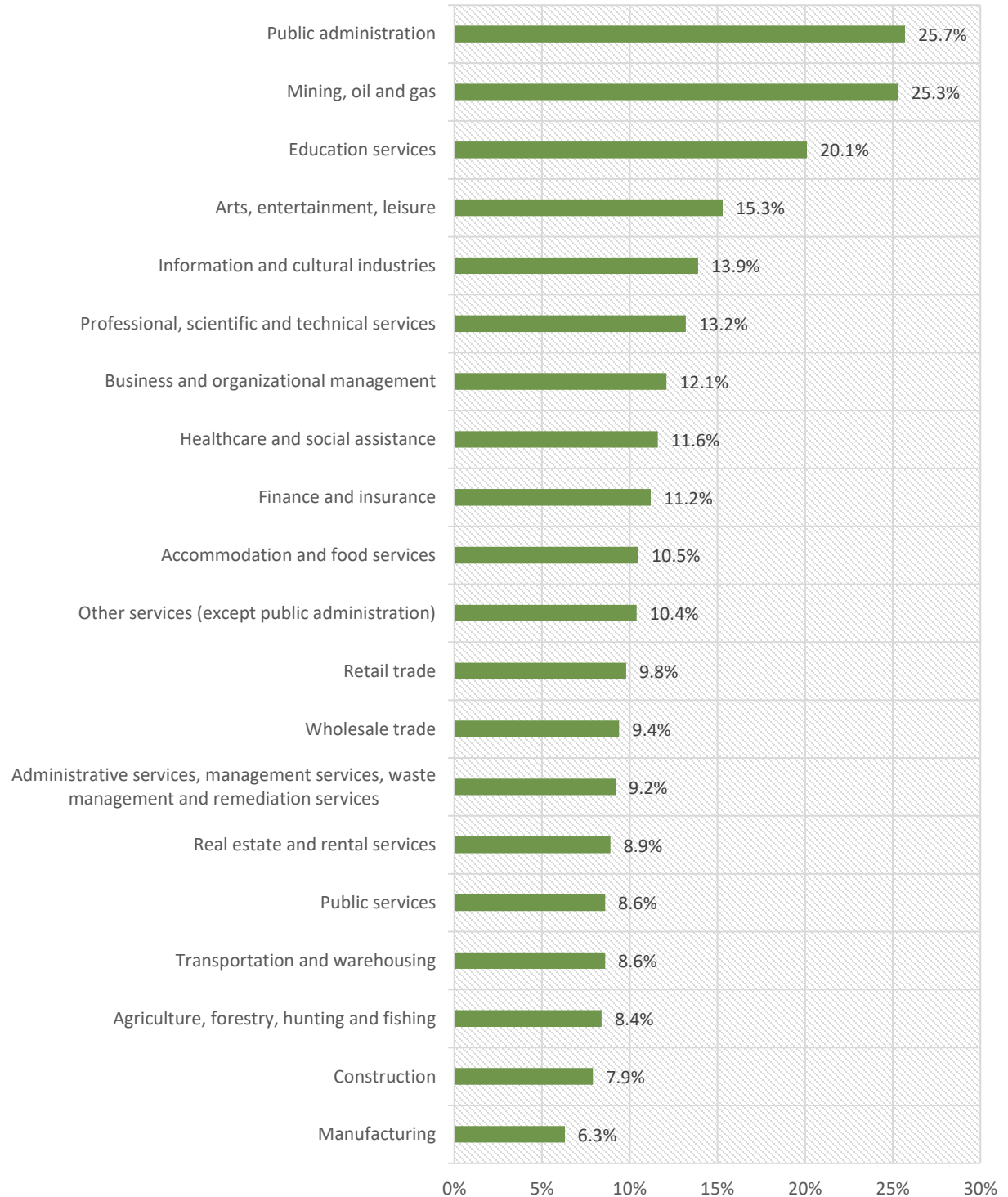
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<sup>24</sup> Ontario Chamber of Commerce. *2022 Ontario Economic Report*, <https://occ.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022-Ontario-Economic-Report.pdf>, p. 15, retrieved May 2022.



## ECONOMY

Chart 18. Percentage of Francophone or bilingual workers





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The percentage of Francophone or bilingual workers is also higher than the provincial average in these sectors: education services; arts, entertainment and leisure; professional, scientific and technical services; and business and organizational management. The percentage of workers in the healthcare and social assistance sectors, as well as finance and insurance, is comparable to the overall percentage of Francophone or bilingual workers in Ontario (11.6%).

In recent years, there have been studies that looked specifically at the need for bilingual workers in various regions of the province. The North Superior Workforce Planning Board noted in a report published in March 2019 that the demand for bilingual workers in that part of northwestern Ontario is felt mainly in healthcare services, sales, and commercial, financial and administrative services.<sup>25</sup>

Another study, conducted in March 2019 for French-language school boards, literacy centres for Francophone adults and the province's two French-language colleges of applied arts and technology, concluded that the demand for bilingual non-qualified workers and apprentices would remain high over the coming years in these sectors: construction, transportation, personal care, restaurants, administrative support, manufacturing and customer service.<sup>26</sup>

Lastly, a study to determine the need and level of interest for the creation of a French-language university in central-southwestern Ontario, conducted for the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development in 2017, found that the region had major shortages of bilingual workers in these sectors: education services; healthcare and social assistance; finance and insurance; information; and professional, scientific and technical services.<sup>27</sup>

According to the data obtained by special order, in 2016, more than one third of Francophone or bilingual workers (36%) had studied mainly in the fields of business, management and public administration or social sciences, behavioural sciences or law, while 41% of Anglophone workers had a diploma in business, management and public administration, or architecture, engineering and related technologies. There were also more Francophone and bilingual workers than Anglophone workers who had studied in the fields of humanities or education.

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<sup>25</sup> North Superior Workforce Planning Board. *Bilingual Employment Gaps in Northwestern Ontario: Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis*, March 2019, [https://www.nswpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2019.04.17\\_FINAL\\_Bilingual\\_Employment\\_Gaps\\_report-1.pdf](https://www.nswpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2019.04.17_FINAL_Bilingual_Employment_Gaps_report-1.pdf), retrieved May 2022.

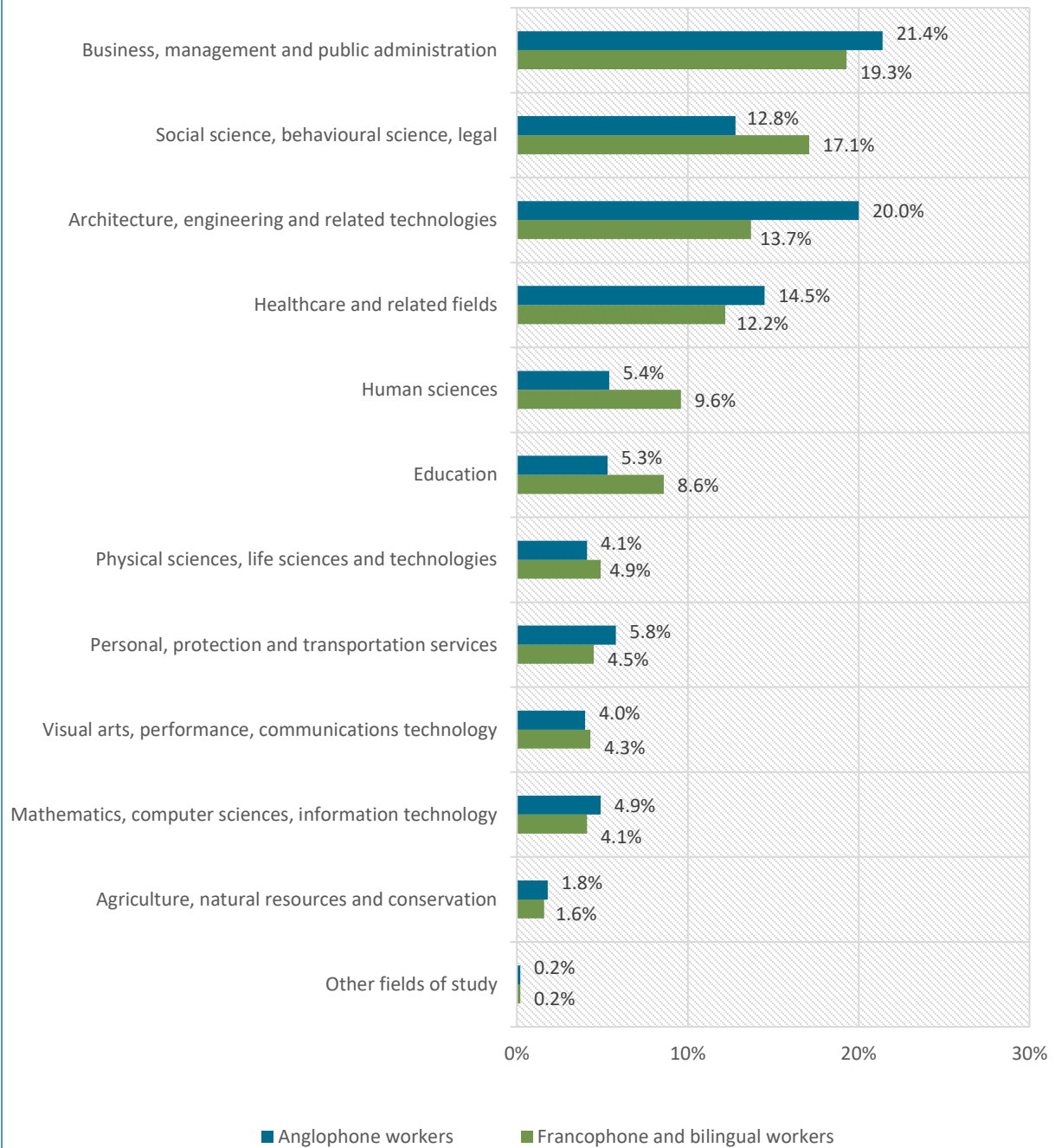
<sup>26</sup> Axion. *Pénurie de main-d'œuvre francophone et bilingue en Ontario*, March 2019, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Malatest. *Study for the Needs and Interest for a French-Language University in Central and Southwestern Ontario*, May 2017, [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/Malatest\\_Final\\_Report\\_MAESD\\_FLU\\_2017.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/publications/Malatest_Final_Report_MAESD_FLU_2017.pdf), p. 30, retrieved June 2022.



## ECONOMY

Chart 19. Ontario workers' fields of postsecondary studies





This data cannot be used to perform a detailed analysis by sector of activity because different data collection systems were used. But there are gaps to be noted between the workers' fields of study and the percentage of bilingual workers in these same fields. The biggest differences are in public administration and education, where the percentage of bilingual workers is significantly higher than the percentage of persons who studied in those fields. It is important to note that education services include elementary and secondary schools and colleges and universities, as well as education support services like personal development schools, student exchange programs or pedagogical testing services.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.3 Analysis findings

The findings of our analysis allow us to identify the economic issues that particularly impact Ontario's Francophone community.

First, it should be noted that the percentage of the Francophone SMEs, approximately 4.3% of businesses in 2017, is slightly higher than the percentage of the province's Francophone population as defined by Statistics Canada in 2016. However, the percentage of SMEs is lower than the percentage of the Francophone population if the inclusive definition established by the government of Ontario in 2009 is used. According to this definition, Francophones represent 4.7% of Ontario's population.<sup>29</sup>

From 2010 to 2017, the percentage of Francophone businesses remained stable at 4.3%, according to the report prepared for Innovation, Sciences and Economic Development Canada in the winter of 2022.<sup>30</sup>

It is noteworthy that the number of non-Francophone businesses in Ontario increased by 17% over seven years, rising from 569,350 to 666,245, while the number of Francophone businesses increased by 19% during the same period, rising from 25,370 to 30,150. Only the northern part of the province is lagging for the percentage of businesses with at least one Francophone owner (13.9%) compared to the percentage of the Francophone population (15.4%) in the region.

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<sup>28</sup> Statistics Canada. *North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Canada 2012*, <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&TVD=118464&CVD=118471&CPV=611710&CS T=01012012&CLV=5&MLV=5>, retrieved April 2022.

<sup>29</sup> Government of Ontario. *Profile of the Francophone Population in Ontario- 2016*, *op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> Statistics Canada, *Official Language Minority Business Definitions – Potential and Limitations*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.



## ECONOMY

Half of all businesses in Ontario, regardless of language, have no employees. That being said, as indicated in Chart 5 in the previous section, the percentage of job-creating businesses is greater among Francophones than non-Francophones. Moreover, a higher percentage of Francophone businesses generated revenue of more than \$50,000 in 2016. Francophone businesses create jobs and contribute to the province's wealth.

Francophone farm operators are more likely to generate low revenues compared to farms in the province as a whole, but they have more acreage than farms not operated by Francophones. According to the report published by Statistics Canada in January 2021, these differences can be attributed to the types of crops associated with farms operated by Francophones (e.g. hay, field crops) and to their location in areas with a harsher climate, namely the province's eastern and northern districts.<sup>31</sup>

Of greater concern is the age of agricultural entrepreneurs and farm operators, across all such businesses in the province. More than half of the agriculture businesses and farms, regardless of language, are owned by a person aged 50 years or more. Studies indicate that there are many hurdles to overcome when selling this sort of business: asset financing, revenue fluctuations, stricter environmental standards, higher production costs, and land acquisition by non-agricultural companies. These conditions make it harder to transfer farmlands to the next generation of farmers.<sup>32</sup>

This situation is even more concerning for SMEs in northern and eastern rural areas of the province, because more than two thirds of the Francophone decision-making persons were age 50 or older in 2016. This situation might seem equally concerning for Francophone SMEs and others, but it is important to note that the pool of potential Francophone buyers is much more limited compared to Anglophone buyers.

The question is what will happen to the services provided to Francophone customers if the SME is bought by a non-Francophone or if the business fails to find a buyer. Will French remain a language of work if the decision-making person is Anglophone? Will bilingualism be considered an asset when hiring staff? These questions underscore the issue of ensuring a next generation of Francophone entrepreneurs and the difficulties involved in transferring ownership of agricultural businesses.

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<sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada, *Portrait of French-speaking Workers in Ontario's Agriculture and Agri-food Industries, 2006 and 2016*, op. cit., p. 56.

<sup>32</sup> Commission sur l'avenir de l'agriculture et de l'agroalimentaire québécois. *Agriculture and Agrifood: Securing and Building the Future*, 2008, <http://www.caaaq.gouv.qc.ca/userfiles/File/Dossiers%2012%20fevrier/Rapport%20CAAQ%20anglais.pdf>, retrieved May 2022.



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Another significant gap concerns exports. It is estimated that the percentage of Francophone exporting SMEs is six percentage points lower than for all SMEs in the province. Despite the importance of Ontario's Francophone population (52.9% of all Francophones outside of Quebec) and of Francophone businesses in the province (49.7% of all Francophone SMEs outside of Quebec), Ontario is lagging compared to businesses in other parts of the Francophone community in Canada or internationally. Ontario has much to gain by claiming its place internationally with the help of stronger Franco-Ontarian businesses. The province has tools to achieve this goal, as it is a member state of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie with observer status, and because of the province's dynamic economy. Many sectors with a sizeable number of Francophone SMEs, including education, mining, professional, scientific and technical services, healthcare and the arts, offer avenues for the development of exports to French-speaking countries.

The level of participation of women as business owners is quite similar between Francophone and non-Francophone SMEs. However, the data on women entrepreneurs was compiled before the pandemic. Currently available information indicates that the pandemic may have affected women business owners more harshly than men. In fact, a survey done by the Industry Strategy Council on the effects of COVID-19 on businesses indicates that businesses headed by women expected revenues to drop by 44% in 2020. Generally, women were more worried about the future viability of their businesses,<sup>33</sup> in part because they are more likely to own newly established and smaller businesses and that they had to lay off a larger part of their staff.<sup>34</sup> This issue should not go unnoticed. The participation of women in business ownership should not regress to a greater extent among Francophones.

Finally, the percentage of business owners born outside of Canada is very similar to their percentage in the general population, both for Francophones and Anglophones. However, the nature of the data collected makes it impossible to identify the business segments or the types of business these owners are involved in. A study done by Statistics Canada in 2016 indicates that for many immigrants who are unincorporated independent workers, entrepreneurship is a secondary activity. Very few of those for whom independent work was the main source of revenue had paid employees.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Industry Strategy Council. *Restart, Recover and Reimagine Prosperity for all Canadians*. May 2020, [https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/innovation-better-canada/sites/default/files/attachments/00118a\\_en.pdf](https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/innovation-better-canada/sites/default/files/attachments/00118a_en.pdf), retrieved April 2022, p. 25

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>35</sup> Statistics Canada. *Immigration, Business Ownership and Employment in Canada*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.





## ECONOMY

Moreover, studies show that immigrant entrepreneurs were more severely impacted by the pandemic, along with women entrepreneurs. In the United States, more than one third of immigrant entrepreneurs indicated that they have experienced substantial losses since the start of the pandemic.<sup>36</sup> The same probably applies in Canada. The Industry Strategy Council recognized the challenges experienced by indigenous or visible minority entrepreneurs, who own many businesses in the areas of tourism, hospitality, retail trade and services.<sup>37</sup>

Francophone or bilingual workers are a vital component of the province's economy. Shortages of these workers in many key economic sectors and many regions not only hinder the delivery of government or community services to the population, but can also lead to gaps in the services provided, loss of customers or contracts, or investments not made by businesses.<sup>38</sup>

That is why it is vital to be able to count on the presence of a sufficient number of bilingual workers in many key sectors. An initial analysis highlighted a major shortage of workers in the administration and education sectors, as well as an underrepresentation of bilingual workers in primary sectors, construction, public services, commerce, transportation, distribution and tourism. In recent years, sector studies in healthcare and early childhood education reveal gaps in many areas of the province. More in-depth studies are needed to measure the extent of the demand for bilingual workers in various regions and sectors of the economy.

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<sup>36</sup> *Forbes*. A Conversation on the Importance of Immigration on Entrepreneurship with Ali Noorani, President and CEO of the National Immigration Forum, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rhettbuttle/2020/10/15/a-conversation-on-the-importance-of-immigration-on-entrepreneurship-with-ali-noorani-president-and-ceo-of-the-national-immigration-forum/?sh=35f1da887c93>, retrieved in March 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Industry Strategy Council. *Restart, Recover and Reimagine Prosperity for all Canadians*, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>38</sup> Ministers' Council on the Canadian Francophonie. *Working Towards a National Portrait of the Unmet Needs for a Bilingual Workforce*, March 2021, [https://cmfc-mccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021-03-22\\_Working-Towards-a-National-Portrait-Unmet-Needs-Bilingual-Workforce\\_final\\_web.pdf](https://cmfc-mccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021-03-22_Working-Towards-a-National-Portrait-Unmet-Needs-Bilingual-Workforce_final_web.pdf) p. 5, retrieved June 2022.



### III. Strategic issues

Based on the data and findings presented in the previous pages, we have identified five priority issues for the development of the Franco-Ontarian economy:

- Increase the pool of bilingual workers in critical sectors
- Build up the next generation of Francophone entrepreneurs
- Create favourable conditions to capture Francophone export markets
- Foster entrepreneurial growth among women
- Foster entrepreneurial growth among immigrants

For each of these issues, we present targets to aim for, avenues to follow and recommended actions to undertake.

#### 3.1 Increase the pool of bilingual workers in critical sectors

A flourishing Francophone economy depends not only on the presence of Francophone or bilingual businesses that produce goods and services, but also on skilled workers that can communicate in the language(s) of work.

It would be very helpful to conduct additional analyses to determine the extent of the shortage of bilingual workers in the province's various sectors and regions. We already know that some sectors, such as early childhood learning, education, agriculture, commerce, lodging, restaurants and some healthcare sectors, are critical sectors with shortages of Francophone or bilingual workers. More detailed studies should also be done in sectors such as tourism, public administration, justice or agri-food, to better understand the many facets of the shortage of Francophone or bilingual workers in Ontario.

Governments along with bilingual and French-language post-secondary institutions need to take concerted action to facilitate the attraction of international students from Francophone countries; to accelerate credential recognition for French-language immigrants as recommended in the White Paper on Immigration in Ontario; to increase the number of spots in some programs of study (e.g., French-language education) or develop new French or bilingual programs in sectors with shortages of bilingual workers. Some post-secondary institutions and provincial associations have already taken action on these issues, by instituting new French-language nursing and pharmacy programs or by developing focused recruitment and training strategies in education.



## ECONOMY

### ***Recommendation 1***

***The federal government should adopt the recommendations of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration and review the recruitment and acceptance of international students from Francophone countries<sup>39</sup> to counter the shortage of workers.***

### ***Recommendation 2***

***The provincial government should accelerate the approval and funding of new spots or new French-language training programs in fields impacted by a shortage of bilingual workers.***

### ***Recommendation 3***

***Recommendation 10 made in the White Paper on Francophone Immigration in Ontario should be implemented without delay: the provincial government should mobilize professional associations, unions and post-secondary institutions that offer French-language programs to improve and accelerate the process of credential recognition and skills upgrading for Francophone immigrants, in order to facilitate and accelerate their entry into the job market.***

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<sup>39</sup> House of Commons. *Differential Treatment in Recruitment and Acceptance Rates of Foreign Students in Quebec and the Rest of Canada*, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/CIMM/report-8/page-66#12>, retrieved June 2022.



## ECONOMY

### *Recommendation 4*

*The provincial government should fund targeted studies in the sectors of tourism, commerce, public administration, justice and agri-food in order to determine with greater precision the extent of shortages of bilingual workers in various regions of the province.*

### *Recommendation 5*

*The provincial government should put in place a pilot project for the recruitment of temporary foreign workers from Francophone or Francophile countries. Similarly to the [Journées Québec](#) events, the strategy would involve virtual missions for businesses and organizations that want to recruit Francophone or bilingual temporary workers.<sup>40</sup> The pilot project would be for at least three years and would aim to hire 1000 foreign workers. The project could be part of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program and specifically target Francophone communities across Ontario. This target would be above and beyond the current number of Francophone immigrants accepted annually through this program.*

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<sup>40</sup> Le Soleil numérique. 17 missions internationales pour recruter 3000 travailleurs, <https://www.lesoleil.com/2022/04/25/17-missions-internationales-pour-recruter-3000-travailleurs-a8ec64b34fc916b5631a962f83e6fce2>, retrieved April 2022.



### 3.2 Build up the next generation of Francophone entrepreneurs

As mentioned earlier, building up the next generation of Francophone entrepreneurs is a very real challenge. That challenge must be met if we are to maintain the percentage of Francophone SMEs and avoid a decline over the next ten years. The disappearance of Francophone businesses would bring about a reduction in French-language services in the communities.

***In 2031, at least 4.3 % of the province's SMEs will still be owned by Francophones.***

For that reason, it is important that in 2031, Francophone businesses should still represent at least 4.3% of all SMEs in the province.

First of all, the sectors and regions most at risk of being impacted by the aging of business owners and the sale or closure of business need to be clearly identified. Additional studies could help to target the sectors and regions that will be hardest hit in coming years (e.g., the agriculture sector, or rural areas in northern and eastern Ontario).

After that, it would be useful to have a strategy to identify, encourage and train the next generation (potential buyers of businesses). And lastly, potential buyers could be supported in their efforts to link up with business owners (the sellers) to ensure the successful transfer of businesses.

#### ***Recommendation 6***

***The provincial government and the federal government should fund studies to identify the regions and sectors that will be most impacted by the aging of Francophone business owners and the sale or closing of Francophone businesses.***



## ECONOMY

### Recommendation 7a

***The provincial government and the federal government should invest in the creation of a centre for the transfer of Francophone businesses with the aim of facilitating business succession and providing advice and training to Francophone buyers and sellers of businesses. The centre would serve as an independent facilitator to ensure the continued existence of Francophone businesses in Ontario.***

### Recommendation 7b

***The provincial government and the federal government should invest in a fund to support the transfer of businesses, in collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders like the Business Development Bank of Canada. The fund would offer preferred rates, competitive advantages and business advice to family members, company executives, individuals or investors to facilitate the transfer of businesses.***

### 3.3 Create favourable conditions for capturing Francophone export markets

As stated in the study done jointly by the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario and the Conference Board of Canada in 2018, Ontario's participation in the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) could bring more trade possibilities for the province's Francophone businesses.<sup>41</sup>

***In 2031, 13% of Ontario's Francophone SMEs\* will be involved in exporting.***

Taking this new reality into account, it is imaginable that by 2031, 13% of Francophone SMEs with 1 to 499 employees and annual gross revenues of \$30,000 or more (1500 businesses) could be involved in exporting.

<sup>41</sup> Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario and Conference Board du Canada. *L'Ontario, le commerce et les avantages du bilinguisme anglais-français*, p. 7.

\*Specifically, these are businesses with 1 to 499 employees and gross annual revenue of \$30,000 or more.



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To achieve this target, three strategies need to be pursued: ensure Ontario's full and active participation in La Francophonie, raise awareness among Francophone SMEs about export opportunities, and promote Ontario businesses in Francophone markets.

### ***Recommendation 8***

***The Government of Ontario should become a full member of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, like New Brunswick and Québec.***

### ***Recommendation 9a***

***Federal and provincial ministries should invest in training and mentorship activities to prepare Francophone businesses to reach out to international markets.***

### ***Recommendation 9b***

***These same ministries and agencies should invest in promotion and networking activities for businesses (in person or virtual) in Francophone markets to showcase Ontario's Francophone businesses and organizations.***



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### 3.4 Foster entrepreneurial growth among women

Women make up slightly more than half of Ontario's Francophone population. A normal expectation for the long term would be that women's participation in business ownership will move closer to their percentage of the population, namely 53%. However, it would be difficult to imagine a 15% increase in women's participation in ownership by 2031. Progress will have to come gradually and that is why, by 2031, the target for women's participation in business ownership should reach 42% among Francophone women.

***In 2031, women will own 42 % of Francophone SMEs in whole or in part.***

To achieve this target, we see the need for an awareness-raising strategy coupled with mentorship and funding opportunities.

An awareness-building campaign would encourage women to embrace entrepreneurship. The campaign could include things like presenting different business models, as well as concrete examples of businesses of all shapes and sizes headed by Francophone women.

It would also be very appropriate to continue current mentorship and coaching programs over a number of years (e.g., 5 to 7 years with possible renewal) to ensure continuity for start-up companies.

Lastly, it would be essential to establish a supplementary financing fund (e.g., no-interest loans or start-up grants) that could serve as a catalyst to launch small businesses or as leverage to obtain more funds from financial institutions.

#### ***Recommendation 10a***

***The provincial government and the federal government should fund a major campaign to raise awareness about women entrepreneurship among target audiences (elementary and secondary students, new immigrants, college and university students).***





### **Recommendation 10b**

***The provincial government and the federal government should continue to fund mentorship and coaching programs by and for Francophones and make them accessible across the province.***

### **Recommendation 10c**

***The provincial government and the federal government should invest in a fund to assist women entrepreneurs in collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders like the Business Development Bank of Canada.***

## **3.5 Foster entrepreneurial growth among immigrants**

Immigrant entrepreneurs are proportionally more likely to own a business or to be self-employed compared to persons born in Canada. However, their businesses are often small and not always sufficient to support their owners. A study produced by Statistics Canada and published in 2016 states that approximately 40% of incorporated businesses belonging to immigrants had one employee or less in 2010, compared to approximately 25% of private businesses owned by non-immigrants.<sup>42</sup> No precise data are available about businesses belonging to Francophone immigrants in Ontario. However, the percentages are probably similar.

***In 2031, only 30% of incorporated SMEs owned by a Francophone person born outside of Canada will have one employee or less.***

Therefore, it could be possible that by 2031, only 30% of incorporated SMEs owned by Francophones born outside of Canada would have one employee or less.

<sup>42</sup> Statistics Canada. *Immigration, Business Ownership and Employment in Canada*, op. cit., p. 13.



## ECONOMY

To achieve this goal, we see the need for a two-pronged strategy: a concierge-type service and financial support.

The concierge-type service would help immigrant entrepreneurs to navigate the Canadian and Ontarian system and bureaucracy, secure government funding and obtain public contracts. It would be a coaching service provided by people who are knowledgeable about the business world and relevant programs.

The supplementary financing program, similar to what was discussed in the preceding section, would serve to facilitate the growth of businesses owned by Francophone immigrants.

There would also be a need for studies and statistical analyses taking into account place of birth and first official language spoken, in order to better understand the realities and specific needs of Francophone immigrant entrepreneurs.

### ***Recommendation 11a***

***The provincial government and the federal government should fund a concierge-type service for 5 to 7 years and make it accessible to Francophone immigrant entrepreneurs across the province.***

### ***Recommendation 11b***

***Provincial and federal ministries should invest in a fund that provides alternate funding to Francophone immigrant entrepreneurs, in collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders like the Business Development Bank of Canada.***

### ***Recommendation 11c***

***The provincial government and the federal government should fund studies that present a clear picture of Francophone immigrant entrepreneurs (how many, in which sectors, which regions, export activity, etc.)***



# Conclusion

Ontario has nearly 50% of all Francophone SMEs in Canada outside of Quebec. The province's bilingual workers represent more than 50% of Canada's Francophone and bilingual workers in minority settings and their activities generate 12% of the province's GDP.

Ontario boasts many Francophone economic development organizations, including the Union des cultivateurs franco-ontariens (the Franco-Ontarian farmers' association, with 350 members representing 3,200 Francophone agricultural businesses across the province), the Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario (the council of Ontario co-operatives, which represents 10 co-operatives and 19 social economy enterprises) and the Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario (the federation of Francophone businesspeople of Ontario, which represents 14 organizations serving more than 4,000 SME and businesspeople across Ontario).

Many other organizations support the economic development of Francophone communities in their daily work, including the Société économique de l'Ontario, the Fondation franco-ontarienne and a number of Francophone and bilingual community development corporations.

This White Paper presents a profile of the Franco-Ontarian economy and underscores some of its key assets and challenges. The Franco-Ontarian economy is an integral part of the province's economy and brings significant added value, but this role could be increased if Francophone economic organizations and their members acquired the means to truly pursue their ambitions.

This document identifies targets to reach over the next ten years, as well as clear courses of action to achieve them. The White Paper on the Franco-Ontarian economy is a starting point for a discussion with governments about innovations to allow Francophone businesses and workers to achieve their full potential.



# Appendix

## Summary table of recommendations

	Provincial ministries concerned							Federal ministries and agencies concerned				
	Francophone Affairs	Citizenship and Multiculturalism	Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade	Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry	Colleges and Universities	Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development	Canadian Heritage	Innovation, Science and Economic Development	Federal economic development agencies for northern and southern Ontario	Business Development Bank of Canada	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
1. Review the recruitment and acceptance of international students from Francophone countries to alleviate shortages of workers.												X
2. Accelerate the approval and funding of new spots or new training programs to provide French-language training in fields with shortages of bilingual workers.						X	X					
3. Improve and accelerate the credential recognition and skills upgrading process for Francophone immigrants to facilitate and accelerate their entry into the job market.							X					
4. Support the production of targeted studies aimed at determining the extent of shortages of bilingual workers in different regions of the province.	X											
5. Implement a pilot project for the recruitment of temporary foreign workers from Francophone or Francophile countries.	X											X



## ECONOMY

	Provincial ministries concerned							Federal ministries and agencies concerned				
	Francophone Affairs	Citizenship and Multiculturalism	Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade	Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry	Colleges and Universities	Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development	Canadian Heritage	Innovation, Science and Economic Development	Federal economic development agencies for northern and southern Ontario	Business Development Bank of Canada	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
6. Fund studies to identify regions and sectors that will be most impacted by the aging of business owners and the sale or closure of Francophone businesses.	X		X	X	X			X	X	X		
7a. Invest in the creation of a business transfer support centre for Francophone businesses.	X		X	X	X			X		X		
7b. Invest in a business transfer support fund.	X		X	X	X			X		X	X	
8. Make Ontario a full member of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.	X											
9a. Invest in training and mentoring activities to prepare Francophone businesses to do business internationally.			X	X	X				X	X		
9b. Invest in promotion and networking activities in Francophone markets to showcase Ontario's Francophone businesses and organizations.	X		X	X	X				X	X		
10a. Fund a major campaign to raise awareness about women's entrepreneurship among target groups.	X		X	X	X		X		X	X		
10b. Continue to fund mentorship and coaching programs by and for Francophones and make them accessible across the province.	X		X	X	X				X	X		
10c. Invest in a financing fund for women entrepreneurs.			X	X	X				X	X	X	



## ECONOMY

	Provincial ministries concerned							Federal ministries and agencies concerned				
	Francophone Affairs	Citizenship and Multiculturalism	Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade	Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry	Colleges and Universities	Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development	Canadian Heritage	Innovation, Science and Economic Development	Federal economic development agencies for northern and southern Ontario	Business Development Bank of Canada	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
11a. Fund a concierge-type service and make it accessible to Francophone immigrant entrepreneurs across the province.	X	X	X	X	X				X	X		
11b. Invest in a financing fund for Francophone immigrant entrepreneurs.			X	X	X				X	X	X	
11c. Fund studies to produce a portrait of Francophone immigrant entrepreneurs.	X	X	X						X	X		



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