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2012 — 2017

Community Priorities
and Enabling Strategies
of the English-speaking
Community of Quebec

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STRATEGIC
PRIORITIES
FORUM

Building a Sustainable Future for
Our English-speaking Communities

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Welcome!

Dear Fellow Members of the English-speaking Community of Quebec:

The English-speaking Community of Quebec has established its priorities and enabling strategies for 2012-2017. The process that was used to determine these priorities was voluntary. The individuals and community sector organisations that led the 19 regional and sectoral consultations, five focus groups, online surveys, and weekend conference invested their time and energy to ensure a vital and sustainable English-speaking community.

It is fitting therefore that the open, transparent, cooperative and voluntary process that has led us to the priorities and strategies outlined in this document has been carried over into the process that will help us fulfill our common goals. This truly is a community-led undertaking. The role of the community's Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) is to accompany, not direct, our efforts forward. Community sector organizations have already taken the lead, endorsing the priorities and strategies and seeking ways to use them as guiding criteria in their own planning and operations.

Our community is blessed with strong supporting partners; but the responsibility for our community's vitality is our own. I am so very proud of this community of communities which, without fuss or bother, selflessly came together in the spirit of collaboration and partnership to ensure our collective future.

This is a strategic leadership document that presents our collective priorities, strategies for their attainment, and a process of self-evaluation and validation. This plan will help us achieve a vital and sustainable future, but it needs our continued commitment and support.

The English-speaking Community of Quebec is an integral part of Quebec's past, present and future, and a fundamental component of Quebec and Canada's culture, history and heritage. Our vitality depends on having an equal opportunity to fully participate in, and contribute to, the social, cultural, economic, and political life of Quebec.

Thank you for the cooperation, assistance, and leadership you have provided in establishing our community's priorities and enabling strategies for 2012-2017. Thank you as well for your ongoing and incredible support.

Noel Burke
Chair
Priority Setting Steering Committee

Building a sustainable future for our English-speaking communities...

Community is more than place; it rests at the core of who we are. English-speaking Quebecers are blessed to belong to many communities at the same time, each adding to our sense of home, the place where we belong. We invest our time and energy in these communities, volunteering, becoming involved, and enjoying fellowship with other community members. This investment provides us and our families with vital, sustainable communities in which to live and grow.

There is a complex system of organisations helping us maintain our communities. Some provide direct services to the members of our communities, some the resources to carry this work out, and some help us coordinate action for the collective good. There are long-standing organisations with formal structures and others that come together spontaneously to tackle a particular community need. Whatever the nature of the organisation, we understand that working together in partnership and cooperation is the most effective way to support our community and its constituent parts.

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) is a federation of community organizations, institutions and other community stakeholders that have come together for the purpose of serving the entire English-speaking Community of Quebec. The QCGN is a place where any organisation – member or not - that supports the English-speaking Community of Quebec is welcome to help identify, explore and addresses the strategic issues affecting the development, vitality, and sustainability of our community. The QCGN is therefore an opportunity; neutral ground where organisations can share

information and knowledge, partner and collaborate, and take action to benefit us all.

Our community has other very sophisticated and effective ‘meeting grounds’ around specific aspects of our communal vitality, for example, the CHSSN in health, QESBA in primary and secondary education, and , ELAN in arts and culture. There are many others. The QCGN is the place where we can meet to talk about the whole community and all its challenges and aspirations, and where we can plan and act together in common cause. To help us all share and work together effectively, the QCGN established the Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC), mandated to work with the community to establish common needs and priorities, communicate this information to each other and our supporting partners like government, and engage in collective action.

The QCGN and by extension the PSSC receives funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage. These resources are provided for no other purpose but to assist the community; they come with ‘no strings attached’.¹ The QCGN and the PSSC operate solely for the benefit of the entire English-speaking Community of Quebec, under the authority of the QCGN membership, not-for-profit organisations working in support of our community.

Join the process! You are very welcome!

Sylvia Martin-Laforge
QCGN Director General

¹ A detailed explanation of the context in which the PSSC was established and its intended role as a community resource is appended to this plan.

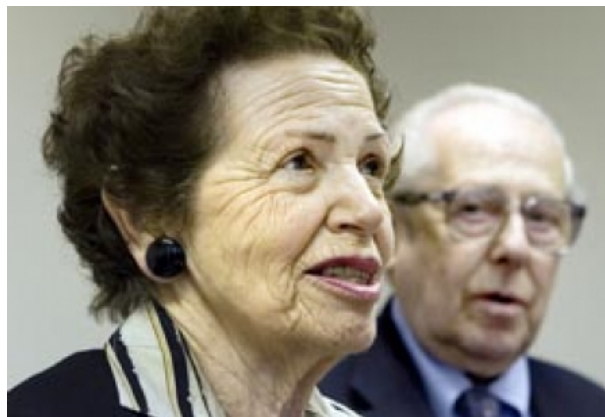
Preface

This document presents the development priorities and enabling strategies determined by Canada's English linguistic minority communities (collectively referred to as the English-speaking Community of Quebec (ESCQ)). These priorities and strategies were charted to help the community sector and its supporting partners in the public and private sectors work together towards strengthening the community's vitality.

The following are recommended for the reader who is not familiar with the ESCQ:

1. *For an excellent current overview of the situation within the ESCQ, see The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages' report entitled, [The Vitality of Quebec's English-speaking Communities: From Myth to Reality](#).*
2. *There are a number of superb sources of analytical data on the community. Two deserve special mention: the CHSSN Baseline Data Reports and other resources found within the [CHSSN Document Centre](#), and Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Brigitte Chavez and Daniel Pereira's, [Portrait of Official-Language Minorities in Canada -Anglophones in Quebec](#)*
3. *Graham Fraser's "Sorry, I Don't Speak French" provides an insightful and accessible history of development of our current official languages 'architecture.' "Community Besieged: The Anglophone Minority and the Politics of Quebec" by Garth Stevenson provides a comprehensive history and analysis of the ESCQ, providing context for unique challenges faced by the community.*

Readers may also find it helpful to have a working knowledge of Part VII of [Canada's Official Languages Act](#), the [Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future](#), and the [Cooperation Agreement to Support the Development and Enhance the Vitality of the English-speaking Communities of Quebec](#).



2012 – 2017 Community Priorities and Enabling Strategies

Introduction

The Development Priorities

On the weekend of March 23-25, 2012, over 180 members of the English-speaking Community of Quebec took part in a Community Priority Setting Conference. The conference was the culmination of the first phase the Strategic Priorities Forum that included 19 regional and sectoral consultations, five focus groups and an online survey of more than 500 English-speaking Quebecers, all of which sought the community's input on the priorities for a vital and sustainable English-speaking community.

At the conclusion of the Conference, the nine members of the Priority Setting Steering Committee signed the following declaration on behalf of the English-speaking Community of Quebec:

WHEREAS we reaffirm the English-speaking Community of Quebec as an integral part of Quebec's past, present and future, and a fundamental element of Quebec's and Canada's culture, history and heritage;

WHEREAS English-speaking Quebecers must have an equal opportunity to fully participate in, and contribute to, the social, cultural, economic, and political life of Quebec;

WHEREAS the Government of Canada is committed to fulfilling its duty to enhance the vitality of linguistic minority communities by supporting and assisting in their development;

WHEREAS the community has identified the following priorities to ensure a more vital and sustainable future:

ACCESS TO SERVICES IN ENGLISH

Increased access to services and government information in English in all aspects of daily living is a pressing issue. The ability of individuals in our community to make informed decisions depends on our capacity to understand options and implications in English.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Developing relationships by fostering greater collaboration and networking among English-speaking organizations and the broader community, diversifying resources, and sharing and developing expertise will make our communities stronger.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Greater access to employment and educational opportunities and higher levels of bilingualism will support the economic prosperity of English-speaking Quebecers thus improving the resilience of our communities.

IDENTITY AND RENEWAL

Nurturing a strong sense of belonging, expressing our identity, enhancing our visibility, and working towards a Quebec society that embraces diversity will ensure the renewal of our communities.

LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

Promoting leadership development at all levels, with an emphasis on youth engagement, and encouraging volunteerism will ensure we are an integral part of Quebec and Canadian society.

STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Healthy institutions are the cornerstone of a dynamic community. Maintaining and supporting existing institutions and establishing new ones will strengthen our communities.

The Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) called upon our community to:

1. **Work individually and collectively** in a collaborative environment to develop and implement specific strategies that support these priorities.
2. **Engage with the PSSC** to create an action plan for the community based on the priorities identified and validated through the Strategic Priorities Forum process.
3. **Solicit all levels of government** to consider these priorities for the purposes of policy and program development in support of the English-speaking community of Quebec.

The community has made it clear that the six priority areas are not to be considered individually or incrementally, but together. The community rejected the notion of producing another laundry list of development priorities. Communities function as complex interdependent systems, and the priorities they need to maintain their vitality are equally complex and interdependent; it is not possible to just work on one area, and then move to another. For example, the community will not sequentially choose between the well being of our seniors, the education of our children, our health and social services needs, and the economic security of our families.

Advancing on the community's priority areas will require a team effort characterized by effective coordination. The English-speaking Community of Quebec is committed to establishing a community development plan to achieve progress in the development priority areas. The plan will provide focus and direction to our community sector, and supporting private and public partners. We will achieve a vital and sustainable future with the help of the community development plan, which is a strategic leadership document, presenting our collective priorities, strategies for their attainment, and a process of self-evaluation and validation.

The Process

The Strategic Priorities Forum

Communities plan together for their future. This planning not only helps community actors coordinate their work, but also help supporting partners like the public and private sectors prioritise and focus resources. The ESCQ has established the Strategic Priorities Forum; a process facilitated by the Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) to identify the community's common development issues and priorities for action and expected results. The Forum is a standing five-year cyclical process that begins with a Community Priority Setting Conference to establish 5-year goals. The PSSC then conducts annual 'check-ins' with participating organisations to help the community evaluate its progress, and to validate established goals. The process is renewed after 5 years with another Community Priority Setting Conference.



Community Sector Levels of Engagement

The community sector serving the ESCQ is heavily invested in the process that produced the community development priorities. They are collectively responsible for ensuring progress is made in each of the six areas to ensure the vitality of our community. In order to achieve this undertaking together, organizations are invited to voluntarily participate through five levels of engagement:

1. Level I

Organisational involvement in the preparatory consultations and Community Priority Setting Conference

2. Level II

Organisational endorsement of the six development priorities contained in the *Declaration from the Community Priority Setting Conference of the English-Speaking Community of Quebec* (see above)

3. Level III

- a) Organisations use the strategic priorities as strategic guidance for their own enabling activities; and,
- b) Organisational commitment to establish SMART benchmarks to provide evidence for the evaluation of the community's progress over the life of the Strategic Priorities Forum

4. Level IV

Organisational commitment to be part of an annual 'check-in' process in support of a self-evaluation and validation of priorities process²

5. Level V

Organisations participate in cooperative efforts to achieve community priorities. This includes working with like-minded organisations to establish community development benchmarks in specific areas of interests, and pursuing common objectives for the common good.

² Detailed operational planning of this process will be undertaken during the summer of 2012 with community input. The effectiveness of the process will be monitored by the PSSC using input from participating organisations, and can be modified accordingly.

Working Together

The Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) is a federation of community organizations, institutions and other community stakeholders serving to benefit the English-speaking Community of Quebec. It is mandated by the community sector to identify, explore and address the strategic issues affecting the development, vitality, and sustainability of English-speaking Quebec. In this capacity, the QCGN established the PSSC to assist the community govern the Strategic Priorities Forum.³

The PSSC accompanies the community sector through the Strategic Priorities Forum process, acting as facilitator and focal point. For example, the PSSC will visit communities to conduct “check-ins,” listening to how participating organisations have incorporated some or all 6 priorities into their community planning and what progress there has been towards achieving the benchmarks. This voluntary self-evaluation will help groups mark their progress and recognise opportunities to partner with others. The role of the PSSC in this process is to provide a common forum for discussion and coordination; accompanying participating organisations through the community development process. Ultimately, the role of the PSSC over the next four years will be to facilitate community reflection and assist community sector partners achieve level five participation.



³ See the appendix for a detailed explanation of the QCGN and PSSC’s context within the ESCQ.

Evaluation

Continuous self reflection is an important aspect of the Strategic Priorities Forum, and is the principle function and focus of the PSSC. The community has established a mechanism to revisit the priorities it has set, validate their continued importance, and measure progress towards their attainment. This process is conducted by way of voluntary self-evaluation, against benchmarks generated by the community sector.

For example, specialised groups working within a particular sector could voluntarily cooperate and work towards establishing benchmarks against the six development priorities areas. These benchmarks could be shared with the community through the PSSC. This approach ensures coordination and cooperation with other sectors of the community, and provides internal self-generated guidelines for the affected sector. The same principle can be applied to community sector organisations with a regional focus.

PSSC

The QCGN established the ESCQ Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) as a permanent committee of the Board of Directors. The purpose of the PSSC is to facilitate the Strategic Priorities Forum; a standing community consultation process to collect, analyze, prioritize and articulate the needs and the issues of the ESCQ and its constituents.

It is important to note that the PSSC is a tool created by and for the community sector to benefit collective action towards our vitality and development. The priorities produced by the Strategic Priorities Forum process will certainly benefit the efficient delivery of resources from supporting partners like government. But the mandate given to the PSSC by the community is clear: to assist the community to establish a community development plan which will articulate the community's five-year priorities. The PSSC thereafter conducts annual community 'check-ins' to validate and update community sector needs and issues identified in the community development plan. The PSSC submits a report on these activities annually to the QCGN Board of Directors no later than May 1 annually. This report identifies and provides analysis on common community needs and issues; and identifies community needs in underdeveloped community areas.⁴

⁴ The report is tabled at the QCGN's Annual General Meeting. It is however a document that 'belongs' to the whole community, its contents open to benefit all supporting and participating organisations and other stakeholders.

Strategies from the Community Priority Setting Conference

The Conference was organized around a series of facilitated discussions which asked participants to provide feedback on the six development priorities that had emerged during the preparatory consultations. What follows are the comments emanating from those discussions.

Access to services in English

Strategy

Increasing access to services and government information in English in all spheres of daily living is a pressing issue for our community. The ability of English-speaking Quebecers to make decisions depends on our ability to understand options and implications in English. This need is strongest in the health and social service sector as well as in the support of marginalized English-speakers including low-income citizens, seniors, as well as individuals with disabilities.

Community building

Strategy

Strengthening relationships that foster greater collaboration and networking among English-speaking organizations, as well as developing partnerships with Francophones and the private sector are at the core of a vital English-speaking community. Sharing and developing expertise will build on the collective knowledge base of the community and diversifying funding sources will help ensure the long-term sustainability of organizations that support English speakers.

Identity and Renewal

Strategy

Enhancing our visibility, sensitizing the Francophone majority to our reality, and working towards a Quebec that embraces ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity are essential steps towards building a more sustainable community. Arts, culture, heritage and media are vehicles for celebrating and forging our identity. Cultivating English-speaking Quebecers' strong sense of identity and belonging will attract newcomers to the community and enable them to envision a promising future in this province.



Leadership, succession and influence

Strategy

Fostering strong stewardship within the community and its organizations and focusing on the renewal of leadership and volunteerism, with an emphasis on youth engagement, will nurture a more sustainable community. Ensuring political representation, recognition and support for our community as an integral part of Quebec society is dependent upon building stronger links with the Francophone majority as well as federal, provincial and municipal government officials and politicians.

Economic prosperity

Strategy

Achieving economic prosperity depends on greater access to employment and educational opportunities for youth and adults alike. Increasing levels of bilingualism across all generations will widen long-term opportunities for English-speaking Quebecers. Crucial elements to achieve prosperity include investments in skills training, entrepreneurship, the creative economy, literacy and lifelong learning.

Strong institutions

Strategy

Supporting strong institutions and strengthening the links between English-speaking Quebecers and those institutions will help insure our community's long-term sustainability. Institutions, for example elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools, linguistic school boards, hospitals, churches and community organizations are the cornerstone of a healthy and stable community.



Other Observations from the Community Priority Setting Conference

Our Stories, Our Community: How we can be catalysts for change

The following themes emerged from this activity:

- The process of building relationships and connecting people must be done around a tangible opportunity for everyone around the table
- Similar challenges and successes are faced across different regions and it is important to share amongst ourselves
- Partnering with the majority is an essential part of success
- Partnering with diverse sectors of our community will be key to future success

A Holistic Approach to Sustainability: Exploring relationships between strategies

Six working groups presented the results of their work in breakout sessions. Here are the major themes that emerged for crosscutting approaches to all strategies:

- It is vital to success that our communities use strengths-based and asset-based language when we communicate with partners, stakeholders, and each other.
- It is vital to success that we have a common voice that enables the diverse sectors of our communities speak about common and critical issues.
- It is vital to success that our communities participate in public spaces that relate to each of these priority issues in order to raise awareness.
- It is vital to success that in each of the priority areas we identify commonalities we share with our Francophone majority.
- It is vital to success that groups on the ground are empowered to contribute to the achievement of the six priority issues.
- It is vital to success that information and best practices are shared across the community.
- It is vital to success that we develop collaborative messages that emphasize the value-added of the contribution the English-speaking communities make to Quebec.

“To say that ‘there is no future without youth’ may seem like a cliché, but for the Lower North Shore the shadow of this phenomenon is already casting itself over the Coast. The lack of economic opportunity forces youth to look elsewhere and without young people returning to their home communities there will be no future families, no students in schools and, eventually, no critical mass to mandate social services.”

Transforming the priorities into actions for our communities

Time was reserved for participants to share stories and best practices that linked back with themes they heard at the conference. The following are highlights from those who shared their reflections:

1. The CLC network has been an important innovation for our community. It allows us to speak to each other and to get the message out to the broader community. This network can continue to contribute to all priority areas.
2. The communities should focus on recreating positive partnerships by appointing people to Boards of partner organizations. There are currently organizations that have been successful at achieving this and they should be viewed as best practices.
3. Arts and culture have a key role to play in the future of our communities. We should recognize that it is embedded in our community. We should further recognize the contribution this sector makes in economic terms, support it and develop it.



Background

The Community Development Plan 2005-2010 (CDP)

In 2001, the Canada's English linguistic minority communities, collectively referred to as the English-speaking Community of Quebec (ESCQ), began consulting on a community development plan. The driving force was a volunteer steering committee working with input from eighty task force members representing eight sectors:

1. Visibility and Leadership
2. Youth
3. Education and Life-Long Learning
4. Health and Social Services
5. Employment
6. Arts and Culture
7. Heritage
8. Media

The plan was centred on seven interconnected and overlapping main strategies. These strategies touched every sector of community, and applied to all regions of Quebec. The strategies were designed to be worked towards simultaneously; they did not represent a list of development priorities *per se*.

The seven strategies were:

1. Build and promote a sense of cultural identity
2. Strengthen visibility and participation in Quebec society
3. Secure a future for English-speaking youth in Quebec
4. Encourage greater dialogue within the ESCQ and the 'larger community'
5. Provide greater access to services and programmes
6. Promote bilingualism
7. Empower the community through research and knowledge

The CDP and the consultation process that surrounded it was an important milestone in our community's development. It provided the guidance necessary to reform important organisations like the QCGN. The CDP also set the criteria by which public sector partners like the Government of Canada developed programmes and allocated resources to support our community's vitality.

Although the CDP was originally conceived with a 5-year lifespan, it was extended by two years for three principle reasons. First, the community sector was heavily engaged in 2010 in preparing for and hosting the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages' historic study on our community, and the Committee's associated visit. The Committee's subsequent report, [The Vitality of Quebec's English-speaking Communities: From Myth to Reality](#), and the Government of Canada's response to its recommendations, focussed national-level official languages policy leaders on the needs and priorities of our community during 2012, the mid-point evaluation of the [Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future](#).

Second, the community negotiated a new [Cooperation Agreement](#) with the Department of Canadian Heritage during 2009-2010, which came into force in 2011.⁵ The Cooperation Agreement is a key document, establishing the framework for the collaborative relationship between the community, and the Government of Canada and its departments and agencies aimed at enhancing the vitality of the ESCQ and supporting and assisting the community's development. The Cooperation Agreement acknowledges the responsibility of the community sector to identify its common development issues and priorities for action and expected results through a community consultation process facilitated by the QCGN Board of Directors' Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC).

The Strategic Priorities Forum is the process the PSSC facilitates to identify the community's common development issues and priorities for action and expected results. The Forum is a standing five-year cyclical process that begins with a Community Priority Setting Conference to establish 5-year goals. The PSSC then conducts annual 'check-ins' with participating organisations to help the community evaluate its progress, and to validate established goals. The process is renewed after 5 years with another Community Setting Conference.

Because the PSSC was established in 2011, the first Community Priority Setting Conference to establish the baseline development priorities was conducted in March 2012. This permitted an exhaustive six-month community consultation in advance of the Conference, held on the weekend of March 23-25 2012.⁶ The results of the Conference are detailed above.

Finally, the promulgation of the Community's development priorities was strategically timed to coincide with the preparation of the Government of Canada's official languages policy beginning in 2013 when the current strategy (the Roadmap) expires.

The Importance of Community Development Plans

Community vitality is the capacity to be different and act collectively. In order to maintain vitality, a community requires a self-aware and motivated population and a measure of self-reliance and control over its fate. A vital community also ensures a successful and stable future.

Even small communities are complex organisational structures. This complexity requires coordination and planning to ensure goals are met together. The ESCQ is blessed with many supporting stakeholders from the public, private, and community sectors. These groups work together to care for our seniors, teach our children, provide us with health and social services, ensure economic opportunity and celebrate our identity and culture through the arts. This requires planning, to ensure that the right actions are taken at the right time, backed by the right resources. Experience has also demonstrated that we work best when cooperating towards common goals.

⁵ PCH recognizes the QCGN as the community's representative organisation, and in this capacity, the QCGN negotiated the agreement on behalf of the community sector serving the ESCQ

⁶ Over 180 leaders of the English-speaking Community of Quebec took part in this Community Priority Setting Conference, the culmination of the first phase the Strategic Priorities Forum that included 19 regional and sectoral consultations, five focus groups and an online survey of more than 500 English-speaking Quebecers, all of which sought the community's input on the priorities for a vital and sustainable English-speaking community.

Community development plans reflect the aspirations of people they serve. The ESCQ is a diverse community of communities with a common purpose: to live, prosper, and be included in the social, political, and economic life and future of Quebec. Elements of our community have been doing so for over 300 years. English-speaking Quebec is an integral part of the province's history and a key strength in the future of a strong, vibrant, and successful Quebec.

The Public Partner

Quebec

There is no question that in the distribution of legislative power in Canada's Constitution, provincial governments have jurisdiction over matters of great importance in the day to day lives of Canadians. For example, health, education, municipal government, marriage, and property and civil rights are just some of the subjects of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.⁷ The Government of Quebec therefore plays a lead and critical role in the life and future of the ESCQ.

Building a relationship between the ESCQ and the Government of Quebec remains an area of continued effort. Although the preamble of the Charter of the French Language promises to pursue the Charter's objectives 'in a spirit of fairness and open-mindedness, respectful of the institutions of the English-speaking community of Québec, and respectful of the ethnic minorities, whose valuable contribution to the development of Québec it readily acknowledges', the Government of Quebec

does not recognise the existence of an English linguistic minority community. It is also worth noting that the community sector serving the ESCQ is not proportionally represented within, or supported by, the Government of Quebec's '[Politique gouvernementale sur l'action communautaire](#)' the policy framework through which the province 'enhances, promotes and supports community action.'⁸



⁷ [See Part VI of the Constitution Act, 1867](#)

⁸ See the Centre for Community Organisations' research project '[In the Know: identifying multiple facets of Quebec's community Sector.](#)'

Canada

Canadians have a set of language rights contained in our constitutional documents. For example, Canada has two official languages - English and French – which “have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada.” Our rights are further defined in a quasi-constitutional federal statute, [The Official Languages Act](#), whose threefold purpose is to:



(a) ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions, in particular with respect to their use in parliamentary proceedings, in legislative and other instruments, in the administration of justice, in communicating with or providing services to the public and in carrying out the work of federal institutions;

(b) support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities and generally advance the equality of status and use of the English and French languages within Canadian society; and

(c) set out the powers, duties and functions of federal institutions with respect to the official languages of Canada.

Part VII of the Official Languages Act commits the Government of Canada to: enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada; and, foster the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society. Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that positive measures are taken for the implementation of these commitments, while respecting the jurisdiction and powers of the provinces.

The Government of Canada has an official languages strategy to help ensure the language rights of Canadians'. The most recent strategy is called, the [Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future](#) (the Roadmap for short).

The Community Partner

Canada's English linguistic minority communities exist entirely within the Province of Quebec. There is no legal recognition of this distinction in the Official Languages Act. However, at the federal level linguistic minority communities are recognised by province and administered as such. The ESCQ should therefore be viewed from two federal perspectives: in law, it is one of Canada's two linguistic minority communities under the Act; and, simultaneously, one of thirteen (10 provincial and 3 territorial) linguistic minority communities.

The difference in legal and administrative perspectives is a challenge and opportunity for the community. It is a challenge because the development of policy and programmes is conducted at the national level where the community has not focussed the development of its capacity. The ESCQ is simply not present within Ottawa's official languages architecture to the same extent as their Francophone counterparts. On the other hand, there is no organisational distance between the community sector serving the ESCQ – the service deliverers – and their national level representatives. Relatively speaking, the ESCQ can move quickly, coordinate itself easier, and talk together coherently.



Appendix

The QCGN and PSSC in Context

The primary source of QCGN's funding is Canadian Heritage, a federal government department. The QCGN is a network with members. However, QCGN is mandated to work with all levels of government to advance the issues of the entire English-speaking Community of Quebec. QCGN members - and many other non-member organisations - invest time and resources in QCGN facilitated activities that benefit the whole community. This is key in understanding the role and responsibilities of QCGN and the PSSC within our community.

The principle reference document for this note is the [Cooperation Agreement to Support the Development and Enhance the Vitality of the English-speaking Communities of Quebec between Canadian Heritage \(represented by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the English-speaking Community of Quebec \(represented by the Quebec Community Groups Network\)](#) referred to as the Cooperation Agreement.⁹ Other references include the [Official Languages Act](#) (Act), and the QCGN by-laws.

The Official Languages Act

Sections 42 and 43 of the Official Languages Act set out the responsibilities of the Minister of Canadian Heritage with regard to Part VII (Advancement of English and French) of the Act. These responsibilities include, *inter alia*:

1. Consultation with other ministers of the Crown to encourage and promote a coordinated approach to the implementation by federal institutions of the Government of Canada's commitments to enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada, and fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society;¹⁰
2. Taking such measures as that Minister considers appropriate to advance the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society; and,
3. Taking such measures as the Minister considers appropriate to ensure public consultation in the development of policies and review of programs relating to the advancement and the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society.

⁹ The Cooperation Agreement was signed between the parties in June 2011, and took immediate effect. The Cooperation Agreement is the latest instrument that defines the ongoing relationship between Canadian Heritage and the community sector serving Canada's English linguistic minority communities (collectively referred to as the English-speaking Community of Quebec, or ESCQ). Past instruments were called Collaboration Accords, and Framework Agreements.

¹⁰ Section 41(2) of the Act provides every federal institution the duty to ensure that positive measures are taken for the implementation of these commitments. Institutions must respecting the jurisdiction and powers of the provinces when carrying out this duty.

The Cooperation Agreement

General

In order to fulfill its mandate under the *Official Languages Act*, Canadian Heritage works in partnership with other federal institutions and other levels of government through the development of complementary action mechanisms. This collaboration takes the form of agreements on education and other services with the provinces and territories, coordinated action between federal institutions, and Cooperation Agreements with representatives from the community sector. This Cooperation Agreement specifically sets out guidelines for a transparent and collaborative relationship with the community sector.

This long-standing record of cooperation between the Government of Canada and the community sector indicates that progress has been made in fostering the development of official-language minority communities. These results have been achieved through Canadian Heritage's support to organizations in each province and territory through the funding of activities and initiatives that benefit Canadians.

In Quebec, this cooperative effort between the federal government and the community sector has helped sustain the institutional network, build and strengthen the range of organizations serving citizens belonging to the English-speaking Community of Quebec (ESCQ), and foster the emergence of specialized community expertise in areas such as health, heritage, culture and economic development.

The Cooperation Agreement acknowledges the importance for Canadian Heritage to work with the QCGN as the representative organization of one of Canada's two official-language linguistic minority communities, that is, the ESCQ. In this capacity, the QCGN plays a key role in promoting a collaborative relationship with the Government of Canada and its departments and agencies aimed at enhancing the vitality of the ESCQ and supporting and assisting the community's development.

In recognition of QCGN's status as the official representative of the ESCQ, the Cooperation Agreement provides a vehicle enabling the QCGN, in collaboration with the Department, to identify common development priorities that could require an intradepartmental, interdepartmental and/or intergovernmental approach or action.

The Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC)

The Cooperation Agreement enables the QCGN, as the representative organization of the ESCQ, to lead the community's development priorities identification process. The ESCQ's community sector identifies its common development issues and priorities for action and expected results through a community consultation process facilitated by the QCGN Board of Directors' Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC). The PSSC communicates the ESCQ's common priorities for action and expected results determined through the community consultation process to PCH. These priorities for action and expected results are aligned with ministerial and public policy priorities through a mechanism described in 3.2. PCH uses this information to make funding decisions, and to inform interdepartmental and intergovernmental initiatives.

The QCGN and Canadian Heritage work with federal departments and agencies, as well as other levels of government, to promote intradepartmental, interdepartmental and intergovernmental collaboration based on these established common priorities.

The Community Priority Setting Process

The ESCQ community sector determines its common development issues and priorities for action and expected results through a community consultation process. The PSSC facilitates the community consultation process, which will normally commence with a community development conference (CDC) held once every five years. The consultation process surrounding the conference will produce the community's development plan, which will contain the common issues and priorities for the upcoming five years. Thereafter, the PSSC holds annual community consultations, providing stakeholders with relevant and timely information on the community's priorities and expected results.

The Strategic Priorities Forum and the PSSC

The operational mechanism designed in response to the consultative processes described in the Cooperation Agreement was the Strategic Priorities Forum. The Forum is a five-year standing process that begins and ends with community priority setting conferences, and provides for evergreen activities in the intervening years. The Forum collects, analyzes, prioritizes and articulates the needs and the issues of the ESCQ and its constituents. The QCGN established the ESCQ Priority Setting Steering Committee (PSSC) as a permanent committee of the Board of Directors to facilitate this process.

The PSSC is chaired by a QCGN Director, and is comprised of eight additional individuals appointed by the Board of Directors initially through open invitation, and subsequently on the advice of the committee. Three members are QCGN Directors (one of whom will be the chair), three are appointed from the QCGN Membership, and three committee members are selected from the community at large. PSSC members serve the interests of the community as a whole, and do not represent a particular sector or region.





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FORUM

Building a Sustainable Future for
Our English-speaking Communities

www.qcgn.ca/strategic-priorities-forum