



Office of the  
Commissioner of  
Official Languages

Commissariat  
aux langues  
officielles

## **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

OF THE 4.4% IMMIGRATION TARGET FOR FRENCH-SPEAKING  
IMMIGRANTS IN FRANCOPHONE MINORITY COMMUNITIES:  
ALMOST 20 YEARS AFTER SETTING THE TARGET, IT  
IS TIME TO DO MORE AND DO BETTER

**FINAL REPORT**  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.1 Context – Past and present contributions of immigration .....</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1.1 Constitutional Framework for Immigration .....	10
1.1.2 Past – Historical contribution of immigration to Canada’s linguistic duality and cultural diversity....	10
1.1.3 Present – Immigration as a key factor of population growth and demolinguistic balance .....	12
<b>1.2 Study topic and purpose .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.3 Objectives and methodology.....</b>	<b>17</b>
1.3.1 Quantitative statistical analysis – primary objective.....	17
1.3.2 Qualitative analysis – secondary objective.....	17
<b>1.4 Scope and limitations .....</b>	<b>18</b>
1.4.1 Federal target of 4.4% .....	18
1.4.2 Admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec.....	18
1.4.3 Method used to estimate the achievement of the target for demographic weight of Francophones in a minority setting.....	19
1.4.4 Description, but not evaluation, of Francophone immigration programs and initiatives .....	19
<b>1.5 Presentation of the study .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>2. HISTORICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL REFERENCE POINTS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>2.1 Historical reference points.....</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1.1 Key events leading up to the adoption of the target.....	20
2.1.2 Approach used to establish the target and its objective .....	21
2.1.3 Evolution of the target and its objective.....	22
2.1.4 Observations on historical reference points .....	26
<b>2.2 Methodological reference points .....</b>	<b>28</b>
2.2.1 Challenges in defining, measuring and counting French-speaking immigrants .....	28
2.2.2 Census language variables at Statistics Canada .....	29
2.2.3 Three definitions and measures of French-speaking immigrants used by IRCC.....	33
2.2.4 Observations on methodological reference points .....	36
<b>3. LEVELS OF FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION TO MINORITY COMMUNITIES – STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TARGET AND ITS OBJECTIVE.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.1 Methodology .....</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1.1 Calculation of admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents, Canada outside Quebec, 2001–2020.....	37

3.1.2 Calculation of gaps between actual admissions of French-speaking permanent residents and admissions required to meet the target, Canada outside Quebec, 2001–2020 .....	37
3.1.3 Estimated impact of reaching the target for the demographic weight of the French-speaking population, Canada outside Quebec, 2001–2016 and 2008–2016 .....	38
<b>3.2 Calculation of admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents by different IRCC definitions and measures, 2001–2020.....</b>	<b>38</b>
3.2.1 Admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2006 definition and measure, Canada outside Quebec.....	38
3.2.2 Admission rates of French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2003 definition and measure, Canada outside Quebec.....	40
3.2.3 Admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2016 definition and measure, Canada outside Quebec.....	40
3.2.4 Admission rates for permanent residents by knowledge of French and mother tongue, Canada outside Quebec .....	42
3.2.5 Calculation of the distribution of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2006 definition and of the French-speaking population, provinces and territories .....	43
<b>3.3 Calculation of shortfalls in reaching the 4.4% target for admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec .....</b>	<b>45</b>
3.3.1 Calculation of target shortfalls according to the 2006 definition and measurement, Canada outside Quebec .....	45
3.3.2 Calculation of target shortfalls per the 2006 definition and measure, provinces and territories, 2001 to 2020 .....	46
<b>3.4 Estimated impact of reaching the target on the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in Canada outside Quebec.....</b>	<b>47</b>
3.4.1 Estimates based on the 2006 definition, Canada outside Quebec .....	47
3.4.2 Estimated number of French-speaking permanent residents needed to maintain the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec at 4.4%, 2001 to 2016 .....	48
3.4.3 Observations regarding the statistical analysis.....	49
<b>4. COMPOSITION OF FRENCH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION TO MINORITY COMMUNITIES – SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PERMANENT RESIDENTS ADMITTED FROM 2001 TO 2020 .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>4.1 Immigration categories and certain programs.....</b>	<b>50</b>
4.1.1 Immigration categories.....	51
4.1.2 Economic category .....	52
4.1.3 Family reunification category .....	55
4.1.4 Refugees and protected persons category.....	55
<b>4.2 Top regions and countries of origin for French-speaking permanent residents admitted to Canada outside Quebec, 2001–2020 .....</b>	<b>56</b>
4.2.1 Overview of Figure 14: Summary table of top regions and countries of origin .....	56
4.2.2 Largest country of origin: France.....	56
4.2.3 Largest region of origin: Sub Saharan-Africa .....	56

4.2.4 North Africa, second region of origin and Lebanon, second country of origin.....	57
4.2.5 Other regions of origin – the Americas, Asia and Oceania.....	57
<b>4.3 Linguistic characteristics of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec according to different definitions and measures .....</b>	<b>58</b>
4.3.1 Definition and measure: 2006.....	58
4.3.2 Definition and measure: 2016.....	58
<b>5. CONSIDERATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.1 Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036 .....</b>	<b>59</b>
5.1.1 Past and present demographic and demolinguistic trends.....	59
5.1.2 Demographic and demolinguistic projections for the future .....	60
<b>5.2 Recruitment approaches.....</b>	<b>62</b>
5.2.1 Identifying promising pools for recruitment.....	62
5.2.2 Working in partnership with provinces .....	63
5.2.3 Using mechanisms to facilitate the granting of permanent residence for French-speaking candidates.....	64
5.2.4 Encouraging transitions from temporary residence to permanent residence.....	64
5.2.5 Establishing a category for French-speaking economic immigrants.....	64
<b>5.3 Potential areas of further research .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>65</b>
6.1 Study topic and objectives.....	65
6.2 Context surrounding the study.....	65
6.3 Context surrounding the adoption and evolution of the target .....	67
6.4 Statistical analysis of the target and its objective .....	69
6.5 Considerations and possibilities for the future .....	71
<b>7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>7.1 The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that, by the arrival of the 2023 target deadline, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada conduct a full analysis on the following in cooperation with key partners and publicly report the results: .....</b>	<b>74</b>
7.1.1 the 4.4% Francophone minority immigration target set in 2003, its deadlines and the shortfalls since it was set; and.....	74
7.1.2 the target’s contribution to achieving the objective of at least maintaining the demographic weight of Francophone minority communities at the level of the 2001 Census, and the impact of this contribution on the development of these communities.. .....	74
<b>7.2 The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that, with the arrival of the 2023 target deadline, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with its government and community partners to:.....</b>	<b>74</b>

7.2.1 review, refine and clarify the objective relative to its contribution to re-establish and maintain the demographic weight of the minority French-speaking population; .....	74
7.2.2 review the target and then adopt a new, higher one; .....	74
7.2.3 define and develop strategies, approaches and tools adapted to meet this new target and its objective; .....	74
7.2.4 set a final deadline and short- and medium-term benchmarks to achieve the new target and its objective; and.....	74
7.2.5 clarify the accountability requirements and measures for the achievement of the new target and its objective.....	74
<b>7.3 The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada adopt a policy on immigration to Francophone minority communities, including a new objective and a new target. ....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>75</b>

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## PREFACE

Like many Western countries, Canada is experiencing population declines and is increasingly relying on immigration in particular as a mitigation measure. In Canada, a country known for its linguistic duality and cultural diversity, immigration is a key contributor to its population growth, but also to its economic, cultural, social and human development. The country as a whole and its official language communities stand to benefit from immigration.

Canada has been built on linguistic duality, which was enshrined in its Constitution of 1982 and the *Official Languages Act* of 1988. Both documents enshrine the principle of advancing the equal status and use of English and French in Canadian society. Moreover, the *Official Languages Act* and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* of 2001 are both intended to support the development of English and French linguistic minorities.

Today, the *Official Languages Act* is awaiting modernization. The Government of Canada published a reform document in February 2021 titled *English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada*. It aimed to promote true equality of the two official languages, considering the fact that French is a minority language in Canada and North America given the predominant use of English. One of the legislative proposals that was made included the obligation for the Government of Canada to adopt a policy on Francophone immigration to support the vitality of official language minority communities, in this case, Francophone minority communities.

For decades, there has been a steady and marked decline in the demographic weight of the Francophone minority, whether measured by mother tongue, language spoken at home or first official language spoken. A number of factors, some of which have historically reflected strong trends, exacerbate this decline, including a marked drop in fertility rates, incomplete intergenerational transmission of the French mother tongue from parents to children, intragenerational shifts to English as the language used at home among the French mother tongue population and an aging French-speaking population. Other factors, such as interprovincial mobility and international immigration, have been more closely linked to economic, social and/or policy factors, not to mention the increasingly present environmental factors.

Drawing from the *Official Languages Act*, including Part VII – Advancement of English and French, and the objectives set out in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, including the objective to "support and assist the development of minority official languages communities in Canada," immigration is one of the key factors on which the Government of Canada has significant influence as it determines its levels and composition.

As demonstrated by my predecessor, Graham Fraser, in his publication *Time to Act for the Future of Francophone Communities: Redressing the Immigration Imbalance* (OCOL, November 2014), the Francophone population in Canada does not benefit from immigration to the same extent as its Anglophone counterpart. Past and present, although the contexts have changed with increasing diversity, immigration favours the English-speaking majority more than the French-speaking minority in Canada outside Quebec.

In recent decades, the immigrant population has been increasingly made up of people with a mother tongue other than English or French. Outside Quebec, these individuals have a strong tendency to have prior knowledge of English or learn English rather than French and to use the majority language rather than the minority language throughout the course of their immigration to the country and their integration into its communities. The force of attraction that English exerts on the Francophone minority population is also exerted on speakers of a mother tongue other than French or English.

As enshrined in the Constitution, immigration is a jurisdiction shared between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. Although the Government of Canada works with other key players—including other levels of government, community organizations, and employers—to promote Canada abroad as a destination country for immigration, as well as in the reception, settlement and integration of immigrants into Canadian communities, it is the Government of Canada that determines the priorities for selecting immigrants, processing their applications and setting the levels and composition of annual immigration to Canada outside Quebec.

In addition, outside Quebec, where the provincial government is responsible for selecting and integrating immigrants under the Canada-Quebec Accord, federal programs account for the vast

majority of admissions to permanent residence. Although our study observes a significant increase in admissions to the Provincial Nominee Program among French-speaking permanent residents in Francophone minority communities over the past 20 years and although that growth is also observed among all admissions in recent years, the fact remains that this program represented one-fifth of permanent resident admissions in 2019 (IRCC, 2020a).

Therefore, given that the Government of Canada has obligations with respect to the equality of official languages and the development of official language minority communities, that it establishes the levels and composition of immigration and that there has been an imbalance for decades between English-speaking and French-speaking immigration to Canada outside Quebec, the Commissioner of Official Languages has made this issue a priority in recent decades.

Building on the groundwork laid by my predecessors Graham Fraser (2006–2016) and Dyane Adam (1999–2006) since the early 2000s, I have made Francophone immigration to minority communities a priority since the beginning of my mandate.

Commissioner Adam's work, in concert with key stakeholders, led to the inclusion of the Government of Canada's obligations to official language minority communities in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* in 2001. This was followed by the adoption of the 4.4% immigration target for Francophone immigration to Francophone minority communities.

This target was established in 2003 in the *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, developed by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee (CIC-FMC Steering Committee). In light of the demographic decline of Francophone minority communities and the deficits in Francophone immigration to these communities for decades, the target's objective was to at least maintain the demographic weight of these communities at the level of the 2001 census. The original target date was set for 2008 but was extended by 15 years in the *2006 Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, also developed by the CIC-FMC Steering Committee. Although the development of this Framework and Plan was done jointly, and their implementation may have involved consultation and collaborative work with partners, and may continue to do so, the target corresponds, in the words of the Department, to a departmental target (IRCC, July 2017). It is directly linked to the Department's legislative obligations with respect to the development and vitality of official language minority communities (CIC, July 2012).

In addition, the Department is responsible for taking, implementing, tracking, and reporting on actions to achieve this target. Over the past 10 years, the Department has found that, despite measures taken and initiatives undertaken as well as increases in numbers of admissions of French speaking permanent residents in Francophone minority communities, the target has not been met (CIC, July 2012 and IRCC, July 2017), that it needs to do more (IRCC, July 2017), that progress needs to be made (IRCC, July 2017), and that progress on meeting the target needs to be more

systematically reported (IRCC, 2019a). The Department gave itself until 2023 to meet the target (CIC, July 2012 and IRCC, July 2017).

Commissioner Fraser's *Time to Act for the Future of Francophone Communities: Redressing the Immigration Imbalance* (OCOL, November 2014), the most recent publication on Francophone immigration, describes policies and programs and raises challenges and issues related to the Francophone immigration continuum at the federal and provincial levels. Among these are the methodological challenges of defining and counting French-speaking immigrants. This study picks up where Commissioner Fraser's work left off by delving deeper into this issue. It takes a closer look at different definitions and measures of French-speaking immigrants, the gaps between admissions of French-speaking permanent residents and the target and its impact on achieving the objective of maintaining the demographic weight of the minority French-speaking population.

This study does not seek to address all issues related to Francophone immigration, but rather to shed light on past experience with this target for admissions of French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities and its objective of increasing or at least maintaining the demographic weight of the French-speaking minority population. It also seeks to explore avenues to consider for the future. I hope that this study will contribute to the discussion on the subject as we approach the target deadline in 2023.

This report focuses solely on immigration as a key factor for the development and vitality of French-speaking minority groups and communities—specifically, the admission of French-speaking permanent residents, a necessary first step of the immigration continuum, a process that spans from the country of origin to linguistic and geographic retention and finally to social, economic and cultural integration of immigrants in the receiving community. Note that this report does not seek to present immigration as the sole factor influencing the demographic weight of Francophone minority communities. Rather, it focuses on immigration as a crucial factor over which the government has significant influence and which, in turn, has an impact on the demolinguistic balance in Canada. The study recognizes that immigration is an area of shared jurisdiction between the federal, provincial and territorial governments, and that it is a complex area that involves various partners. However, the Government of Canada plays a leading role.

This study primarily consists of a statistical analysis of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents in Francophone minority communities relative to this target and its objective. This was made possible thanks to a collaborative data sharing agreement between the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and IRCC for the production, acquisition and validation of its administrative data on admissions of French speaking permanent residents. Some data used in this analysis have not been published or presented in a single publication to date, for example, the number and rate of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec according to three definitions used in the last 20 years.

With this study, I wish, in accordance with my mandate, to uphold the Government of Canada's commitment to promote the development of official language minority communities, in this case Francophone minority communities, and advance the equal status and use of English and French in Canadian society, by shedding light on an issue of primary importance to Canada, its communities, their linguistic duality and their diversity.



Raymond Th  berge  
Commissioner of Official Languages

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Context – Past and present contributions of immigration

### 1.1.1 Constitutional Framework for Immigration

Before recalling some historical landmarks in the 20th century, it is important to note that the *Constitution Act, 1867*, establishes a division of powers and responsibilities between the federal and provincial governments with respect to immigration. Section 95 states that in each province the legislature may make laws in relation to immigration to that province. It is stated that the Parliament of Canada may from time to time make laws in relation to immigration in all or any of the provinces; and any law of the legislature of a province in relation to immigration shall have effect therein only so long as it is not inconsistent with any law of the Parliament of Canada (Government of Canada, *Constitution Act, 1867*).

Therefore, according to IRCC:

“The federal government has a well-established constitutional responsibility in the area of immigration. Although this is an area of shared jurisdiction in which the provinces may intervene through legislative, regulatory or programming measures, the federal government exercises overriding authority. In other words, provincial governments may intervene in the area of immigration, provided that such intervention remains consistent with that of the federal government.” (CIC, July 2012: 11)

### 1.1.2 Past – Historical contribution of immigration to Canada’s linguistic duality and cultural diversity

The diversity and duality of Canada as we know it today has been built over time, beginning with Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit and Metis). Immigration, primarily of British and French settlers who spoke English and French, then laid the groundwork for linguistic duality, which officially recognizes English and French as the official languages of Canada and official language minorities (English in Quebec and French outside Quebec). In the 20th century—and particularly, in recent decades—the demographics of immigration became increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse. These components of diversity and duality have contributed and continue to contribute to the country’s demographic, economic, social, cultural and human development and vitality.

During the 20th century, Canada experienced multiple waves of immigration in response to the social and economic climate and government policies of the day, including policies governing immigration levels and composition. A brief overview of key events in history illustrates the combined effect of context (social change, political and economic climate) and laws and policies on immigration, cultural diversity and linguistic duality.

Immigration levels fluctuated throughout the twentieth century, reaching historic highs at historically significant moments. For example, in 1913, Canada admitted over 400,000 immigrants (OCOL, November 2014).

Until the 1960s, immigration to Canada primarily originated from Europe and the United States. Yet, despite the large influx of Europeans at the beginning of the 20th century, in 1931, the majority of Canada's residents were still of British (52%) and French (28%) origin. The country remained largely Eurocentric in its orientation and composition until the end of World War II, which caused a massive shift in ideas and attitudes about race, religion and ethnic origin. Although preference was still given to British immigrants, the *Canadian Citizenship Act* of 1947 lifted the head tax and other constraints on Asians. In addition, in 1948, the adoption of the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* formalized the elimination of barriers to immigration in modern democracies (Canadian Museum of History).

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, Canada started modernizing and democratizing its legislative frameworks. In 1962, new immigration regulations were introduced that eliminated racial discrimination in Canadian immigration policy by replacing the criterion of race or national origin with that of skill. The *Immigration Act* of 1976 required the government to draft a plan for future immigration and present it to Parliament. The federal government also adopted the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy in 1971 and the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988 (Canadian Museum of History).

Starting in the 1970s and 1980s, immigration became increasingly diverse in terms of the country of origin and language of immigrants. The majority of immigrants settling outside Quebec were no longer English speakers from Europe and the United States.

The composition of immigrant languages changed markedly starting in the 1970s and 1980s. Before the Second World War, parts of the Canadian population already declared a few non-European languages (Chinese, Japanese and Arabic) as their mother tongue. However, changes to immigration laws and rules in the 1960s contributed to a rapid rise in immigration from Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, the West Indies and Africa. These changes brought about an increase in language diversity. (Statistics Canada, February 2018: 6)

During this same period, linguistic duality was strengthened with the adoption of the first version of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969, which recognized the equal status of French and English in all federal institutions. Following the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), the *Official Languages Act* was broadened in 1988 to ensure the full exercise of the language rights guaranteed therein. Part VII of the Act set out the Government of Canada's commitment to enhance the vitality and support the development of official language minority communities and to promote English and French in Canadian society.

This was followed by the adoption of provisions on official languages and official language communities in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) in 2001. The purpose of the Act is to enrich and strengthen the social and cultural fabric of Canada, while respecting its federal, bilingual and multicultural nature, and to support the development of minority official language communities in Canada.

### 1.1.3 Present – Immigration as a key factor of population growth and demolinguistic balance

For the past few decades, Canada, like other Western countries, has been experiencing a population decline due to low birth rates (number of live births compared to the size of the population in a given place during a specific period of time) and an aging population (IRCC, 2020a). In this context, international immigration emerges as a main driver of population growth (IRCC, 2020a; Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, September 2017).

Between 2017 and 2018, net immigration (balance of immigrants and emigrants) accounted for 80% of Canadian population growth, with the remaining 20% attributed to natural growth, or the difference between births and deaths (IRCC, 2020a). IRCC expects to admit between 300,000 and 430,000 permanent residents per year from 2021 to 2023, after a dip during the first year of the pandemic in 2020 (IRCC, 2020a). From a long-term perspective, by the early 2030s, Canada's population growth may rely exclusively on immigration (IRCC, 2020a). This trend is expected to hold for the next several decades (Statistics Canada, September 2019).

However, in Canada outside Quebec, the Francophone minority population is experiencing, if not more markedly than the majority Anglophone population, an even more significant population decline. This can be related to a number of factors, including a dramatic drop in fertility rates since the 1960s (number of live births over the number of women of child-bearing age); incomplete transmission of French as a mother tongue to the children of French-speaking parents; greater population aging; primary use of a language other than the French mother tongue, often English, in the home; and inter-provincial mobility trends driven by such factors as economic conditions. In addition to these factors, some of which represent major trends, immigration is a crucial component. Not only is immigration considered to be the main driver of Canadian population growth, but it also has a direct influence on the demolinguistic balance in the country. Moreover, it is a factor over which the government has significant influence, particularly in terms of its levels and composition (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017).

[I]n many cases demographic trends are particularly heavy and difficult to reverse due to the weight of the past and the fact that a population's initial structure often exerts great inertia. [However, p]olitical decisions and action can also influence the evolution of certain demographic factors. The identification of national immigration thresholds, receiving refugees, changes in immigration policies or family-related policies are good examples of this. (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 20)

However, immigration, which is increasingly diversified, does not tend to reflect the landscape or the dynamics of linguistic duality in the country in terms of its contribution to maintaining the demographic weight of the French-language minority in Canada outside Quebec (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017).

A number of demographic factors have contributed to the evolution of French and the Francophonie in Canada. Aside from a low fertility rate and incomplete transmission of French as a mother tongue to the children of French-speaking parents, international immigration has the strongest effect on the evolution of French in Canada. On average, over the last 20 years, roughly 235,000 new immigrants have come to Canada each year, more than 80% of whom have neither French nor English as their mother tongue.

In general, of the country's two official languages, a large majority of these immigrants know only English and use it at work and in everyday life. Accordingly, it is usually English that is used in the homes of immigrants outside Quebec. (Statistics Canada, 2012: 9)

#### Immigration levels

According to administrative data from IRCC, more than 340,000 total permanent residents were admitted to Canada in 2019, before the pandemic. Of these, 40,000 settled in Quebec. Outside Quebec, of the remaining 300,000 permanent residents admitted, less than 10,000—below 3%—were French speakers (IRCC, 2020a).

Beyond annual admissions of French-speaking permanent residents, outside Quebec, the share of the total French-speaking immigrant population (by first official language spoken) changed little in proportion between 1981 and 2011, from 1.7% to 2.0%, while the proportion of the French-speaking population born in Canada declined from 5.9% to 4.5% (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017).

We therefore observe that, in Canada outside Quebec, both the proportion of French-speaking permanent residents admitted annually and the proportion of all French-speaking immigrants (regardless of the period of immigration) are smaller than the demographic weight of the French-speaking population as a whole.

#### Immigration composition

Immigration composition has greatly diversified in recent decades due to immigration from non-European countries and a majority of immigrants with a mother tongue other than English or French (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017).

International immigration is the main driver of Canadian population growth. The primary effect it has had on the language situation is increasing the population for whom neither English nor French is their mother tongue or home language. In addition, the geographic and linguistic make-up of international immigrants has a direct impact on the demolinguistic balance between English and French across the country, such that the vast majority of immigrants are far more likely to adopt English as the main language in Canada outside Quebec. (Statistics Canada, January 2017: 17)

In light of this, mother tongue, which long served as the primary criterion for defining language groups in Canada, was replaced by the Government of Canada in 1991 by first official language spoken (FOLS) under Part IV of the *Official Languages Act* and the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*. FOLS is used to determine the official language in which citizens, including new citizens, are most likely to request services from and communicate with the federal government. This criterion is meant to be more inclusive than mother tongue, as it is determined by three census questions considered in succession: knowledge of official languages, mother tongue and language spoken most often at home. Since its introduction, it has been widely used to define the “Francophone” and “Anglophone” populations for a variety of purposes, including for demographic and demolinguistic analysis.

Trends over the past few decades in the demographic weight of English, French and non-official language groups (other than English or French), as defined by mother tongue and by FOLS, indicate that outside Quebec, the majority of the population with a mother tongue other than English or French tends to know, adopt and use English rather than French. This means that when FOLS is used as a criterion, the non-official language group tends to be included in the English-speaking population and contribute to its demographic weight. This is not the case for the French-speaking population, whose demographic weight has been steadily declining both in terms of mother tongue and FOLS despite increases in numbers, due to various factors such as declining birth rates, language mobility and the low contribution of immigration, as noted earlier.

Immigration has played a key role in the recent evolution of the English-speaking population in Canada outside Quebec. The main factors here are the rise in immigration in the late 1980s and the steady stream of immigrants to Canada since (between 150,000 and 250,000 annually, the majority of whom settle outside Quebec). On one hand, the size and linguistic composition of the immigrant population—a group whose mother tongue is generally other than English or French—have decreased the weight of the English-speaking population, defined by mother tongue and home language. On the other, these developments confirm the role of English as the main language of integration and convergence outside Quebec. Generalized learning of English, language transfers toward English and a strong propensity to adopt English over French account for the discrepancies between the trends noted for each of the three characteristics. These factors also explain why, despite high non-official language immigration, the

demographic weight of the English-speaking population defined by FOLS has continued to rise. (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 46)

#### Increasing immigration of individuals with a mother tongue other than English or French and unequal contribution to the demographic weight of official languages groups in Canada outside Quebec

The 4.4% target for French-speaking minority immigration was adopted in 2003 to stem the decline in the demographic weight of the French-speaking minority population, which was 4.4% in the 2001 census (based on mother tongue and FOLS). Below are some data that give an indication of the context and magnitude of this decline by these criteria both before and after the adoption of the target.

As illustrated in Figure 1, in Canada outside Quebec, Canada's French-speaking population has been on a steady decline in recent decades at nearly identical rates, whether using the criterion of mother tongue or FOLS.

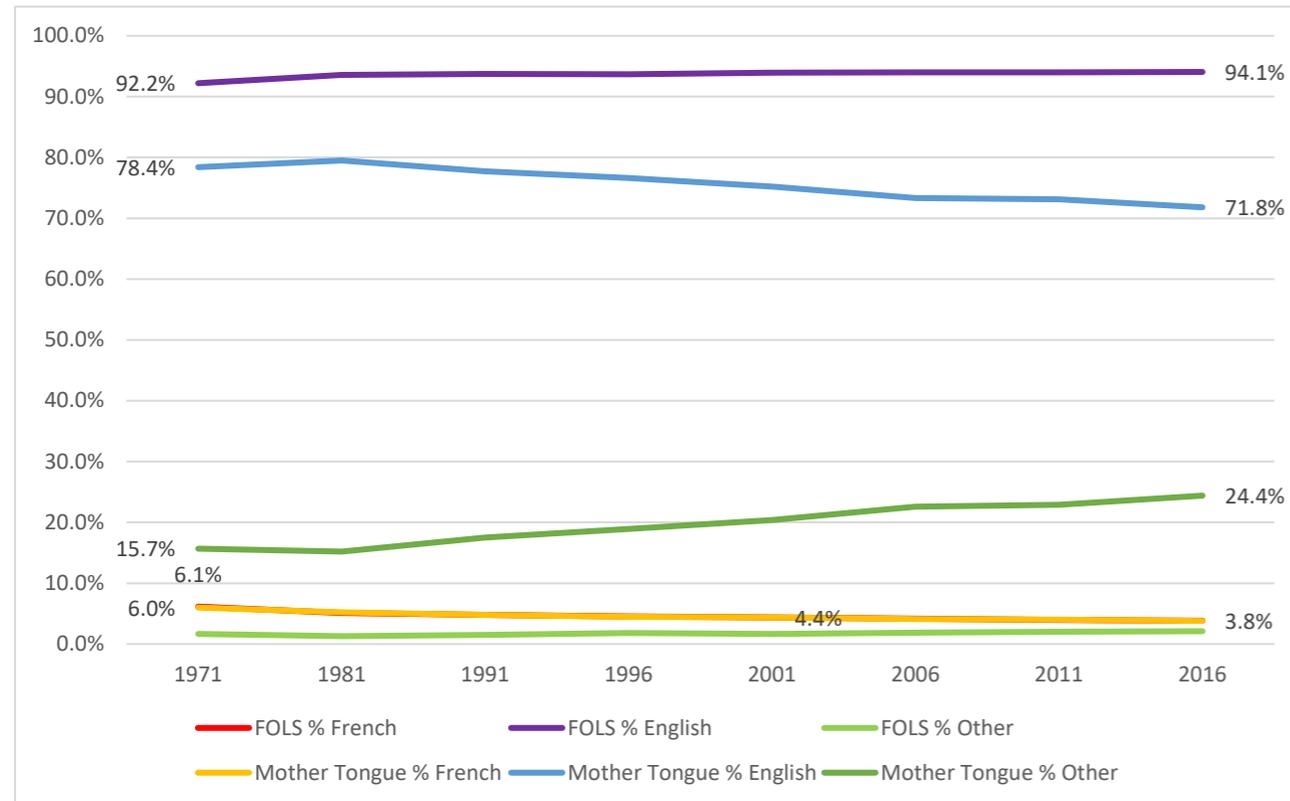
In 1971, this group accounted for 6.1% of the population according to FOLS and 6.0% according to mother tongue; 4.4% according to both criteria in 2001; and 3.8% according to both criteria in 2016. This amounts to a 37.6% decrease in terms of FOLS between 1971 and 2016 (6.1% to 3.8%).

During this period, the English-speaking population according to mother tongue also decreased, from 78.4% to 71.8%. At the same time, this population according to FOLS increased somewhat from 92.2% to 94.1%, representing a relative increase of 2.0%.

In contrast, the population with a mother tongue other than English or French increased from 15.7% to 24.4% between 1971 and 2016, a relative increase of about 55%. This increase explains the decreases in the English and French populations according to mother tongue.

Yet, in Canada outside Quebec, of the two official languages, English is the language of convergence for the population with a mother tongue other than English or French. If this trend holds, the steady decline in the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in minority settings will likely continue. Statistics Canada, in its publication *Language Projections for Canada – 2011 to 2036*, predicts that the proportion of the French-speaking population outside Quebec as measured by FOLS will continue to decline and could fall to 3.1% by 2036 (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 79).

Figure 1: Population by mother tongue and first official language spoken, Canada outside Quebec, 1971 to 2016



Sources:

Statistics Canada. Table 15-10-0003-01 Population by mother tongue and geography, 1951 to 2016  
 Statistics Canada. Table 15-10-0005-01 Population by first official language spoken and geography, 1971 to 2016

## 1.2 Study topic and purpose

This study focuses on the 4.4% target for French-speaking immigrants in minority communities adopted in the *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities* (2003). The Framework was developed by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee (CIC-FMC Steering Committee), which was established by the then Minister of Immigration.

In light of the steady decline in the demographic weight of the minority French-speaking population, the objective of this target was to at least maintain this weight at 4.4% as it stood at the time of the 2001 census (according to both mother tongue and FOLS). The original target deadline was set for 2008 but was later pushed to 2023 due in part to methodological challenges in defining what constitutes a “French-speaking immigrant” and determining how to count these individuals. Since the adoption of this target, three definitions and measures have been used to count admissions of French-speaking permanent residents in Canada outside Quebec.

This study includes a statistical analysis of the admissions of French-speaking permanent residents relative to the target since its adoption, according to the different definitions used and estimates of the desired effect of achieving this target on the demographic weight of the minority French speaking population, which was its objective. Using qualitative analysis, we also provide context for the target's adoption and evolution and provide avenues for reflection as we approach the 2023 deadline.

In doing so, the study aims to shed light on past experience since the adoption of this target and to explore avenues for future reflection as it approaches the 2023 deadline. Put simply, the study aims to put this target into perspective and not to determine or quantify a new target.

### 1.3 Objectives and methodology

#### 1.3.1 Quantitative statistical analysis – primary objective

The primary objective of the study was to conduct and present a quantitative statistical analysis of 1) the shortfalls between the admissions of French-speaking permanent residents and the target over time and 2) estimates of the desired effect of reaching the target on the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population as per the target's objective.

First, we calculated, since 2001, the size of the shortfall between the admission rates of French-speaking permanent residents achieved and the rates that would have been required for 4.4% of permanent residents admitted outside Quebec to be French speaking, according to the different definitions and metrics used by IRCC.

Next, we added the calculated shortfalls to the French-speaking population outside Quebec by FOLS as measured in the 2016 census to give an estimate of the desired impact of achieving the target on the demographic weight of the French-speaking minority population.

#### 1.3.2 Qualitative analysis – secondary objective

The secondary objective of this study was to put into context and perspective the adoption and evolution of the target and its objective. This was done based on a review of key literature and documents, as well as virtual focus groups with key stakeholders from the following government, community and academic groups and organizations:

- Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Statistics Canada
- Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA), Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC), Réseaux en immigration francophone (RIF);
- University researchers

The purpose of the focus groups was to present the preliminary findings of the study, collect feedback from key stakeholders on the information presented and gather their observations, perceptions and understanding of the context surrounding the adoption and evolution of the target, as well as to explore avenues for reflection as we approach the 2023 target deadline.

In order to protect the participants' anonymity, the information collected from these focus groups is presented under major themes that came up frequently in responses or that were particularly impactful. Given the limited number of focus groups and focus group participants, no references are made to the specific focus groups in which these ideas were shared. It is also for this reason that a list of participants is not included in this report.

Relevant information from the qualitative analysis is presented in a complementary manner in specific sections (Historical and Methodological Reference Points and Considerations and Possibilities for the Future). Some of this information is also included at the end of other sections as additional information, under the heading Observations.

## 1.4 Scope and limitations

### 1.4.1 Federal target of 4.4%

This study deals only with the federal target of 4.4% for Francophone immigration outside Quebec adopted in 2003 by the CIC-FMC Steering Committee and not with other Francophone immigration targets that may have been adopted by provinces such as New Brunswick, Ontario or Manitoba. Nor do we address Francophone or Anglophone immigration to Quebec.

### 1.4.2 Admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec

Similar to how the target was determined in 2003 and monitored in the following years, this study looks at admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec and does not address temporary residents. It relies on data on admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec as determined by the various definitions and measures used by IRCC since the target was adopted. These data are from an administrative database provided by IRCC in January 2021 for the purposes of this study.

By focusing on the target, the study deals with one part of the immigration continuum and therefore does not cover the continuum as a whole. It deals primarily with the upstream selection and admission of French-speaking permanent residents, although it also mentions the initial stages of promotion and recruitment of French-speaking permanent residents. It also does not address, downstream, the integration of French-speaking permanent residents into Francophone minority communities, their geographic retention within these communities, or their linguistic retention—that is, the continuity of their knowledge and use of French after their admission. While this may have an impact on the demographic weight of language groups, including the French-speaking minority population, as mentioned earlier, it is beyond the scope of the statistical analyses

conducted in this study. It is also the subject of other studies and analyses conducted or sponsored by academic or government agencies, including some by IRCC.<sup>1</sup>

It goes without saying that the selection and admission of permanent residents is a crucial first step of the immigration continuum, but not the only step. However, there is currently no target for retention or integration of French-speaking immigrants in minority communities.

#### 1.4.3 Method used to estimate the achievement of the target for demographic weight of Francophones in a minority setting

It is also important to note that we are proposing mathematical estimates of the desired impact of achieving the target on the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec based on the approach used at the time of its adoption.

These estimates do not include, in the equation, a complete demographic or demolinguistic analysis of the various factors that contribute to the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population. The study recognizes that a number of factors, trends, and complex dynamics have specific impacts on the demographic weight of this population, but that, in keeping with the approach taken in setting the target, it does not incorporate these factors into its statistical analysis. The study acknowledges this limitation. It does, however, refer to some demographic and demolinguistic analyses made in other publications, including Statistics Canada's *Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036*.

However, as stated earlier, although immigration is not the only factor that influences demographic weight, it constitutes a key factor in the country's demolinguistic balance and one over which the government plays a leading role, specifically in terms of immigration levels and composition.

#### 1.4.4 Description, but not evaluation, of Francophone immigration programs and initiatives

This study does not seek to examine general immigration or Francophone immigration policies, programs or initiatives adopted and implemented in terms of, for example, their evolution, evaluation or impact on achieving the target. However, key programs relevant to the target and its analysis are presented and described.

### 1.5 Presentation of the study

To provide context for the quantitative statistical analysis, the study first presents historical and methodological reference points relevant to the adoption and evolution of the target. This section draws on information from the literature and key document review as well as from the focus groups.

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<sup>1</sup> Other works on integration: Traisnel et coll. (2020); Mulatris, Jacquet and Gwenaëlle (2018); Fourot and Aung (2019).

For works conducted or sponsored by IRCC, see IRCC, Research Reports

The next section presents the statistical analysis of the shortfalls between the admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec from 2001 to 2020 and the target, followed by estimates of the desired impact of reaching the target on the demographic weight of the French-speaking minority population in the 2016 census. We then present some characteristics of French-speaking permanent residents admitted from 2001 to 2020.

The last section presents avenues for reflection and future possibilities following the statistical analysis and in light of the qualitative information gathered from the literature and key document review as well as from the focus groups.

The conclusion, which contains a summary of the study, is followed by three recommendations from the Commissioner of Official Languages.

## 2. HISTORICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL REFERENCE POINTS

### 2.1 Historical reference points

#### 2.1.1 Key events leading up to the adoption of the target

The target was adopted in the *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities* (2003), which was developed by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee (CIC–FMC Steering Committee) established in 2002 by the then Minister.

The Strategic Framework followed changes to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* to which provisions on official languages and official language minority communities were added following, among other things, the Dialogue national consultation tour led by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada and statements by Commissioner Adam before Parliament and in research that formed the basis of two studies (2002). In addition, a study by Quell (OCOL, November 2002) contained the following recommendation:

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration must establish long-term selection and retention targets for immigrants to official language minority communities. These targets must not only reflect the demographic percentage of these communities within the general population but also compensate for inequitable immigration rates in the past. (OCOL, Quell, November 2002: 20)

The Strategic Framework was adopted in support of the 2003–2008 Action Plan for Official Languages, which outlined the challenges facing Francophone minority communities, particularly in terms of demographics, and set quantitative objectives for recovery in priority areas (CIC–FMC Steering Committee, 2003). It was also to be followed by the adoption of action plans to promote

immigration to Francophone minority communities, which were to be drawn up by CIC in cooperation with other federal departments, the provinces and territories, and the Francophone communities (CIC-FMC Steering Committee, 2003: 4).

### 2.1.2 Approach used to establish the target and its objective

The Framework was introduced by a message from the two co-chairs emphasizing that the Steering Committee had identified the issues to be addressed and the major strategies for reversing the immigration deficit that the Francophone and Acadian communities have been experiencing for decades. It considered the issue to be crucial for these communities and to have major repercussions, whether at the economic, cultural, social, demographic or international level (CIC-FMC Steering Committee, 2003: 4).

Acknowledging that Francophone minority communities have not benefited as much from immigration as the Anglophone majority, the Framework aimed to develop and implement strategies to promote the attraction, settlement and integration of immigrants in Francophone and Acadian minority communities. It contained five objectives, including increasing the number of French-speaking immigrants; improving the capacity of Francophone minority communities to receive immigrants; the economic, social and cultural integration of French-speaking immigrants; and the regionalization of Francophone immigration outside Toronto and Vancouver.

Of particular interest to this study is the first objective of the Strategic Framework (2003: 9). According to its title, its objective was to “increase the number of French-speaking immigrants to give more demographic weight to [Francophone minority communities].” However, in the argument, it was more a question of “maintaining” this demographic weight by attracting and retaining, at the very least, the same percentage of French-speaking immigrants. Thus, there seems to have been some ambiguity as to whether the goal was to increase or maintain the demographic weight. In addition, the Framework refers to both attracting and retaining French-speaking immigrants. Finally, it is important to note that the 4.4% target was understood as a minimum threshold to be reached, the targeted result being that at least 4.4% of immigrants outside Quebec would be French-speaking by 2008 (CIC-FMC Steering Committee, 2003: 9).

This threshold was based on the percentage of French-speaking immigrants living in Francophone minority communities according to the Department’s administrative data (3.1% of French-speaking immigrants, i.e., those who have French as their mother tongue or who have knowledge of the French language)<sup>2</sup> and on the percentage of the population outside Quebec who were French-speaking according to the 2001 census (4.4% based on both mother tongue and first official language spoken). The Strategic Framework refers to this percentage of the French-speaking population according to mother tongue and the weight of Francophone minority communities.

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<sup>2</sup> As explained later in the report, this definition aligns with the 2003 definition, which tended to overestimate the numbers of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec.

The Strategic Framework does not cite any detailed demographic or demolinguistic studies to support a target of 4.4%, beyond this assumption of a direct equivalence or correlation between the proportion of French-speaking immigrants and the demographic weight of the French-speaking minority population.

Therefore, its approach would not have factored into the equation other dimensions of the immigration continuum from country of origin to establishment and integration into a host community or other factors besides immigration that affect the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population.

### 2.1.3 Evolution of the target and its objective

In September 2006, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration published the *Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, which was also co-authored by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee (CIC-FMC Steering Committee). The Strategic Plan consisted of identifying the challenges to be met and the main priorities to be prioritized in the selection of initiatives over the next five years (CIC-FMC Steering Committee, 2006: I).

The Plan aimed to intensify and better coordinate efforts to achieve all five objectives set in the 2003 Strategic Framework, including increasing the number of French-speaking immigrants to increase the demographic weight of Francophone minority communities. According to the Steering Committee and its Strategic Plan, “it would take 15 years to reach the annual target of 8,000 to 10,000 French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities”, 120,000 to 150,000 total over this period (CIC-FMC Steering Committee, 2003: 3).

Accordingly, the initial 2008 deadline for achieving the 4.4% target was pushed 15 years later to 2023. This was justified in part by difficulties in drawing an accurate portrait of immigration to Francophone minority communities.

The year after it was published, the Strategic Plan was criticized by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages (May 2007). The objectives of the plan were not called into question, but the committee members argued that the plan had a number of shortcomings, including ambiguous targets and a lack of a statement of current status.

Subsequently, in response to criticisms of a lack of specifics on how to measure progress in admissions, in June 2009, the federal government set an interim target of 1.8% by 2013, while maintaining the 4.4% target for 2023 (Standing Committee on Official Languages, November 2010). This 1.8% target was actually achieved by the deadline (CIC, July 2012). In addition, in 2013, the government adopted a target of 4% for French-speaking economic immigrants outside Quebec for 2018 while maintaining the overall target of 4.4% for 2023.

Furthermore, in 2010, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, in its third study on the issue, argued that, due to the mobility of Francophones and language transfer rates, the target of 4.4% determined on the basis of statistical data from 2001 was outdated, that it would not maintain the linguistic balance outside Quebec and that it should therefore be revised upwards. The study included 20 recommendations, the second of which was that Citizenship and Immigration Canada, in cooperation with Francophone minority communities, should consider setting the proportion of Francophone immigrants that Canada wishes to admit annually in these communities at 7%. This recommendation was not acted upon. A third recommendation was made to the Government of Canada that, after consultation with Francophone minority communities and the development of a new Francophone immigration strategy, it implemented a national policy on Francophone immigration to minority communities (House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, November 2010).

In 2012, as part of the *Evaluation of the Recruitment and Integration of French Speaking Immigrants to Francophone Minority Communities Initiative* (CIC, July 2012), the Department stated the following:

“In 2006, the GoC and the FMCs adopted a Strategic Plan which aims, among other things, to increase the proportion of French-speaking newcomers settling in these communities. This objective directly aligns with the Department’s legislative obligations with respect to the development and vitality of OLMCs.” (CIC, July 2012: 14)

One of the questions examined was whether the initiatives put in place helped to achieve the targets set for the number of French-speaking immigrants settling in FMCs. In this regard, the report stated on more than one occasion that the target had not been met. In addition, the report stated the following:

“Although the number of newcomers settling in FMCs has increased since 2003, the 4.4% target has not yet been reached.” (CIC, 2012: 14)

“Since the adoption of the Strategic Framework in 2003, the federal government and FMCs have pursued an objective (4.4%) that has still not been attained.” (IRCC, 2012: 22)

“Although progress has been made in the past decade, the objectives set in 2003 (and set out in the 2006 Strategic Plan) have not yet been met. The partners’ efforts must therefore continue.” (CIC, 2012: 35)

The evaluation report concluded that the 2003 Strategic Framework and the 2006 Strategic Plan had enabled CIC and FMCs to set a target for the number of French-speaking newcomers who should settle in FMCs, and that this approach had several merits in enabling stakeholders to

measure progress in this particularly complex process. However, it pointed out the challenge of not having a single validated and consensus-based method for calculating the number of "French-speaking newcomers" as defined in the Strategic Plan. It recommended that CIC, in collaboration with relevant partners, determine the formula it intends to use to measure the number of French-speaking immigrants who settle in FMCs (CIC, July 2012: vi). These issues of defining "French-speaking immigrants" and their corresponding measures are presented and explained in more detail in this report in the following section on methodological benchmarks.

In 2016, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages drew attention to the lack of a policy to support IRCC in implementing the provisions of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* that are intended to foster the development of official language minority communities through immigration. It recognized that IRCC is taking steps to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants, but that its program-based approach has the effect of fragmenting Francophone immigration matters. He recommended that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and the *Official Languages Act*, issue an official immigration policy to increase the demographic weight of minority language communities, while respecting provincial jurisdiction (House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, December 2016).

The *Evaluation of the Immigration to Official Language Minority Communities Initiative* (IRCC, July 2017) focused on progress toward expected outcomes since the 2012 evaluation and included some consideration of outcomes since 2003 to better assess trends over time. Key areas of focus included promotion and recruitment activities and Francophone immigration outcomes in FMCs. (IRCC, July 2017: 8). The evaluation report stated the following:

“However, in spite of these efforts, which have been ongoing since 2003, the relative weight of French-speaking immigrants settling in FMCs remains well below departmental targets. Evidence indicates that the current approach, which has relied mainly on promotional activities as well as options for temporary residence, may not be sufficient to achieve the established targets, and more efforts may be needed if current targets are to be realized.” (IRCC, July 2017: v)

“The OLMC Initiative supports departmental obligations with respect to the OLA and IRPA (as described above), as well as its objectives for Francophone immigration, which are aligned with FMC and provincial/territorial government priorities. Since 2003, the department has had as one of its objectives to ensure that 4.4% of immigrants settling outside Quebec were French-speaking, aiming to do this by 2023.” (IRCC, July 2017: 9-10)

“As a result, the Strategic Framework set a target of 4.4% for Francophone immigration to FMCs, and contended that '[m]easures should be developed to help the Francophone

and Acadian communities profit more from immigration to mitigate their demographic decline'.” (IRCC, July 2017: 11)

“Years later, there is still a need to foster the demographic and economic growth, as well as the vitality, of FMCs, and immigration is viewed as a means to do this. The targets set for Francophone immigration, as well as Francophone economic immigration, to FMCs are still ongoing and have not been met.” (IRCC, July 2017: 11)

“While the numbers of French-speaking immigrants settling in FMCs increased in many of the years since 2003, their relative weight within the overall immigrant and economic immigrant populations outside of Quebec has remained below IRCC’s targets.” (IRCC, July 2017:12)

“Evaluation findings suggest that the targets set for Francophone immigration, though still ongoing, are ambitious and will be difficult to achieve, and that more significant efforts on the part of the department are needed if progress is to be made towards achieving these targets.” (IRCC, July 2017:14)

In 2018, the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Action Plan to Increase Francophone Immigration Outside Quebec was adopted. Recognizing the role that Francophone immigration plays in preserving the vitality of Francophone minority communities and the demographic decline of these communities despite efforts and achievements, the Plan affirmed the need to redouble efforts to meet the challenges. It called for the concerted implementation of additional measures among the various governments and stakeholders to attract, select, integrate and retain French-speaking immigrants. (IRCC, March 2018).

In 2019, following the Action Plan for Official Languages – 2018-2023, the federal government unveiled the Francophone Immigration Strategy, which reiterated the government’s commitment to reaching the 4.4% target by 2023. Specifically, the Strategy aimed to support the vitality of Francophone minority communities by establishing three main objectives for Francophone immigration over the next four years: increase Francophone immigration to reach a target of 4.4% of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec by 2023; support the successful integration and retention of French-speaking newcomers; and strengthen the capacity of Francophone communities (IRCC, 2019a).

More recently, in the winter of 2021, the Government of Canada’s *Official Languages Act* reform proposal document, *English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada* (Canadian Heritage, February 2021), proposed the adoption of a Francophone immigration policy under the *Official Languages Act*. One of the objectives of this policy was to “maintain the demographic weight of Francophones outside Quebec so that this demographic represents 4.4 percent of the country’s population,” but it did not include a target for Francophone immigration

or a timetable for achieving it. However, given that since the time the target was adopted, the Francophone minority population has shrunk from 4.4% in the 2001 census to 3.8% in the 2016 census (based on first official language spoken), the reform document would pave the way for a remedial approach to redress and then maintain the weight of the French-speaking population at 4.4%.

#### 2.1.4 Observations on historical reference points

##### Approach to setting the target and its objective

Based on our reading of the 2003 Strategic Framework and on observations of key stakeholders on the topic, establishing a direct correlation between the proportion of French-speaking immigrants or permanent residents admitted and the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population would have involved an approach that can be described as simplistic, in that it did not consider the full scope of the immigration continuum and the various demographic and demolinguistic factors at play.

In regard to the immigration continuum, it should be noted that the Framework refers to the need not only to attract but also to retain a proportion of French-speaking immigrants equal to the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population. In response to this, various stakeholders consulted in multiple focus groups stressed that efforts to recruit and select, then retain and integrate immigrants should go hand in hand.

The other factors that influence the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in a minority setting are not spelled out in this Strategic Framework, but according to some of the participants in the focus groups, were brought up in broader discussions and reflections at the time. Other responses emphasized the importance of taking these various factors into account and the fact that they play out in different ways from one region to another. It may be noted that analyses of various factors at different geographic scales are available in Statistics Canada publications, including those cited in this study as well as in *Composite Indicators for Community Vitality* (Canadian Heritage, 2017).

It is interesting to note that this target was accompanied by measures in the Strategic Framework (CIC–FMC, 2003: 10), such as establishing a percentage of French-speaking immigrants selected through the Provincial Nominee Program and a percentage of Francophone foreign students admitted as permanent residents. In addition, it was suggested that recruitment activities be targeted to identify Francophone source countries or that special efforts be made. The suggestion to target certain programs and origin countries also emerged from the literature review and focus group discussions.

##### Timelines for reaching the target

With regard to the postponement of the initial deadline of 2008 to 2023, we have noted that in the 2003 Strategic Framework, the target of 4.4% of French-speaking immigrants in minority

communities was to be reached by 2008. This deadline was postponed in the 2006 Strategic Plan, which set the priorities for the next five years. The CIC-FMC Steering Committee stated that it estimates that it would take 15 years to reach the annual target of 8,000 to 10,000 French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities. This was attributed to challenges related to the definition of a "French-speaking immigrant" and its measurement. According to some focus group participants, this was the time needed to see and measure the effects of actions taken over three five-year cycles. We have noted, however, that the new 2023 deadline did not appear as such in the Strategic Plan.

In subsequent years, the Department found that, despite measures taken and initiatives undertaken as well as increases in numbers of admissions of French speaking permanent residents in Francophone minority communities, the target was not being met (CIC, July 2012; IRCC, July 2017), that more needed to be done (IRCC, July 2017), and that progress was needed (IRCC, July 2017). In the Francophone Immigration Strategy, the Department committed to more systematic reporting on progress toward meeting the target (IRCC, 2019a). It stated that it would have until 2023 to meet the target (CIC, July 2012; IRCC, July 2017).

The extension of the deadline from 2008 to 2023 could have left room for interpretation, such as whether achievement of the target could be understood and expected on an annual, five-year, or term basis. Regardless of this interpretation, one of the Department's expectations was to see progress in meeting the target. To this end, the Department publishes annual data to track progress toward the target, such as Facts and Figures. It also reports to Parliament on immigration levels and composition on an annual basis.

#### [Other approaches](#)

In more than one discussion group, stakeholders raised the issue of setting a target and purely quantitative objectives for the contribution of immigration to the development and vitality of Francophone minority communities.

From a more qualitative standpoint, more than one person noted the importance of remembering the human side of things with respect to the perceptions and experiences of Francophone immigrants and Francophone minority communities throughout the immigration continuum. The appeal of Francophone minority communities to potential immigrants (in terms of available opportunities and services) was discussed, as were the motivations of immigrants for wanting to settle in a particular community (Francophone or Anglophone, in a minority or majority setting, in a particular province or territory, in an urban or rural setting); their experience in the continuum of immigrating to, settling in and integrating into these communities; and their experience in migrating between communities. Others observed that French-speaking immigrants who integrate into Francophone minority communities themselves contribute to the recruitment of other immigrants into these communities due to linguistic, cultural and human factors.

Others raised the idea of establishing complementary objectives, for example, for the retention and integration of French-speaking immigrants into Francophone minority communities.

## 2.2 Methodological reference points

### 2.2.1 Challenges in defining, measuring and counting French-speaking immigrants

The issue of definitions as a conceptual tool for identifying and counting a population goes beyond the scope of immigration, as there is no single method for defining or counting the French-speaking population, let alone the French-speaking immigrant population.

This is an issue that is becoming increasingly complex in the context of growing diversity in language group composition, characteristics and practices. As outlined in a study by the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, the issue of definitions “raises other questions that have direct consequences not only on research, but also on public policy and on estimates of official-language minority populations that may use certain services” (Guignard Noël and Forgues, March 2020:1).

In the area of immigration, this matter is of particular importance, as it is central to the development of targets and the monitoring of progress. A variety of definitions and methods are possible that use one or a combination of language variables. In addition, figures may vary depending on the definition and method used. Thus, depending on the criteria used, several definitions are possible, each with its advantages and disadvantages (OCOL, November 2014; CIC, July 2012 and IRCC, July 2017). Over the past two decades, in consultation with Francophone minority communities, IRCC has used three main definitions and corresponding measures to count French-speaking permanent residents.

Recall that the 4.4% target was set based on the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population in the 2001 Statistics Canada census, which was 4.4% according to both mother tongue and first official language spoken. Moreover, the reports and follow-ups on progress toward the target have been and still are based on IRCC administrative data on the admission of permanent residents. Therefore, it is appropriate to briefly provide some methodological reference points for each of these data sources.

The census, which is conducted once every five years, includes more questions related to official languages than the application for permanent residence, which is completed only at the time of application and contains fewer questions on this topic. There are also differences in the questions asked and how the answers are handled.

With regard to the questions asked, as noted later in this report, the 2016 census contained six questions or sub-questions about official languages. These pertained to knowledge of official languages, language spoken most often at home, other languages regularly spoken at home, mother

tongue, language used most often at work and other languages used regularly at work. Other variables may be derived from the responses to these questions, such as first official language spoken.

Permanent residence applications can be used to gather data on mother tongue and official languages spoken, i.e., knowledge of official languages (CIC, July 2012). In addition, since 2017, the application asks which official language the applicant is most at ease using (IRCC, Francophone Immigration Policy Hub, November 2016).

Census data provides more detailed information on the linguistic characteristics and practices of the population and groups within this population over time. These data can also be broken out by immigration status and period (recent immigration in the last one or five years versus earlier immigration) and compare them to the non-immigrant population and the population as a whole.

IRCC's administrative data are updated on a monthly basis and can be used to closely monitor changes in the admission of permanent residents to Canada. However, there are not as many variables that do the same for French-speaking permanent residents.

In addition, these questions are not asked at the same point in the individual's immigration continuum. IRCC's questions are asked in the permanent residence application, whereas Statistics Canada's are asked in the census, after individuals are settled in Canada.

In an increasingly linguistically diverse context, one factor in particular is more and more present in data collected by both IRCC and Statistics Canada: the processing and classification of double or multiple responses to linguistic variables and questions.

### 2.2.2. Census language variables at Statistics Canada

Before discussing the three definitions and measures of Francophone immigrants used by IRCC since the adoption of the target in 2003, it is relevant to address the census language variables used by Statistics Canada that are most relevant to this study, namely those used to enumerate the Francophone minority population and calculate its demographic weight relative to the overall population outside Quebec. We will therefore not discuss, for example, variables related to language of work.

#### Mother tongue

Mother tongue “refers to the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the person at the time the data was collected.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016, Mother Tongue, on-line version ([www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop095-eng.cfm](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop095-eng.cfm))

It has been included in the census since 1901 and long been used as a reference variable by Statistics Canada to enumerate the Francophone population.

Enumerating the French-speaking population by mother tongue, however, does not take into account those who have a mother tongue other than French but who know it or use it in their daily lives, at work or at home, for example. In fact, many immigrants who know and can use French may have other mother tongues such as Arabic, Creole, Lingala, etc.

#### Knowledge of official languages

Knowledge of official languages “refers to whether the person can conduct a conversation in English only, French only, in both or in neither language.”<sup>4</sup>

This variable was introduced to the census in 1971. In the early 2000s, a study by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages pointed out that this measure is more inclusive than the mother tongue measure (OCOL, Quell, November 2002). However, one of its disadvantages is that it relies on a person’s subjective assessment of his or her ability to conduct a conversation in a given language (Guignard Noël and Forgues, March 2020).

#### Language spoken most often at home

Language spoken most often at home, as its name implies, “refers to the language the person speaks most often at home at the time of data collection. A person can report more than one language as ‘spoken most often at home’ if the languages are spoken equally often.”<sup>5</sup>

This variable was also introduced to the census in 1971. One of its main advantages is that it provides an indicator of intragenerational language transfer, i.e., the use of a language other than one’s mother tongue as the language most often used at home. However, counting the French-speaking population by this variable excludes people who know French but use another language most often at home, as is the case for a number of immigrants (Guignard Noël and Forgues, March 2020).

A second sub-question, “other language(s) spoken regularly at home,” was added to the census in 2001 to collect information on languages, if any, that the person speaks regularly at home, other than the language(s) they speak most often at home.<sup>6</sup> This question adds nuance to the analysis of

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada, Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016, Knowledge of Official Languages, on-line version ([www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop055-eng.cfm](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop055-eng.cfm))

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016, Language Spoken Most Often at Home, on-line version ([www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop186-eng.cfm](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop186-eng.cfm))

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, Dictionary, Census of Population, 2016, Other Language(s) Spoken Regularly at Home, on-line version ([www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop187-eng.cfm](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/pop187-eng.cfm))

intragenerational language transfer by accounting for individuals who, if they do not speak their mother tongue most often at home, at least speak it regularly.

#### First official language spoken

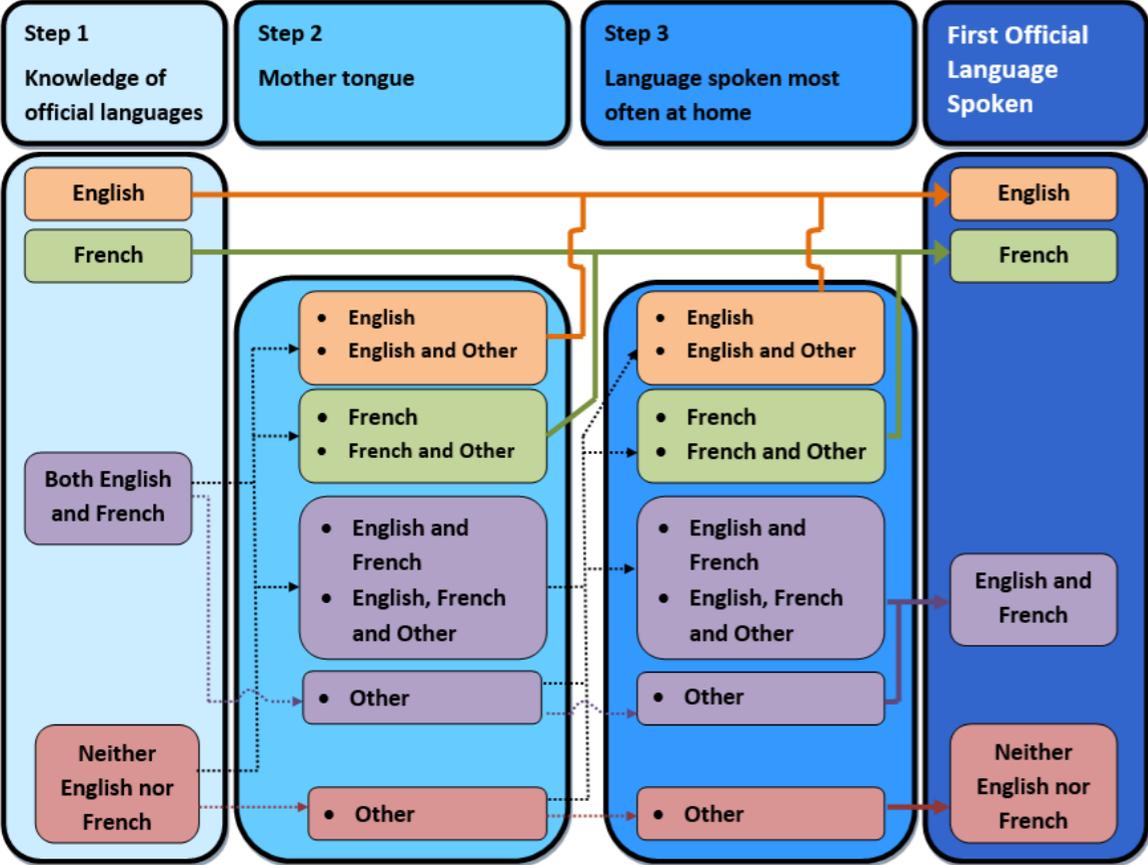
Considering the limitations of using mother tongue to paint a picture of a population in which immigration is increasingly diverse, and given the presence of mother tongues other than English or French, the concept of first official language spoken (FOLS) was developed and adopted in 1991 under the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations* (Statistics Canada, June 2014). It was intended to better account for people who have a mother tongue other than English or French, but who have knowledge of English or French or use an official language most often at home.

Though FOLS was adopted under Part IV of the *Official Languages Act* in 1991, since then it has also been used more broadly to define and count official language minorities, particularly in relation to Part VII of the Act, which pertains to government support for their vitality. Thus, FOLS is the variable used in the statistical portraits of the French-speaking immigrant population outside Quebec prepared by Statistics Canada (June 2014 and April 2010) and in many recent works on official language minorities. It is also the main reference variable in this study for estimates of the impact of attaining the 4.4% objective for Francophone immigration on the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population.

FOLS is not the subject of a single census question but is derived from three successive census language questions: one on knowledge of official languages, one on mother tongue and one on the language spoken most often at home. Below is a more detailed explanation of this derivation method followed by a diagram of it in Figure 2.

According to this method, people who can conduct a conversation in French only are assigned French as their first official language spoken. People who can conduct a conversation in English only are assigned English as their first official language spoken. Responses to the questions on mother tongue and language spoken most often at home are then used to determine the first official language spoken of those who can speak English and French or who cannot speak either official language. The French category includes people who have French only or French and at least one non-official language as their mother tongue. People who have English only or English and at least one non-official language as their mother tongue are included in the English category. For cases that have not yet been classified, people are assigned to the French category when they speak French only or French and at least one non-official language as their language spoken most often at home. The procedure is the same for English. Thus, the population is classified into two main categories: English and French. Two residual categories should be added for those who could not be classified using the information provided: English and French and neither English or French (Statistics Canada, Census Dictionary).

Figure 2: Derivation of the first official language spoken



### 2.2.3 Three definitions and measures of French-speaking immigrants used by IRCC

Three definitions and measures of what constitutes a French-speaking immigrant have been adopted and used by IRCC since 2003. They are summarized in Figure 3 and described below.

Figure 3: Summary of definitions, measures and questions used to identify French-speaking immigrants, IRCC (2003, 2006, 2016)

Definition: 2003	Definition: 2006	Definition: 2016
A French-speaking immigrant is an immigrant whose mother tongue is French or who has knowledge of the French language.	A French-speaking immigrant is an immigrant whose mother tongue is French, or whose first official language of usage is French if the mother tongue is a language other than English or French.	A French-speaking immigrant is an immigrant for whom French is the first Canadian official language of usage.
Measure: 2003	Measure: 2006	Measure: 2016
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permanent residents who report French as their mother tongue</li> <li>2. Permanent residents whose mother tongue is a language other than French, <u>including English</u>, and who report a knowledge of French (<u>including</u> dual responses of “English and French”)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permanent residents who report French as their mother tongue</li> <li>2. Permanent residents who have a mother tongue other than <u>English</u> or French and report a knowledge of “French only” (<u>excluding</u> dual responses of “English and French”)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permanent residents who report a knowledge of “French only.”</li> <li>2. Permanent residents who report a knowledge of “English and French” <u>as well as</u> French as the official language in which they are most at ease.</li> </ol>
Relevant questions on the permanent residence application	Relevant questions on the permanent residence application	Relevant questions on the permanent residence application
<p>Mother tongue: From the list, select your first (native) language. This is the language that you learned at home during your childhood and that you still understand. If your native language is not in this list, select “Other.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English</li> </ul>	<p>Mother tongue: From the list, select your first (native) language. This is the language that you learned at home during your childhood and that you still understand. If your native language is not in this list, select “Other.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> French</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other</li> </ul> <p>Knowledge of French: From the list, select whether you are able to communicate in English and/or French:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> English</li> <li><input type="radio"/> French</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Both</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Neither</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> French</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Other</li> </ul> <p>Knowledge of French: From the list, select whether you are able to communicate in English and/or French:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> English</li> <li><input type="radio"/> French</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Both</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Neither</li> </ul>	<p>Knowledge of French: From the list, select whether you are able to communicate in English and/or French:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="radio"/> English</li> <li><input type="radio"/> French</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Both</li> <li><input type="radio"/> Neither</li> </ul> <p>Language in which the applicant is most at ease: “If you selected ‘Both,’ choose whether you are most at ease in English or French.”</p>
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Sources:

Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee

*Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*. November 2003.

*Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*. September 2006.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Francophone Immigration Policy Hub. *Measure of the definition of French-speaking immigrant* [oral presentation]. November 2016.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. *Generic Application Form for Canada*.

**Definition and measure: 2003**

In 2003, the definition of a French-speaking immigrant and the corresponding measure referred to permanent residents with French as their mother tongue and those with knowledge of the French language. The latter group included all permanent residents who had a mother tongue other than French (including English) and reported being able to communicate in French only or in English and French.

One disadvantage of this definition and measure is that they tend to overestimate the number of French-speaking immigrants due to the fact that they include all permanent residents that have reported being able to speak English and French, regardless of which official language they use most regularly (IRCC, July 2017). According to data provided by IRCC (2021), only 16.8% of permanent residents included in the 3.1% figure from 2001 had French as their mother tongue. The reliability of this measure was quickly called into question at the time including in the *Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities* (CIC-FMC Steering Committee, 2006).

#### Definition and measure: 2006

A new definition and measure were adopted in the 2006 Strategic Plan. They were the benchmark for over a decade and refer to an immigrant whose mother tongue is French or, if their mother tongue is a language other than English or French, whose first Canadian official language of usage is French. However, the permanent residence application forms, which at the time contained only two language questions, did not directly measure the second part of the definition, first Canadian official language of use. The number of immigrants meeting this criterion is estimated based on the questions on mother tongue and official languages spoken (CIC, July 2012).

The 2006 definition was thus measured by combining permanent residents whose mother tongue is French and permanent residents whose mother tongue is not English or French and whose official language spoken is French only. Unlike the 2003 definition, this second definition excludes permanent residents who have English as their mother tongue and those who have a mother tongue other than French and who report being able to communicate in both English and French. This has the effect of underestimating the number of French-speaking immigrants by not including bilingual (English-French) individuals whose mother tongue is not French, even though it is their primary official language of use (CIC, July 2012).

For example, according to administrative data obtained from IRCC (2021), for the period from 2001 to 2020, the use of the 2006 definition resulted in the exclusion from the number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec of 5,313 Lebanese immigrants, 4,399 Moroccan immigrants, 1,975 Algerian immigrants and 1,851 Tunisian immigrants who have Arabic as their mother tongue and who reported that they are able to express themselves in French and English, even though they come from countries where French is a common language in the public space (language of instruction, language spoken by a significant proportion of the population, etc.).

#### Definition and measure: 2016

In an effort to paint a more accurate picture of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents, IRCC developed and adopted in 2016 a new definition and measure of French-speaking immigrants based on knowledge of French rather than mother tongue. It refers to an immigrant for whom French is the first official Canadian language of use. It is measured by combining a) permanent residents who report knowledge of “French only,” and b) permanent residents who report knowledge of “English and French” as official languages and mark French as the language in which they are most at ease. A new question added in 2017 to the application for permanent residence form identifies this second component more precisely.

This definition is considered more inclusive than the 2006 definition, as it includes bilingual immigrants for whom French is not their mother tongue, and is more restrictive than the 2003 definition, as it excludes individuals who have knowledge of French but are more at ease in English.

For 2019, 1,782 more French-speaking permanent residents were counted under the 2016 definition and measure than were counted under the 2006 definition and measure. Over three quarters of these additional French-speaking permanent residents came from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, and had Arabic as their mother tongue, were able to express themselves in both official languages of Canada and were more at ease in French. If we add permanent residents from Burundi who have Kirundi as their mother tongue, Lebanese Arabic speakers, and Creole speakers from Mauritius, more than 95 percent of the difference between the 2006 and 2016 measures for 2019 is accounted for (IRCC, 2021).

These data seem to support IRCC's assertions (Francophone Immigration Policy Hub, November 2016) that the new measure adopted in 2016 provides a more accurate picture of the reality of French-speaking immigration since it better accounts for the six main countries of origin of permanent residents, all of which are places where French is a common language of use.

#### 2.2.4 Observations on methodological reference points

##### Definition and measure: 2003

According to focus group participants, it was apparent at the time that the 2003 definition and measure had to be reviewed, which was done in 2006. Notably, it quickly became apparent that it overestimated admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec by indicating that the target had been reached and even exceeded from the outset.

##### Definition and measure: 2006

We recognize, as do others, that the 2006 definition and measure have limitations in that they underestimate admissions of French-speaking permanent residents. In addition, they exclude bilingual immigrants whose mother tongue is not French. Nevertheless, this definition was operational until April 2016 and, along with its corresponding measure, is used in the publication of Facts and Figures. (IRCC, Francophone Immigration Policy Hub, November 2016)

Therefore, the following statistical analyses are based primarily on the 2006 definition and measure. We will still refer to the 2003 and 2016 definitions on various occasions where appropriate.

##### Definition and measure: 2016

With respect to the definition adopted by IRCC in 2016, the earliest data are available only from 2019 onward, which does not allow for a longitudinal analysis, unlike the 2003 and 2006 definitions. This is because the measure used for the 2016 definition is derived in part from a question added to the permanent residence application form in 2017.

Issues of comparability between IRCC administrative data and Statistics Canada census data were raised in focus groups. Other interventions focused on the comparability of this new definition and

measure to those previously used by IRCC to track the admission rates of French-speaking permanent residents over time.

Furthermore, the data presented in this report illustrate that the measure developed in 2016, which includes the notion of first official language of use, provides a more accurate picture of the French-speaking immigrant population than previous measures.

In addition, it allows for a more accurate of permanent residents whose mother tongue is a language other than French, but who know French and are more comfortable in French than in English. A number of them come from countries where French is a common language used in the public space and which represent potential pools for attracting, recruiting and selecting French-speaking immigrants, such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Burundi, Lebanon and Mauritius.

### **3. LEVELS OF FRANCOPHONE IMMIGRATION TO MINORITY COMMUNITIES – STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TARGET AND ITS OBJECTIVE**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

##### **3.1.1 Calculation of admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents, Canada outside Quebec, 2001–2020**

First, the actual admission rates of French-speaking permanent residents are presented using a descriptive approach using five different variables for the period of 2001–2020 from the administrative database provided by IRCC: the three definitions of French-speaking immigrants (2003, 2006, 2016), knowledge of French and French as a mother tongue. A descriptive approach also makes it possible to present the characteristics of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec over the same period.

##### **3.1.2 Calculation of gaps between actual admissions of French-speaking permanent residents and admissions required to meet the target, Canada outside Quebec, 2001–2020**

Second, for the period of 2001 to 2020, calculations of the gaps or shortfalls between the total number of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents actually admitted according to the 2006 definition and the total number of admissions required annually to meet 4.4% are presented. To determine the total number required, we calculated 4.4% of the total number of permanent residents admitted outside Quebec for each reference year. We then summed these gaps to illustrate the magnitude of the accumulated shortfalls in admissions of French-speaking permanent residents over the past two decades. These analyses are primarily based on IRCC's 2006 definition, which allows us to examine admissions of French-speaking permanent residents over a 20-year period. Despite its limitations with tendencies to produce underestimates, it is the most appropriate unit of measurement for looking at this population over a long period of time. It is also the reference

measure used by IRCC for most of the study period, from 2006 to 2016. In addition, it should be noted that the 2006 definition and its corresponding measure were the ones used from the time of the 2008 deadline extension until 15 years later. We will, however, refer to the 2003 and 2016 definitions on various occasions where appropriate.

### 3.1.3 Estimated impact of reaching the target for the demographic weight of the French-speaking population, Canada outside Quebec, 2001–2016 and 2008–2016

Third, in line with the primary objective of the target and its premise in 2003, we sought to estimate the impact of closing these gaps and achieving the target on the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec.

To do so, we added the shortfalls in the number of French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2006 definition for the period 2001 to 2016 to the French-speaking population in Canada outside Quebec according to first official language spoken (FOLS) as enumerated in Statistics Canada's 2016 census.

In the absence of a direct correspondence between the variables, the wording and sequence of the questions and the treatment of multiple responses, it seemed most appropriate to use the 2006 definition of a French-speaking permanent resident according to IRCC and the definition of the French-speaking population according to FOLS in the 2016 Statistics Canada census,<sup>7</sup> since French mother tongue on its own is too restrictive.

We made estimates for two baseline scenarios:

- From 2001 to the first third of 2016<sup>8</sup> (with the 2001 Census as the initial reference period for setting the target)
- From 2008 to the first third of 2016 (2008 being the initial timeframe for achieving the target)

## 3.2 Calculation of admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents by different IRCC definitions and measures, 2001–2020

### 3.2.1 Admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2006 definition and measure, Canada outside Quebec

#### *2006 definition and measure – Percentages*

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<sup>7</sup> It is possible to hypothesize that those included in the definition of French-speaking immigrant according to the 2006 IRCC measure (permanent residents with French as their mother tongue or with knowledge of French only) would also overwhelmingly be included in the population with French as a FOLS in Statistics Canada's 2016 census (persons with knowledge of French only or with French as their mother tongue). However, the FOLS criterion is less restrictive. In addition, depending on the derivation method and the distribution of multiple responses, this criterion may also include immigrants with knowledge of English and French, immigrants who have French and another language as their mother tongue and immigrants who use French only or French and another language most often at home.

<sup>8</sup> Given that the census was conducted on May 10, after the first quarter of the calendar year.

As shown in Figure 4 further below, according to this definition and measure at IRCC, the percentage of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec rose from 1.2% in 2001 to 2.6% in 2020. Though this percentage more than doubled, it remains below 4.4%, despite the different initiatives implemented by IRCC to increase this proportion (IRCC, 2019a). It is important to remember, however, that this definition and measure tend to underestimate the number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec.

The proportion of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec crossed the 2% threshold for the first time in 2019. From 2001 to 2018, this proportion fluctuated between 1.1% and 1.8%. It fluctuated between 1.1% and 1.3% from 2001 to 2006; increased to 1.6% from 2007 to 2010 and 1.8% from 2011 to 2013; decreased to 1.4% and 1.3% in 2014 and 2015, and increased again to 1.8% in 2017 and 2018; and then exceeded 2.0% in 2019 and 2020. We can see that after reaching a low point in 2015 (1.3%), this proportion increased slightly in the following years, reaching 2.1% in 2019 and 2.6% in 2020—an increase of 1.3 percentage points over five years. Nevertheless, admission rates of French-speaking permanent residents in Francophone minority communities did not surpass 2% for most of the study period.

It should be noted that for 2020, as shown in figures 5 and 6 below, immigration outside Quebec as a whole decreased more significantly (-53%) than Francophone immigration (-43%) during the COVID-19 pandemic. It remains to be seen what the impact of a return to pre-pandemic levels of immigration will be in the years to come.

#### *2006 definition and measure – Figures*

Figure 5 presents the absolute numbers of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec according to the 2006 definition. The total admissions from 2001 to 2020 amount to 67,430 French-speaking permanent residents admitted under this definition (data not shown in Figure 5).

For comparison purposes, Figure 6 shows that a total of 4,251,948 permanent residents were admitted during the same period. French-speaking permanent residents thus represent only 1.6% of all permanent residents admitted outside Quebec in the last two decades.

However, there has been a notable increase in the number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted in recent years. The average annual number of these admissions between 2001 and 2005 was 2,350, whereas it was 4,813 for the period from 2016 to 2019<sup>9</sup>—more than double, or a difference of nearly 2,500 average yearly admissions between these two periods.

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<sup>9</sup> We have excluded the year 2020 from the calculation of this average because of the impacts of the pandemic on immigration levels.

### 3.2.2 Admission rates of French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2003 definition and measure, Canada outside Quebec

#### *2003 definition and measure – Percentages*

The 3.1% of French-speaking immigrants in 2001 referred to in the 2003 Strategic Framework was based on the definition for the same year, 2003. Figure 4 indicates that 3.2% of admissions in 2001 were French-speaking according to this definition and its measure. It should be noted that this number has been rounded from 3.16%.

As shown in Figure 4, the annual proportion of French-speaking permanent residents, as defined in 2003, exceeded the 4.4% threshold each year from 2004 to 2011 and in 2019 and 2020.

However, these numbers should be interpreted with caution because, as noted earlier, this measure tends to overestimate the number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted (IRCC, July 2017). In many years, it included more permanent residents who reported English as their mother tongue than those who indicated French. For example, as measured by the 2003 definition, in 2009, 33.7% of the French-speaking permanent residents admitted had English as their mother tongue, compared to 22.9% for French (not shown in the figure).

The annual decreases for the 2003 measure observed from 2007 to 2015 can be explained by a marked decline during this period in the number of permanent residents who have a mother tongue other than French and who report being able to communicate in both official languages.

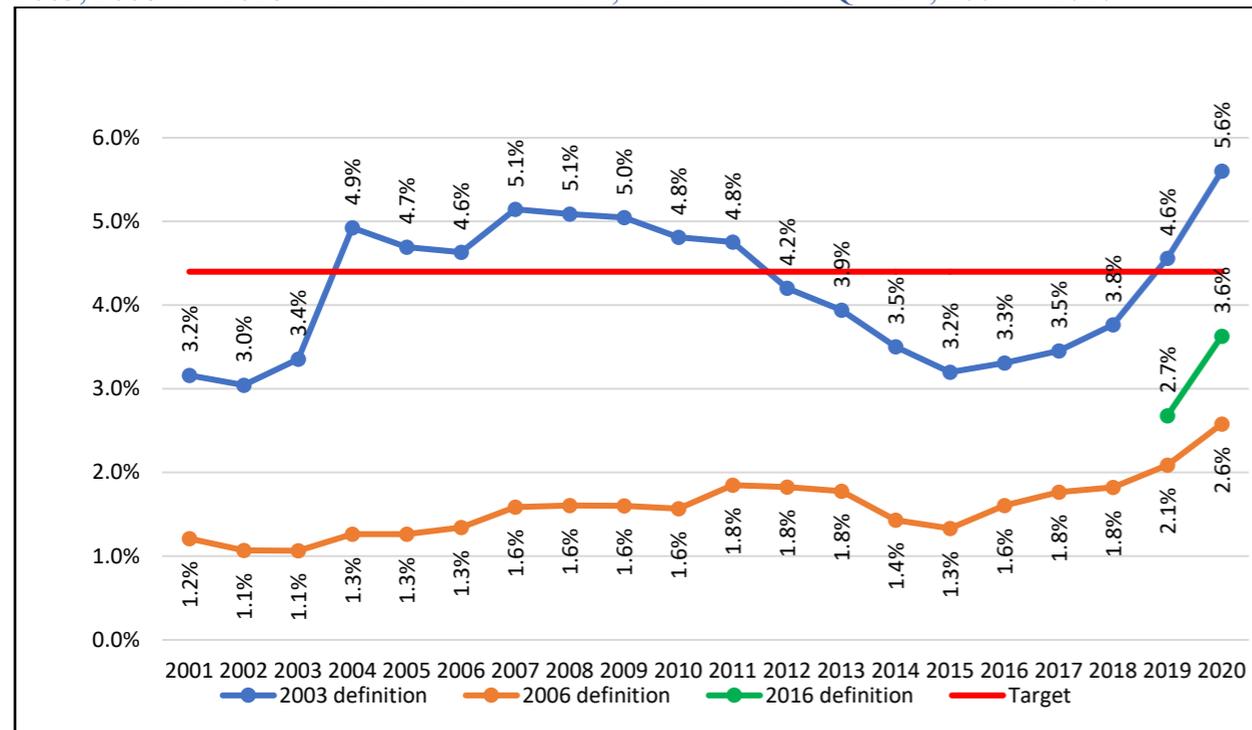
### 3.2.3 Admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2016 definition and measure, Canada outside Quebec

The data presented in Figure 4 and Figure 5 according to the 2016 definition are shown for two years only. For 2019, the proportion of French-speaking permanent residents is slightly underestimated in these calculations. This is because the total number of admissions outside Quebec only takes into account the year in which applicants became permanent residents and not the year in which they applied for permanent residence. Therefore, it is not possible to use the 2016 measure to identify French-speaking applicants who became permanent residents in 2019, but who applied for permanent residence before January 1, 2017, when the new questions were introduced to the immigration form.<sup>10</sup> As with the 2006 measure, there may be a proportional increase between 2019 and 2020, but a decrease in absolute numbers in the context of the pandemic.

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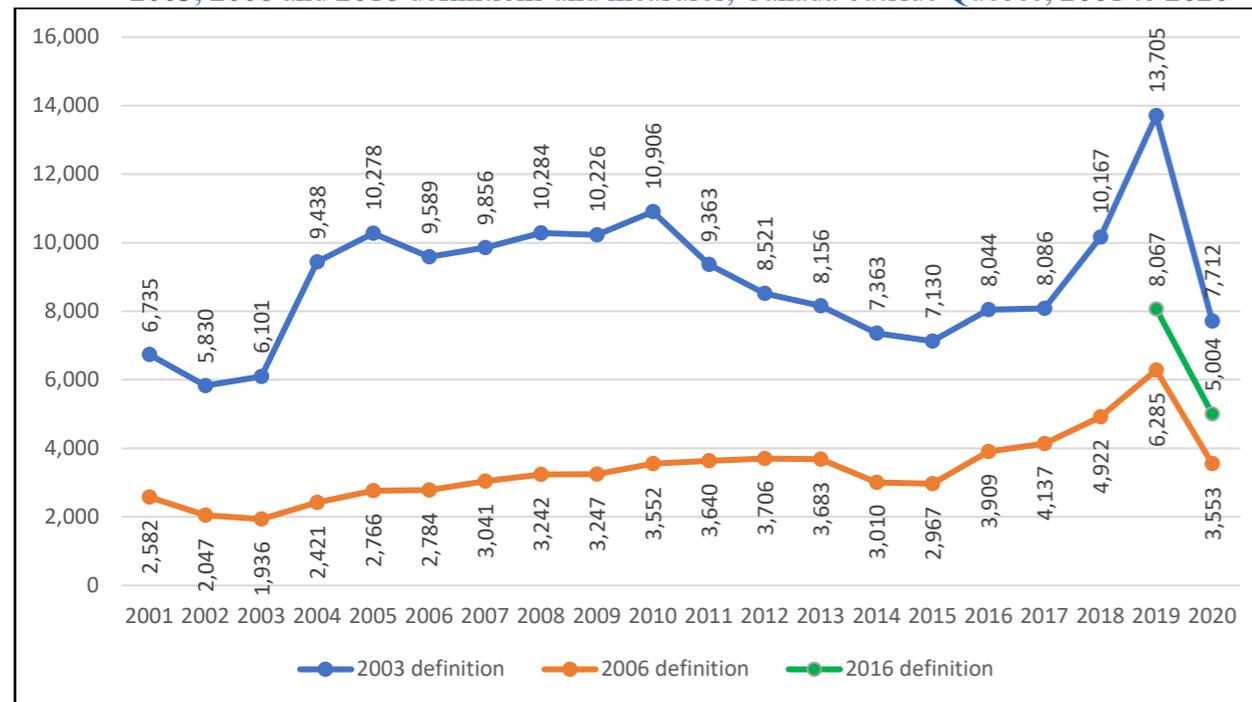
<sup>10</sup> Specifically, 402 individuals who applied for permanent residence before January 1, 2017 are considered French-speaking permanent residents based on the 2016 definition and measure. Thus, the 2.82% proportion presented in the IRCC publications (*Facts and Figures*, 2020) for the year 2019 is more reflective of reality as it includes these additional 402 permanent residence applicants.

Figure 4: Proportion of French-speaking permanent residents admitted annually according to the 2003, 2006 and 2016 definitions and measures, Canada outside Quebec, 2001 to 2020



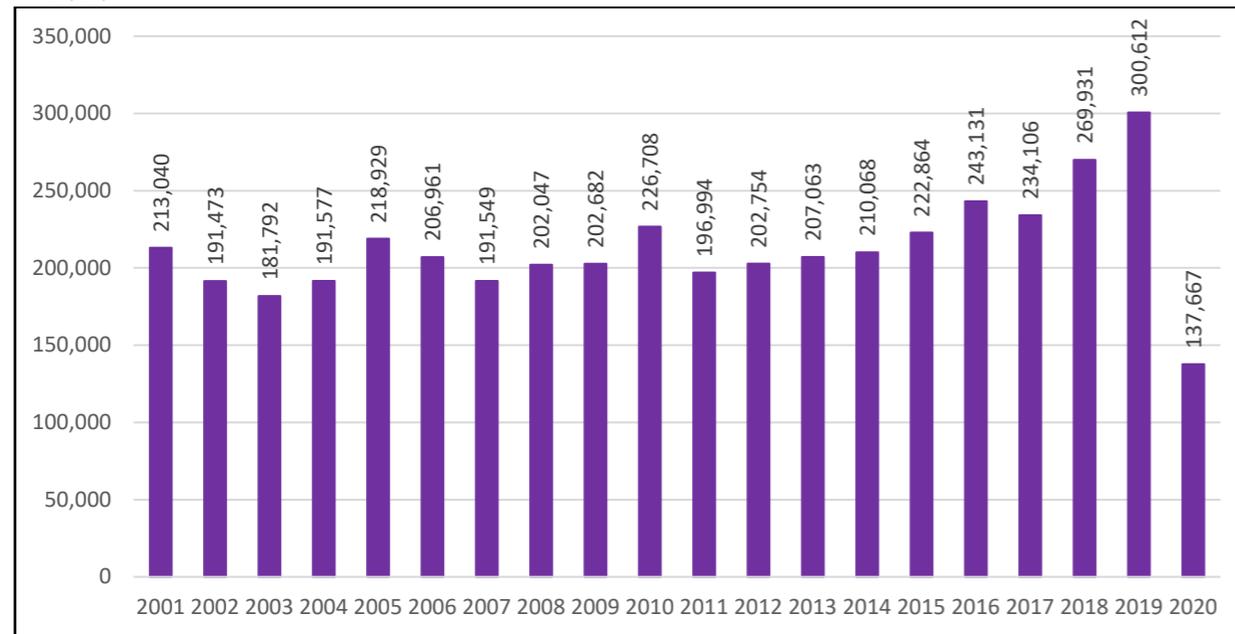
Source: IRCC, 2021

Figure 5: Number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted annually according to the 2003, 2006 and 2016 definitions and measures, Canada outside Quebec, 2001 to 2020



Source: IRCC, 2021

Figure 6: Total number of permanent residents admitted annually, Canada outside Quebec, 2001 to 2020



Source: IRCC, 2021

### 3.2.4 Admission rates for permanent residents by knowledge of French and mother tongue, Canada outside Quebec

#### Knowledge of French – Percentages

Figure 7 below shows that among all permanent residents admitted outside Quebec between 2001 and 2020, according to IRCC data (IRCC, 2021), the percentage reporting knowledge of both English and French fluctuated between 2.1% in 2001 and 4.1% in 2020. After peaking at 3.8% in 2004, this proportion decreased slightly in subsequent years and fell below 3% from 2012 to 2018, before rising to 3.3% in 2019. Furthermore, it can be noted that at the time of the 2016 census, 9.8% of the Canadian population living outside Quebec said they knew both French and English (Statistics Canada, March 2019).

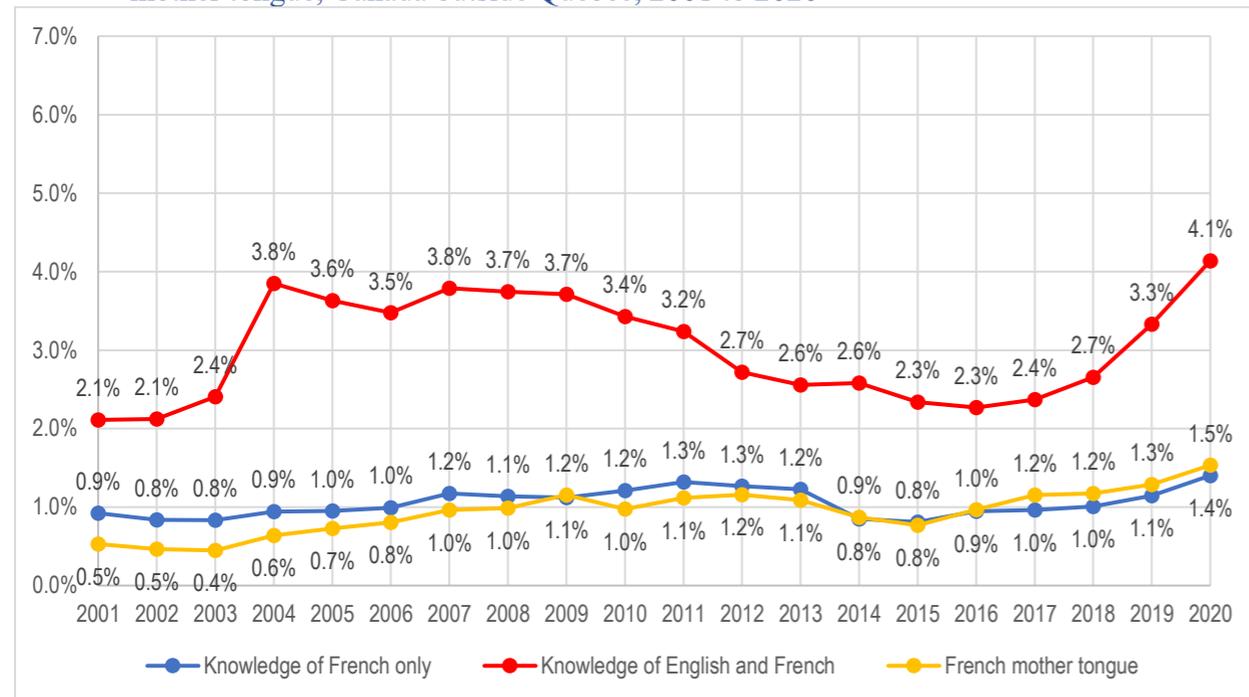
The percentage of all permanent residents admitted outside Quebec who reported knowing only French is lower than the proportion of permanent residents who reported knowing both official languages, according to IRCC data (IRCC, 2021). From 2001 to 2020, this proportion fluctuated between 0.8% and 1.4%. To illustrate, these percentages are higher than the 0.4% of the total Canadian population outside Quebec who reported knowing only French at the time of the 2016 Census (Statistics Canada, March 2019).

#### French mother tongue – Percentages

As shown in Figure 7 below, the percentage of all permanent residents with French as their mother tongue fluctuated between 0.4% and 1.5% between 2001 and 2020.

It should be noted that French as a mother tongue and knowledge of only French or both English and French are not mutually exclusive and may overlap. A proportion of admitted permanent residents may have French as their mother tongue and know only French or both English and French. However, the data indicate that a larger proportion of admitted permanent residents have knowledge of both English and French compared to the proportion with French as their mother tongue. Also, as previously stated, the mother tongue variable does not account for an increasingly diverse population and immigration, particularly in terms of language, with increasing numbers of immigrants who report having a mother tongue other than English or French.

Figure 7: Proportion of all permanent residents admitted annually by knowledge of French and by mother tongue, Canada outside Quebec, 2001 to 2020



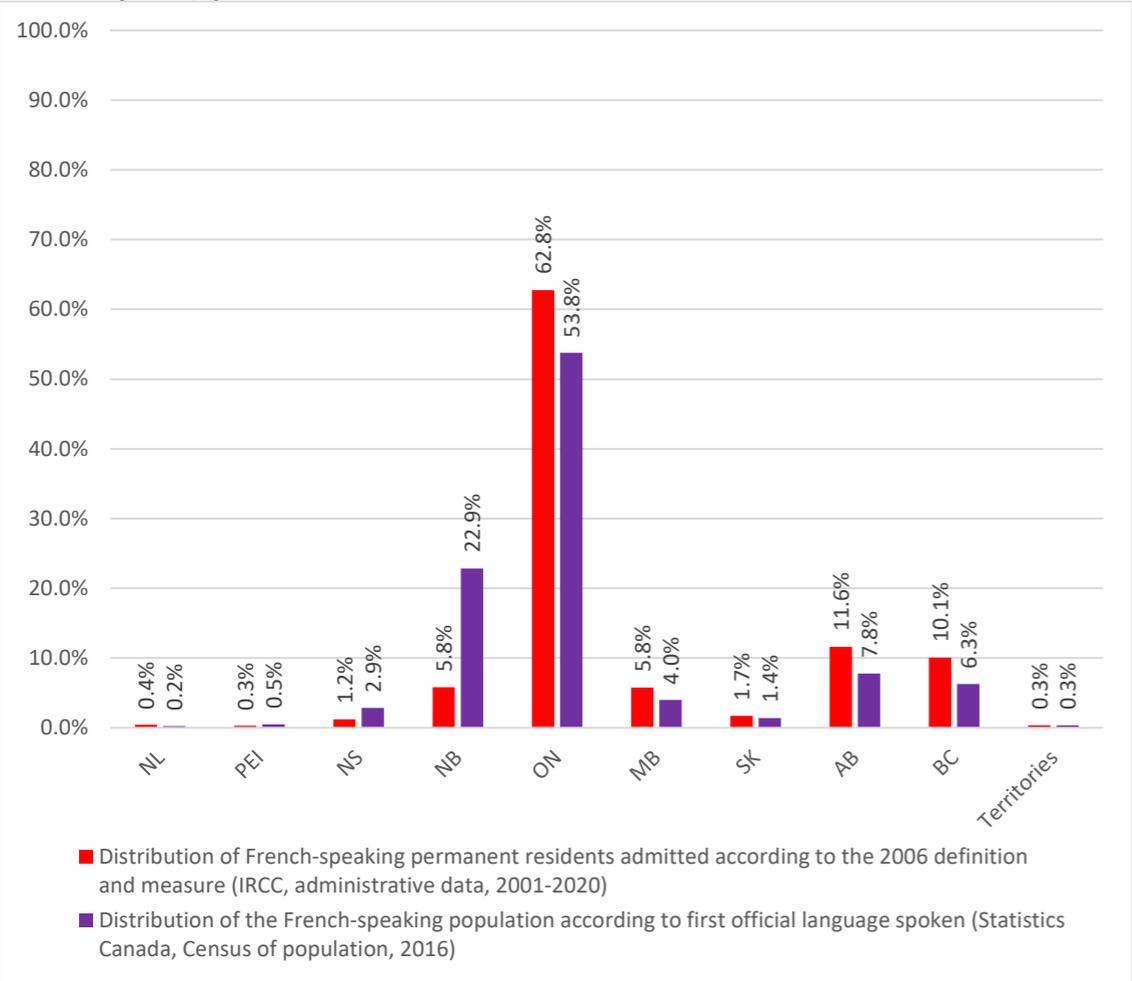
Source: IRCC, 2021

3.2.5 Calculation of the distribution of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2006 definition and of the French-speaking population, provinces and territories  
 Figure 8 below shows the distribution among provinces and territories of all French-speaking permanent residents admitted during the period from 2001 to 2020, according to the 2006 definition and measure. For reference, the figure also shows the distribution among provinces and territories of the total French-speaking population outside Quebec by first official language spoken in the 2016 Census.

The data show that Ontario received almost two-thirds (62.8%) of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec, followed by Alberta (11.6%) and British Columbia (10.1%). Prince Edward Island and the territories admitted only 0.3% of all French-speaking permanent residents who settled outside Quebec during this period.

Three Maritime provinces admitted a proportion of French-speaking permanent residents lower than the proportion of their population in the Canadian Francophonie by first official language spoken. Of these, New Brunswick is at the bottom of the list. While 22.9% of French speakers outside Quebec lived in New Brunswick at the time of the 2016 census, the province received only 5.8% of French-speaking permanent residents over 20 years.

Figure 8: Distribution of French-speaking permanent residents admitted according to the 2006 definition and measure and of the French-speaking population by first official language spoken, provinces and territories



Source: IRCC, 2021 and Statistics Canada, 2016

### 3.3 Calculation of shortfalls in reaching the 4.4% target for admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec

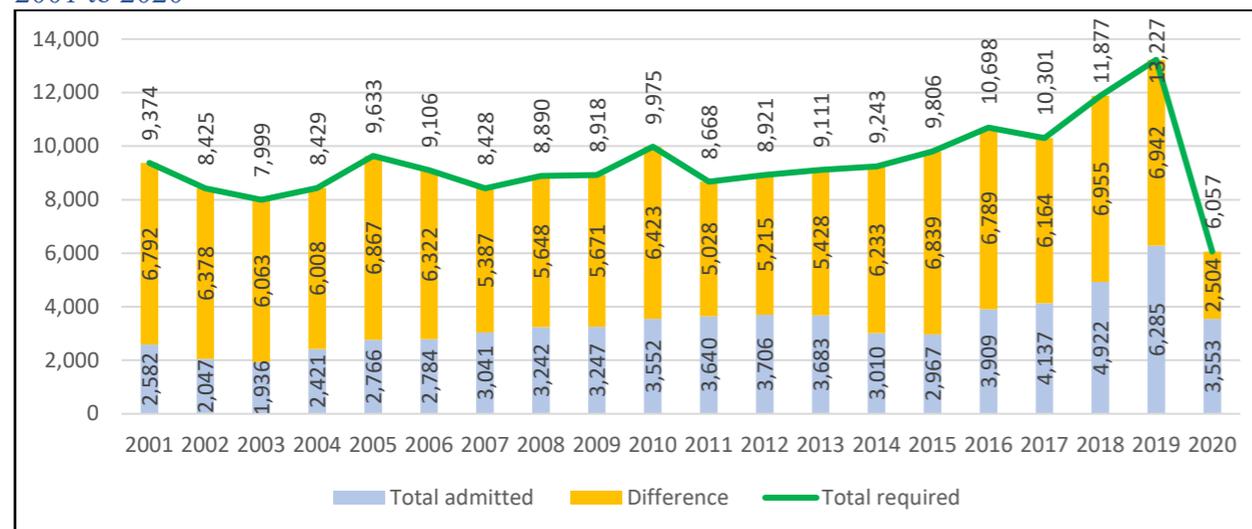
#### 3.3.1 Calculation of target shortfalls according to the 2006 definition and measurement, Canada outside Quebec

The data presented in the previous section show that the number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted each year is well below the number that would have been required to reach 4.4% of Francophone immigration outside Quebec.

According to Figure 9 below, on average, the admission of approximately 6,000 additional French-speaking permanent residents per year would have been required to reach 4.4% of all admissions outside of Quebec each year from 2001 to 2020. For the entire period from 2001 to 2020, the total of these annual gaps represents an admissions shortfall of approximately 119,656 French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec, per the 2006 definition. This is nearly double the 67,430 French-speaking permanent residents actually admitted outside Quebec during this period. In sum, to reach 4.4% admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec after 20 years, it would have been necessary to admit 119,656 more French-speaking permanent residents than the 67,430 admitted, for a total of 187,086.

Moreover, if we consider the shortfalls accumulated not since 2001, but since 2008, the original deadline set in 2003, 75,839 more French-speaking permanent residents would have needed to be admitted outside Quebec than were actually admitted (49,853). Thus, in total, to reach 4.4% admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec after 12 years, 125,692 French-speaking permanent residents would have needed to be admitted outside Quebec.

Figure 9: Gaps between the number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted annually according to the 2006 definition and the number required to reach 4.4%, Canada outside Quebec, 2001 to 2020



Source: IRCC, 2021

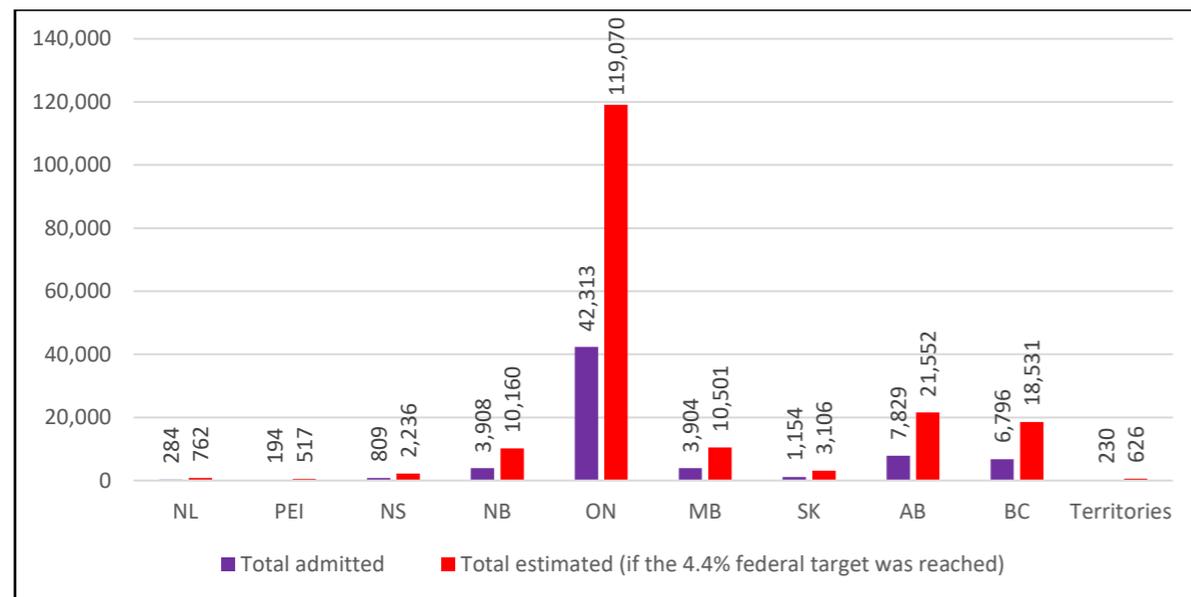
### 3.3.2 Calculation of target shortfalls per the 2006 definition and measure, provinces and territories, 2001 to 2020

These accumulated shortfalls in Francophone immigration between 2001 and 2020 are not evenly distributed among the provinces and territories, which have levels of French-speaking immigration that vary considerably, as shown in Figure 8 earlier.

In order to estimate the distribution of these 119,656 additional French-speaking permanent residents, under a scenario in which the target had been reached each year since 2001, we used the actual annual distributions of permanent residents among the provinces for each year being studied.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 10 below shows that in such a scenario, the province of Ontario would have had the largest share of additional permanent residents, while in absolute numbers, these numbers would have been modest in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and the territories.

Figure 10: Provincial and territorial distribution of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2006 definition and of totals required to reach 4.4%, provinces and territories, 2001 to 2020



Source: IRCC, 2021

<sup>11</sup> For example, in 2019, Manitoba welcomed 7.35% of French-speaking permanent residents who settled outside Quebec (per the 2006 definition). In 2019, the gap between actual admissions and the number of admissions required to meet the 4.4% target was 6,942. Therefore, we distributed 7.35% of this shortfall to Manitoba (510 people). Next, we added this figure to the actual number of permanent residents admitted in Manitoba for 2019 to estimate the number of permanent residents who might settle in the province if the national target of 4.4% were reached. We repeated this calculation for each year of the study to arrive at an estimate of the total shortfall over 20 years shown in Figure 10. There is a slight difference in the national figures in Canada outside of Quebec between the provincial/territorial and national levels due to rounding.

### 3.4 Estimated impact of reaching the target on the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in Canada outside Quebec

#### 3.4.1 Estimates based on the 2006 definition, Canada outside Quebec

Given the primary objective and the underlying premise of the target, which was to at least maintain the demographic weight of the French-speaking minority population at the 2001 census level of 4.4% (based on first official language spoken and mother tongue), the following estimates are intended to explore and examine the impact that meeting this target could have on this demographic weight. The methodology used to do this is described in section 3.1.3 above.

Estimates are given for two scenarios, one with the assumption that the target of 4.4% of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec would have been reached by 2001 (whereas in the early 2000s, deficits in French-speaking immigration to minority communities were reported by the CIC-FMC Steering Committee and 2001 was the reference year for setting the target) and the other with the assumption that it would have been reached by 2008 (considering the initial target deadline). The estimated impact on the demographic weight of the French-speaking minority population is calculated based on the first official language spoken.<sup>12</sup> The estimates are presented in Figure 11 below.

Based on census data and the criterion of first official language spoken, the demographic weight of the minority French-speaking population fell from 4.4% in 2001 to 3.8% in 2016. This represents a difference of 0.6 percentage points, a relative decline of about 13%.

In a scenario where the 4.4% target was reached by the original 2008 deadline, this demographic weight could have been around 4.0% in 2016—a difference of 0.4 percentage points, or a relative decline of about 8%.

In a scenario where the target was reached as early as 2001, this demographic weight could have been about 4.2% in 2016—a decrease of 0.2 percentage points, or a relative decline of about 5%.

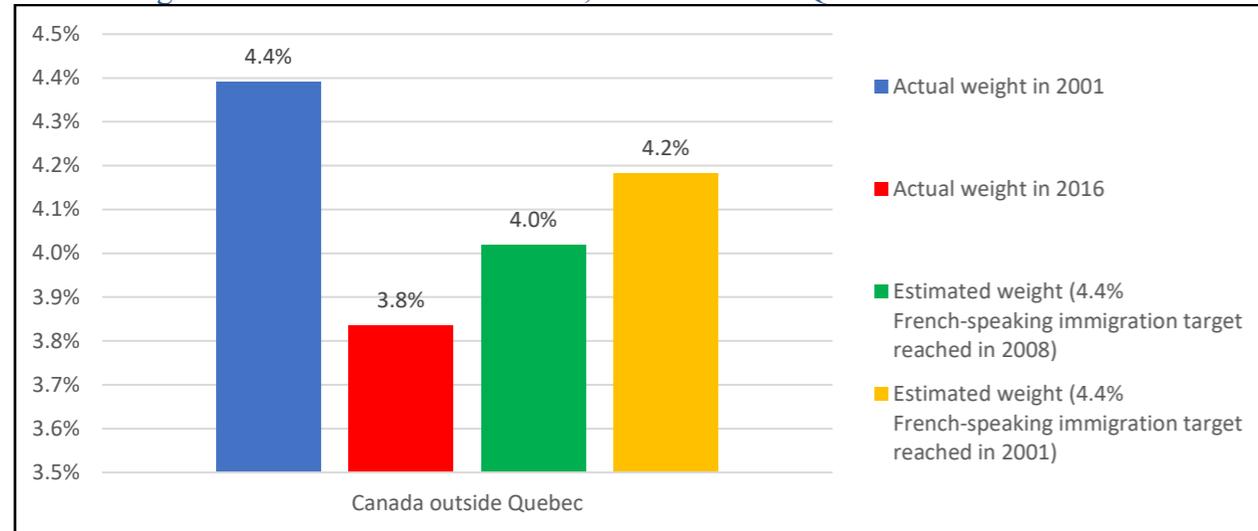
According to these assumptions, the demographic decline of the French-speaking population outside Quebec, based on first official language spoken, could have been one-third to two-thirds less significant than it actually was, considering percentage points (0.2 or 0.4 vs. 0.6 percentage points) and relative declines (5% or 8% vs. 13%).

These estimates indicate that reaching the target earlier, in 2001 rather than 2008, could have had an impact on reducing the extent of the decline in this demographic weight.

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<sup>12</sup> As noted earlier, the mother tongue variable does not account for the increasing diversification of the Canadian and immigrant population, particularly in terms of language, as many individuals have a mother tongue other than English or French.

Figure 11: Demographic weight of the French-speaking population in the 2001 and 2016 censuses by first official language spoken and estimates of the impact on demographic weight had this target been reached in 2001 or 2008, Canada outside Quebec



Source: IRCC, 2021 / Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2016 censuses

### 3.4.2 Estimated number of French-speaking permanent residents needed to maintain the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec at 4.4%, 2001 to 2016

As we have illustrated, reaching an admission rate of 4.4% for French-speaking permanent residents in 2001, according to the 2006 definition, would have required the admission of an additional 119,656 more French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec. According to our estimates, this would not have made it possible to maintain the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in a minority setting at the same level between the 2001 and 2016 censuses (according to FOLS).

Having made this observation, the question now is what maintaining this demographic weight would have required. According to our calculations, it would have required approximately 150,000 more Francophones outside Quebec at the time of the 2016 census, or 1,174,831 rather than 1,024,200 French-speaking people according to the FOLS criterion out of a total of 26,700,695 people in Canada outside Quebec (Statistics Canada, August 2017).

If admissions of French-speaking permanent residents were the only factor considered in the equation, these 150,000 additional Francophones would translate to an annual admission rate of between 6% and 7%, or an average annual rate of approximately 6.2% from 2001 to the first third of 2016.

In this case, in line with the initial objective and its premise, between 2001 and 2016, an annual admission rate of French-speaking permanent residents of between 6% and 7% would have been

necessary to at least be able to contribute to maintaining the demographic weight of the minority French-speaking population at 4.4%.

However, as mentioned earlier, this does not take into account the linguistic and geographic retention of admitted French-speaking permanent residents nor their integration into Francophone minority communities, not to mention other factors besides immigration that influence this demographic weight, which has continued falling to 3.8% as measured by first official language spoken in the 2016 census.

### 3.4.3 Observations regarding the statistical analysis

#### Approach to setting the target and its objective

Following the target's premise, these statistical analyses and estimates first raise the question of whether there is a direct correlation between the admission rates of French-speaking permanent residents and the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec or vice versa.

According to our estimates, even if admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents had been equivalent to the demographic weight of the French-speaking minority population since the early 2000s, it would not have been sufficient to maintain the demographic weight at 4.4%, let alone increase it. However, it could have helped to reduce the decline.

To maintain the demographic weight of the minority French-speaking population based solely on immigration or the admission of French-speaking permanent residents, a considerably more ambitious target would have been required. According to our estimates, this would amount to annual admission rates in the order of 6% to 7%.

As noted in the focus groups, the broader immigration continuum should be factored into the equation, including French language retention among admitted French-speaking permanent residents as well as their geographic retention and integration in Francophone minority communities.

Moreover, the question emerged in the discussion groups and in the literature review of other factors, other than immigration, that influence the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population, including a particularly sharp drop in fertility rates, increased aging of the population, trends in intra- and inter-generational language transfers, as well as inter-provincial migratory movements, which affect the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in different regions of the country in different ways (Statistics Canada, 2017; Canadian Heritage, 2017). For its part, based on the mobility of Francophones and the rates of language transfer, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages estimated that a target of 7% would be required to maintain the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population (House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, November 2010).

According to focus group participants, a new target should be based on comprehensive demographic and demolinguistic analyses and be part of a larger picture.

#### **Marginal growth in the number of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents**

Despite an increase in the absolute number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec over 20 years, there has been little growth in the percentage of these admissions, due, in particular, to a considerably greater increase in admissions of non-French-speaking permanent residents. This issue came up in the focus groups, as did the importance of adapting policies, strategies and measures to immigration levels was raised in order to have in place, on the ground, the tools and resources needed for the reception and integration of immigrants.

#### **Potential effects of accumulating target shortfalls**

The analysis illustrates that accumulated shortfalls in admissions of French-speaking permanent residents to minority communities over time may have contributed, at least in part, to the decline in the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in minority communities.

In the analysis, changing the reference year in which the 4.4% immigration level was reached from 2001 to 2008 resulted in a 0.2 percentage point difference between the two scenarios. This would suggest that a few years of difference in reaching the target could have contributed, at least in part, to changing the impact on the demographic weight of the minority Francophone population. Each year in which the target was not met may have accentuated the shortfalls accumulated in the last two decades.

## **4. COMPOSITION OF FRENCH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION TO MINORITY COMMUNITIES – SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING PERMANENT RESIDENTS ADMITTED FROM 2001 TO 2020**

As part of our analysis of the data provided by IRCC, we wanted to look at a few characteristics of French-speaking permanent residents admitted from 2001 to 2020 outside Quebec and how some of these characteristics have changed over two decades according to IRCC's 2006 definition and measure. These characteristics pertain to immigration categories and some programs that we have selected, regions and countries of origin, and certain linguistic characteristics.

### **4.1 Immigration categories and certain programs**

While this study does not specifically focus on immigration programs, it is worth briefly describing some of their key aspects to give an idea of the institutional context surrounding the target for

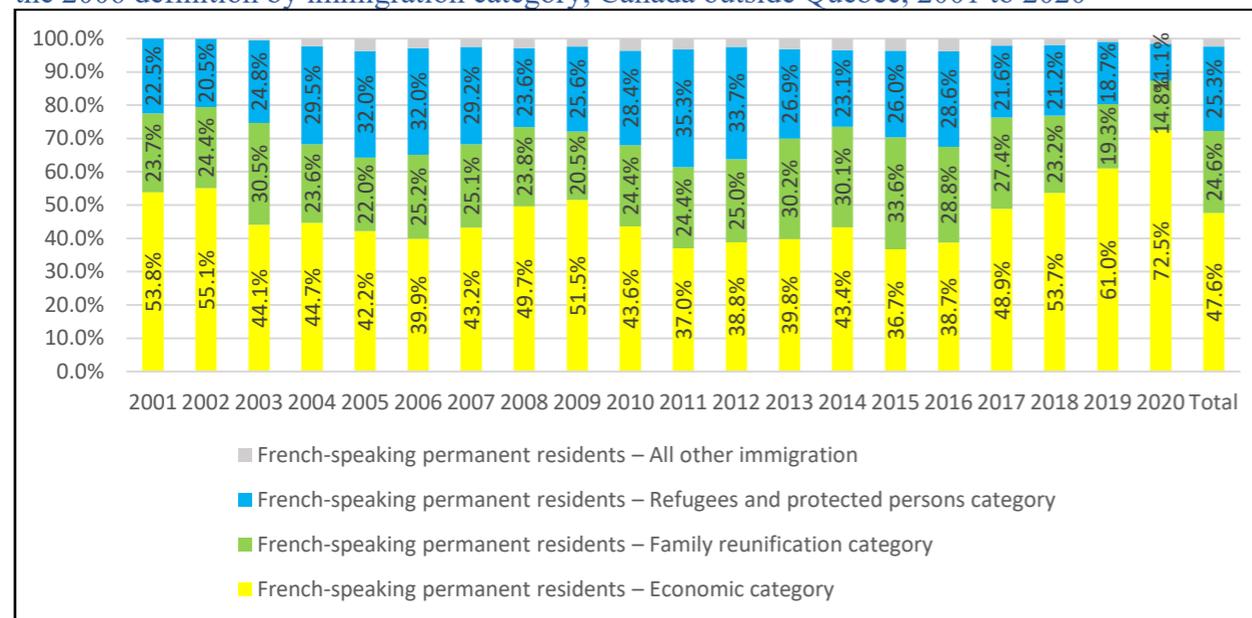
French-speaking immigration to minority communities, in addition to the data provided in this section.

#### 4.1.1 Immigration categories

IRCC’s permanent resident program classifies immigrants into three main categories: economic, family reunification, and refugees and protected persons.

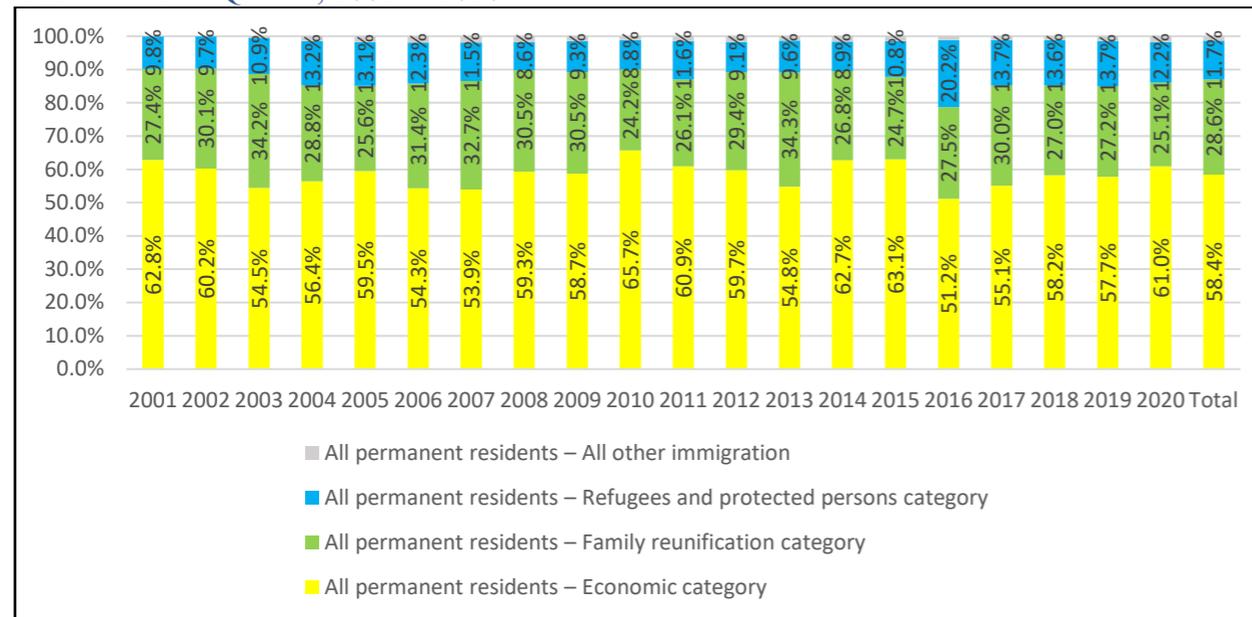
Figures 12A and 12B below show the category breakdown for French-speaking permanent residents (Figure 12A) and for all permanent residents (Figure 12B) admitted from 2001 to 2020. These figures are followed by more detailed information about each category and more specific data on programs within the economic category.

Figure 12A: Proportion of French-speaking permanent residents admitted annually according to the 2006 definition by immigration category, Canada outside Quebec, 2001 to 2020



Source: IRCC, 2021

Figure 12B: Proportion of all permanent residents admitted annually by immigration category, Canada outside Quebec, 2001 to 2020



Source: IRCC, 2021

#### 4.1.2 Economic category

The economic category is the largest immigration category in terms of annual admissions. Permanent residents in this category are selected based on their ability to become economically established in Canada.

As illustrated in Figures 12A and 12B above, in total over a 20-year period outside Quebec, 47.6% of French-speaking permanent residents were admitted in the economic category compared to 58.4% of all permanent residents who were admitted. This difference is less acute when we look at admissions in recent years (2016–2020): the gap in the proportion of recent admissions between French-speaking permanent residents and all admitted permanent residents has narrowed, averaging 55.4% and 56.4%, respectively for this period (data not shown in the figures).

The recent increase in the number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec is primarily due to economic immigration. The greater proportion of French-speaking permanent residents in the economic category corresponds to the absolute number of these permanent residents, which rose from 1,513 in 2016 to 3,835 in 2019 before dropping to 2,576 in 2020 (data not shown in the figures).

#### Certain programs under the economic category

The economic category includes the following programs outside Quebec: the Federal Skilled Worker Program (includes admissions in the Federal Skilled Worker Program, Federal Skilled Trades Program and Canadian Experience Class); the Provincial Nominee Program; the federal

Business Immigration Program (includes admissions in the Self-Employed Persons Program, Start-up Visa Program and Immigrant Investor Venture Capital Program); the federal Caregiver Program (includes admissions in all categories of caregiver immigration); and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (IRCC, Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration, 2020a). Data on admissions of French-speaking permanent residents for the first three programs according to the 2006 definition and measure are presented below.

We first observe that the recent increases in admissions of French-speaking permanent residents in the economic category are due more to increased admissions in the Federal Skilled Worker Program and the Provincial Nominee Program than in the Business Immigration Program, as Figure 13 below illustrates.

#### [Federal Skilled Worker Program](#)

As Figure 13 illustrates, the proportion of admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec in the Federal Skilled Worker Program rose steadily from 2016 to 2019, from 24.7% to 40.3%, representing an increase from 964 to 2,531 admitted permanent residents (data not shown in the figures).

As indicated above, permanent residence admissions under the Federal Skilled Worker Program include admissions in the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Federal Skilled Trades Program and the Canadian Experience Class. These programs are managed through the Express Entry system since 2016.

Candidates for permanent residence who submit an expression of interest and are deemed eligible are ranked in the Express Entry pool using a system where points are awarded based on language skills, education, work experience and other factors. Candidates in the pool with the highest scores are invited by IRCC to apply for permanent residence.

In 2017, the federal government started to award additional points in the Express Entry process for strong French skills and introduced measures to facilitate the granting of permanent residence for French-speaking temporary foreign workers and international students. The increase in the award of additional points for French-speaking and bilingual applicants had been announced in October 2020 (IRCC, 2020c).

#### [Provincial Nominee Program](#)

Immigration is an area of jurisdiction shared between the federal government and the provincial and territorial governments. Since the 1990s, the provinces and territories have played an increasingly active role in immigration, adopting official immigration strategies and selection and immigration policies tailored to their needs (Paquet, 2016).

One of the primary vehicles that provinces and territories have for recruiting economic category immigrants is the Provincial Nominee Program, which exists in part to encourage the development of official language minority communities. As part of this program implemented by IRCC, each province can issue a set number of nomination certificates each year according to specific criteria, in order to target certain groups or their local needs.

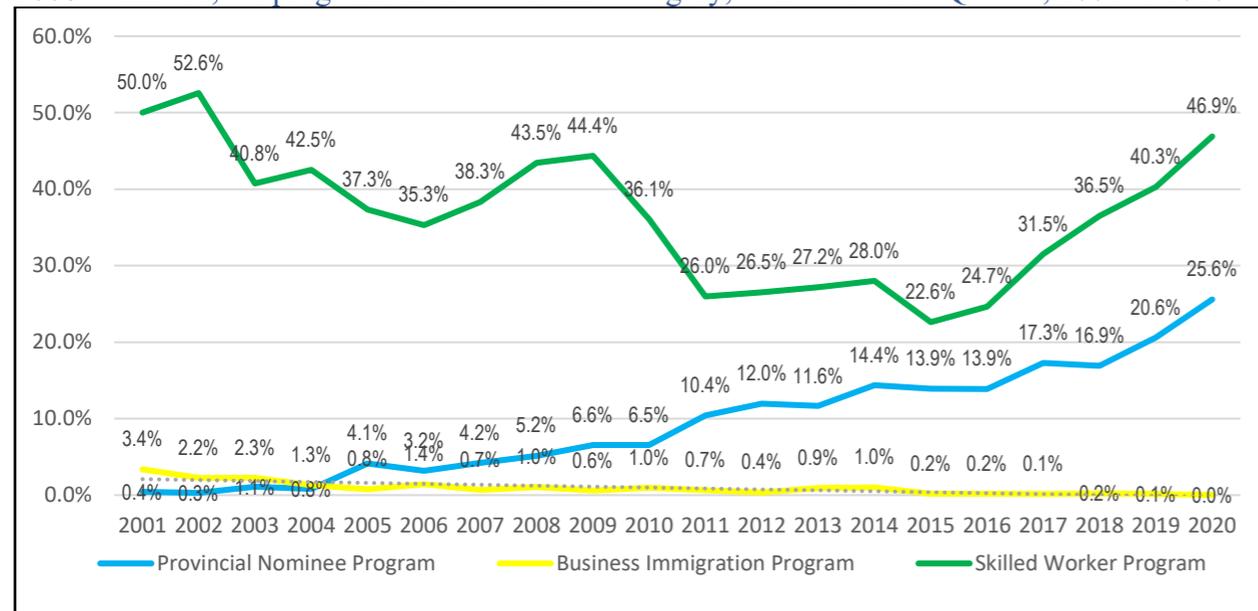
The data about the Provincial Nominee Program are particularly interesting given that in the early 2000s, almost all French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec were selected by the federal government.

As Figure 13 below illustrates, among French-speaking permanent residents, the proportion admitted under this program in 2001 was 0.4%. In 2019, the proportion was 20.6%, and in 2020, it was 25.6%. This reflects the increasingly large role that provinces and territories play in selecting French-speaking permanent residents, as they have made a full quarter of such selections in the past year.

According to some of the participants in the focus groups, these changes attest to the importance of greater collaboration with the provinces. However, the fact remains that the majority of Canada's immigration programs are federal programs, which account for 79.4% of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec in 2019 and 74.4% in 2020 (data not shown in the figures).

As well, the number of selection certificates issued to French-speaking permanent residents varies considerably from province to province. For example, in 2019, 14% of all permanent residents admitted to New Brunswick were French-speaking, compared to 3.7% in Ontario, 2.4% in the territories, 2% in Manitoba and 1.8% in Newfoundland and Labrador. Less than 1% of the permanent residents admitted to the other provinces were French-speaking (data not shown in the figures below).

Figure 13: Proportion of French-speaking permanent residents admitted annually according to the 2006 definition, for programs in the economic category, Canada outside Quebec, 2001 to 2020



Source: IRCC, 2021

#### 4.1.3 Family reunification category

Candidates for permanent residence in the family reunification category are sponsored by a Canadian citizen or permanent resident living in Canada.

As Figures 12A and 12B above show, a smaller proportion of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec were in the family reunification category, both for the entire period from 2001 to 2020 (24.6%) and in recent years, meaning 2016 to 2020 (22.5%). In contrast, the proportion of all permanent residents in this category was 28.6% and 27.5%, respectively (data not shown in the figures).

#### 4.1.4 Refugees and protected persons category

As Figures 12A and 12B above show, French-speaking permanent residents are overrepresented in the refugees and protected persons category compared to all permanent residents admitted outside Quebec, with 25.3% for the entire period from 2001 to 2020 compared to 11.7% for the general permanent resident population. This gap has narrowed somewhat for admissions from 2016 to 2020: 20.3% for French-speaking permanent residents, compared to 14.8% for all permanent residents admitted outside Quebec (data not shown in the figures).

In absolute numbers, the number of refugees among the admissions of French-speaking permanent residents stayed relatively stable from 2016 to 2019 before dipping in 2020. The decreased proportion of refugees is due to a larger increase in economic category admissions.

## 4.2 Top regions and countries of origin for French-speaking permanent residents admitted to Canada outside Quebec, 2001–2020

### 4.2.1 Overview of Figure 14: Summary table of top regions and countries of origin

Figure 14 below consists of three columns, in which the top 10 countries of origin according to citizenship for admitted French-speaking permanent residents are expressed as percentages. The first column lists the countries according to the 2006 definition and measure for French-speaking immigrants from 2001 to 2020. The second column lists the countries according to the same definition and measure, but for 2016 to 2020. The third column lists the countries according to the 2016 definition and measure, for 2019 alone. The table gives a sense of how the top countries of origin have changed over time using the same measure and definition (from 2006), and it also illustrates how the list differs depending on whether the definition and measure from 2006 or from 2016 are used. It should be noted that this list of countries of origin is not exhaustive.

### 4.2.2 Largest country of origin: France

The table shows that France has been the top country of origin for French-speaking permanent residents admitted each year of the study period, regardless of which definition is used, and that this trend is holding steady. Under the 2006 definition, France was the country of origin for 22.9% of French-speaking permanent residents from 2001 to 2020 and 32.9 % of recent immigrants (from 2016 to 2020). In absolute numbers, this means that on average, approximately 1,500 people from France were admitted annually in the last five years (not shown in the table).

Participants in the focus group were apparently unsurprised by these numbers, given that Destination Canada and others have been organizing promotional activities focusing on France since the early 2000s, while similar initiatives in other regions such as Africa are more recent or to be developed.

### 4.2.3 Largest region of origin: Sub-Saharan Africa

Under the 2006 definition, sub-Saharan Africa is proportionally the top region of origin for French-speaking permanent residents admitted to Canada outside Quebec between 2001 and 2020, with 41%. The top countries of origin for permanent residents from sub-Saharan Africa are the Democratic Republic of the Congo (12.5%), Cameroon (5.6%), Burundi (4.3%) and Côte d'Ivoire (2.7%). Furthermore, at least 1% of French-speaking permanent residents admitted in the past 20 years have had Mauritius, Rwanda, Djibouti, Senegal or Guinea as their countries of origin.

These patterns in immigration from sub-Saharan Africa echo the trends noted by Marcoux and Richard (2018), who found that the number of French speakers in Africa is growing steadily, making the African Francophonie a promising pool for recruiting French-speaking immigration candidates to Canada outside Quebec.

#### 4.2.4 North Africa, second region of origin and Lebanon, second country of origin

From 2001 to 2020, 15.3% of admitted French-speaking permanent residents came from Lebanon and countries in North Africa, with the main countries of origin being Morocco (5.2%), Algeria (3.8%) and Lebanon (2.3%).

However, it is possible that this proportion is underestimated, because the measure for the 2006 definition excludes many bilingual individuals who have a mother tongue other than French (usually Arabic) but also know French, such as people from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Lebanon, as the numbers in the Methodology section illustrate.

When the 2016 definition is used to calculate the proportions, 32.8% of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside of Quebec in 2019 come from these four countries, as the third column of Figure 14 shows.

Overall, Africa was the place of origin for more than half of the French-speaking permanent residents that have been admitted since 2001.

#### 4.2.5 Other regions of origin – the Americas, Asia and Oceania

Figure 14 also shows that the top country of origin in the Americas for French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec is Haiti, and that only 2.3% of French-speaking permanent residents in the past 20 years have come from Asia or Oceania, despite Asia being the region of origin for more than half of all permanent residents admitted outside Quebec (data not shown in the figure).

Figure 14: Summary table of top regions and countries of origin for admitted French-speaking permanent residents according to the 2006 definition (data for 2001 to 2020 and 2016 to 2020) and the 2016 definition (data for 2019), Canada outside Quebec

<b>Top 10 countries of origin for French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec according to the 2006 definition (2001 to 2020)</b>	<b>Top 10 countries of origin for French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec according to the 2006 definition (2016 to 2020)</b>	<b>Top 10 countries of origin for French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec according to the 2016 definition (2019)</b>
1. France (22.9%)	1. France (32.9%)	1. France (22.1%)
2. Congo (DRC) (12.5%)	2. Congo (DRC) (10.5%)	2. Morocco (13.2%)
3. Haiti (8.6%)	3. Cameroon (6.2%)	3. Algeria (11.4%)
4. Cameroon (5.6%)	4. Morocco (5.7%)	4. Burundi (6.6%)
5. Morocco (5.2%)	5. Algeria (5.4%)	5. Cameroon (6.4%)
6. Burundi (4.3%)	6. Burundi (4.7%)	6. Congo (DRC) (5.8%)
7. Algeria (3.8%)	7. Haiti (4.6%)	7. Tunisia (5.8%)
8. Côte d'Ivoire (2.7%)	8. Côte d'Ivoire (2.9%)	8. Haiti (3%)

9. Lebanon (2.3%)	9. Belgium (2.7%)	9. Lebanon (2.4%)
10. Mauritius (2.1%)	10. Djibouti (2.1%)	10. Mauritius (2.3%)

Source: IRCC, 2021

### 4.3 Linguistic characteristics of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec according to different definitions and measures

As described below, French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec from 2001 to 2020 have different linguistic characteristics depending on the definitions and measures used.

#### 4.3.1 Definition and measure: 2006

##### 4.3.1.1 French and other mother tongues

French is the mother tongue of 59.7% of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec between 2001 and 2020 according to the 2006 definition. The rest have more than 165 languages other than French as their mother tongues, nine of which are mother tongues for at least 1% of the permanent residents that have been admitted since 2001. The five most common are Arabic (10.9%), Creole (6.6%), Kirundi (2.6%), Lingala (2%) and Swahili (1.7%).

##### 4.3.1.2 Ability to communicate in English or French

With respect to their ability to communicate in Canada's official languages, 62.9% of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec between 2001 and 2020 according to the 2006 definition reported being able to communicate in French only. This definition includes both those whose mother tongue is French and those whose mother tongue is a language other than English or French but who have knowledge of French (only French).

Furthermore, 28.7% reported being able to communicate in both English and French. These bilingual permanent residents only include those whose mother tongue is French. Lastly, 7.8% reported being able to communicate in English only or neither of Canada's official languages, despite French being their mother tongue.

These data show that the French-speaking permanent resident population as determined using the 2006 definition can both include people who do not actually know French and exclude bilingual individuals who speak French as their first official language of use.

#### 4.3.2 Definition and measure: 2016

The measure for the 2016 definition also paints an interesting picture of the linguistic characteristics of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec, as the 2016 definition is meant to be more inclusive of bilingual individuals who speak French but have a mother tongue other than English or French.

As mentioned earlier, this definition and measure no longer take mother tongue into account, but instead focus on knowledge of official languages and the official language in which the person is most at ease. It also excludes people who do not speak French and allows for a more accurate count of bilingual Francophones.

According to this definition and measure, in 2019, 38.6% of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec spoke French only, and 61.4% spoke both English and French.

Although the 2016 definition and measure no longer take mother tongue into account, it is interesting to see that according to this measure, French was the mother tongue of 39.5% of the French-speaking permanent residents admitted. For the rest, the five most common mother tongues were Arabic (30.1%), Kirundi (5.5%), Creole (4.1%), Bamileke (1.6%) and Swahili (1.9%). Once again, these data show how the 2016 definition and measure can be used to provide a more accurate count of Arabic speakers who use French as their primary official language.

## 5. CONSIDERATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE

### 5.1 Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036

The *Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036*, published by Statistics Canada (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017), are particularly useful for illustrating the magnitude of the challenges facing Francophone minority communities in light of past demographic and demolinguistic trends and for considering these communities' possible futures, particularly in regard to the importance of immigration. These projections are based on the evolution of the factors affecting the composition of language groups in recent decades: fertility, aging, intergenerational and intragenerational language transfers, and international and interprovincial migration. The estimates in the report project—but do not predict—various future scenarios depending on whether these factors and past trends persist or change course in the years and decades ahead.

#### 5.1.1 Past and present demographic and demolinguistic trends

As we have previously noted, immigration has not been—and still is not—favourable for the maintenance of the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population.

Statistics Canada puts it this way:

Despite the impact of immigration, people who declared French as their mother tongue [particularly in Canada outside Quebec] maintained their population levels into the 1950s because of high fertility rates. Since the 1951 Census, this population's share has steadily decreased in Canada (Statistics Canada, February 2018: 3).

Furthermore, outside Quebec, the minority French-mother-tongue population differs from the majority English-mother-tongue population in terms of intergenerational linguistic mobility, namely the incomplete transmission of parents' mother tongue to their children. This incomplete transmission of French generally contributes to increased aging of the population by shrinking "the pool of potential new French-speaking parents who could transmit their French to their children" (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 116). This is not the case for the majority English-mother-tongue population, in which the parents' mother tongue of English is highly likely to be transmitted to the children.

In addition, the mother tongue transmitted to children is frequently the language spoken most often at home by the parents<sup>13</sup> (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 23, 116). When it comes to intragenerational linguistic mobility and language transfers, the minority French-mother-tongue population tends to most often use another language at home, and that language is usually English rather than their French mother tongue. This is less true in provinces and territories outside New Brunswick and some areas of Ontario bordering Quebec (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 116). Nevertheless, outside Quebec, the English-mother-tongue population tends to use English most often at home, and most people with a mother tongue other than English or French who make a language transfer do so to English (Statistics Canada, January 2017: 93).

Lastly, the minority French-speaking population includes more interprovincial migrants than international migrants, whereas the English-speaking population has more international migrants than interprovincial migrants (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 39). For information, other publications specifically address the interprovincial migration of the French speaking immigrant population (CIC, July 2012; IRCC July 2017; Statistics Canada, June 2014).

#### 5.1.2 Demographic and demolinguistic projections for the future

Statistics Canada's study projects that the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population could steadily decline to 3.1% by 2036 in most of its scenarios (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 78).

The authors of the report point out that some of the factors point to major trends that are relatively stable and evolve slowly over time, such as intergenerational transmission of language, or the transmission of the mother tongue from parents to children (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 20). In Canada outside Quebec, there are trends of incomplete intergenerational transmission of French as a mother tongue from parents to children. However, even in a hypothetical scenario where the transmission of French is almost complete, it is projected that the weight of the French FOLS population would be 3.6% in 2036, compared with 3.1% in most of the other scenarios (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 78).

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<sup>13</sup> Lachapelle, 1991; Marmen and Corbeil, 2004; Lachapelle and Lepage, 2010.

On the other hand, the report points out the following:

[Translation]

Immigration is one of the demographic factors that has a major influence on the demographic evolution of language groups in Canada . . . that the government exerts some influence over, both in terms of the number of immigrants admitted each year and the composition of the immigrant inflow, including factors like country of birth and knowledge of official languages (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 27).

According to the study, in order to maintain the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population at the 3.8% it was in the 2016 census, an estimated 275,000 French-speaking immigrants (approximately 13,750 per year) would need to be admitted outside Quebec from 2017 to 2036. In total, to maintain this weight at 3.8%, 5.1% of the immigrants who settle outside Quebec between 2017 and 2036 would need to have French as their first official language spoken. The proportion for each province and territory would vary widely, from more than 35% in New Brunswick to less than 3% in the Western provinces. Newfoundland and Labrador and the territories were excluded from these calculations, as the percentages of their populations who have French as their FOLS are not expected to decline between 2017 and 2036 (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 78–79).

It should be emphasized that according to Statistics Canada’s projections, 5.1% of French-speaking immigration outside Quebec would be needed solely to keep the Francophone minority population at the demographic weight of 3.8% that it had at the time of the 2016 census. The 4.4% immigration target for French-speaking immigration outside Quebec was set based on the demographic weight of the Francophone population in the 2001 census, which was 4.4%.

Given the current situation and these projections for the future, if a new Francophone immigration target was adopted with a view to maintaining—or helping maintain—the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population at 3.8% or more, or to increase—or try to increase—this weight (to 4.4% for example), it is very likely that an even more ambitious target than 4.4% French-speaking permanent resident admissions would be required. Targets, or at least objectives and follow-up on French language retention among French-speaking immigrants and their integration into Francophone minority communities, may also be useful to have. It appears that new possibilities could therefore emerge from the 2021 census now including questions about language of instruction with respect to indicators of integration of French-speaking immigrant families within Francophone minority communities.

## 5.2 Recruitment approaches

Even if a more ambitious target for admissions of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec is deemed necessary in order to reach or get close to the level needed to maintain or increase the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population, whether the current target of 4.4% will be achieved in the next three years remains uncertain.

The most recent evaluation of the Immigration to Official Language Minority Communities Initiative (IRCC, July 2017) revealed the limitations of Canada's current approach to recruiting French-speaking immigrants, given that the outcomes have been well below target since 2003. This evaluation estimated that achieving the 4.4% target would be difficult if current initiatives were not significantly scaled up.

Evidence indicates that the current approach, which has relied mainly on promotional activities as well as options for temporary residence, may not be sufficient to achieve the established targets, and more efforts may be needed if current targets are to be realized. (IRCC, July 2017: v)

The gaps in reaching the 4.4% objective since the early 2000s prompt us to think about ways that the current approach can be expanded, improved or reimaged. The primary focus of this report is statistical analysis; however, there is value in considering such possibilities for the current approach based on a review of the literature, the trends identified in the statistical analysis and input from the focus groups. This list of considerations is not exhaustive and simply provides potential avenues to explore or pursue further.

### 5.2.1 Identifying promising pools for recruitment

The study produced by Marcoux and Richard (Fall 2018) on behalf of IRCC is particularly valuable for identifying promising pools for recruiting French-speaking immigrants. The trends observed in this study are consistent with our report's findings on French-speaking immigrants' top regions of origin.

Marcoux and Richard (Fall 2018) assert that the 4.4% target could be met through carefully targeted recruitment activities that take into account anticipated demographic shifts within the international Francophonie, stating that [Translation] "in order to maintain or expand the presence of the French language north of the US border, we need to identify the countries or regions of the world that, in the short to medium term, are likely to see considerable growth in their French-speaking population and thus would make potential pools for recruiting French-speaking immigrants" (Fall 2018: 76).

Data from the Organisation internationale de la francophonie provide an overview of the current situation and future trends in the French-speaking population pools. A 2018 report from the

Observatoire de la langue française estimates that 300 million people speak French worldwide and that 235 million use the language on a daily basis. The number of French speakers around the world is growing steadily: there were 22.7 million more at the time of the report than in 2010, and 68% of these new French speakers live in sub-Saharan Africa.

These trends lead Marcoux and Richard to argue that [Translation] “the centre of the French-speaking world is shifting from Europe to Africa” (Fall 2018: 82), mainly West and Central Africa. According to the researchers, both areas have great potential for the recruitment of French-speaking immigrants. They state that the proportion of French-speaking immigrants from African countries is already on the rise without Canada putting in what they consider to be a massive effort to recruit from this region, which our study has also found. This leads Marcoux and Richard to assert that the 4.4% target could be achieved through targeted, well-coordinated initiatives in certain African countries to recruit a few thousand additional French-speaking immigrants each year. This does not mean that Europe is no longer a valuable recruitment pool, but it has less potential for recruitment compared to Africa.

In order for such mechanisms to be implemented, Canada’s international promotional activities must also be aligned with the selection and long-term settlement of French-speaking newcomers (CIC, July 2012). Simply promoting Canada’s Francophone minority communities is not enough: the information has to reach people who actually may potentially immigrate to Canada and settle in one of these communities.

Promotion, namely in the form of activities organized by Destination Canada, is essential to achieving the target, but it must be part of a broader recruitment strategy. According to the authors of the two department evaluations (CIC, July 2012 and IRCC, July 2017), it is worth keeping in mind, when considering Canada’s promotional strategies, that “[i]f more Francophone newcomers can be convinced to settle in [Francophone minority communities], they must be allowed to immigrate to Canada permanently” (CIC, July 2012: v).

### 5.2.2 Working in partnership with provinces

Data on admission categories show that the provinces and territories play an increasingly important role in the selection of French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec, accounting for more than one fifth of selected residents in the last two years. While the federal government’s immigration agreements with each province and territory include clauses that aim to promote immigration to Francophone minority communities, the number of French-speaking permanent residents selected by the provinces and territories varies considerably from one jurisdiction to another. In this context, it would be interesting to consider establishing more specific objectives regarding the number of spots for French-speaking candidates under provincial programs and to continue the efforts seen in recent years to engage more with the provinces and territories on this matter.

### 5.2.3 Using mechanisms to facilitate the granting of permanent residence for French-speaking candidates

The IRCC's 2012 and 2017 evaluations point to the need to develop more mechanisms to facilitate the granting of permanent residence in Francophone minority communities. The fall 2020 announcement that the increase of additional points for French-speaking and bilingual candidates would be awarded in the Express Entry is an example of this kind of initiative.

### 5.2.4 Encouraging transitions from temporary residence to permanent residence

Some stakeholders we consulted noted that international students, who receive their education in Canada and are often socially integrated into their communities, are a group of particular interest to recruitment and integration. A study by the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (June 2020) suggests that more should be done to understand the role that post-secondary educational institutions play in immigration. Special consideration could also be given to French-speaking temporary workers, including those hired through the Mobilité Francophone program.

### 5.2.5 Establishing a category for French-speaking economic immigrants

A 2013 study ordered by the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie amid immigration reforms posited that a pilot program could be established to create a new category for French-speaking economic immigrants. The Minister has the authority to create such a program by ministerial instructions. Spots in the pilot program would be available exclusively to French-speaking candidates. It is worth considering the possibility of developing this kind of pilot project and measuring its potential outcomes.

## 5.3 Potential areas of further research

This study focused on the statistical analysis of the admission of French-speaking permanent residents in minority communities. Many other ideas for areas of interest for further research were brought up in the focus groups, some of which are addressed in existing IRCC research reports:

- Expand the study by Marcoux and Richard (2018) to look at potential pools for recruitment and consider how our findings could be used to improve current approaches to promotion and recruitment
- Analyze the possibility of developing a pilot project for the creation of a Francophone economic immigrant category and measure its potential effects
- Make an inventory, monitor and evaluate the impact of immigration policies, programs and initiatives, including Francophone immigration and the recruitment of French-speaking permanent residents
- Perform a comparative analysis of provincial provisions on Francophone immigration to identify best practices as well as shortcomings
- Analyze Francophone immigration and other immigration at different geographical scales between and within provinces and territories, including between urban and rural settings

- Document the experiences of French-speaking temporary residents who wish to transition to permanent resident, the challenges they face and ways the transition could be made easier
- Perform a comprehensive review of the literature on the socioeconomic integration of immigrants into Francophone minority communities, identifying the main issues and where research is lacking
- Paint a picture of the general state of language transfers in the French-speaking immigrant population and related issues
- Create a profile of immigrants in Francophone minority communities and identify factors affecting their retention, particularly reasons for secondary migration between or within provinces and territories and related issues

## 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Study topic and objectives

This study focused on the target of 4.4% for French-speaking immigrants in minority communities adopted in the *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities* in 2003, which was developed by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee (CIC-FMC). The initial deadline for achieving the target was set for 2008. Due to methodological challenges in defining a "French-speaking immigrant" and the time required to observe and measure the effects of initiatives taken, the deadline was extended by 15 years, from 2008 to 2023, in the *Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, also developed by the CIC-FMC Steering Committee in 2006.

The primary objective of the study was to conduct a statistical analysis of the shortfalls since the adoption of the target and to estimate its desired impact on maintaining the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population, which was the target's objective. Supplemented by a review of key literature and documents, as well as focus groups with key government, community and academic stakeholders, our study provides contextual information on the adoption and evolution of the target and its objective, and provides ideas for consideration and future action as we approach the 2023 deadline. The study aims not to quantify a new target, but to provide avenues for reflection.

### 6.2 Context surrounding the study

Before turning our focus to the target itself, we provided some general historical and demographic context. We discussed key events in Canada's history that laid the groundwork for the linguistic duality and cultural diversity for which the country is known, and to which immigration is a major contributor. We see first that immigration, enshrined in the *Constitution Act, 1867*, is an area of shared jurisdiction between the federal government and the provinces and territories, but that the federal government has primary authority. Since the adoption of the *Immigration Act* (1976) and following the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (2001), the federal government has been

required to report to Parliament on the levels and composition of immigration it has admitted in the previous year and targets for the coming year. It determines priorities for the selection and admission of newcomers annually. Outside Quebec, the vast majority of immigrant selection and admission programs are the responsibility of the federal government. Although our study finds a significant increase in admissions to the Provincial Nominee Program among French speaking permanent residents in minority communities over the past 20 years and although growth is also observed among all admissions in recent years, the fact remains that this program accounted for one-fifth of permanent resident admissions in 2019 (IRCC, 2020a). Although immigration is subject to situational factors, including international migration, and is an area of shared jurisdiction in which the federal government works with other levels of government, community organizations and employers, in Canada outside of Quebec, the federal government plays a leading role. In turn, this immigration has an important influence on the demolingistic balance in Canada.

In the past, most immigrants to Canada outside Quebec were English speakers from Europe and the United States. In response to changes to legislation and regulations that began in the 1960s and 1970s, immigration started to become increasingly diverse in terms of language and country of origin in the 1970s and 1980s. During this same period, linguistic duality was strengthened with the adoption of the first *Official Languages Act* in 1969, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982 and the new version of the *Official Languages Act* in 1988. The addition of Part VII to the new *Official Languages Act* set out the Government of Canada's commitment to enhancing the vitality and supporting the development of official language minority communities and promoting English and French in Canadian society. This was followed by amendments to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (2001) to include supporting the development of official language minority communities in Canada as one of the purposes of the Act.

Looking at the demographics, for the past few decades, Canada, like other Western countries, has been experiencing a population decline due to low birth rates (number of live births compared to the size of the population in a given place during a specific period of time) and an aging population (IRCC, *Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*, 2020a). The French-speaking minority population has also been experiencing a particularly dramatic population decline over the past several decades due to multiple factors, including immigration that has not been and continues not to be favourable to it.

Some of these factors have historically reflected strong trends, including a marked drop in fertility rates, incomplete intergenerational transmission of the French mother tongue from parents to children, intragenerational shifts to English as the language used at home and an aging population, in addition to other factors such as interprovincial mobility and international immigration, which have been more closely linked to economic and/or policy factors.

Over the past few decades, the level of immigration to Canada has held steady at between 150,000 and 250,000 annually since the 1980s. As for composition, the majority of immigrants settle outside

Quebec and generally have neither English or French as their mother tongue, decreasing the relative weight of the French-mother-tongue population and the English-mother-tongue population outside Quebec. However, when measuring by first official language spoken (FOLS), which is determined by knowledge of official languages and language spoken most often at home, the English-speaking population, unlike the French-speaking population, has maintained its demographic weight. This can be explained notably by the fact that English is the immigrant population's main language of integration and convergence outside Quebec due to generalized learning of English, language transfers toward English and a strong propensity to adopt English over French (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017: 46).

The study acknowledges from the start that there are many reasons for the decline in the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in minority communities. Nevertheless, it considers immigration to be a key factor given its influence on the demolinguistic balance in the country and the government's role in determining the level and composition of immigration. In fact, according to Statistics Canada, although "[a] number of demographic factors have contributed to the evolution of French and the Francophonie in Canada, [including] a low fertility rate and incomplete transmission of French as a mother tongue to the children of French-speaking parents, international immigration has the strongest effect on the evolution of French in Canada" (Statistics Canada, 2012: 9).

### 6.3 Context surrounding the adoption and evolution of the target

The study raised the following salient points about the context in which the target was adopted and evolved.

The 4.4% target for French-speaking immigrants was adopted in the 2003 *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, which was developed by the CIC-FMC Steering Committee. At the time, the Steering Committee noted a demographic decline in the Francophone minority population and a deficit of French-speaking immigrants to these communities. It therefore set a target of 4.4% of Francophone immigration to minority communities, with the objective of increasing, or at least maintaining, the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec at the level measured in the most recent census (the 2001 census), which was 4.4% of the overall population (as measured by both mother tongue and FOLS). It aimed for at least 4.4% of immigrants outside Quebec to be French speaking by 2008.

The study noted that the wording of the objective in the Strategic Framework made it unclear whether the goal was to increase or maintain the demographic weight. The study also found that the target was established on the presumption that there is a correspondence or even a direct correlation between immigration and demographic weight, without detailed demographic or demolinguistic studies cited to support it. Therefore, the approach would not have factored into the

equation other dimensions of the immigration continuum, such as French language retention among immigrants and geographic retention within Francophone minority communities, and other factors besides immigration that affect the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population. This significant limitation was raised by participants in the focus groups. This study and its statistical analysis follow the approach used in setting the target in 2003. This study does not include a comprehensive demographic or demolinguistic analysis. This limitation is noted. However, the study notes publications in which such analyses are conducted (Statistics Canada, January 2017; PCH, 2017).

In addition, the study found that the target was understood as a minimum threshold to be reached, and that the Strategic Framework refers to not only attracting, but also retaining French-speaking immigrants. The study also found that the target was accompanied by measures such as the establishment of percentages of French-speaking immigrants for certain programs (provincial nominee program, international students' transitions to permanent residency) and that it was suggested to target French-speaking source countries. The suggestions to target certain programs and source countries also emerged from the literature review and the focus group discussions.

The *Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities* (2006), which was also developed by the CIC-FMC Steering Committee, aimed to intensify and better coordinate efforts to achieve all five objectives set in the 2003 Strategic Framework, including increasing the number of French-speaking immigrants to give more demographic weight to Francophone minority communities. The Plan pushed the initial 2008 deadline for achieving the 4.4% target 15 years later to 2023. This was justified in part by difficulties in drawing an accurate portrait of immigration to Francophone minority communities.

The study also noted that, according to the 2006 Strategic Plan, without the year 2023 being included, the CIC-FMC Steering Committee estimated that it would take 15 years to reach the target, referring to an annual target of 8,000 to 10,000 French-speaking immigrants (CIC-FMC, September 2006). As well, according to some focus group participants, the deadline was pushed back considering the time it would take, over three five-year cycles, to see and measure the effects of the measures and initiatives taken. In subsequent years, the Department noted that, despite measures taken and initiatives undertaken as well as increases in numbers of admissions of French speaking permanent residents in Francophone minority communities, the target was still not being met and said that more effort would be required to make progress to meet the target (CIC, July 2012; IRCC, July 2017). It stated that it expected to do so by 2023 (CIC, July 2012; IRCC, 2019a). Publication of data to track results related to the achievement of the target and reports to Parliament have been—and are still being—made on an annual basis.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages has conducted a number of studies on the target. In a 2010 study, it argued that, due to the mobility of Francophones and language transfer rates, the target of 4.4% determined on the basis of census data from 2001 was

outdated, that it would not maintain the linguistic balance outside Quebec and that it should therefore be revised upwards to 7%.

Both the 2010 study and another study by the Committee in 2016 recommended that a national immigration policy be issued to increase the demographic weight of minority language communities. This recommendation was also made more recently in the government's *Official Languages Act* reform document *English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada*, published in February 2021.

#### 6.4 Statistical analysis of the target and its objective

The study went on to present the methodological reference points needed to understand the statistical analysis of the target. It noted that the 4.4% target for Francophone immigration regarded the admission of permanent residents by IRCC and was set based on the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population in the 2001 Statistics Canada census, which was 4.4% as measured by both mother tongue and FOLS. The study noted that, because the target only includes the admission of French-speaking permanent residents, it is a crucial first step of the immigration continuum, but not the only step, and other factors besides immigration are not taken into account. This limitation, presented at the outset in the introduction to the study and reiterated in following sections, was also brought up in the focus groups.

Limitations were also pointed out about the three ways in which IRCC has defined and measured what constitutes a “French-speaking immigrant.” The first definition and corresponding measure, introduced in 2003, tended to result in overestimations and was soon dropped. The second, in 2006, was prone to underestimation but was the reference measure used for a longer period of time, from 2006 to 2016, and was thus used for the statistical analysis in our study. The most recent definition, from 2016, is considered more inclusive and accurate, but the earliest data are available only from 2019 onward. Concerns were also raised about the comparability of the data generated using each of these definitions, in addition to issues of comparability between language data from the census and IRCC administrative data.

The study found that not long after the target was adopted, uncertainty and apprehension (which are still present today) were voiced about whether achieving the target would be sufficient to actually maintain the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population at 4.4%.

The statistical analysis in this report tends to concur with this. Following the approach used to determine and monitor the target, the first step in the statistical analysis was to calculate the gaps between the admission rates and numbers obtained and the rates and numbers required to meet a French-speaking permanent resident admission rate of 4.4% from 2001 to 2020, using the 2006 definition and measure for French-speaking immigrants in the administrative data provided by IRCC to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

To this end, the study allows us to see that, according to the 2006 definition and measure, the admission rate for French-speaking permanent residents from the time the target was adopted to 2019 did not surpass 2.0%. The rate edged up to 2.1% in 2019 and again to 2.6% in 2020. According to the 2016 definition and measure, the admission rate for French-speaking permanent residents was 2.7% in 2019 and 3.6% in 2020. However, we noted that as 2020 was the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, admission rates were down overall for permanent residents but less so for French-speaking permanent residents.

Next, the analysis looked at what would have happened if the target had been adopted in 2001 and achieved every year from 2001 to 2020, considering that in the early 2000s, deficits in Francophone immigration were already noted and that the target was adopted based on the 2001 census. In this case, on average, the admission of approximately 6,000 additional French-speaking permanent residents per year would have been required. In sum, to reach the target after nearly 20 years, approximately 119,656 French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec would have had to be admitted in addition to the 67,430 that were admitted, for a total of 187,086.

If we consider the shortfalls accumulated not since 2001, but since 2008, which was the original deadline, approximately 75,839 French-speaking permanent residents would have had to be admitted from 2008 to 2020, in addition to the 49,853 that were admitted, for a total of 125,692 French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec over 12 years.

The next step was to estimate the desired impact of achieving the target on the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec. These estimates are based on two scenarios or assumptions: one in which the target would have been reached in 2001 (the reference year for setting the target) and one in which the target would have been achieved in 2008 (the initial target deadline). In the estimate, the number of additional French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec that would have been needed in order to meet the target was added to the French-speaking population outside Quebec based on FOLS in the 2016 census.

According to our analysis, even if admission rates for French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec had been 4.4%, this would not have been sufficient to maintain the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population at 4.4%. However, it could have helped to reduce the decline between the 2001 and 2016 censuses.

Between these two censuses, the proportion of the Francophone minority population fell from 4.4% to 3.8% based on FOLS, which represents a decline of 0.6 percentage points. According to our scenarios and estimates, if the target had been reached in 2001 and had a direct impact on the demographic weight of this population, said weight could have been about 4.2% in 2016, representing a decrease of 0.2 percentage points. If the target had been reached in 2008, the demographic weight could have been around 4.0% in 2016, which represents a decline of 0.4 percentage points. Although these scenarios are hypothetical, the analysis shows that changing the

reference year for achieving the target from 2001 to 2008 resulted in a 0.2 percentage point difference. This would suggest that a few years of difference in reaching the target could have contributed to the accumulated admission shortfall, which could have at least a partial impact on the demographic weight of the minority Francophone population.

Having observed that achieving the target would not have made it possible to maintain the demographic weight of the French-speaking population in minority communities at 4.4% between the 2001 and 2016 censuses when measured by FOLS, the study sought to see what it would have taken to maintain this demographic weight. According to our calculations, approximately 150,000 more Francophones outside Quebec would have been needed according to the FOLS at the time of the 2016 census, that is, 1,174,831 instead of 1,024,200 Francophones according to FOLS out of a total of 26,700,695 people in Canada outside Quebec (Statistics Canada, August 2017). We estimated that, if admissions of French-speaking permanent residents were the only factor considered in the equation, these 150,000 additional Francophones would translate into an annual admission rate of between 6% and 7%.

## 6.5 Considerations and possibilities for the future

Lastly, the study presented a few characteristics of French-speaking permanent residents admitted from 2001 to 2020, along with some considerations and possibilities for the future.

We looked at Statistics Canada's *Language Projections for Canada, 2011 to 2036*, which indicate that the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec will likely continue to decline over the next 15 years in the projection scenarios. Although the absolute number of Francophones as defined by FOLS may increase, Statistics Canada projects that the proportion of the French-speaking population in minority communities will decrease, and that decrease would vary by province. One reason for this is that the proportion of immigrants who have a mother tongue other than English or French but know, adopt and use English is predicted to see greater growth over the next two decades than the proportion of immigrants with a mother tongue other than English or French who choose to adopt French (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017).

The study similarly noted that, although the number of French-speaking permanent residents admitted outside Quebec has more than doubled in 20 years, this increase is not sufficient to achieve the 4.4% target. This is due to a greater increase in admissions of permanent residents who are not French-speaking.

Statistics Canada projects that, in order to maintain the demographic weight of the French-speaking population outside Quebec at the same level it was at the time of the 2016 census (3.8%), the average annual proportion of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec from 2017 to 2036 would need to be 5.1% according to FOLS (Statistics Canada, Corbeil and Houle, January 2017).

Ever since the Office of the Commissioner (OCOL, Quell, November 2002) and other bodies, including the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages (November 2010) and the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages (December 2014), first called for the adoption of a remedial approach in the early 2000s, immigration levels of French-speaking permanent residents in minority communities have led to an additional admission shortfall of approximately 120,000 French-speaking permanent residents outside Quebec since 2001.

More recently, the FCFA (2018a: 11) has also called for an effort to close the gap to be seriously considered. The official languages reform document *English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada* includes a proposal to increase the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population to 4.4% (Canadian Heritage, February 2021), suggesting an openness to this possibility.

In addition to providing food for thought about levels of immigration and admission of French-speaking permanent residents to minority communities, our study identified considerations and possibilities for the future regarding immigration composition, including regions and countries of origin and immigration categories. As well, it identified some approaches and mechanisms worth considering, such as targeting promising pools for recruitment that are situated within the international Francophonie, working in partnership with the provinces, working on mechanisms that would facilitate the granting of permanent residence, encouraging temporary residents to transition to permanent residence, and creating a category for French-speaking economic immigrants.

In sum, by identifying the shortfalls in French-speaking permanent resident admissions since the target was adopted and estimating the impact that achieving the target may have on the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population, the study highlights that the levels and composition of permanent resident admissions established by the federal government represent a crucial though not exclusive component of the immigration continuum. In turn, this continuum has an influence on the demolinguistic balance in the country. Outside Quebec, where the immigrant population is more and more diverse and the immigrants admitted typically either learn or already know English and choose to use and adopt English as their language of integration instead of French, immigration tends to contribute more to the development of the English-speaking population than the French-speaking population in terms of demographics and other factors. Identifying promising pools for recruitment based on immigrants' countries and regions of origin and the languages spoken in these countries and regions could provide avenues to be explored so that both official language groups, including French speakers in minority communities, can fully enjoy the increasingly diverse immigrant population and the contribution of this diversity to the country's linguistic duality.

Moreover, the fact that other factors besides immigration have an impact on the demographic weight of the Francophone minority population suggests that a more holistic approach and a more ambitious target would be necessary in order to increase or maintain this population's demographic weight.

Finally, while we acknowledge the challenges that have surrounded this target and its objective for nearly 20 years, it should also be acknowledged that the government must be held to account on its commitments, including the targets and goals it sets, and called on to change course when those commitments are not fulfilled. To that end, I am making the following three recommendations.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

7.1 The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that, by the arrival of the 2023 target deadline, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada conduct a full analysis on the following in cooperation with key partners and publicly report the results:

- 7.1.1 the 4.4% Francophone minority immigration target set in 2003, its deadlines and the shortfalls since it was set; and
- 7.1.2 the target's contribution to achieving the objective of at least maintaining the demographic weight of Francophone minority communities at the level of the 2001 Census, and the impact of this contribution on the development of these communities.

7.2 The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that, with the arrival of the 2023 target deadline, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with its government and community partners to:

- 7.2.1 review, refine and clarify the objective relative to its contribution to re-establish and maintain the demographic weight of the minority French-speaking population;
- 7.2.2 review the target and then adopt a new, higher one;
- 7.2.3 define and develop strategies, approaches and tools adapted to meet this new target and its objective;
- 7.2.4 set a final deadline and short- and medium-term benchmarks to achieve the new target and its objective; and
- 7.2.5 clarify the accountability requirements and measures for the achievement of the new target and its objective.

7.3 The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada adopt a policy on immigration to Francophone minority communities, including a new objective and a new target.

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