

Coming together to build from within...

Strong, prosperous communities don't just happen. They are forged from the wisdom and abilities of their members and their willingness to work together towards common goals and home-grown, sustainable economic solutions.

As members of Quebec's English-speaking communities, this toolkit is designed to help us help ourselves. In a word, it's about **capacity-building** – the capacity of our many and diverse communities to come together, build from within, and take charge of our own economic and social development.

A little background....

In May 1998, the **National Human Resources Development Committee (NHRDC) for the English Linguistic Minority** was created to help Quebec's English-speaking communities draw on their strong heritage to rebuild for the future. This community-government partnership flows from the government of Canada's commitment – under the Official Languages Act – to support and foster the English and French minority groups in Canada.

National Committee (NHRDC) = Community Table + Government Table

By bringing together the diverse members of Quebec's English-speaking community, the **Community Table** provides a strong mechanism for voicing our opinions, sharing our experiences and influencing policy. With a clearer understanding of our needs, the **Government Table** – represented by Human Resources Development Canada and other government partners – can better coordinate the policies and programs designed to support the English-speaking minority.

At the grassroots level...

The National Committee (NHRDC) is actively at work through a volunteer network of **Community Economic Development and Employability Committees (CEDECs)** and their **Regional Economic Development Officers (REDOs)**. The CEDECs and REDOs work hand-in-hand with the Community and Government Tables to motivate and mobilize our English-speaking communities.

The process, however, does not stop there. We all play a vital role when we get involved and work together to achieve the human resources and community economic development that will reaffirm our place in society and provide opportunities for future generations.

We are Quebec's English-speaking communities!



A Community Capacity-building

Toolkit

for Quebec's English-speaking communities



Capacity-building: The first step to community economic development

We all want strong communities with flourishing economies that can offer their populations a vibrant quality of life. To achieve this, we need to develop a solid plan for **community economic development** that identifies opportunities for growth and lasting employment and works to make them a reality.

How quickly we get there depends on our ability to rediscover the fundamental strengths on which our communities were founded, and which continue to sustain us.

Our history and traditions. Our people. Our achievements.

That process of rediscovery is also known as **capacity-building**.

A CONTINUOUS PROCESS

Capacity-building involves the careful nurturing of community pride, leadership, and active participation of an ever-growing number of individuals. It is a continuous, never-ending process.

It begins when the members of a community come together to talk about their needs and opportunities. It grows stronger when they develop a common focus and vision, take ownership of a realistic plan to enhance their community, seek out the resources they need to help them, and finally celebrate each successful milestone that brings them closer to their goal.

Capacity-building empowers us to take responsibility for our own community's development. It is a first step; it is also a huge one.

CEDECs: Catalysts for local action

Community Economic Development and Employability Committees (CEDECs) are regional-based, volunteer committees that form the link between the National Committee (NHRDC) and the Community Table and the ongoing efforts of community leaders and organizations.

The volunteers who make up the **CEDECs** come from the communities they represent. So they understand local culture, geography and the evolving needs of the different segments of the population. They are motivators and coordinators, focused on promoting and encouraging action.

By organizing events to mobilize the members of a community and bring them together, **CEDECs** are continually engaged in

the process of **capacity-building**. They help us focus on a common goal, set priorities for action, and identify necessary resources. They can also put us in touch with the public and private-sector partners who can help us achieve our goals.

THE REDOs: A NATURAL FIRST CONTACT

Just as the CEDECs support the efforts of the communities in their region, so, too, do the **Regional Economic Development Officers** support the efforts of their CEDECs. The **REDO** is a full-time position and, as such, a natural first contact to the CEDEC. Acting as community facilitators and animators, the **REDOs** keep volunteers in tune with each other and their communities.

Community Capacity-Building: The continuous process required to foster the pride and appropriate local leadership that allows communities, through their members, to take responsibility for their own development.

Community Economic Development and Employability Committees (CEDECs): These regionally based, volunteer committees represent the National Committee (NHRDC) at the local level. They act as community facilitators by creating opportunities for communities to come together, recognize their existing assets, develop a common vision, and gain access to the public and private-sector partners who can help them realize their vision.

Community Table: A federally incorporated not-for-profit organization that is funded by Human Resources Development Canada. The Community Table currently is composed of 16 members, representing the different regions of Quebec with English-speaking communities. The Community Table represents the English linguistic minority on the National Committee (NHRDC).

Government Table: Led by Human Resources Development Canada, the Government Table regroups the various federal departments and agencies who are partners with the Community Table in the National Committee (NHRDC).

National Committee (NHRDC): The National Human Resources Development Committee for the English Linguistic Minority was created in

May 1998 as a partnership between the Government of Canada and the English-speaking minority in Quebec. Through the close cooperation of the Government and Community Tables, the National Committee (NHRDC) is working to revitalize the English linguistic minority through long-term community economic development.

Regional Economic Development Officers (REDOs): These eight community-based individuals are engaged full-time in spearheading and coordinating the initiatives of the CEDECs, particularly in the area of community capacity-building.

Needs Assessment: A comprehensive region-by-region study of Quebec's English-speaking communities undertaken by the National Committee (NHRDC). Its findings reveal each region's strengths, weaknesses and ongoing requirements within the context of sustainable community economic development. Released publicly in May 2000, the study is entitled Community Economic Development Perspectives.

Strategic Orientations: Four key areas of challenge and opportunity, identified in the needs assessment process, that English-speaking communities in every region consider essential to their long-term viability. The four strategic orientations are: community capacity-building and culture, communications, youth, economic diversification and job creation.

Community profile of the Magdalen Islands

The collaborative spirit of the Magdalen Islanders has long been a tonic for our geographic isolation. The common ancestry of the English-speaking community and our relatively small size has contributed to our deep sense of fellowship.

With slightly over 700 people, our community represents approximately 6% of the total population of the Islands. And while concentrated on Grosse Île and Entry Island, Anglophones are present in every municipality of the Magdalen Islands.

We are a resilient, dynamic community that is actively seeking creative alternatives to our traditional reliance on the fishery. Inspired and supported by the **CEDEC of the Magdalen Islands**, the English-speaking community is engaged in an ambitious exploration of how we can contribute to the

growth of local tourism. This **“Gateway to the East”** concept has inspired a new cooperation that has extended beyond our immediate shores to include federal and provincial government partners.

We are also working to expand our internal leadership base, our entrepreneurial capacity, and our fragile communications network. We are identifying ways to improve and extend our health and educational services, including French-language training. We are determined to provide lasting opportunities for our youth.

As our community continues its journey of development, we are aware that small business and tourism represent two growth areas for English-speakers. An expanded employment base means a strengthened, vibrant community.

The challenge is ours!

Community profile of the Lower North Shore

From Kegaska in the west to Blanc-Sablon in the east, the 15 English-speaking communities that make up the Lower North Shore follow each other in rugged succession along the coast of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

Despite the relative isolation of each our communities, we are linked by the strength we have always shown in the face of physical adversity and our pride in our deeply-rooted heritage. Most of us are descendants of settlers who came here as early as the 18th century – attracted by sealing and salmon fishing.

Coasters are a patient people – used to contending with the uncertainties of an often harsh, though starkly beautiful landscape. That patience is helping us find solutions to some of the major challenges that face us:

accessibility and communications. Our communities start where the road literally ends. And without a road system, it is no small task to organize inter-regional initiatives in such areas as education and tourism promotion.

Yet, northern living has its creative solutions. The snowmobile has proven a new means for bringing villages together for activities ranging from hockey tournaments to economic forums.

Through the efforts of the **Lower North Shore CEDEC**, we are actively seeking ways to diversify our economy, promote partnerships and help create lasting employment. By connecting formerly disconnected communities, we will continue to build on our traditional strengths, our adaptability, and our lively, local culture.

Community profile of Gaspésie

The 10,000 English-speaking residents of the Gaspé are spread over 18 different communities and 450 kilometres of coastline. We are a hard-working, rural and industrious people, with strong ties to our region and to our environment.

The sea has always had a shaping influence on our lives. We are surrounded by the Baie des Chaleurs, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River, and they say the waters of all three run deep in the blood of Gaspésians.

Our English-speaking community is proud of its strengths and of the Irish, Scottish and English heritage that so many of us share. Our long tradition of volunteering finds us working side by side to organize community festivals and events.

Of all the challenges facing us, easy access to a wide range of education services

– including French-as-a-second-language – is perhaps the greatest. Many younger members of our community have had to leave the region to pursue their education – and often don't return.

Finding solutions is no easy task, which is why the work being done by the **Gaspé CEDEC** to bring people together and mobilize our collective ideas and skills is so important. We live in a haven of natural beauty and there is very real potential for expanding our economy through tourism. The CEDEC is also working with community leaders and entrepreneurs to help our young people rediscover their roots and explore new opportunities in the region of their birth.

Together, we can realize a new vision for our community.

Community profile of the Outaouais

Today, the Outaouais is an intimate blend of urban and rural environments. Yet, regardless of where we make our home in the region, we remain deeply rooted in the rural values of the generations who preceded us. In the early 1800s, the forest industry initially attracted families to this area and it continues to play a role in the local economy.

With some 50,000 people, our English-speaking community boasts a strong rural infrastructure and some of the most impressive agricultural associations in the country. We are also served by the vigorous urban infrastructure of the neighbouring National Capital Region, and many members of our community commute daily to jobs outside of the Outaouais. The majority of these individuals are employed either within the federal government or the high-tech industry.

So we have the benefits of a thriving urban sector right at our fingertips, while at the same time, we are surrounded by the nat-

ural beauty and tranquillity of our rural landscape.

Our region has an active recreational life. In summer, we enjoy boating and other water sports on the Ottawa and Gatineau rivers and on our many lakes. Winter activities include skiing, snowmobiling and hockey.

Our strong pride in our heritage is evident in our many historical societies, and in our fervent desire to preserve our future through environmental protection.

The **Outaouais CEDEC** is one of the organizations working with the English-speaking community and its many service clubs and volunteer associations to strengthen our communication network. With our strong commitment to bilingualism and a dedication to the youth population, we have the potential to build communities that could enhance the economic and social profile of the entire Outaouais.

Community profile of the Eastern Townships

As Townshippers, we are the beneficiaries of a long and distinguished heritage. First settled by Loyalists fleeing the American colonies in the wake of the War of Independence, this large and scenic region subsequently became home to successive waves of English, Scottish, Irish and later French immigrants. More recently, newcomers from Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and Latin America have contributed to the unique and vibrant character of the Eastern Townships.

Whether descendants of the first Townshippers or relatively new arrivals, we are all part of a dynamic English-speaking community. This community has given rise to many organizations, associations and institutions, as well as numerous artistic and cultural events, agricultural fairs, festivals and community celebrations. The Townships are also home to the only English-language daily newspaper in Quebec published outside of the Montreal area.

Anglophone Townshippers number some 43,000 people – about 7% of the region's total population. Nevertheless, we continue to play an important role in our region's social, economic, cultural, and political life. We are known for our independent spirit and proud self-reliance. We also treasure the bicultural and bilingual character of the Eastern Townships and enjoy strong and harmonious relationships with our French-speaking neighbours.

Our community has its share of challenges: among them, a declining and aging population, high unemployment, and low literacy and education levels. But organizations like the **Eastern Townships CEDEC** are helping far-flung communities to identify their individual strengths, network with like-minded citizens, and realize that empowerment is rooted in cooperation.

The English-speaking community of the Eastern Townships can be assured a future as bright and healthy as our past. The choice is ours!

Community profile of the Québec/Chaudière-Appalaches region

The Québec/Chaudière-Appalaches region is home to what was one of the earliest English-speaking settlements in Canada. Our community originated in a first wave of Irish and British immigration that took place in the mid-1700s. These early settlers were followed by another tide of English-speaking immigrants in the mid-19th century.

Today, our dynamic English-speaking community is comprised of approximately 14,000 individuals, who make up 2% of the region's total population.

An extensive network of services support our community. An English-language school system, a health and social service centre, a community newspaper and a regional CBC office are among the resources that bind us. Churches offer English services in a variety of faiths, and libraries and cultural/recreational groups complement other assets. In fact, the **Québec/Chaudière-Appalaches CEDEC** has compiled a database of more than 100 English-speaking community groups and organizations active in our region.

Our high-mobility rate has resulted in an injection of new people and fresh ideas into

our community. (Some 25% of our numbers originate outside the province and have come here for business reasons.) In addition, we are well integrated with the majority French-speaking population and often partner with them in a variety of initiatives.

The retention of our youth is a significant challenge facing our region, and we are striving to dispel the myth that our area offers little hope for employment. In fact, a wide array of bilingual employment opportunities exists right in our own backyard.

We are a highly educated workforce and are pooling our efforts to develop the infrastructure necessary to exploit the numerous opportunities presented by a thriving global marketplace.

Regular cultural activities and events are creating strong connections within our community of communities and helping us to retain a unique sense of our roots and identity. We are working hard to boost the profile of the English-speaking community, promote a sense of pride and belonging, and welcome newcomers into the fold.

Community profile of South West Quebec

The English-speaking community of South West Quebec is concentrated in the Chateauguy Valley – in towns like Hemmingford, Huntingdon and Chateauguy – as well as in the Hudson area along the Lake of Two Mountains. Our region’s agricultural roots go back almost three centuries, and the Chateauguy River Valley remains an important centre for dairy farming.

There is no “typical” English-speaker in our region. Some of South West Quebec’s 50,000 Anglophones live in the multi-ethnic communities and towns that border Montreal, and they make the daily commute to jobs in the city. Others come from a more traditional rural environment.

Regardless of our varying lifestyles, we have a strong presence in the region – with many English-speaking clubs, associations and activities. Our proximity to Ontario and the U.S. border gives us additional access to English resources and culture.

Community members whose ties to our region go back generations have a strong sense of belonging that often manifests itself in regular involvement in community activities. Through the efforts of the **South West Quebec CEDEC** and other community organizations, we are working to extend that spirit of participation and volunteerism to a broader cross-section of the English-speaking community. So, too, are we striving to improve communications and create new links between the different segments of our population.

We also recognize that specific groups within the English-speaking community – notably youth and senior citizens – need greater attention.

By combining our resources and skills, we will create greater unity and strength within the English-speaking community of South West Quebec. This, in turn, will allow us to address the challenges facing us and build on our substantial heritage.

Community capacity-building and community economic development are challenges that can't be undertaken lightly. Upon their success lies our own future and the future of our communities.

But we don't have to reinvent the wheel! Through the National Committee (NHRDC), **Human Resources Development Canada** is already an active partner in community development. A variety of other federal government departments and agencies are also available to assist us in our initiatives. Some of these potential partners include:

- Canada Economic Development
- Industry Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Treasury Board Secretariat
- Agriculture and Agri-food Canada

Partnerships also promote frank and open dialogue; so when we partner with government, we have a unique opportunity to influence the policies and programs that affect us.

In addition, local **CEDECs and REDOs** are increasingly in touch with provincial agencies and private-sector partners who recognize that strong communities are in everyone's best interest.

Finally, **every member of the English linguistic minority is a partner** in keeping our communities healthy, dynamic and strong. We all have ideas, skills, and experience. The enthusiasm we can generate together is a resource that should never be underestimated.

Ultimately, we are all responsible for our own communities. By working together and pooling our strengths, our strongest partnership is with each other.

Voicing our needs: Common issues and concerns

Soon after its formation, the **National Human Resources Development Committee for the English Linguistic Minority** asked English-speaking communities across the province about our needs, our hopes and the issues that affect us on a daily basis.

The comprehensive **needs assessment** that resulted revealed the strengths, traditions and concerns particular to each region. It also identified four key strategic areas on which we all agree our sustainable long-term development depends.

FOUR STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

- **Capacity-building** – Many English-language communities have faced many years of dramatic change and economic difficulty. Capacity-building helps us take stock of our traditional strengths and assets and use them as a springboard for revitalization.
- **Communication** – Knowledge is power. Creating opportunities and networks for English-speaking communities to share information and experiences among ourselves and with our Francophone neighbours will enable us all to learn from each other.

- **Youth** – Young people need good educational resources and a range of economic, cultural and social opportunities to grow to their full potential. By working together for the benefit of our youth, we will help our future leaders find their place in the community and add their contributions to those that have gone before.
- **Job creation and economic diversification** – These are essential goals for any healthy community. By working to improve our access to training (including French-language training), jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, we will expand and develop our economies.

Capacity-building is our number one priority, because it is the prerequisite for success in the other three areas.

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