



Mr. Lloyd Longfield, M.P.  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Science and Research  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G6

Dear Colleague:

Pursuant to Standing Order 109 of the House of Commons, I am pleased to submit on behalf of the Government of Canada (the Government) the response (the Response) to the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Science and Research (the Committee) entitled, "Revitalizing Research and Scientific Publication in French in Canada," which was presented to the House on June 15, 2023.

The Government is committed to enhancing the vitality of the French language and Canada's Francophone communities, both in Quebec and in French-speaking official language minority communities across Canada. The Government is committed to supporting science and research that creates new knowledge and generates impact for Canadians and the world, and recognizes the important role French-speaking researchers and institutions play in Canada's science and research ecosystem. The Government recognizes Canada's position within the international French-speaking community and the potential to foster global collaborations to address common challenges, including action on climate change.

Research needs are increasingly complex, collaborative, multi- and interdisciplinary, and international. The Government knows that Canada's federal research supports must continue to evolve in order to maintain Canada's research strength. That is why the Government launched the Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System to provide independent, expert advice on enhancing the federal system supporting research and talent. As reaffirmed in Budget 2023, the Government remains committed to carefully considering the Panel's recommendations, including its calls to improve support for Francophone research and ensure the equitable treatment of research funding applications submitted in French within the federal research support system.

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The Government extends its gratitude to the members of the Committee for their work in undertaking the study, developing the report, and preparing recommendations. The Government also wishes to extend its gratitude to the numerous witnesses who provided expert testimony and to the organizations that submitted written briefs to share their advice, providing the Committee with valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities, barriers and enablers to the vitality of the French language in science and research in Canada. The Committee's findings and recommendations underscore the critical role of the federal research support system has in supporting French researchers, institutions and communities. These insights will continue to inform how the Government carries out its responsibilities to invest in the science and research ecosystem and in support of Francophone communities across Canada.

The Response to the Committee's report and recommendations is the product of collaboration between Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), Canadian Heritage (PCH), Health Canada (HC), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada (OSCA), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The Government has carefully considered and agrees in principle with the Committee's report and recommendations, and is responding along three themes: (1) Existing Measures; (2) Expanding Support; and (3) Strategic Programs.

***Existing Measures*** (Recommendations 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14)

Contributions to Research

The Government values the role of Francophone researchers, institutions, and communities and their important contributions to Canada's research and science ecosystem. Canada is a world leader in science and research, and it is critical that federal programs acknowledge the contributions of Francophone researchers and institutions in knowledge creation. The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendation to review the criteria and procedures used by Canada's federal granting agencies to assess research excellence in the context of allocating funding, including by discontinuing the use of bibliometrics such as the impact factor, and introducing weighting mechanisms to better recognize research conducted and published in French. Procedures and criteria used to assess research contributions are critical to the success of the federal research support system. That is why, aligned with global best practices, Canada's federal research granting agencies—the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)—are working to assess the use of bibliometrics such as impact factor in research funding assessment criteria. They are each introducing new approaches to better

reflect and recognize the diverse contributions of Canada's research community to knowledge creation and mobilization, including by researchers in Quebec and in French-speaking official language minority communities (OLMCs) across Canada.

The granting agencies monitor international developments in research assessment, evaluation, and excellence to help inform policies and practices, and guide participation in joint initiatives. They are signatories to DORA—the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment—reaffirming their commitment to responsible research assessment and mobilization. The declaration is a global initiative to support the development and promotion of best practices in assessment of scholarly research and improve approaches to research assessment across disciplines. It aims to address the negative consequences of unintended overuse of journal publications, including journal impact factor, as a primary indicator of quality for research output realizing that the quality and impact of research cannot be measured through journal publications alone. In signing on to DORA, Canada's granting agencies recognize that there are ways to improve the methods by which the outputs of academic research are assessed. Through these and other actions, the granting agencies are taking concrete steps to ensure that the contributions of researchers working and publishing French are recognized in funding allocation processes.

Each of the granting agencies has practices in place to recognize the diverse contributions of researchers when assessing funding applications. SSHRC provides guidance to peer reviewers—the independent volunteer experts who make recommendations to the agency on the merit of funding applications—to consider broad and varied research contributions when assessing research excellence. These contributions include traditional academic publications and other outputs, including books, articles, research reports, and policy papers. Reviewers also consider creative outputs, such as performances, presentations, and artistic materials. Other contributions to research and advancing knowledge to non-academic audiences are also measured, including communications with the general public, policy-makers, or the private sector.

In 2022, NSERC published new guidelines for evaluating contributions to research, promoting an expanded perspective to research utilization and practice, including emphasizing knowledge mobilization. The guidelines recognize the co-creation or transfer of products, technology, processes, services or advice to the private, public or non-profit sectors, communities or society. They recognize the value of communicating research results and knowledge translation to both the general public, including disseminating information through diverse channels (e.g., magazine or newspaper articles, media interviews, blog posts, or social media publications). The guidelines also

encourage reviewers to recognize training and mentoring activities, including mentoring, and outreach and engagement with students, youth or members of the general public.

CIHR also encourages funding applicants to highlight a broad range of outputs, beyond just bibliometric impact. It directs peer reviewers to assess productivity in many ways, not based solely on publications, and to consider an applicant's career stage and experiences. As part of the CIHR *Strategic Plan 2021–2031*, the agency is working with research institutions, other funding organizations, and communities, to develop and promote a renewed and inclusive concept of research excellence. These changes are especially beneficial for French-language funding applicants, providing improved opportunities to describe research impact beyond publications and citations.

### Grant Funding Applications

Canadians have a right to access federal programs and services in their first official language, including when researchers engage with the federal research support system. The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendation that Canada's granting agencies should work to encourage researchers to submit funding applications in French. Researchers can access programs and services of the federal research support system in the official language of their choice and the granting agencies offer all submission, evaluation, and administrative services to applicants in both French and English. The granting agencies encourage applicants to submit their applications in their preferred official language, and researchers are free to choose their preferred official language for communication and accessing granting agency programs, including funding applications. In keeping with its commitment to DORA, some NSERC programs will begin using narrative format applications, allowing researchers to describe their contributions to research, training and mentoring in writing. NSERC expects this change to benefit French-language researchers—whose research contributions may not be well captured by bibliometrics alone—encouraging the greater use of French in funding applications.

SSHRC application and award rates for submissions in French show that French and English applications have comparable levels of success. SSHRC publishes the rates of English and French applications in its annual report on competitions, accessible to the public on its website. In addition to existing measures, SSHRC is assessing strategies to further encourage researchers to submit funding applications in French, including emphasizing data and analysis on the success rates of funding applications received in French when communicating with researchers and other stakeholders. The agency is also considering ways to better communicate its processes for ensuring equitable assessment of applications in French and promoting the services offered by SARF during information webinars for its programs.

CIHR is committed to encouraging researchers to submit funding applications in the official language of their choice. All funding application guidance material is published in both official languages, and applicants are invited to communicate with CIHR in their first official language. To support these efforts, CIHR has increased the application page limit for research proposals submitted in French, based on evidence that documents written in French require approximately 20% more-character space than applications written in English. In addition, the CIHR *Strategic Plan 2021-2031* outlines measures to support and assist the development of OLMCs and foster the full recognition and use of both English and French, consistent with the *Official Languages Act*. Its policy statement on official languages encourages the appropriate inclusion of official language considerations, including the views of people living in OLMCs, in health research design, conduct, and application to improve health outcomes, and facilitates equitable access to its programs and services for health research stakeholders in both official languages.

The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendations that the granting agencies publicly report on the proportion of funding applications submitted in French and ensure that the success rate of these applications is fair. The granting agencies are working to understand how best to collect and share information about applications and funding awards. For example, SSHRC publishes data on application and award rates for French and English applications in its annual report on competitions. This data allows for monitoring of trends which may be indicative of changes in the wider research ecosystem, and analyses of this data are regularly examined by SSHRC's governing council. Official languages is also considered in the context of program evaluations, including a recent umbrella evaluation of granting agency talent programs, which examined official languages as a variable within the population of graduate students accessing funding. Data from SSHRC shows that across its programs, the share of funding awards given to applications submitted in French is comparable with the share of all applications submitted in French, indicating that the agency is working towards a fairer and more equitable merit review process.

The Government also acknowledges the Committee's recommendation for language-based benchmarks or minimums for funding awarded by the granting agencies. Requirements for research proposal quotas based on language requirements would be inconsistent with established program design and international best practices for the support of investigator-initiated research. Where the distribution of funds across official languages is equitable, an excellence-based merit review process is preferable to establishing quotas, with efforts better directed at encouraging researchers to apply for funding in French. Most funding awarded by the granting agencies supports investigator-led research and knowledge mobilization, meaning applications for funding are made by individual researchers or collaborative teams to support specific projects. The

granting agencies cannot direct or require researchers to use a specific official language, which would be inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the *Official Languages Act*. Individual researchers may use their official language of choice when making funding applications, when conducting research, and publishing research results. The language choices of individual researchers are based on many factors, including contextual drivers within the domestic and global research ecosystem.

The granting agencies have taken concrete actions to promote and encourage the use of French in research funding applications. In 2021, CIHR put in place equalization measures for its Project Grant program, CIHR's largest competition for research grant funding, to ensure that the proportion of French grants funded is at least equal to the proportion of applications submitted in French, in order to address historic disproportions in funded research across both official languages. Project funding data for 2022 shows that these measures are having a positive impact on success rates for applications submitted in French, with the percentage of funded French-language projects growing to 20%, consistent with the success rates of the competition overall. For each of its biannual project grant competitions—its largest open grant competition—CIHR publicly releases data on the number of grants submitted and approved, broken down by a variety of identifying factors, including applications submitted in French.

NSERC monitors and regularly reports information on language of grant funding applications and success rates and awards data are publicly disclosed on the Open Government portal. From 2009 to 2018, across all NSERC programs, applications submitted in French had an average success rate of 73%, compared to an overall success rate of 66%. Since 2010, success rates for French grant applications have consistently remained higher than those of English applications. Over the last two decades, the percentage of applications in French received for NSERC grants has declined from 9% in 1992 to 7% in 2019, with a peak of 11% in 1993. The agency is working to understand trends in the language of application using all available tools, including examining these discrepancies using gender-based analysis plus perspectives. It is also assessing potential changes in policies and practices which could further mitigate language bias, such as increasing character limits for applications submitted in French.

The granting agencies are introducing measures to obtain better data and understand language usage in different contexts among funding applicants, such as official language used at home versus language preferred for correspondence. As part of the *Tri-Agency Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (2018 – 2025)*, the granting agencies have updated the funding applicant self-identification questionnaire to include questions on official languages. With this data, the granting agencies are better able to monitor the impact of their actions on the proportion of researchers applying in their first official language,

helping inform agency policies and practices in respect of the use of French. For example, preliminary analysis of self-identification language data from 2022 for the NSERC Discovery Grants program indicated that the majority of applicants who report French as their first language, and their most commonly used language at home, submitted funding applications in English. Of this same population, nearly half reported their language-of-preference for correspondence to be English.

### Assessing Applications in Both Official Languages

Ensuring grant funding reviewers can effectively assess applications in both official languages is critical to guaranteeing equitable access to the federal research support system. The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendation that funders, including the granting agencies and the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), establish an objective evaluation of the language proficiency of expert reviews. The granting agency funding review process relies on the work of thousands of independent volunteer experts. For example, NSERC's Research Grants and Scholarships (RGS) review committees rely on approximately 900 peer reviewers every year. Review committee members are primarily Canadian academics, but also include industry, government, and international members. In addition to peer review committees, the granting agencies also rely on other external reviewers who do not necessarily sit on peer review committees, but who provide written reviews of funding applications. In 2022–23, RGS needed over 6550 external, non-committee reviewers. In any given year, NSERC Research Partnerships funding opportunities call on between 2,000 and 2,500 external reviewers as part of its merit review processes.

Granting agency peer reviewers offer up their own time to assess funding applications—in some cases multiple weeks every year—and without compensation. Reviewers are recruited for their capacity to review applications, including subject matter expertise and official language proficiency. Peer reviewers report in granting agency surveys that their work is important, but time consuming, and recruiting volunteers is a persistent challenge. Adding formal language proficiency or testing requirements would raise barriers to recruiting volunteers, reducing the pool of volunteers willing to serve as reviewers and risking the performance of granting agency programs.

The granting agencies recognize the importance of providing applicants with a fair and equitable peer review process in both official languages. At SSHRC, merit review committees are able to assess research in both French and English, with 25% of committee members reporting French as their preferred official language of communication. All committees are functionally bilingual, with the exception of high-volume research areas where the volume of applications requires multiple committees. In such cases, one committee may consider only

English applications, with a bilingual committee assessing French applications. In the most recent annual report on competitions, SSHRC merit review committee members reported a high level of satisfaction regarding the equitable treatment of applications in both official languages and commented on the bilingualism of the application review process.

CIHR has taken a series of concrete actions to strengthen its ability to review and assess submissions in French. It has increased the availability of translation services for peer reviewers and researchers so that information is available in both official languages at all stages of the research funding process, from application to review. In 2018, CIHR implemented a targeted recruitment strategy to expand its pool of experts capable of reviewing applications written in French, and ongoing analysis is conducted to ensure that at least 20% of reviewers can review applications submitted in French. The agency continues to take steps to remove barriers to accessing funding, including linguistic barriers, by translating one-page research summaries of applications submitted in French in advance of committee meetings and translating review decisions. CIHR is also piloting simultaneous interpretation services for select peer review committees and will extend this pilot as it continues to refine steps to ensure the full participation of reviewers in both English and French.

CIHR uses self-declared language proficiency of its reviewers and verifies language abilities by performing data quality analysis exercises to compare declared language capabilities against reviewers' stated ability to review French language applications during a specific competition. The agency follows up with reviewers who first indicate a capacity to review in French but subsequently declare a language conflict when required to review French language applications. By performing this analysis, CIHR improves the accuracy of data on reviewer language proficiency for future application assignments and can consider corrective measures, if needed.

In accordance with their commitments to making active offers of service to the public in both official languages, the granting agencies also monitor the French-language capabilities of evaluation groups. For example, NSERC uses several measures (e.g., language of correspondence as identified by the applicant, reviewer profile data, recruiting questionnaires, etc.) to determine the language proficiency of its peer reviewers. It has recorded an increase in the share of Francophone members of evaluation groups over five years. In 2020 and 2021, all evaluation groups reported greater than 20% Francophone membership, not including French-speaking reviewers who do not identify as Francophone. Over the past decade, NSERC peer-review committee data shows that on average, 26% of reviewers identify as Francophone, with 45% of members self-declared as bilingual. Ensuring that French applications receive proper review is part of the responsibilities held by evaluation committee chairs and staff.



## Translation Support Services

The Government agrees with the objective of the Committee's recommendation to invest in translation support services in both official languages for use by researchers. The translation of research results is an eligible expense as set out in the *Tri-agency Guide on Financial Administration*, the comprehensive set of the principles and directives that govern the use and administration of research grants funded by CIHR, NSERC, or SSHRC. In addition, the granting agencies have increased the availability of translation services for peer reviewers and researchers so that information on programs and services is available in both official languages at all stages of the research funding process, from application to peer review.

In addition to supporting the translation of research results, SSHRC promotes and supports the mobilization of knowledge as key to maximizing the impact of the research that it funds, to the benefit of Canadians and their communities. SSHRC directs researchers to consider its *Guidelines for Effective Knowledge Mobilization* when developing funding applications. These guidelines include recommendations for researchers to consider the language of the communities involved in their research as part of their knowledge mobilization plan, a plan required as part of applications and assessed through the merit review process. The guidelines encourage funding recipients to disseminate research knowledge in both official languages, whenever feasible or appropriate. The agency also further encourages researchers to publish their results in the language of the community where the research takes place, including in the case of Indigenous languages and French.

Recognizing that more can be done to increase access to science and research knowledge in French, in Budget 2023, the Government provided PCH with \$8.5 million over five years (2023–2024 to 2027–2028) to support the creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge in French.

### ***Expanding Support*** (Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 12, 15)

#### Support for French-language Researchers, Institutions, and Communities

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of programs which support French-language researchers, their institutions and communities. Canada's research support system is investing to advance linguistic equality and duality in research and science. The Government is committed and taking action to improve access to resources that help make research and scientific knowledge in French more accessible, including examining the Committee's recommendation that it continue funding for SARF. Established by *Acfas* in 2022, SARF is a national service providing post-secondary researchers with assistance

in French, supporting the development and vitality of research in French in Canada, with a particular focus on supporting researchers in OLMCs. SSHRC is supporting SARF by endorsing its services and facilitating connections with post-secondary institutions and across the research community. The agency continues to raise awareness of the SARF program through communications with the applicant community, such as by promoting its services in webinars for funding applicants. The Government is committed to exploring the future role of SARF and *Acfas* as important partners within the federal research support system. The *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028: Protection-Promotion-Collaboration* will support the creation of new measures to improve the French-language research ecosystem in Canada, including continuing to support researchers in their applications for funding in French from Canada's granting agencies. This is in addition to funding of \$118,000 (2023–2024) for SARF provided by the Government in Budget 2021.

### Scientific Publication in French

The communication and mobilization of knowledge are a critical part of the work of researchers and research institutions. The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendations calling for financial support for scientific publication in French and for French-language and bilingual scholarly journals, and for the development of measures to encourage the bilingual scholarly journals that they fund to increase the percentage of articles they publish in French. The granting agencies support scholarly publications and journals in both French and English. For example, SSHRC funds scholarly publications through the Aid to Scholarly Journals (ASJ) grants, which support Canadian scholarly communication by helping journals to offset the costs associated with publishing scholarly articles, digital publishing and journal distribution on Canadian not-for-profit platforms. These grants help increase dissemination, discoverability and readership of original research results in the social sciences and humanities through Canadian scholarly journals and encourage the transition of journals to open access models of publishing. The agency monitors the application and award rates for English, French and, within the ASJ, bilingual publications. In advance of the most recent competition, in 2021 ASJ evaluation criteria and application instructions were reviewed and refined to emphasize flexibility in showcasing and evaluating journal impact, and de-emphasize traditional metrics, such as journal impact factor, which tend to disproportionately benefit English language publications. Recent ASJ grants data provides important observations, showing that the distribution of awards in the most recent competition for which data are available (2022) is balanced across bilingual (30.33%), French (31.15%), and English (38.52%).

In addition to the ASJ, the Awards to Scholarly Publications program (ASPP)—funded by SSHRC and administered by the Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences as the Scholarly Book Awards—funds scholarly books in Canada that

make important contributions to the humanities and social sciences. As part of the changes announced in April 2023, the awards now include increased funding for translation of work, providing up to five translation grants annually that support translations of scholarly books from English, French or an Indigenous language, to one of those same languages. In fiscal year 2022–2023, the program awarded one translation grant, with four applications still in process. Since 2020–2021 the ASPP has reviewed English and French applications separately, with a view to balancing the success rate of applications made in each language. In 2022–2023, the ASPP approved 78.1% of English publications applying for funding and 76.5% of French publications applying for funding; a total of 17.2% of grants were awarded to French applications.

The Government also acknowledges the Committee’s recommendation to support initiatives offering open access to French-language scientific research, such as the *Érudit* platform, by providing stable, predictable funding. Each of the granting agencies is committed to improving access to the results of its funded research, and to increase the dissemination and exchange of research results as per the *Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications*, which is applicable regardless of the language of research conducted. On July 4, 2023, the federal research granting agencies announced a review of the open access policy, with a goal of requiring that any peer-reviewed journal publications arising from agency-supported research be freely available in both official languages, without subscription or fee, at the time of publication. The review will consider impacts of open access on the broader research ecosystem, including publication in French. Language and the use of French in research publications is an important consideration and will be studied as part of the review’s consultations taking place in 2023 and 2024. The agencies anticipate release of a renewed open access policy by the end of 2025.

Existing granting agency initiatives align with the objective of the Committee’s recommendation to support open access to French-language scientific research. For example, SSHRC supports the Coalition Publica, a consortium of the Public Knowledge Project and the *Érudit* Platform. *Érudit* provides an open access infrastructure for scientific publications in French within the Pan-Canadian Knowledge Access Initiative. Following the success of this initiative, the Government is examining options for future granting agency support for Coalition Publica, including *Érudit*. In addition to SSHRC, CFI supports the Coalition Publica, with up to \$10 million in funding under the Major Science Initiatives Fund 2023-2029. Through this program, CFI is contributing to the ongoing operation and maintenance of research facilities of national importance in order to enable Canadian researchers to undertake world-class research. With support of CFI, Coalition Publica and *Érudit* will continue to strengthen research production, dissemination, and infrastructure in English and French, based on the principles of open access and open-source development.

In addition to the new funds allocated by the Government to support researchers and publications in French, the modernized *Official Languages Act* sets out that federal institutions shall take positive measures to support the creation and dissemination of information in French that contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge in any discipline. In addition, as part of the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028*, the Government will support strategic investments over the next five years, including regional support to better mobilize scientific knowledge within official language communities across Canada.

### Research Involving Canadian Francophone Communities

The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendation that it provide permanent funding for research involving Canadian Francophone communities. The granting councils facilitate and support research involving Francophone communities, including French-speaking OLMCs outside of Quebec. In 2016, CIHR engaged OLMC stakeholders, including the Consortium national de formation en santé, the Association francophone pour le savoir, the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie Canadienne, and the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, to better understand the needs of the OLMC research community. Among the key findings of these consultations was an identified and persistent lack of health data on OLMCs. In response to the recommendations of OLMC stakeholders, in 2021 CIHR launched a Catalyst Grant, "Official Language Minority Communities in Health Research," to support research initiatives aimed at generating knowledge on health issues faced by OLMCs. Through this grant stream, CIHR invested over \$1 million and supported 11 research projects. Supported work included research at the University of Ottawa to build and validate a linguistic information reference tool to foster collaborative research to improve health services for French-speaking OLMCs. The CIHR 2023 Spring Grant competition also saw the inclusion of a priority announcement on Health and Official Languages in Minority Communities, funding two French-language research projects with an investment of \$200,000. Going forward, CIHR will continue to work to build research capacity in OLMC in alignment with its 2021-2023 Strategic Plan commitments.

SSHRC also regularly funds research involving Canadian Francophone communities and related topics. Across all its programs, SSHRC awards upwards of \$8 million a year towards research projects related to official languages, linguistic duality and OLMCs. This represented \$25.5 million in funding support for 398 projects in the last three years. Research on and involving Francophones often takes place with post-secondary institutions that serve OLMCs. As these institutions are often smaller, they benefit from the progressive funding formulas and other measures, including from special allocations of Canada Research Chairs, to help compensate for smaller infrastructure and ensure sufficient support for their research capacity.

### Access and Use of Official Languages Data

The Government recognizes the Committee's recommendations to dedicate resources to support research community access and use of official languages data from the 2021 Census and future data from the *Survey on the Official Language Minority Population*. The Government agrees that research and knowledge about French-speaking OLMCs depends on access to data. That is why costs to access data, including data collected by Statistics Canada (StatCan), is an eligible expense per the *Tri-agency Guide on Financial Administration*. In addition, the Government of Canada supports the Canadian Research Data Centre Network (CRDCN), a research and training platform supporting the needs of over 2,000 researchers in the quantitative social and health sciences in Canada. The network is funded by SSHRC, CIHR, CFI, the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ), provincial governments, StatCan, and 42 primary and affiliated partner universities across Canada. The network is recognized as one of Canada's Major Science Initiatives, providing unique access to Statistics Canada data on 33 campuses across the country, including universities in Quebec and in French-speaking OLMCs, to advance knowledge and inform public policy, including access to StatCan data related to official languages.

As part of the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028*, in Budget 2023 the Government provided \$2 million over five years (2023-2024 to 2027-2028) to StatCan's Language Statistics Program to enrich the data ecosystem on children eligible for education in a minority official language to facilitate the Government's commitment to establishing a comprehensive estimate of the size of these populations, and to enable provinces and territories, school boards, and OLMCs to better plan and implement actions in support of their minority language rights. This new data will be made available to the public and for use by the research community. This funding is part of a broader commitment made in Budget 2023 to provide \$679.2 million over five years, starting in 2023-24, for PCH to support equal access to services of equal quality in education by working with provinces and territories to make high-quality minority-language education, opportunities for second-language learning, and bilingual government services more readily available across Canada.

### **Strategic Programs** (Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 13, 16, 17)

#### Enhance Access to Science Information in French

Enhancing the vitality and equality of the French language in Canadian society requires action and cooperation. That is why the Government is working with partners across Canada to improve coordination and enhance access to science information in French and strengthen Francophone post-secondary institutions. The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendation that the

federal granting agencies should develop support programs for science outreach, science communication and the mobilization of scientific knowledge in French across the country. The granting agencies are committed to enhancing access to scientific information in both official languages.

For example, CIHR is taking steps to expand the reach of its work and enhance the communication of scientific information in French. The agency is working to ensure that national funding opportunities, including pan-Canadian initiatives and networks, provide information and materials for the public in French and English. Through NSERC programs, applicants are encouraged to communicate the results of their research to stakeholders—locally, nationally, and internationally—sharing knowledge and promoting and advancing understanding of science and engineering. When applying for funding, NSERC expects researchers to demonstrate that their work is effective and influential, and that it reaches and is accessible to the intended audience. Indicators of impact may include knowledge mobilization, mentoring and promotion of a research culture in different languages. Applicants for funding opportunities may choose the language of communication according to their objectives and intended audience.

NSERC promotes science and scientific information in French and to Francophone communities. The agency administers science promotion campaigns, Science Odyssey and Science Literacy Week, both of which actively engage with Francophone audiences. Through these campaigns, NSERC partners with organizations in Quebec to deliver over 600 science promotion events in French, reaching over 200,000 participants across all age groups. In addition, NSERC's PromoScience program provided funding to close to 30 Francophone organizations to deliver French language science promotion activities. PromoScience supports hands-on learning experiences for young students and their teachers. Organizations funded by PromoScience are encouraged to provide materials in both official languages. Since 2017, PromoScience has funded 53 French-language initiatives, and in fiscal year 2020-21 alone, there were nine active PromoScience grants focused on OLMCs, including eight focused on French-speaking communities outside of Quebec. The NSERC Science Communication Skills grant is a pilot program currently under evaluation. The grant can support organizations providing science communication skills training to students, fellows, and faculty in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) from Canadian post-secondary institutions, teaching them how to effectively communicate science to the public.

SSHRC provides funding for scholarly and scientific exchange and knowledge mobilization through its core programs, such as Connection Grants, which fund events and outreach activities. In 2022-23, SSHRC funded 129 Connection Grant applications submitted in French, or 21.8% of all grants awarded. Knowledge dissemination and outreach costs are also eligible expenses within SSHRC research and partnership grants. Also contributing to science communication, as

previously noted, SSHRC funds scholarly publications directly through the Aid to Scholarly Journals funding opportunity and the Awards to Scholarly Publications program, administered by the Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences as the Scholarly Book Awards. The agency also recently renewed a partnership with the Québec Science Journal to promote mobilization of scientific knowledge in French by ensuring visibility of SSHRC-funded researchers who are showcased in the journal.

### Support for Research and Publication in French

The Government acknowledges and is assessing options in respect of the Committee's recommendation to develop and fund a Canada-wide strategy for supporting research and publication in French with partners across Canada, including through the review of the *Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications*. Translation costs associated with dissemination of findings are an eligible expense under the *Tri-Agency Guide on Financial Administration*, which is a comprehensive resource for grant recipients and institutions on the use of granting agency funding awards. The granting agencies remain committed to supporting research in French across the country and continuing to take concrete actions to address historic disproportions in funded research across both official languages. For example, over the last five years, CIHR has dedicated significant funding to French language applications, investing \$97 million in support of 928 applications for grants and awards received in French. The agency will continue to monitor research funding data to ensure equity in health research funding for French-speaking researchers; work with key stakeholders, such as universities and community organizations, to identify areas for improvement; and implement actions to further support health research in both official languages in Canada.

Within the implementation of its international framework, SSHRC is seeking opportunities to develop initiatives with French-speaking international partners in order to create further opportunities for collaborations in research and publications in French, leveraging Canada's linguistic duality as a strength of its research ecosystem. The agency is engaged, along with the FRQ, in the Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP), a grouping of over twelve global social sciences and humanities funders. T-AP works to support international collaboration in social science and humanities research by offering joint research calls in areas of strong potential for international collaboration. It also offers Canadian researchers opportunities to work with their peers in other Francophone countries such as France and Switzerland.

### Post-secondary Institutions in Official Language Minority Communities

The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendation that it develop a program for sustainable funding for post-secondary institutions in OLMCs, and that this program take into consideration the challenges that these institutions

face as regards their size, geography, and financial constraints. The granting agencies understand the challenges and unique considerations of French-speaking post-secondary institutions in OLMCs, and are working to build these considerations into the design and implementation of their programs. As highlighted earlier in this response, institutions serving OLMCs benefit from progressive funding formulas and other measures in granting funding programs. These measures can benefit post-secondary institutions in French-speaking OLMCs across Canada.

To further strengthen these institutions, in Budget 2023, the Government provided new funding of up to \$128 million for minority-language post-secondary education over four years (2024–2025 to 2027–2028). This investment is part of the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028*, to address the unique funding needs of minority-language post-secondary institutions and foster the development of strong learning environments and educational institutions. These investments are helping to ensure that minority-language post-secondary institutions can support the development of a professional and bilingual workforce able to contribute to the vitality of OLMCs. Recognizing the importance of the minority-language needs of the post-secondary sector, the Government is continuing to assess how best to support minority-language educational institutions.

The Government's approach to modernizing the *Official Languages Act* includes a commitment to strengthening opportunities for members of OLMCs to engage in quality learning—in formal, non-formal or informal settings—in their own language throughout their lives, from early childhood to post-secondary education. In Budget 2021, the Government increased funding available for official languages, including for post-secondary education in the minority language, by \$121.3 million over three years (2021–2022 to 2023–2024). This funding is helping meet the pressing needs of the post-secondary sector and to support strategic initiatives to support the vitality of post-secondary education in minority languages, including to mobilize scientific knowledge in French.

The Government acknowledges the Committee's recommendations related to the OCSA and recognizes the importance of monitoring and coordinating efforts for supporting research and scientific publication in French. The Government established the OCSA to strengthen science in decision-making, as scientific research and expertise are essential to ensuring Canadians are well informed and the Government has the necessary tools to address the most pressing issues we face as a country. The Government acknowledges the important role the Chief Science Advisor can play in supporting efforts to enhance the vitality and equality of French in science and knowledge exchange. The Government will consider how to most effectively inform decision-making for policies and programs for French within the federal research funding system, including how the Chief Science Advisor can support these activities.



## International Student Exchange

The Government recognizes the importance of supporting student exchange, including between Canada and countries and institutions in the international Francophonie, and acknowledges the Committee's recommendation to develop an international student exchange program for post-secondary institutions in the Francophonie. The Government knows that international students bring new ideas and increase Canada's innovation capacity. That is why the Government launched Canada's *International Education Strategy (2019-2024)*, which is working to diversify Canada's education sector, boost Canada's innovation capacity, promote global ties, and foster a vibrant Canadian economy. Led by Global Affairs Canada, the strategy is helping build relationships and promoting Canada's strong schools and programs of study in French. For example, the Study in Canada Scholarship program provides French-speaking post-secondary institutions the opportunity to strengthen and diversify their international linkages in support of academic and research excellence. Global Affairs Canada also organizes virtual and in-person recruitment fairs for Francophone international students, such as the Tournée ÉduCanada en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre 2023, which helped recruit students from Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cameroon. Building on this success, in the fall of 2023, GAC will organize the EduCanada Francophone Virtual Fair to assist Canadian post-secondary institutions to connect with students interested in studying in French in Francophone communities across Canada. The virtual fair is expected to engage 1,300 visitors from Africa, Europe, Middle East, and Latin America.

Through Canada's *International Education Strategy*, the Government has implemented a digital marketing strategy to diversify Canada's international education sector and address regional and demographic gaps, including to raise the profile of French-language programs. Global Affairs Canada promotes Francophone institutions directly to international students through the annual EduCanada advertising campaign. The 2022-23 campaign promoted Canadian educational institutions in Francophone minority communities in France, Senegal, Morocco, and Côte d'Ivoire. In addition, through the CanExport Associations program of the Trade Commissioner Service, GAC is supporting the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC) and the Réseau des cégeps et collèges francophones du Canada (RCCFC) to promote Canada's French-speaking post-secondary institutions.

The Government is also supporting measures to increase student mobility and make Canada a global centre for high-quality post-secondary education and research, like supporting the Mitacs Globalink Research Internship (GRI) and Globalink Research Awards (GRA) exchange programs. The programs support over 1,000 student exchanges between Canada and partner countries around the world each year, including students from the international Francophonie. The GRI programs build relationships between Canada and international partners by

attracting top students from partner countries to Canadian universities, including Francophone institutions in Quebec. Each year, these programs match exceptional international students with leading Canadian researchers for three-month research internships, with Mitacs funding student travel and accommodation. Students are provided with professional skills training, industry networking opportunities, and social and cultural experiences.

### **Conclusion**

The Government of Canada will continue to take actions that enhance the vitality of the French language. A diverse and inclusive research community is vital to a healthy innovation ecosystem that includes the talents, perspectives and ideas of minority language communities. The Government will consider the Committee's recommendations for supporting the vitality of French in science and research in Canada. These recommendations will support the Government in its work as it moves forward to address recommendations of the Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System, including its advice on the use of French in research.

The Government reiterates its thanks to members of the Committee for their dedication to undertaking this review and for their commitment to Canada's science and research community. The Government looks forward to engaging with the Committee, Francophones, the research community, and all Canadians on ways to leverage science and research to foster a prosperous and inclusive economy and society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Champagne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P.