

NEW VICTORIES, NEW CHALLENGES

ANNUAL REPORT 09/10

RDÉE
Canada

*The national Francophone
economic development network*

Canada 

RDÉE Canada

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**RDÉE CANADA HAS IMPROVED
ACCESSIBILITY TO VARIOUS PROGRAMS,
INCLUDING FEDERAL ONES, IN ORDER
TO SUPPORT THE RDÉES IN THE CREATION
AND CO ORDINATION OF APPLICABLE
COMMUNITY BASED CED AND HUMAN
CAPACITY BUILDING (HCB) PROJECTS.**

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Word from the Chair



RDÉE Canada is proud of its past and ongoing contributions to the economic development of Francophone and Acadian communities (FACs) for over a decade and will continue to do so. This is the 12th year of implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed in 1998 between the Government of Canada, represented by a number of ministers, and RDÉE Canada, representing FACs.

This memorandum of understanding marked the beginning of a most innovative and unique partnership. It allowed us to change to some degree the culture of FACs and strengthen their economic base, two developments that are critical to their future, and to make significant progress in all the regions of the country.

Looking back, it is important that we and our federal partners compile a summary of our key results and identify the main lessons learned in order to jointly determine what direction the economic development of FACs should take in the next decade. In this way, we will be able to fulfil our mandate and further the economic well-being of our country.

We are carrying out our mandate every day. RDÉE Canada actively contributes to the development of the Canadian economy through the support services provided to the Network by the RDÉE Canada team and through various projects such as the *Lauriers de la PME* national competition. In November, for the fifth year in a row, the *Lauriers de la PME* highlighted the entrepreneurial excellence of Francophone businesses in Canada. All the participants and Network employees agreed that it was a great success. Congratulations to all the winners!

RDÉE Canada is also pleased to have had the opportunity to promote Francophone economic development in Canada through the Place de la Francophonie 2010 Agrotourism Pavilion at the Olympic Games in Vancouver. At the event, tens of thousands of people were able to learn more about our network and about the economic potential of Francophone communities. A number of visitors were surprised to learn not only that it is possible to do business in French all over the country but also that our communities are economically thriving.

In order to address to some extent the skills shortage in Francophone and Acadian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the difficulty faced by immigrants with regard to employability and economic integration, RDÉE Canada has developed an economic immigration strategy with the help of various Canadian and French partners.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, who have demonstrated their commitment to our network throughout the year. We are now looking forward to another exciting year, one full of innovative projects! Let us work together to create a brighter economic future for Francophone communities! Keep up the good work!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gilles Croze', written in a cursive style.

Gilles Croze
Chair, RDÉE Canada

Word from the Director General



**THE GOVERNMENT OF
CANADA ACKNOWLEDGED
THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF
INVESTING IN THE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA'S
FACS BY SIGNING A MEMORAN-
DUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH
RDÉE CANADA IN 1998.**

How far we've come

When we established RDÉE Canada in 1997, our intent was to organize economic development in all Francophone and Acadian communities (FACs) in Canada, the stated priority of the community leaders who met at the three successive national conferences on the economy held in the early 1990s. With the help of the interested leaders, we established in each province and territory an economic development and employability network modeled on the national organization. The purpose of the network was nothing less than to help develop FACs that were vibrant, economically viable and essential to the maintenance and continued development of Canada. We have always considered economic development to be the keystone of community development and growth. In fact, without a viable economic base, the best schools, ideal cultural activities and effective health services are simply inaccessible. Moreover, the opportunity to work in French is vital to the development of FACs and virtually essential to the preservation of the linguistic and cultural identity of Francophones.

Realizing our vision consisted in providing FACs with access to the economic development programs and services offered by the federal government to the Anglophone majority in Canada. In our opinion, the Canadian government had and still has a mandate to take appropriate steps to ensure the viability of the communities, including curbing anglicization, cultural assimilation and the weakening of their community infrastructure. The forum for these discussions extended from the Board of Directors to the National Committee of Economic Development and Employability (CNDÉE), on which our Government of Canada partners were represented. In the first years of operation, we obtained the federal government's support for the CNDÉE's three-year

planning and strategic framework, which reflects the economic development needs of FACs. This was a first in the history of Canadian Francophonie, and we should all be proud of it.

We fondly remember that, in the fall of 2004, the Government of Canada held an in-depth consultation with community and government stakeholders in economic development, and the results of the study¹ clearly identified economic development needs and the positive measures required to meet them.

RDÉE CANADA, ALONG WITH THE RDÉE NETWORK, SUCCEEDED IN BREAKING INTO SOME EUROPEAN MARKETS, TO THE BENEFIT OF FAC BUSINESSES.

Following this consultation, the Ministry pledged the government's commitment to a long-term economic development strategy supported by a three-year administrative provision—the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities—which was extended to 2013 by the *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008–2013*.

The Government of Canada acknowledged the critical importance of investing in the economic development of Canada's FACs by signing a memorandum of understanding with RDÉE Canada in 1998. It then implemented a strategic mechanism for meeting its objectives: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's 1999 Support Fund and 2005 and 2008 Enabling Fund; Western Economic Diversification Canada's Francophone Economic Development Organizations Program; and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Vision projects. Since 1997, RDÉE Canada has been able to obtain over \$100 million in order to equip FACs with a nation-wide economic development network, which is essential to their future. Through its strategic

planning for community economic growth, RDÉE Canada has initiated a fundamental cultural change in the communities, which was no small feat.

However, it is interesting to note that 13 years later, FACs in a number of regions in Canada still lack appropriate support for their economic development, including business start-up and expansion. As a result, a number of the RDÉEs have been unable to truly contribute their resourcefulness and energy to the economic development of their communities. This unequal access to crucial economic tools is depriving these communities of their due, which is a terrible shame.

The financial support given to the RDÉE Canada network through the Enabling Fund is intended to provide the communities with access to the same benefits that the Canadian majority reaps from the host of economic development programs offered by federal institutions, in accordance with the mandate conferred on them by the government and Parliament. Federal interdepartmental co-operation must also extend to the two other levels of government through the implementation of complementary activities that stimulate the economic development or employability within FACs. We must recognize that the contributions made by a number of federal institutions to the economic development of FACs is still significantly less than it should be, given their programs, resources and influence. More specifically, Industry Canada, as the leader of the economic development departments and agencies, must take appropriate positive measures in order to fully exercise its leadership role.

In the aftermath of the severe economic recession, from which a number of FACs are having difficulty recovering given the magnitude of the setbacks they suffered, it is imperative that the Government of Canada take the appropriate positive measures to implement each of the four axes of the CDNÉE's strategic framework, approved during the fall 2004 consultation, and to ensure that RDÉE Canada's 2008 strategic planning is fully implemented.

The government must demonstrate its leadership to ensure that the mandate conferred on the CNDÉE in 1998 is achieved. The operating procedure of this national joint committee must be fundamentally changed to allow the government, along with RDÉE

Canada, to develop and take the appropriate measures to ensure the economic development of FACs.

Moreover, it is important to develop a tripartite strategy involving the community and the two levels of government of our federation in order to effectively support the economic development and employability of FACs. The strategy implemented in some provinces has a proven track record. It must now be expanded, strengthened and implemented in other regions of the country.

RDÉE Canada, along with the RDÉE Network, succeeded in breaking into some European markets, to the benefit of FAC businesses. The successful economic development of FACs depends on this. In the same vein, in response to the impending critical shortage of skilled labour, RDÉE Canada adopted an economic immigration policy that is already the envy of others. This part of our strategy is another necessary condition of the successful development of FAC businesses and, in turn, FACs themselves, especially given that Statistics Canada predicts that, from 2011 to 2015, 100% of the net labour force growth will result from immigration. Therefore, Francophone communities that are able to attract, retain and integrate immigrants will have a clear competitive edge.

Extensive research must also be an integral part of the government's support for the economic development of our communities.


The combined involvement of a several departments could support some aspects of various areas of economic activity in FACs. The spirit of co-operation between the federal government and FACs must be driven by the principles of equality between official language majorities and minorities, sufficient investment, institutional responsibility, partnership, parity, horizontality and obligation of result.

The degree to which these principles have been applied demonstrates how far we have come since 1997 and is a testament to the genuine cultural changes that can be observed today. At the same time, simply mentioning these principles makes us realize how far we still have to go. The fact is that most federal departments are not yet contributing

sufficiently to the economic development of FACs, and a good number of the provincial and territorial RDÉEs still lack the means to foster economic development in their areas. The issues raised above are significant. Together, we are called on to roll up our sleeves, arm ourselves with unrelenting determination and find ways to successfully meet these challenges, which include economic immigration.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of the Board of Directors, who have brilliantly represented their respective communities. I would also like to thank RDÉE Canada staff, who have demonstrated unwavering professionalism over the last year.

It has been an honour to work with you.


Roger Lavoie
Director General, RDÉE Canada

1 Pierre LeBlanc, *Initiative horizontale et paritaire visant le développement économique des communautés francophones et acadienne en milieu minoritaire : Rapport de recherche et de consultation*, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Ottawa: October 9, 2004.

Vision guiding our strategies

FRANCOPHONE AND ACADIAN COMMUNITIES (FACS) ARE LEADERS AND AN ESSENTIAL DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE CANADIAN ECONOMY.

Mission

RDÉE CANADA, ARCHITECT OF FAC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTES TO THE GROWTH OF THE CANADIAN ECONOMY.

Mandate

- INFLUENCES GOVERNMENT POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES SO THAT THEY MORE EFFECTIVELY MEET THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY NEEDS OF FACS.
- CONTRIBUTES TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY OF FACS.

Who are we?

Since it was established in 1997, RDÉE Canada, the only national economic development network serving Canada's Francophone and Acadian communities, optimizes the economic potential of these communities through 12 provincial and territorial organizations with over 100 economic development specialists.

The purpose of the CED strategy is to support existing and start-up businesses as well as industries and economic sectors, and to promote employability and community capacity building. This strategy provides various services to businesses and communities with respect to consulting, searching for financing, economic planning and skills acquisition, to name just a few areas.

Areas of action

Since 2004, as part of its community economic development strategy, RDÉE Canada has been responsible for planning and responding in two areas of action: community economic development (CED) and human capacity building (HCB). The national Network provides various services to communities and business people in order to create businesses, economic development projects and sustainable jobs.

Since the creation of the Network, we have been active in four main priority areas: tourism, rural development, youth entrepreneurship and employability, and knowledge-based economy. This year, we wanted to focus more on the needs of the communities and analysed the priority needs for which the Network could provide additional support. It was determined that, from then on, the Network would work on the following economic issues: tourism, the *Espace économique francophone canadien*

[Canada-wide Francophone economic space], the green industry and economic immigration. In the next year, RDÉE stakeholders from Canada's four FCA regions will form working groups on economic issues (WGEIs) that will help develop and implement the national economic development strategy at the regional level and promote co-operation among the stakeholders in the various regions. The WGEI issues will replace the priority areas mentioned above.

Support services

In addition to being a leader in the areas of employability development and entrepreneurship, the RDÉE Canada national office provides its provincial and territorial members with a vast array of support and intervention services, including strategic co-operation, communication, research and analysis, professional excellence, financing and strategic alliance activities, which flow from the strategic directions in its 2008–2013 planning.

As an example of support services, last November, RDÉE Canada brought together all the Réseau's employees for exchange on various issues through workshops on four main themes: tourism, domestic trade, economic immigration and results-based management. The overall objective of these workshops was to give the officers tools so that their work within the communities would be facilitated.

The workshop on tourism made our Canadian La Francophonie tourism developers more aware of the opportunity the 2010 Vancouver Games presented for promoting and highlighting experiences and tourist attractions in our provinces and territories for obtaining lasting and tangible benefits for all of La Francophonie in Canada.

The domestic trade workshop, which was part of the *Espace économique francophone canadien* initiative, was for better equipping officers to sensitize entrepreneurs or institutions that wish to do interprovincial business while also having to properly estimate their resources and capacities. The workshop also aimed to inform the officers regarding potential regulatory obstacles and to help entrepreneurs correctly determine what their objectives are.

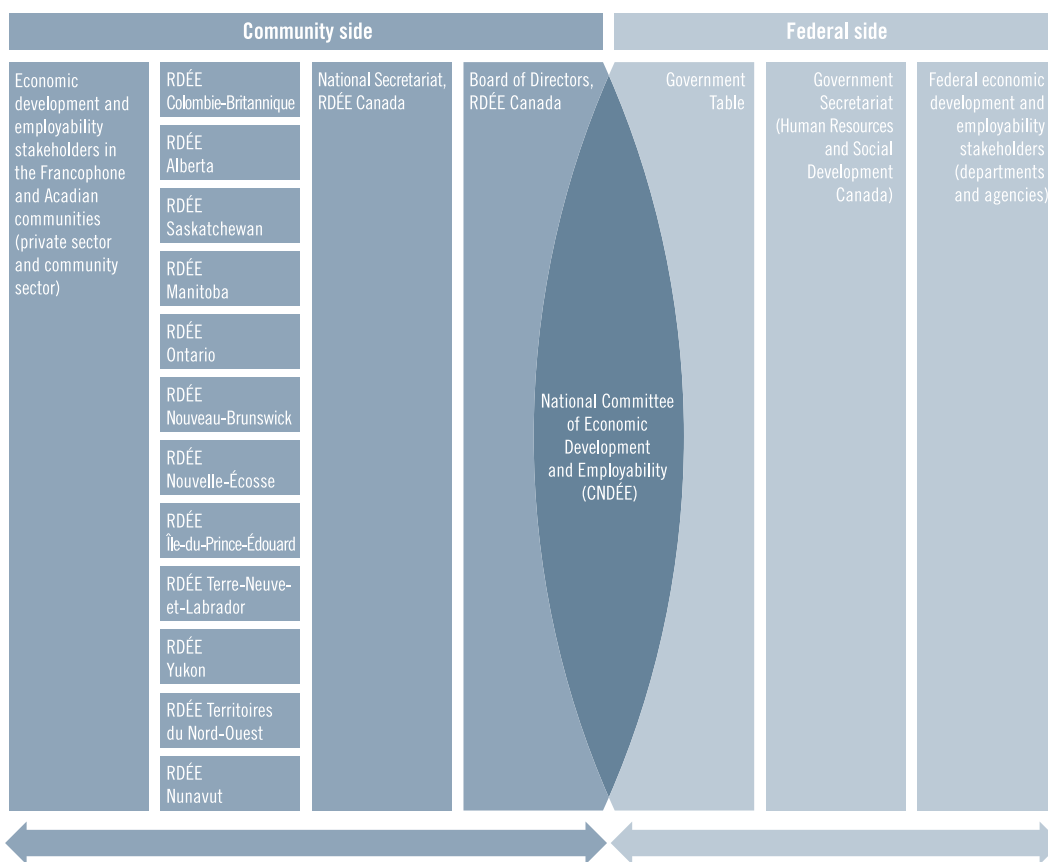
The workshop on economic immigration was for making Réseau officers conscious of the main challenges in recruiting qualified Francophone immigrants, fostering their economic integration and keeping them in our Francophone communities as well as helping them find Canadian employers. The overall strategy developed by RDÉE Canada for ensuring better integration of Francophone immigrants in Francophone and Acadian community job markets was presented.

The fourth workshop dealt with results-based management. The main objectives were to explain the use of data from the Réseau's socio-economic profiles as well as determining the necessary data for measuring performance indicators.

These four topics are presented in greater detail in the pages that follow.

**OUR ORGANIZATION
STRENGTHENS AND EXTENDS
THE INFLUENCE OF THE
NATIONAL RDÉE CANADA
NETWORK IN ORDER TO
SUPPORT THE CREATION
AND CO ORDINATION OF
COMMUNITY BASED CED
AND HCB PROJECTS.**

Network overview



National Committee of Economic Development and Employability (CNDÉE)

The National Committee of Economic Development and Employability (CNDÉE) is an instrument for bringing the Francophone and Acadian communities and the Government of Canada closer together. Its objective is to foster the economic development of Canadian Francophonie.

Within this national committee, RDÉE Canada exercises its role as special liaison with the federal government in matters relating to economic development and employability for Francophone minority communities across Canada. It advises the government on adapting policies, programs and services to better meet the economic development needs of these communities.

COMMUNITY SIDE

RDÉE Canada Board of Directors

RDÉE Canada is governed by a board of directors composed of entrepreneurs and business people. The board members represent the interests of all regions of the country: Eastern, Central, Western and Northern. Their knowledge is an excellent asset for our network. Moreover, their fields of experience help us achieve our mandate and leave a lasting legacy for Canada's Francophone community.

Gilles Croze, Co Chair, CNDÉE*

Roger Lavoie, Director General, RDÉE Canada*

Eastern region

- **Jean-Paul Deveau**, Director – Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
- **Armand Agabab**, Observer, Chair, RDÉE Terre Neuve et Labrador – St. John's, Newfoundland
- **Bernard Savoie**, Director – Chemin Caissie, New Brunswick
- **Adrienne Godbout**, Director – Grande Digue, New Brunswick

Central region

- **Pierre Bélanger**, Director – Earlton, Ontario
- **Simon Proulx**, Treasurer – Ottawa, Ontario*
- **Jacques Kenny**, Observer, Chair, RDÉE Ontario – LaSalle, Ontario
- **Collin Bourgeois**, Director – Sturgeon Falls, Ontario
- **Pascale Harster**, Director – Dundas, Ontario

Western region

- **Gilles Croze**, Chair – Delta, British Columbia (Co Chair, CNDÉE)
- **Louise Durand**, Vice Chair – Île des Chênes, Manitoba*
- **Michel Matifat**, Observer, Chair, RDÉE Colombie-Britannique – Vancouver, British Columbia
- **Suzanne Corneau**, Director – Calgary, Alberta

Northern region

- **Aminata Maiga**, Director – Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

* members of the RDÉE Canada Executive Committee

FEDERAL SIDE

- **Michel C. Caron**, Acting Co Chair, CNDÉE
- **Johanne Bourgeois**, Secretary General

Departments and agencies represented on the federal side of the CNDÉE

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency: Kurt Inder, Ghislaine Savoie

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: Anne Scotton

Agriculture and Agri Food Canada: Brian Murphy

Western Economic Diversification Canada: Jean Laberge

Fednor (*observer*): Grace Hodder

Industry Canada: David Gollob

Canadian Heritage: France Caissy, Jérôme Moisan, Jean Yves Cayen

Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Élise Lavigne, Myriam Trudeau

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada:

Michel C. Caron, Johanne Bourgeois, Pascal Dubé

Statistics Canada: Réjean Lachapelle, Christine Blaser

Public Works and Government Services Canada: Julie Paquette





RDÉE Canada team



- 1] Roger Lavoie
Director General
- 2] Richard Aubry
Director of Intergovernmental and
International Affairs
- 3] Nathalie Gélinas
Operations Director
- 4] Karine Silva
Director of Communications
- 5] Julie Dumoulin
Communications Assistant

Provincial and territorial Network member organizations

RDÉE Canada works with provincial and territorial organizations to facilitate the economic development of Francophone and Acadian communities. Each member of the Network is independent and constitutes a work unit. Some Network organizations are active only in employability development while others are also involved in economic development.

Each of the following organizations cares about the development of its Francophone communities and is making a great deal of effort to ensure their long-term survival. Thanks to the work of the Réseau officers, their advice and support, innovative projects are created all across la Francophonie in Canada. RDÉE Canada invites you to consult each of their websites and see for yourself all their good work and the results. You will note that our Réseau plays a significant role in the economic growth of Francophone and Acadian communities!

Conseil de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique

RDÉE Colombie-Britannique

Donald Cyr, Director General

Tel.: 604-732-3534 / Toll Free: 1-877-732-3534

www.sdecb.com

Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta

RDÉE Alberta

Marc Tremblay, Director General

Tel.: 780-414-6125 / Toll Free: 1-888-414-6123

www.lcdeca.ca

Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan

RDÉE Saskatchewan

Robert Therrien, Director General

Siriki Diabagaté, RDÉE Manager

Tel.: 306-566-6000 / Toll Free: 1-800-670-0879

www.ccs-sk.ca

Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba

RDÉE Manitoba

Louis Allain, Director General

Tel.: 204-925-2320 / Toll free: 1-800-990-2332

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RDÉE Ontario

Nicole Sauvé, Director General

Eastern region

Martine Plourde, RDÉE Manager

Central-Southern-Western region

Annie Dell, RDÉE Manager

Northern region

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Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick

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Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse

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La Société de développement de la Baie acadienne
RDÉE Île-du-Prince-Édouard
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RDÉE Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador
Christophe Caron, Director General
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www.rdeetnl.ca

RDÉE Yukon
Sophie Delaigue, RDÉE Manager
Tel.: 867-668-2663
www.rdee-yukon.ca

Conseil de développement économique
des Territoires du Nord-Ouest
RDÉE Territoires du Nord-Ouest
Sylvie Francoeur, Director General and
RDÉE Manager
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www.cdetno.com

RDÉE Nunavut
Daniel Lamoureux, RDÉE Manager
Tel.: 867-979-2801
www.definunavut.com

RDÉE Canada encourages you to consult the RDÉE
in your province or territory to see how your network
can help you.

Background on Francophone and Acadian communities

SPREAD OUT OVER NINE PROVINCES AND THREE TERRITORIES, FRANCOPHONE AND ACADIAN COMMUNITIES COMPRISE 1,053,800 PEOPLE WHOSE FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN IS FRENCH. THESE COMMUNITIES ACCOUNT FOR 14% OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CANADIANS WHOSE FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SPOKEN IS FRENCH.

NEARLY 14% OF FRANCOPHONES LIVE OUTSIDE QUEBEC, WHERE THEY ACCOUNT FOR 3.4% OF THE TOTAL POPULATION OF CANADA.

THE NUMBER OF CANADIANS OUTSIDE QUEBEC WHOSE MOTHER TONGUE IS FRENCH HAS INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY SINCE 1951—FROM 721,820 IN 1951 TO OVER A MILLION IN 2009

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA (2006 CENSUS)

Exciting Issues and Innovative Projects

Economic immigration: the answer to the shortage of skilled labour!

RDÉE Canada is focussed on economic immigration, a solution to labour force shortage and succession issues in businesses that will also increase the number of Francophones living outside Quebec. Economic immigration is one of the components of RDÉE Canada's employability strategy, which is consistent with the RDÉE Network's 2008–2013 strategic planning, Citizenship and Immigration Canada's directions (the CIC-FMC Steering Committee's strategic plan) and the logical framework of the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) Enabling Fund.

In the last year, RDÉE Canada has developed, in collaboration with its partners, a comprehensive economic immigration strategy designed to help immigrants who are trained abroad obtain jobs that make the most of their skills and experience, on the basis of labour market needs.

The approach is based on establishing relationships between employers and future skilled employees—in other words, establishing a direct link between job offers and applications. The approach is consistent with the memorandum of understanding (MOU) ratified in 2008 between RDÉE Canada and Pôle Emploi International Paris (PEI). This MOU allows them to pool their skills and resources to facilitate the placement of potential Francophone candidates who want to relocate to Canada. PEI is the international department for the French government's public employment service. Its role is to find jobs for French nationals who want to work abroad. Under the MOU, PEI is responsible for selecting potential candidates for positions offered by Canadian businesses.

The comprehensive strategy has three main components: Raising Employer Awareness, Recruitment, and Research.

STRATEGY] 1 [RAISING EMPLOYER AWARENESS
RDÉE Canada and its network endeavours to improve its ability to identify and meet SME workforce needs in the provinces and territories of the participating RDÉEs. Among other things, the approach focusses on:

- raising awareness among local employers: participating RDÉEs will raise awareness in the business community about the economic soundness of Francophone immigration and the economic rewards it represented for the whole community, while identifying and meeting SME workforce needs;
- adequate guidance for businesses with respect to recruitment: through their business officers, participating RDÉEs will adequately guide and support businesses in their recruitment strategies; and
- co-operation with the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP): to accelerate the hiring of skilled employees who want to settle in a Canadian province and become permanent residents.

The Raising Employer Awareness component of the strategy stimulates economic development and job creation by raising awareness among the targeted businesses (canvassing, surveys, SME banks, job fairs), by providing adequate guidance to SMEs in their recruitment (business officers), and by working with the provincial government (Provincial Nominee Program) and federal and business community partners.



Information session organized at Destination Canada (Paris, November 2009)



Recruitment of potential workers from Prince Edward Island at the RDÉE booth (Destination Canada).

The purpose of the pilot project approach is to test concepts with a view to identifying best practices and applying them to a larger-scale project. In this way, the national initiative can be tied to and compared with a provincial initiative.

This component is consistent with provincial and territorial approaches. In fact, various approaches were used in 2009–2010 by RDÉEs in Ontario, Alberta (CDÉA) and British Columbia (SDÉCB), in collaboration with RDÉE Canada, in an effort to implement and firmly establish the Raising Employer Awareness component in the targeted RDÉEs (Raising Employer Awareness component).

RESULTS

The Ontario RDÉE was funded in 2010 by the Citizenship and Immigration (CIC) regional office under this component (over \$800,000 and eight business specialists hired). The Alberta RDÉE began a collaborative initiative with the Province, and the organization hopes to obtain tangible medium-term results. The British Columbia RDÉE is working with the Province on economic immigration.

The Raising Employer Awareness component is closely linked to the Recruitment and Research components.

STRATEGY] 2 [RECRUITMENT

RDÉE Canada and its network is focussing on the selection and recruitment of actual and potential skilled immigrants in partnership with CIC's operations office and in association with external partners such as Pôle Emploi International Paris, the Canadian Embassy in Paris, and the international branches and immigration branch of CIC.

**OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS,
CANADA HAS RECEIVED MORE
THAN 372,000 FRANCOPHONE
IMMIGRANTS, NEARLY 77,500
OF WHOM HAVE SETTLED IN
FRANCOPHONE AND ACADIAN
COMMUNITIES IN CANADA.**

RESULTS

This component was funded in 2009–2010 by CIC's Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program, giving rise to promotion, recruitment and partnership liaison activities for Destination Canada 2009 (information for eligible immigrants on the economy and the employability in FACs).

STRATEGY] 3 [RESEARCH

RDÉE Canada and its partners, in collaboration with CIC and its partners, adopted a pilot project approach initially involving only a few RDÉE participants. On the basis of the results, the approach might be extended to the rest of the Network.

The main purpose of the research project was to analyse the feasibility of three pilot projects in three Canadian cities (Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver). The projects were designed to help Francophone immigrants come to Canada and to facilitate their economic integration outside Quebec by means of the Authenticated Job Bank. The primary function of this computerized job bank is to enable authenticated job offers from employers in Canadian provinces and territories (outside Quebec) to be directly matched with the job applications of skilled Francophone applicants from Pôle Emploi International.

The job bank, governed by set protocols and procedures, contains authenticated job offers, i.e. real offers made by businesses and considered authenticated because they have obtained all the required Canadian provincial and federal authorizations. These job offers will be entered into a secure dedicated site, via the RDÉE Canada site (www.rdee.ca), by business officers at the RDÉEs (in this case, the business officers involved in the BC, Alberta and Ontario pilot projects, but with the intention of expanding the pilot projects to the whole Network in the future). These job offers are live and ongoing on the Pôle Emploi International site so that they can be matched with job applications (potential candidates for each offer). Then, the list of potential candidates will be forwarded to the participating RDÉEs so they can present the applications to the businesses, a partnership approach based on the agreed-upon strategies.

It should be noted that only those involved in matching the job applications and offers (entrepreneurs, through provincial and territorial RDÉEs and Pôle Emploi International) will have access to the Authenticated Job Bank via www.rdee.ca, with secure access given in advance by RDÉE Canada.

RESULTS

This component was funded in 2009–2010 by the CIC's Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program. The results of the three pilot projects (Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver) are as follows:

1] The pilot job bank included participants from three Canadian cities (Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver) and was tested on a population of 10,142 selected businesses that had a future need for skilled labour in the desired sectors and corresponded to the sectors of the Pôle Emploi applications. The number of businesses surveyed in each city was determined on a per-capita basis for the three provinces in which the cities are located: 2,243 businesses for Vancouver, 2,842 for Calgary and 5,057 for Toronto. In addition to the direct survey, each participating RDÉE contacted its network of businesses directly, where possible, and sent them the tools and questionnaires developed.

The output data of the on-line survey showed an interest in the project—the preliminary results revealed that fourteen (14) businesses (comprising a total of 88 positions) agreed to be contacted for the authentication process. There were 88 future skilled positions (management level) to be staffed (in the next three months), of which half belong to two sectors—the business, finance and administration sector and the sales and service sector. Although it was highly targeted by the survey, the health sector represented only 3% of the 88 positions to be filled. This, among other things, could be explained by the barriers to entry in the health professions.

Note: We must, however, acknowledge that a follow-up must be done with businesses before the survey results can be presented. Only this step will allow us to determine how many positions were filled through this project. The follow-up will also allow us to



(Left to Right): Richard Aubry, Director of Intergovernmental and International Business, RDÉE Canada; Stève Gentili, President of the Forum Franco-ophone des Affaires; Robert Djellal, Advisor to the minister responsible for integration and integrated development; Gilles Croze, President of RDÉE Canada; Roger Lavoie, Director General of RDÉE Canada, during an economic mission.



(Left to Right): Roger Lavoie, Director General of RDÉE Canada; Gérard Larcher, President of the Senate (France); Richard Aubry, Director of Intergovernmental and International Business, RDÉE Canada; Karine Silva, Director of Communications, RDÉE Canada.

identify businesses that want to be contacted later for future labour force needs. Other results are expected following a field visit by certain players.

2] RDÉE Canada and the Forum Francophone des Affaires (www.ffa-int.org), in partnership with Pôle Emploi International Paris, launched the Authenticated Job Bank on March 29, 2010. This project is also supported by the Organisation internationale de la francophonie; the French minister of Co-operation and Francophonie, the French minister of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Solidary Development, the French minister of Work and Social Affairs; the French secretariat responsible for employment; the Canadian Embassy in France; and the French Embassy in Canada.

3] RDÉE The three pilot projects allowed us not only to stock the Authenticated Job Bank (since the job offers from Canadian businesses must be authenticated), but also to test our methodology and refine, as necessary, the different approaches that could be used to implement other projects in other Canadian cities.

“[Translation] To date, this initiative has enabled us to make contacts in the tourism and engineering sectors, where there is a real labour shortage. RDÉE Alberta has benefitted greatly from this initiative. The entrepreneurial world here has a direct liaison in us,” said Marie-Laure Polydore, economic development officer for the Conseil de développement économique de l’Alberta (RDÉE Alberta).

² If it has not already been arranged or is not in the process of being arranged, it is important that certain RDÉEs receive funding from CIC and/or their province in the future so that they can hire business officers (who work directly with the businesses and in association with the provinces and partners to recruit skilled workers) and organize awareness-raising events for businesses on international recruitment. This is an important part of the process, as these officers will directly enter the authenticated job offers on the secured site.

An international agreement was signed to revitalize the economy of FACs and of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon

RDÉE Canada and SODEPAR (SOCIÉTÉ de Développement et de Promotion de l'Archipel Saint-Pierre et Miquelon) ratified a memorandum of understanding in May 2009 to formalize collaboration and mutual support between the two partners. The objective of this agreement is to help consolidate an international Francophone network to maximize the impact on the economic vitality of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon and Francophone and Acadian communities in Canada. The two parties are committed to sharing their experiences for the benefit of Francophone communities.

The agreement was signed at the French Embassy in Ottawa by Gilles Croze, President of RDÉE Canada, his Director General Roger Lavoie, Stéphane Artano, President of the Conseil Territorial and Chief Executive Officer of SODEPAR and Thierry Baslé, Director of economic development with SODEPAR. There were numerous guests of honour in attendance, including François Delattre, French Ambassador to Canada, Senator Gérald Comeau, Senator Denis Detchevry, Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages, François Guimont, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, and Carmen Sylvain, Director General, European Union, at DFAIT.

“We have been working with SODEPAR for almost two years. Signing this memorandum of understanding is a way of formalizing this association. Our two organizations are particularly active in the area of economic development. Together, we want to provide the Network’s Francophone and Acadian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with an official doorway to Europe and vice versa

through Saint-Pierre et Miquelon,” said Roger Lavoie, Director General of RDÉE Canada.

“As indicated on several occasions by the President of the Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, and the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper, France and Canada share a conviction that the development of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon will be achieved by fully integrating it [economically] into its regional environment. This is why we see cooperation with Canada as a major priority. We are seeking joint and mutually beneficial development, in which everyone wins. Networking, sharing information and best practices and creating businesses are just some of the objectives that RDÉE Canada and SODEPAR share. This agreement will allow you to work even more closely in this regard to create a true Francophone business community that would include Saint-Pierre et Miquelon alongside its Canadian neighbours and partners,” said François Delattre, French Ambassador to Canada.

As expressed by Mr. Artano and Mr. Croze, this co-operation has seen concrete results over the past several months through the creation of projects that encourage discussion and the transfer of knowledge between the signing parties.



(Left to Right): Roger Lavoie and Gilles Croze of RDÉE Canada; François Delattre, French Ambassador to Canada; Stéphane Artano and Thierry Baslé of SODEPAR, during an event organized at the French Embassy for signing of the memorandum of understanding.



Stéphane Artano, president of the Conseil Territorial [translation: territorial council] and CEO of SODEPAR, and Gilles Croze, President of RDÉE Canada signing the memorandum of understanding.

[ADDITIONAL INFORMATION]

The memorandum of understanding sets forth areas of co-operation, including:

- Management of organizational knowledge and learning, which may, for example, include the exchange of a strategic intelligence function, the sharing of tools and collaboration in professional development;
- Research, development and preparation of joint studies;
- Communications and marketing. In this regard, the partners could share their communication tools, exchange information in all aspects of media relations and serve as contacts for economic and institutional stakeholders;
- Creation of an economic context conducive to the development of business in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon and in Canada's Francophone communities, possibly consisting of economic exchanges between the partners and their own networks – Canada, France, Overseas Countries and Territories;
- In such cases, the various audiences would need to be informed of the economic potential of the Archipelago and Canada's Francophone communities, businesses would need to be informed of tax and institutional regulations, promoters of viable projects would have to be supported, and the creation of new businesses would have to be sought and encouraged;
- Administrative management – joint development of management tools and joint submission of funding requests to financial backers.



(Left to Right): Karine Silva, Director of Communications, RDÉE Canada; Gilles Croze, President of RDÉE Canada; Marcel-Pierre Cléach, Senator from la Sarthe; Roger Lavoie, Director General of RDÉE Canada, Richard Aubry, Director of Intergovernmental and International Business, RDÉE Canada; Stéphanie Bowring, Parliamentary Assistant to Denis Detcheverry, Senator from Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon, during an economic mission held in Paris in 2009.

Economic mission to the Saint-Pierre et Miquelon Archipelago: doorway to Europe for Canadian SMEs

In the spirit of the memorandum of understanding entered into in May 2009, an initial economic mission visit took place the following month to mobilize prospective partners and stakeholders. The mission opened a dialogue on the different marketing mechanisms and processes available to establish the Bureau de Marketing et de la Mise en Marché (B3M SPM).

A second economic mission travelled to the Archipelago in September 2009. RDÉE Canada and representatives of two Canadian Francophone businesses travelled to Saint-Pierre et Miquelon from September 14 to 18, 2009, as part of the “B3M SPM.”

The goal of this economic visit, organized jointly by RDÉE Canada and the Conseil Territorial de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, and supported by SODEPAR, was to help open European markets to Canadian Francophone businesspeople via Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. The Archipelago offers various advantages, including its strategic position in North America that makes it the gateway to Europe, its competitive taxation, its skilled workforce and proximity, the availability and expertise of its public administration and the relative ease of starting up a corporation (reasonable time and costs).

Representatives of two Ontario businesses (Bisons du Nord – livestock production and food products; SOLEXOM Inc. – language products) interested in exporting to targeted European markets participated actively in this “test” of the Saint-Pierre et Miquelon advantage.

Targeted working meetings and operational workshops were held during this mission promoting dialogue and discussion between the participants. A marketing mechanism was established according to facts such as needs, opportunities and constraints. The main topics discussed included non-taxation, local capital assistance code, assistance with working capital, customs exemptions, labour code applicable to Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, visas and French and European standards for consumption of foodstuffs. In addition, both Canadian entrepreneurs made contact with businesspeople in the Archipelago with a view to creating a business association in future.

RDÉE Canada’s role also involved providing advice to the SMEs so that they could create tangible business partnerships and break into the European market.



(Left to Right): Armand Agabab, Outgoing president of RDÉE, Newfoundland and Labrador; Roger Lavoie, Director General of RDÉE Canada; Karine Silva, Director of Communications, RDÉE Canada; Thierry Basle, Director of Economic Development for SODEPAR; Pierre Bélanger, Owner of Bisons du Nord; Ludovic Guerpillon, President of SOLEXOM Inc.; Richard Aubry, Director of Intergovernmental and International Business, RDÉE Canada, during an exploratory mission in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon.



Presentation "The Economic, Commercial and Regulatory Contexts and the Benefits of having Facilities in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon".



Presentation "The Economic, Commercial and Regulatory Contexts and the Benefits of having Facilities in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon". (Right: Stéphane Artano, President of the Conseil Territorial of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon).



Roger Lavoie, Director General of RDÉE Canada, during a televised interview (RFO, Saint-Pierre et Miquelon).



Ludovic Guerpillon, President of SOLEXOM Inc.



Pierre Bélanger – Owner, Bisons du Nord.

Canada-wide Francophone economic space Do you speak French? Let's do business!



Espace économique francophone canadien

The mission of the Espace économique francophone canadien (EÉFC) [Canada-wide Francophone economic space], an initiative developed by RDÉE Canada and the Réseau des SADC du Québec, is to foster economic growth of Francophone businesses in Canada and abroad* and to help Francophone entrepreneurs gain better positions in and provide increased input to the economy in their respective communities, through shared expertise, business opportunities, markets and discovering how different business could work well together.

The Espace économique francophone canadien initiative addresses the need to create a space that will benefit Francophone entrepreneurs. It represents a new path for Francophone entrepreneurs who want to start up companies, do business in French and who have French-language economic development projects under way.

* This is accomplished through our initiative *Bureau du marketing et de la mise en marché de Saint-Pierre et Miquelon (B3M SPM)*. The goal of this initiative is to facilitate relationships and trade between business communities and SMEs in FACs and abroad by helping our SMEs take advantage of business opportunities in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon.

The primary services offered and activities organized by this initiative are:

- Identification of business opportunities
- Guidance strategies for entrepreneurs

- Mentoring and creation of consortiums between Francophone entrepreneurs.
- Networking between the member organizations of our two networks in order to promote dialogue between businesses.

While dozens of businesses have benefited from the expertise of our two economic networks and created exchanges and business opportunities since 2007, these initiatives have in fact helped create jobs for *hundreds* of people.

Examples of economic impacts and business success stories

- JABNEEL Construction, a Quebec pre-fabricated housing company, was created in Lamont, Alberta, in 2007. Thanks to contacts made through our initiative, JABNEEL generated approximately \$12 million in revenue. The company created four jobs and hired contract construction teams.

Following some major investments, the company submitted a proposal for the development of a semi-rural community. Business forecast: the project is valued at \$90 million over 5 to 10 years.

- A six-person delegation from Saskatchewan travelled to Gaspésie from March 2 to 5, 2009. The target sectors were wind energy, agri-food, tourism and fish processing. This mission helped create partnerships between entrepreneurs and economic leaders and developing new strategic alliance projects.

- A six-person delegation from Haute-Gaspésie specializing in seafood processing travelled to Saskatchewan from March 1 to 5, 2010. Cusimer, Atkins et frères and Les Crustacés des Monts are Gaspé-based companies that created new trade alliances in order to market their products. These companies hired 120 employees.

“The specific purpose of L’Espace is to assist French-speaking Canadian entrepreneurs in taking advantage of business opportunities as well as to have access to business markets in Canada and abroad. It is essential to let people know that business can be done in French everywhere in Canada,” said Roger Lavoie, Director General of RDÉE Canada.

- E-Mission Free, a Manitoba company operating in the environmental technology field, found several potential clients in the Granby region. Serious discussions are under way with a view to selling products in Quebec, which would represent up to \$2.5 million in sales over the next three to five years. The two companies are in talks to create a strategic alliance, which would result in the construction of a factory in Quebec and economic benefits totalling in the tens of millions of dollars.
- A delegation of five Manitoba companies travelled to Granby in March 2010. JR Stephenson Inc. of Manitoba entered into a partnership with CSTM of Granby to facilitate the delivery of a major contract. Over the next three to five years, the Manitoba company expects this partnership to represent additional sales of \$1 to \$5 million.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS THIS INITIATIVE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

- Improved offer of French-language services for Francophone business communities.
- Increased number of exchanges and alliances between the Francophone SMEs served by our networks.
- Complementarity and sectoral compatibility between Quebec firms and those of FACs.
- More tenders by small Francophone enterprises in response to private and public invitations to tender.
- More successful tenders.
- Increase in knowledge and in our capacity to identify sectors and SMEs with a high potential for trade and alliances.
- Increased awareness of Francophone entrepreneurs in Canada.
- Larger business volume between the Francophone SMEs served by our networks.

THE GOAL OF OUR NETWORK IS TO SHOWCASE THE DYNAMISM OF FRANCOPHONE SMES OUTSIDE QUEBEC IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANADIAN ECONOMY, AND EMPHASIZE THAT THE CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE IS AN ADDED VALUE IN ALL PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES. AN INCREASING NUMBER OF SMES ARE CREATING JOBS AND DIVERSIFYING CANADA’S ECONOMY. THEIR GROWTH IS WITHOUT A DOUBT A MEASURE OF PROSPERITY FOR FRANCOPHONE AND ACADIAN COMMUNITIES AND FOR CANADA AS A WHOLE.

Green industry

When the branches met in March 2010, they agreed that the RDÉE Canada Network would commit to a national green industry development strategy. To carry out this national strategy, they also agreed to create a working group on the economic issues facing the green industry that would bring together individuals from RDÉEs interested in these issues. Created in 2010, this group will be responsible for developing and implementing the national green industry development strategy at the regional level and promoting co-ordination among stakeholders in the different regions.

We are acting on the principle that the environmental protection, economic growth and job growth objectives can be achieved at the same time. The key to fostering a green economy lies in the careful orchestration of Francophone and Acadian SMEs. SMEs, including those in Francophone and Acadian communities, will require innovative solutions to consume less energy, reduce pollution of the air, water and soil, and tackle these pollution issues. To benefit from the potential offered by green industry, we must make every effort to position our SMEs within this industry. The green industry includes sectors associated with wind and solar energy, bioenergy, offshore energy, green transportation, green buildings and green materials. The green industry generates new revenue opportunities, such as the development of more effective products, clean technologies and innovative informatics solutions.

According to an International Labour Organization study,² approximately 100,000,000 jobs are being created today by renewable energy, recycling activities, waste processing and new construction methods and all these activities are becoming ever more popular. This would suggest a labour shortage in this sector for the next few years. The market for environmental products and services was valued at \$1.37 trillion billion per year in 2008 and is expected to double by 2020. At the global level, the renewable energy sector is already creating more new positions than those created each year by sectors producing energy from fossil fuels. According to Environmental Careers

Organization (ECO Canada), the increase in the estimated number of environmental jobs in Ontario was expected to be triple that of the number of other jobs, between 2006 and 2011³.

From a broad conceptual perspective, employment will be affected in at least four ways as the economy is oriented toward greater sustainability:

- Additional jobs will be created—as in the manufacturing of pollution-control devices added to existing production equipment.
- Some employment will be substituted—as in shifting from fossil fuels to renewables, or from landfilling and waste incineration to recycling.
- Certain jobs will be eliminated without direct replacement—as when packaging materials are discouraged or banned and their production is discontinued.
- Many existing jobs (such as plumbers, electricians, metal workers and construction workers) will be transformed and redefined as day-to-day skill sets, work methods and profiles are greened.

This is why it is important that we put strategies in place to redeploy workers in declining economic sectors, strengthen the skills of current workers or offset the shortage of skilled workers through such approaches as economic immigration.

What should the green industry profile of Francophone and Acadian businesses look like, and what must be done to create it? What path must we take? What challenges must we face? What role must the governments and Francophone and Acadian SMEs play to transform this vision into action? How do we strengthen (green) Francophone and Acadian SMEs? These are all questions that could guide the working group's discussions on the economic issues of the green industry in Francophone and Acadian communities.

82% of Canadian executives believe that a response to climate change is imperative today and plan an immediate increase in spending for climate change initiatives.

71% of respondents indicate that their company already has an enterprise-wide climate change program targeting key business drivers, and another 11% are planning for implementation in the next 12 months.

While globally, 70% of those surveyed expect their companies' spending on climate change initiatives to increase over the next two years, 82% of Canadian companies plan to increase their spending in this regard.

The investment will be significant with nearly half of Canadian respondents planning to spend between 0.5% to more than 5% of their revenue on climate change initiatives. For a US\$ 1 billion company, this represents anticipated spending of between US\$ 5million and US\$ 50 million annually.¹

¹ Ernst & Young, Action amid uncertainty: the business response to climate change, May 2010

² OIT, Emplois verts, faits et chiffres, septembre 2008

³ Eco, transition du marché du travail : un remède pour les pénuries de main-d'œuvre en environnement, Calgary, 2007, p.7

Performance measures

The performance measures included in the Enabling Fund and the Linguistic Duality Economic Initiative of the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013 are of paramount importance for the economic development of FACs.

The performance measures are rooted in the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, which seeks to "take advantage of the economic benefits of linguistic duality, and strengthen support for the economic development of official language minority communities." Economic development is one of the five key investment areas and one of the five areas for government action in the Roadmap. For Canadians, according to the Roadmap, the Enabling Fund means continued support for minority-community economic and labour-market development, through partnerships, development plans and capacity building. Having two languages of international scope puts Canada at the forefront of societies with knowledge-based economies. This asset allows Canadian businesses easier access to global markets and partners.

As part of the Roadmap, the government is implementing the Economic Development Initiative to help foster the development of new business expertise in community members. For Canadians, this will mean economic development tailored to their regional needs, through innovation, entrepreneurship, partnerships and diversifying economic activities, and Canadian companies that are industry leaders and internationally competitive. In addition, each economic development federal institution is responsible for creating and implementing positive measures to support the economic development of official language minority communities.

Several guidelines in the performance measurement framework were created following a meeting of all RDÉE Canada Network managers and presidents:

- 1] The presidents of the Network's board of directors shall encourage common, comparable performance measures and practices;
- 2] These common performance measures shall respect the diversity and specific characteristics of the provinces and territories;

- 3] The performance measures may result in positive and negative consequences that need to be justified and validated;
- 4] The performance measures must be fair;
- 5] They must be based on well-being and oriented toward a performance improvement approach;
- 6] The performance measures are rooted in the self-management and self-accountability approach of the RDÉEs;
- 7] They are also based on the principle of collective performance accountability for the RDÉE network as a whole: a mutual support and intervention agreement is in place in cases of unsatisfactory performance.

Database

In 2009-2010, RDÉE Canada entered information into and updated a national database where provincial and territorial RDÉE activities have been filed. This database contains a great deal of information on the activities carried out in FACs. It is primarily a data collection tool but is specifically used to share best practices between Network organizations.

The RDÉE Canada Network database will undergo changes next year in order to update its performance measures. This unifying project will make it possible to collect additional quantitative data from Franco-

phone and Acadian communities outside Quebec. In particular, it will help us share knowledge among community players via a virtual national library. For 13 years now, our Network has been fostering the growth of Francophone minority communities in Canada. Therefore, we want to allow government, community and private organizations to have access to concrete results that will create programs and services for the benefit of Francophone communities in Canada. RDÉE Canada's aim is to become a leader in Canada in the field of data collection and the production of direct results.



RDÉE Canada at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics

RDÉE Canada took advantage of the Vancouver Winter Olympics, which took place from February 12 to 28, to promote its Network and some of its projects. Our organization is pleased to have had the opportunity to promote Francophone economic development in Canada at the Place de la Francophonie 2010 Agrotourism Pavilion. In addition, our presence was a golden opportunity to promote the role that we play in fostering the economic integration of French-speaking immigrants in Canada. It is exceptionally important to promote the fact that is possible to work in French in all Canadian provinces and territories, a fact that is not well known.

THIS WAS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE FRANCO-PHONE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN CANADA, WHICH DIRECTLY AFFECTS FRANCOPHONE TOURISM PROMOTERS

Furthermore, one of RDÉE's partners, the Société de Développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique (SDECB), played an exceptional role at this international event. The SDECB did a remarkable job in promoting the participation of Francophones at the Agrotourism Pavilion, located at the Place de la Francophonie. Through their efforts, along with those of the Corridor touristique de l'Ouest, the four Western RDÉEs (Société de développement de la Colombie-Britannique, Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta, Conseil de coopération de la Saskatchewan and the Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba) were able to showcase their tourist attractions to tens of thousands of tourists who came to discover our Canadian marvels. *"This was a wonderful opportunity to promote Francophone tourist attractions in Canada, which directly affects Francophone tourism promoters,"* said Gilles Croze, RDÉE Canada President.

In recognition of entrepreneurial excellence in Francophone and Acadian communities



On November 7, 2009, in Ottawa, RDÉE Canada held the awards gala for the fifth edition of the Lauriers de la PME competition. This national competition, held every two years, showcases Francophone businesses in the Canadian economy. This high-profile event, held at the Fairmont Château Laurier, was attended by some 300 guests, including representatives of the 40 nominated businesses from Canada's nine provinces and three territories, public and private partners and members of the Network.

"The Lauriers de la PME competition highlights the importance that Francophone businesses operating in provinces and territories outside Quebec have for Canada's economy. These businesses provide strong leadership support for community economic development endeavours and foster a work environment in which

employees can grow and develop. In short, these guiding lights serve as models for those who dream of some day achieving the same level of success. The growing number of such businesses represents a symbol of the prosperity of Francophone minority communities in Canada," said Mr. Croze, RDÉE Canada President, at the launch of the competition in February 2009.

Mr. Croze said he was also *"delighted to see the extent to which the finalists are an example of the entrepreneurial spirit that exists within Canada's Francophone and Acadian minority communities."* Attendees watched as four companies took home awards in the following categories: Processing Companies, Commercial Service Companies, Speciality Service Companies and Micro-companies.



RDÉE CANADA WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE ALL THE LAURÉATS BUT ALSO ALL THE FINALISTS THAT SUBMITTED THEIR NOMINATIONS FOR THE LAURIERS DE LA PME 2009 COMPETITION!

Recipients

In the **Processing Companies** category, the award was presented to **A.F. THERIAULT & SON LTD** from Baie Ste-Marie, Nova Scotia. This company was created in 1938 by Augustin Theriault and is one of the largest privately owned shipyards in the Atlantic region in the field of boatbuilding and repair.



Christine Thériault, Aimée Thériault, Arthur Thériault and Gilles Thériault receiving their awards from Kurt Inder, Manager, Official Languages and Multiculturalism at the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

"We are convinced that the competition as a whole provides evidence of credibility. The fact that we won the award in the Processing Companies category in a national competition is something we plan to promote within our market, which includes governments and the private sector."

Gilles Theriault

The winner of the **Commercial Service Companies** competition was **DOLYNNY PHARMACY HOLDINGS "SHOPPERS DRUG MART"** in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The company distinguished itself by its pioneering services, as the owner, Darryl Dolynny, has implemented free drug delivery and support from health professional to all communities in the northern part of the Territory.



Cindy Dolynny and Daryl Dolynny receiving their award from Denise Deschamps (left), Initiatives Officer and in charge of economic development at Fed/Nor Industry Canada.

"This competition is very motivating and gives you the opportunity to speak in French. After I received the award, the newspapers in the province (French-language as well as English-language) promoted the fact that we are a Francophone company."

Darryl Dolynny

The award for the **Specialty Service Companies** category went to **LAFLÈCHE ENVIRONNEMENTAL INC.** of Moose Creek, Ontario. This company, founded by André Lafèche in 1980, has cutting-edge technology and is working to provide long-term waste disposal solutions today and a sustainable legacy for tomorrow.



André Lafèche and Claudette Lafèche receiving their awards from Shelly Glover (centre), Parliamentary Secretary for the Official Languages at Canadian Heritage and Member from Saint-Boniface, Manitoba.

"All my life I have worked to make a difference. All of a sudden, it's like a renaissance. It is gratifying that my work and the fact that I have always followed my dreams has been recognized."

André Lafèche

The winner of the **Micro-Companies** category is **OOPS! DESIGN INC.** of Edmonton, Alberta. Created in 2006 by Marie-Pierre Castonguay and Ross Bragg, this company provides a range of services including the creation of dynamic Web sites, games, animations, databases, brochures, posters and pamphlets.



Marie-Pierre Castonguay and Ross Bragg receiving their award from Lyne Rivard (left), Special Projects Development representative at *Journal Les Affaires*.

"This competition was very gratifying for us. We have received a great deal of visibility, especially since we won! This was a wonderful experience."

Marie-Pierre Castonguay

Special Award!

The selection committee presented two special awards at the gala. The first went to **MAISON BEAUSOLEIL INC.**, of Négouac, New Brunswick. The company, led by Amédée Savoie and Maurice Daigle, is in the oyster industry.



Amédée Savoie and Carole Savoie receiving their award from Marc Brazeau (right) of the firm Marcil Lavallée and selection committee representative.

"I appreciated the fact that I could meet entrepreneurs from across Canada, especially those in the food service sector. It was a great opportunity to make business connections. It was a truly positive experience."

Amédée Savoie

The second special award went to **VICTORIAN EPICURE INC.** in Victoria, British Columbia. This company, founded by Sylvie Rochette in 1991, specializes in manufacturing food products and spice blends. Since 2000, the company's sales have jumped by an unbelievable 1,269%.



Marc Trottier receiving the award from Marc Brazeau (left) of the firm Marcil Lavallée and selection committee representative.

"This competition was a wonderful celebration! Our special award enhances the feeling of pride our entire team has in working for this company!"

Marc Trottier

Visibility of the competition

Our event was promoted nationally and was featured on television channel TVA's program *Viens voir ici!*

The special episode provided an overview of the diversity of the Franco-Canadian economy: it profiled the leaders of our communities and described to viewers the realities and challenges facing Francophone small and medium enterprises across much of the country.

RDÉE Canada would like to thank all the partners that made this competition possible

The competition enjoyed the support of a range of public and private partners: Canadian Heritage (PCH), the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC), Industry Canada and the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) are the federal partners that contributed to the *Lauriers de la PME 2009*. Some of the private partners that supported the competition

include the Fairmont Château Laurier, Journal Les Affaires, Power Corporation, Marcil Lavallée, Shift Central, Delta Ottawa, Voyages Rideau, Productions Rivard, Survival System, PRA Inc., Distantia and Infusion Design.

Having a greater awareness of the challenges and needs of minority Francophone entrepreneurs

This event also provided an opportunity to begin consultations with all 40 finalists of this competition, which is geared to businesspeople in Francophone and Acadian communities throughout the country. Industry Canada mandated RDÉE Canada to provide information collected from the finalists of the *Lauriers de la PME 2009* that would be conducive to increasing its knowledge and understanding of the realities, challenges and needs within the official language minority communities (OLMCs).

The information collected was compiled and analysed as a whole.

Use of French

We must first emphasize that the use of French among owners and their employees differs from one company to another. On the one hand, in more than a third of the companies (36%), French rarely serves as the language of work. On the other, in a third of the SMEs consulted (33%), French is the language used daily in communications between the company leaders and their employees.

However, the use of French in communications between companies and their suppliers is generally very limited. According to the information collected, a majority—more than two thirds (67%)—sometimes or, in many cases, never communicate in French with their suppliers.

In terms of the language of communication used with customers, the data collected reveal that a significant percentage of companies use French (47% use it regularly). Therefore we assume that Francophone markets—local, regional or international—are relatively important clients for a number of the SMEs consulted.

Francophone markets

We attempted to determine the interest that SMEs have in Francophone markets and whether being a Francophone company actually adds value in the development of their company. A high percentage of the SMEs consulted (83%) responded that being Francophone was a benefit to their company.

According to the information obtained, almost half of the SMEs have the Canada-wide Francophone community as a common market (47%). For a majority of these SMEs, Quebec seems to be the key market. Nevertheless, a number of respondents cited minority Francophone communities outside their respective province or territory as target markets. The Francophone communities in the Maritimes, Ontario and the four Western provinces were most frequently mentioned as markets.

In light of the comments we received, it is important to note that some entrepreneurs who do not currently have a market in the Francophone community throughout Canada would one day like that to be the case. Entrepreneurs surveyed in Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the Northwest Territories clearly demonstrated interest in this regard.

One quarter (25%) of respondents are currently doing business in international Francophone markets.

France is the main target market, and, to a lesser extent, the islands of Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. Belgium, Luxembourg and French-speaking Africa were also mentioned. It is interesting to note that European Francophone tourists, who come mainly for conferences and special events, make up a target clientele for entrepreneurs in the guided tours and foodservice sectors. Lastly, it is important to point out that a large percentage of the companies consulted do business abroad. Some companies do business in the United States but not in Francophone markets.

Main challenges

The lack of skilled labour, including the difficulty of retaining staff, is without a doubt the biggest and most common challenge for most companies. We noted that this issue affects companies in all regions of the country and in most business sectors. The difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff that are both skilled and bilingual is a reality for a number of companies.

Transportation costs are the second-largest concern. The sharp increase in the price of oil over the past few years has also had an impact on companies who export their products outside the region, for example. Owners of SMEs in northern Canada, for example, incur significant transportation costs if they want to receive training, given the lack of resources, or if they must travel for business purposes.

The fluctuation in the value of the Canadian dollar, according to the data obtained, is the third-largest challenge facing businesses in minority situations. This factor creates particular difficulties not only for export businesses but also for those companies that need to purchase raw materials and supplies from abroad in order to produce their goods and services. Also, a stronger Canadian dollar does not encourage American tourists to come to Canada, which affects a good many companies in the communities.

The challenges and requirements of entrepreneurs in minority situations are not, in many respects, different from those of most businesspeople. However, the vast majority of entrepreneurs surveyed acknowledge the fact that they speak French to be an added value to their company and that there are business opportunities to be had in Francophone markets in Canada and abroad. [THE END]