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The Honourable Michael Chong

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● (0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (The Honourable Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC)): Welcome to the 31st sitting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, on Tuesday, March 13, 2012. We are meeting today pursuant to Standing Order 108 to conduct a study relating to the evaluation of the Roadmap: Improving Programs and Service Delivery.

Before turning the floor over to our witnesses, I would like to say that the committee has consented to deal with the subamendment and the amendment submitted to the committee. The motion pertaining to the budget will be dealt with in the second part of this meeting.

I believe the committee has given unanimous consent to withdrawing the subamendment and the amendment. Is that correct?

Some hon. members: Yes.

(The subamendment and the amendment were withdrawn.)

[English]

The Chair: There's a motion on the floor to adopt a budget of \$63,900, moved by Mr. Godin. Is there any further debate on that motion?

Seeing none, I'll call the question.

All those in favour of the budget as proposed by Mr. Godin?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: The budget is carried.

Thank you very much.

We've disposed of the second part of our committee orders of the day for today, so we now have a full two hours to hear from the four witnesses in front of us.

[Translation]

With us today are Ms. Frenette and Mr. Aucoin from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Mr. Saint-Germain and Mr. Sylvester from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Welcome, everyone.

We are going to start by giving the floor to the representatives of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

Mr. Peter Sylvester (Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Good morning, Mr. Chair, and members of the committee. Thank you for the invitation to appear

before you today. My name is Peter Sylvester, and I am the Associate Deputy Minister and official languages champion of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Joining me today is Yves Saint-Germain, Director of Information, Language and Community Policy at CIC.

We are pleased to be here today to discuss CIC's activities through the funding allocated under the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality.

Canada has a long-standing tradition of immigration. Immigration has contributed and continues to contribute to the social and economic development of Canada and to its cultural enrichment, and it also benefits the country's two linguistic communities.

Under the roadmap, CIC received \$20 million over five years to maintain, improve and develop immigration-related activities in official language minority communities.

In terms of anglophone minority communities, a significant factor that must be kept in mind is the 1991 Canada and Quebec agreement on immigration. CIC is exploring options for how it can best meet its obligations towards the official language minorities in Quebec while respecting commitments that exist under the Canada-Quebec Accord.

The Department is working with representatives from these communities to carry out research, including an assessment of the communities' capacity to attract newcomers and a statistical portrait of immigrants that have settled within those communities.

In terms of supporting francophone minority communities outside Quebec, CIC's approach is to increase the number of francophone immigrants settling in these communities and ensure that they obtain the support they need to integrate in French into Canadian society.

In addition to the funds allocated through the roadmap, CIC has set aside \$10 million over four years from its settlement program for specific activities related to welcoming and integrating French-speaking immigrants in official language minority communities.

Concretely, CIC's funds under the roadmap are dedicated to: promotion and recruitment activities for potential French-speaking immigrants; francophone immigration networks; settlement and integration services for French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec; coordination and cooperation activities among key stakeholders; and research activities for official language minority communities.

• (0850)

[English]

As you know, Mr. Chair, the work we do in this area requires collaboration with many partners. CIC believes in the benefits of consulting regularly with communities in order to be in touch with the realities they face. That's why in 2002 the department created the CIC Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee. This committee brings together representatives from federal departments and agencies, provinces and territories, and representatives of official language minority communities to foster immigration to francophone minority communities and to help these communities benefit from immigration.

[Translation]

You may be aware that a 2004 study by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada noted gaps in the capacity of francophone minority communities to support the reception and integration of French-speaking immigrants.

The study identified several challenges, including a lack of recruitment capacity and means to promote francophone minority communities, as well as a lack of reception and integration services in French.

In its efforts to address these issues, in September 2006 CIC unveiled the Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities.

[English]

The strategic plan was drawn up in partnership with federal departments and provincial, territorial, and community representatives through the CIC Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee. Its objective is to provide a concerted and targeted approach to support the vitality of francophone minority communities by attracting a greater number of French-speaking immigrants to regions outside Quebec, improving the capacity of francophone minority communities to receive francophone newcomers, and facilitating the integration of the newcomers.

CIC's activities within the strategic plan were aligned with the road map, and accordingly the initial five-year period of the strategic plan, 2006-2011, was extended into 2013. Under the road map we funded the Destination Canada job fair. Destination Canada has been gaining in popularity in recent years, with extensive media coverage and attendance in Paris and Brussels reaching a record high in 2011. From almost 12,400 requests to participate, almost 2,700 pre-selected candidates participated in this year's eighth edition of the fair. More than 300 separate job profiles were posted on the event website by 110 different employers or their authorized representatives. An informal survey conducted at the end of the fair indicated that approximately 150 contracts were signed and another 150 interviews were planned.

[Translation]

CIC was pleased to see that the success of Destination Canada was noted in the 2010-2011 Annual Report of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

We have also strengthened francophone immigration networks, and have established 13 francophone immigration networks for

French-speaking immigrants in nine provinces and two territories. In other words, we have built the capacity of communities to welcome and integrate new immigrants into the community.

These networks bring together more than 250 francophone organizations representing various sectors, including economic development, education and health.

To give you just one example of the important work these networks do, the three Ontario networks collaborated with La Toile des carrières to organize bilingual job fairs in Ottawa and Toronto. Ninety-seven employers participated in Toronto and 55 in Ottawa.

With regards to the integration services delivered to French-speaking immigrants, CIC funds 121 French points of service. These are located in 24 cities outside Quebec and are managed by francophone service providers.

Other initiatives include a full range of tools for language training in French, the provision of settlement services in French schools, workshops on employer awareness and jobs fairs, and the establishment of entrepreneurship and labour market training programs.

[English]

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Chair, one of the key objectives for the CIC within the road map is to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants to regions outside of Quebec. Quite frankly, this is our biggest challenge, but we're pleased to say that momentum has been building.

• (0855)

[Translation]

Statistics indicate that 1.5% or 3,481 permanent residents admitted to Canada outside Quebec in 2010 were French-speaking immigrants. Preliminary data from January to June 2011 show that we are on track to achieve the target of 1.8% by 2013, as we are now at 1.7% or 1,545.

CIC remains committed to meeting the target of 4.4% of French-speaking immigrants settling in francophone minority communities outside Quebec by 2023. Immigration is, after all, one of the key contributing factors to the vitality of official languages minority communities.

Moving forward, CIC is looking to promote the transition from temporary to permanent residence for francophone temporary residents through the Canadian Experience Class, or CEC. In particular, more emphasis will be placed on promoting the CEC at events such as Destination Canada.

The CEC offers many temporary foreign workers and foreign student graduates in Canada the opportunity to apply to stay as permanent residents and eventually become Canadian citizens. It helps Canada permanently retain temporary residents with Canadian skilled work experience and proficiency in English or French.

[English]

CIC is also looking toward employment-based promotion and recruitment activities, including employer outreach throughout the year to increase the number of job offers to potential French-speaking immigrants. In this regard, our department believes that community stakeholders could play a greater role by mobilizing employers through available community networks.

[Translation]

Before closing, I would just like to inform members of the committee that CIC has retained the services of an external consultant to conduct an evaluation of the recruitment and integration of immigrants. The evaluation is well underway and preliminary results will be taken into account in the horizontal summative evaluation currently being conducted by Canadian Heritage. CIC's final report is expected this coming June.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would be more than happy to answer any questions that committee members may have on this topic.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sylvester.

I will now give the floor to the representatives of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Ms. Denise Frenette (Vice-President, Finance and Corporate Services, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Good morning. I am pleased to appear before you today in my capacity of Vice-President, Finance and Corporate Services and Official Languages Champion for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the ACOA.

I am accompanied by my colleague Mr. Wade Aucoin, ACOA's Director General of the Community Development directorate. Together, we will endeavour to set out ACOA's active role in implementing the Economic Development Initiative under the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, 2008-2013.

[English]

ACOA is an economic development agency whose mandate is to support Atlantic Canada's businesses and communities. The Honourable Bernard Valcourt is the Minister of State responsible for ACOA. He is also Minister of State for la Francophonie.

[Translation]

ACOA, like the other regional economic development agencies, manages its own budget and programs. With the exception of collaborating with Industry Canada on accountability matters specific to the Economic Development Initiative, ACOA handles its own part of the financing under the initiative.

I think it is a good idea to give you a snapshot of Atlantic Canada's official language minority community. As you know, French is the official language of Atlantic Canada's linguistic minority population.

[English]

Roughly one-third of Canada's French-speaking official language minority population resides in Atlantic Canada. Atlantic Canada's population is approximately 2.2 million people, of which 276,000

people, or 13% of the region's population, are Acadians and francophones.

[Translation]

The majority of Acadians and other francophones, roughly 85.5%, live in New Brunswick and reside primarily in three areas of the province: in Madawaska, in northwestern New Brunswick; the Acadian Peninsula, in northeastern New Brunswick; and the southeastern corner of New Brunswick which includes Moncton, Dieppe, Shediac and Bouctouche.

In Nova Scotia, the francophone minority is located primarily in Cape Breton in Cheticamp, Isle Madame and the regional municipality of Cape Breton; in Halifax; in the municipalities of Clare and Argyle in southwestern Nova Scotia; and in other rural communities scattered throughout the province.

Acadians and francophones on Prince Edward Island are concentrated particularly in the Evangeline region in Abram-Village, Mont-Carmel and Wellington, though they are also found in the province's two main cities, Summerside and Charlottetown.

• (0900)

[English]

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the majority of the francophone population live in the provincial capital of St. John's, on the Port-au-Port Peninsula in western Newfoundland, and in Labrador City.

[Translation]

In each of the Atlantic provinces, these communities are supported by numerous organizations which coordinate activities from education and health to economic development and business.

At ACOA, serving the region's Acadian and francophone population comes naturally. This community is part of the region's social fabric and many of ACOA's employees are themselves members of the francophone minority which the agency serves.

[English]

Now, if I may, I would like to give you a little information regarding our agency.

ACOA was created in 1987 with the mandate to create economic growth in Atlantic Canada by helping businesses to become more competitive, innovative, and productive. ACOA works in three main areas: business development, community development, and policy, advocacy, and coordination.

[Translation]

The geographical location of agency offices is very important. Over thirty offices are spread out over the entire Atlantic region. Its head office is in Moncton, New Brunswick and it has regional offices in each provincial capital along with local offices strategically located throughout the region.

ACOA has staff capable of serving the public in both official languages. Over half of the positions at ACOA require the knowledge of both official languages. In addition to the services provided by agency staff, ACOA has established partnerships with other federal and provincial departments and with regional organizations such as Community Business Development Corporations or CBDCs. The provision of service by these offices covers virtually the entirety of francophone communities throughout Atlantic Canada.

[English]

In carrying out its activities, ACOA endeavours to take into account the nature and the specific needs of each of the official language minority communities it serves.

[Translation]

ACOA has contributed greatly to the region's francophone community. Project funding comes from ACOA's Business Development Program and Innovative Communities Fund, as well as from the federal 2008-2013 official languages action plan, referred to as the roadmap.

In fact, the Commissioner of Official Languages gave ACOA an "exemplary" mark with respect to the positive measures that it has taken for the benefit of Atlantic Canada's official language minority community.

Before turning to the roadmap *per se*, I would like to give you a summary of the contributions to the OLMCs that the agency makes using its own programming.

[English]

Under its regular programming from 2006 to 2011, the agency invested a yearly average of \$13 million in the region's official languages minorities communities. For instance, in 2010-11, ACOA contributed to several projects in support of the OLMCs' economic vitality, including foreign trade missions to promote wood and fisheries products; youth entrepreneurship initiatives; and major community infrastructure projects, including the Centre des arts de la Petite Église d'Edmundston, and the construction of a municipal centre in Shippagan.

[Translation]

Under the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013, ACOA actively partners with francophone communities in managing Economic Development Initiative or EDI projects. This initiative is delivered under the agency's Business Development Program. The EDI seeks to highlight the economic benefits of linguistic duality and the way it enhances the vitality of the official language minority communities.

The initiative's criteria seek to give particular attention to projects that bear upon entrepreneurship, innovation, diversification and the establishment of partnerships. As soon as the roadmap was announced, ACOA consulted with representatives of the region's OLMC and informed them of the initiative and how to access funding.

Under the Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality, \$6.2 million were earmarked for ACOA. This enabled the agency to increase its contribution to the economic development of the Acadian and

francophone minority community and to highlight the economic advantages of linguistic duality.

● (0905)

[English]

Roughly \$500,000, or 8%, of the total \$6.2 million was held back to cover the cost of managing the initiative.

[Translation]

In total, ACOA identified \$5.7 million to invest in projects under the EDI. This financing was primarily directed to non-commercial activities in order to support innovative and diversified activities and to support small and medium size businesses. Applicants were asked to submit a short project summary for assessment by the agency's official languages committee comprised of official languages coordinators from across the agency.

To date, a total of 34 projects have been approved for financing of more than \$5 million. Due to leveraging from various partnerships, the total value of these projects is around \$10 million.

A dedicated \$10 million contribution was directed to a specific project for francophone immigration—a project carried out specifically with the Population Growth Division of the Province of New Brunswick. This initiative was in support of settlement and retention activities for francophone immigrants to New Brunswick.

[English]

Since 2010, project disbursements have increased sharply. The sum of \$1.1 million was disbursed in 2010-11, a contribution of almost \$2 million is forecasted for 2011-12, and a total investment of \$2.2 million is set to be made in 2012-13.

[Translation]

The preliminary results of an external summative evaluation conducted towards the end of 2011 show that the management of the initiative and the strategies taken for delivery were sound and satisfactory.

Among the 34 projects supported by ACOA under the EDI, some are worthy of particular note: New Brunswick Translation Inc., a project to assist small and medium-sized businesses with the costs for translation of their business marketing tools; the "Pays de la Sagouine" tourism site, a project that enabled an English-language translation of an already successful French-language play, resulting in attracting a significant number of anglophone visitors to the site; the Conseil provincial des sociétés culturelles, a project involving an electronic ticket vending system, with revenues accruing to the cultural organizations represented by the vendor; and the Atlantic Canada Acadian Tourism Commission, two projects which involved the development of experiential tourism activities in five Acadian tourism venues in Atlantic Canada and the coordination of activities in each of these regions.

[English]

These are just a few examples of the support ACOA has given to the region's official language minority communities.

At ACOA, the respect for official languages is more than just an obligation; it also makes good business sense, and it makes sense to be attentive to the needs of the agency's clientele.

[Translation]

ACOA maintains a close relationship with the economic development stakeholders in the region's official language minority community, as witnessed by the ACOA-Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité or RDÉE regional committee, RDÉE being the Human Resources and Skills Development-financed French-language Economic Development Network, in existence since 2006.

I truly appreciate having been given the opportunity to bring this short message to you. I would now like to hand over the discussion to my colleague Wade Aucoin, Director-General of the agency's Community Development branch. Wade plays a direct role in delivering the EDI at ACOA and he will be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

● (0910)

The Chair: Thank you for your testimony, Ms. Frenette.

We will begin with Mr. Godin.

Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses. In seven minutes, we do not have enough time to ask all our questions. Not to be rude, but I would say that time is on your side.

ACOA has received \$16.2 million. So I am going to put my questions to the ACOA representatives. Of that \$16.2 million, \$10 million was spent on support for francophone immigration to New Brunswick, and \$6.2 million was spent on the Economic Development Initiative.

The figures provided by ACOA show that on February 27, 2012, it had spent \$3,979,725 of the \$10 million allocated for francophone immigration, representing about 40%. We are now in 2012. The roadmap ends in 2013.

What is the problem? I am asking you simply because the New Brunswick Commissioner of Official Languages has said we could do better when it comes to immigration. All sorts of commentary has been published on this subject. So I would like to know whether you have people, program officers, who are capable of supporting francophone immigration. Do you have the necessary expertise? Where is the problem? The roadmap ends in 2013 and only 40% of the money allocated has been spent.

Mr. Wade Aucoin (Acting Director General, Community Development, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Thank you for your question.

We are aware that francophone immigration is a priority for francophone communities in New Brunswick. Several factors have contributed to this delay. The first was the initial delay in allocating funds. As you know, the funds actually became available in May 2009. That delayed things considerably for New Brunswick and for us.

The second factor we have to keep in mind is that we are talking about what are new initiatives for a whole group of communities in New Brunswick. So it took time to set up the advisory committees and resource centres, and to attract people to those centres.

We are also very concerned about the delay. Officials at ACOA have contacted the Government of New Brunswick, in person and by letter, to explain our concerns. The Government of New Brunswick assures us that new measures are going to be taken to speed up the project. At present, we want to see quarterly reports showing more convincing results.

As well, we have obtained permission from the Treasury Board Secretariat for an extension of this particular project so it can conclude at the end of March 2014. We think the work is so important and the results we have seen to date are so worthwhile that we have received permission to extend it to March 2014.

Mr. Yvon Godin: They are giving you an extension until 2014. At the same time, you are withdrawing \$15 million in funding from ACOA and you say that this will not disrupt the programs because it will relate to the workforce, about 100 people. Will the expertise still be there? If not, are you going to be lacking in expertise and then have a second problem?

● (0915)

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Mr. Godin, we are working closely with the Government of New Brunswick.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Aucoin, I know that you are working very hard. You are doing all that can be done. However, if the minister cuts the number of jobs at ACOA, how are you going to implement the program?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: We have entered into agreements with the Government of New Brunswick to achieve the new objective. I can, however, tell you about the good results we have achieved through this project.

Mr. Yvon Godin: On the anglophone side, there are 2,000 immigrants, and there are 300 on the francophone side. You call those good results?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Under the immigration project, which totals \$10 million, 400 immigrants have settled in various regions, including yours.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Aucoin, as I told you at the outset, I have only seven minutes. You have made some excellent efforts, but are you not afraid that with the \$15 million in cuts, all those efforts will fall by the wayside, fall into Chaleur Bay?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: I really do think we can manage the situation with the resources available to us.

Mr. Yvon Godin: You referred to agreements with the provinces relating to certain programs. What is ACOA doing to make sure that francophones get something out of them? I have been to Newfoundland and Labrador. In terms of the CBDCs, are you sure that province is sufficiently bilingual that services will be offered to francophones? That is not what those people tell me, at least. When you telephone St. John's, nobody speaks French. So you have to go through Moncton, but you are not able to speak to the officers because they are too busy and the process takes too long. As well, the funds for implementing the programs have been cut by \$15 million. Do you not think that this is going to aggravate the situation even further?

What do the agreements with the provinces actually involve? Under these provincial agreements, in the case of an ACOA program, when you transfer a program that comes from the federal government, do you make sure that the official languages are respected?

Ms. Denise Frenette: Under our contribution agreement, it is the province of New Brunswick that is responsible for managing the project. That being the case, we make sure there are provisions for...

Mr. Yvon Godin: I was talking about Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ms. Denise Frenette: Right, but I was talking about the immigration project.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I am talking about other programs. This is about the francophone community and ACOA's responsibilities when it comes to bilingualism. The programs you transfer to the province, the CBDCs, for example, are they local? Do you make sure that bilingualism is respected?

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Godin.

Mr. Aucoin.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: I do not entirely understand your question. In the other provinces, we do not have agreements like the one currently in effect in New Brunswick relating to immigration.

However, to answer your question about the CBDCs specifically, I would point out that they are not under provincial jurisdiction. They are independent incorporated entities that have their own boards of directors. There are about 10 designated CBDCs that offer bilingual services in regions where there is a substantial concentration of francophones. We are familiar with those regions.

Over the last year, while the CBDC funding model was being reformulated, each CBDC was allocated \$10,000 so they could serve the francophone community in the regions better.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Gourde.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lotbinière—Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, CPC): Thank you for being with us this morning. Since we have an opportunity to hear from representatives of two organizations whose work seems to be similar, I am going to take advantage of it.

At the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, you have implemented measures to attract immigrants. What about at ACOA? Do you talk to each other? Is there any overlap? Can you both

explain for us how you work when it comes to the Atlantic provinces?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: I will start to answer your question and then I will invite my colleague to continue.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we set up a steering committee as part of the strategy. Several departments are represented on the committee, including ACOA. There are also representatives from the provincial government, from the communities, and so on.

I know that at the local level in the province, on the ground, ACOA also has a committee and CIC sits on it. So there are two vehicles, if I may put it that way. At the national and regional level, there are working groups. As well, there is the ACOA steering committee. We often have occasion to talk to each other and coordinate our efforts through those two vehicles.

● (0920)

Ms. Denise Frenette: I agree with those comments. The way we make sure there is no duplication and we are moving in the same direction is really by creating a committee and maintaining ongoing dialogue with CIC.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: You are moving in the same direction, but is one in more of a position of leadership in relation to the other, when it comes to the initiative in the Maritimes? When it comes to francophone immigration in the regions, is there one organization that goes looking for francophone immigrants and another that takes charge of them so that these people stay in the Maritimes?

Ms. Denise Frenette: The project in New Brunswick is really an exception to the rule. It is a specific project, it provides an additional contribution to the efforts made by the Immigration Department in the Atlantic region. In terms of everyday things, the Immigration Department is responsible for immigration, not ACOA.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: When it comes to the broad directions taken, the steering committee meets once a year to set priorities at the national level. Then, in the committees in the regions, on the ground, there is also discussion among all the participants about the priorities or strategies to be pursued during a specific period.

Maybe Yves could add to my answer. I also know that arrangements have been made in New Brunswick to coordinate our efforts. For example, most of our efforts, in terms of immigration, are concentrated in the southern part of the province, while ACOA focuses mainly on the north. So there is already some division of funds, to have maximum coverage of the province.

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain (Director, Information, Language and Community Program Policy, Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada): I will briefly add that there are two aspects to the coordination between ACOA and CIC. The first relates to promotion and recruitment. CIC is in charge of efforts relating to promotion and to recruiting francophone immigrants. When there are events like Destination Canada, we certainly invite our partners to participate. We collaborate on strategy.

As Mr. Sylvester said, when it comes to settlement services, including reception services, language training and community development in the host communities, CIC works closely with New Brunswick and ACOA on a tripartite regional committee. That is how we have been able to develop the services offered in the northern part of the province.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: We have moved from theory to practice. Can you give us a concrete example of a successful initiative in the region? Can you name one organization or another that is a case you have both worked on, where that has borne fruit?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: I will come back to the case of Destination Canada. As you know, that is an annual promotion and recruitment event held in Paris, Brussels and Tunis. Our organizations work at the local level to raise awareness among employers and communities about recruiting immigrants. So there is a long preparation process that takes place throughout the year. A delegation is sent to Paris, Brussels and Tunis. We work closely with New Brunswick on this, and we have done for some years.

Since the roadmap was adopted, we have redoubled our efforts. There are a lot of sessions devoted specifically to candidates who plan to settle in New Brunswick. Under its provincial nominee program, New Brunswick selects francophones. That is how we work closely together.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: That is all, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Bélanger?

[English]

Hon. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): I'm just wondering, Mr. Chairman, if I were to move a motion that we table indefinitely the study of the *Feuille de route*, if that would be debatable.

But I won't do that. I just notice that there are only four on the opposite side there. I thought they'd learned a lesson, but they haven't, it seems.

Anyhow,

[Translation]

Thank you for being here this morning.

Mr. Sylvester, how long have you been working at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: In fact it is approaching five months. I am new to this area.

• (0925)

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: And you, Mr. Saint-Germain?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: For me it is nearly five years.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Have you heard about a report by the Standing Committee on Official Languages that was tabled in the third session of the 40th Parliament, relating to immigration?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Yes, indeed. When I was assigned to this file, I had an opportunity to review and identify the major issues and the parameters of the file. Since the report was public, it was appended to the file. So I had an opportunity to go through it and familiarize myself with it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: And you, Mr. Saint-Germain?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: Yes, indeed.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: That report was tabled in November 2010. Parliament was not dissolved until April 2011. I imagine that someone in the department must have started working on the reply we asked for. Does that bring anything to mind?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: Yes. The Department had 120 days to table a reply, but Parliament stopped sitting.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Yes, but it had been nearly 120 days when Parliament was dissolved. Had a start been made on preparing a reply?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: From what I have here, the report was obviously released, so I would think that people were preparing to reply to the report. That would be logical.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You do not have that information.

Mr. Saint-Germain, you were there at the time and you were involved in official languages issues, is that right?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: Yes.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: So do you know whether a reply was being prepared?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: Yes, work was being done on a reply.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: If I may, Mr. Chair, I would like to point out that replies to things like this are tabled by the government.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I am perfectly aware of that. That is because...

Mr. Peter Sylvester: These are draft replies that would be covered by cabinet confidences. So I hesitate to say anything about that.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I understand all that, sir.

I would like to point something out to you. You talk about statistics. You say that it was at 1.5% and it is now 1.7%, or 1,545 immigrants. What proportion of the population of Canada is francophone at present?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: It is 4.1%.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: No, I want to know the proportion for the entire country. Quebec is still part of the country, as far as I know. Is the curve increasing or decreasing?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: It is a decreasing curve.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I would like to help you with your figures, because I understand what you were alluding to. What proportion of the population outside Quebec is francophone?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: As a percentage, it is 4.1%, according to the last census.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Within the department, what is the justification for the 1.8% objective not being achieved before 2013 and the 4.4% objective not being achieved before 2023?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Under the Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities that was adopted in 2006, it was decided that it would take 15 years to achieve the 4.4% target. That is why CIC adopted the target of 2023.

In the meantime, under the roadmap, there was a request for an interim target to be adopted. That is why we have the target of 4.4% in 2023, and 1.8% in 2013.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Would you be prepared to say that if there is a lower percentage of francophone immigrants, as a proportion of the francophone population outside Quebec, by 2023, that would create greater linguistic polarization in Canada?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: I am not certain that polarization results from those figures, no.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: No? How would it be explained, then? Since anglophones now account for 90% and more, in my opinion there will be a gradual decline in the number of francophone immigrants, as we have seen.

In that case, how do you explain that there would not be growing polarization?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: It may be the premise of the question that I do not accept. I do not know whether polarization necessarily results from the figures in that way.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: I hope you are right, because I would not want to see that kind of thing happen; it could be very dangerous for the country later on.

Are you aware that one of the recommendations was to set the target at 7% or, at least, to consider the possibility of achieving that?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Yes, I saw that recommendation in the report.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Do you think it would be achievable if the necessary resources were allocated?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: Since I arrived, I have focused on the target that was already set. As to whether it is achievable, I do not know.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: I would perhaps like to add...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: No.

Do you know what percentage has been achieved in Manitoba?

● (0930)

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: No, I do not have the exact figure, but the target is in fact 7% for that province.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: What is the target?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: The target is 7%, but it has never been achieved.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: But the target is 7%. What percentage has been achieved?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: We could provide you with the figures later; I do not have them now.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Is it more than 1.8%?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: I would think so.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You are correct.

So if a province wants to set a target of 7% and is able to achieve it, why could the country itself not do the same thing?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Mr. Chair, the answer I would offer is this.

As you well know, we have a somewhat limited pool of potential francophone immigrants, first. Second, we are competing rather heavily with Quebec, which is also trying to attract a fair number of francophone immigrants. So, logically, if we set a target of 7% Canada-wide, given that Manitoba is already having trouble achieving its target of 7%, I imagine that this would be a very big challenge.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Excuse me. I had the impression that Manitoba was going to achieve that objective. We have in fact seen constant growth since the authorities decided that was a good thing for their province. I do not understand why we are so reluctant, in Canada, to make more of an effort.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Other factors could be added to the answer, Mr. Chair. The provinces, and Manitoba, set their percentages, not CIC. The provinces reserve the right to decide what a reasonable immigration target would be.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: With all due respect, they do not do that in a vacuum; they do with in collaboration with CIC, and using its programs. What would prevent another province from doing the same thing? New Brunswick has received \$10 million to try to do something better than it is currently doing.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Mr. Chair, I do not think there is anything preventing them. As the member noted, we work hand in hand with the provinces and we also work with them on the programs they administer.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

Mr. Williamson, you have the floor.

Mr. John Williamson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

To respond quickly to Monsieur Bélanger, I thought we were all friends here. There's nothing to worry about. If you bring a motion forward, we'll debate it for a while. We learn a few tricks from you guys as well.

Mr. Mauril Bélanger: Some of them might not be debatable.

Mr. John Williamson: That might be true. We'll scramble in that case.

[Translation]

Ms. Frenette, could you explain for us how ACOA ensures that its services are provided in both official languages? This is somewhat by way of answering Mr. Godin's questions, particularly in relation to St. John's...

Mr. Yvon Godin: St. John's, in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. John Williamson: ...where there are francophones. We may not be talking about a region like mine, in southeastern New Brunswick, but we are still talking about regions where there is a significant francophone population.

Ms. Denise Frenette: As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we have a high concentration of bilingual employees. These are bilingual positions. More than 50% of our employees are bilingual. We go beyond the bilingualism requirements.

We think this is a positive measure. The requirements are determined at the base, and are based on the representation of francophones in certain regions, and in all regions where there is a certain concentration of francophones. There are in fact bilingual personnel. Among other things, we have a number of regional offices, in the regions, that are designated bilingual. In total, 19 offices, in addition to the head office, are bilingual. We have very strong representation when it comes to bilingualism.

● (0935)

Mr. John Williamson: That is very good.

Can you explain for us what ACOA has done to implement the roadmap, please?

Ms. Denise Frenette: When the roadmap was adopted, we first prepared an internal discussion paper. In the spring of 2008, we took a good look at the question of how we were going to implement the program. We also developed a management framework for implementing it. Then we really focused on communication and developing an Internet and Intranet site to use for our initiative. We had meetings with members of senior management to explain our objectives and make sure that a sound strategy was developed and was supported by ACOA senior management. We developed an evaluation grid to use for evaluating projects.

Then we really tried to initiate a dialogue with the official language minority community, to be sure that the people there clearly understand how to access EDI funding. As well, as I mentioned earlier, we work closely with the ACOA-RDÉE committee. We also used that table to expand our thinking about the initiative, to make sure our strategy is sound and would be able to support the initiative.

We also did something else that we think is a best practice. For submitting proposals, rather than leaving it to the communities to develop proposals that may not correspond to the vision of the program, we invited them to submit brief proposals that we examined internally. Then we went back to the communities to let them know what we thought about the proposals, whether they were moving in the right direction, in order to guide the work people were doing so they would not waste time preparing proposals that might not necessarily have been accepted at the end of the day.

So I think that really was, for us, a best practice that enabled EDI to play a role as an engine for dialogue with the communities, to try to maximize their potential.

Mr. John Williamson: That is fine for me.

The Chair: It is now Mr. Boughen's turn.

[English]

Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Welcome to the panel. We're glad you could spend some time with us this morning.

I have a couple of questions.

In your opinion, what is the advantage of the road map for francophone communities in the Atlantic region? Where do you see the advantage of the road map as you deal with those communities?

Ms. Denise Frenette: As I've mentioned, certainly we've seen the benefit of the road map in terms of having the engagement with the communities and having the opportunity to work with the communities on a strategy that would move them further in their advancement.

We have the preliminary results of the evaluation. Based on those results, we are seeing that our efforts have had an impact. For every dollar invested, we've leveraged another \$1.07 in additional funding from partners. So we see that this initiative has built a lot of capacity in the region. It also has developed a lot of partnerships with other stakeholders. It has been very positive.

I don't know if Wade would like to add to that.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Yes, just to put a finer point on it.

I think this is an important comment. The preliminary results that we're seeing from the evaluation are showing us that 95% of the beneficiaries of the economic development initiative have increased their capacity in their business or in their community.

Denise already mentioned the leveraging. She was too modest. The leveraging is also another important point. When you look at the regular leveraging for BDP, the program we use on the non-commercial side, it's about 25%. But with this initiative, we leveraged, as Denise said, almost double what we invested, which means that we were the catalyst for these communities to generate new partnerships and new investments for new initiatives.

We also see in the preliminary results that over a thousand businesses increased their capacity for training, their knowledge of financial statements, for instance, and their knowledge on being able to access international markets. These are important things for communities.

We also see that about 75 communities reinforced their capacity to coordinate partnerships with other community groups. Again, this is an important thing in minority communities: they need to be able to find strength in numbers when they're in a minority situation.

I could go on, but for us, I think those are some of the more important general benefits that we're seeing. We could talk about the specific benefits that specific projects have achieved.

Denise mentioned the translation project. We've seen hundreds of companies translate some of their products so that a greater number of people are aware of their products and they can increase their sales. We've seen, for instance, that Le Pays de la Sagouine in Bouctouche attracted more people. This increased their revenues. It helps the small community of Bouctouche. Those are real, concrete, tangible results that have come from this initiative.

Thank you for the question.

● (0940)

Mr. Ray Boughen: If we still have a little time, Chair, the other question I have is on whether EDI has had an impact in any particular areas, such as tourism. Does it have a positive impact that you can share with us?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: I'm just going to find the information on this project, because it's an important one.

The two projects we did that I think had the greatest impact on tourism were the two biggest ones. Both of these were with the commission on Acadian tourism in Atlantic Canada, or, in French, the Commission du tourisme acadien du Canada atlantique. This commission was in place before the EDI. ACOA had been supporting it before this. The purpose of this commission is to support high-quality, experiential Acadian culture tourism products. We think the Acadian culture is a unique culture and we think people from all around the world should come and share it—

Mr. Yvon Godin: Yes.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mr. Wade Aucoin: We supported two projects with the commission. The first one was to develop a strategy around five poles. The five poles were in southeast New Brunswick, southwest Nova Scotia, the Acadian peninsula, Cape Breton—my home area in Chéticamp and l'Île Madame—and the Evangeline region in Prince Edward Island. The first part was to establish a strategy around that. The second part was to hire coordinators to implement the strategy in those areas and to actually develop better products for those Acadian regions.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Aubin, you have the floor.

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, Ms. Frenette, gentlemen. Welcome and thank you for your presentations, which will help us understand the subject a little better.

My first questions will be specifically for the representatives of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. In trying to grasp this issue, I was really a little surprised to see that on the report card released by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages you were given a "C" as your overall score, a "D" for service to the public and language of work, and a "C" for management of official languages within the department.

First, I know the report is a little dated, having been released in 2009-2010, but how do you explain this situation? Even more importantly, I imagine that you have taken measures to fix the problem. So what measures have been implemented and what results do you anticipate or have you already achieved?

● (0945)

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Thank you for your question.

I am also a newcomer to the department, and when I was assigned the role of official languages champion, I also checked the record. I noticed that the scores in our report card were lower than I might have hoped. I have also had an opportunity to see that a number of measures have been taken. One of the most important measures is to form a steering committee, which I now chair, within the department. The steering committee has also prepared an action plan with several focuses, to identify gaps in our performance and propose measures and initiatives to fill those gaps.

I also had the opportunity to meet with the Commissioner a few weeks after I was appointed, to ask him whether he saw that we had

made progress. I think he was of the opinion that this was the case, because he had noted it, as I mentioned at the beginning, in my preliminary remarks, before I addressed the subject of Destination Canada.

Now, when it comes to current recruitment in the department, in terms of services, we have also had the opportunity to go over with the commissioner one of the issues that contributed to getting a score that was perhaps lower than was deserved. That related to the entire system of calls and answering, the Montreal call centre, which is staffed by bilingual personnel. All officers who answer the telephone are bilingual. I think that in the methodology used by the commissioner to score our performance, there may have been a misunderstanding about the nature of the call centre. After that discussion, correspondence was exchanged between the department and the OCOL to rectify that situation.

In short, we did identify areas where we have progress to make and we are in the process of focusing on those gaps in order to improve our performance.

Mr. Robert Aubin: Thank you.

I followed your presentation at the beginning of the meeting closely. It seemed to me, and I would like you to confirm or refute this, that there is a difference between how the francophone minority communities outside Quebec and the anglophone minority in Quebec approach things. In the presentation, for example, that seemed fairly clear.

When you talked about francophone communities outside Quebec, you said: "In terms of supporting francophone minority communities outside Quebec, CIC's approach is to increase..." There were action verbs and even references to concrete actions.

However, when you talked about the anglophone community in Quebec, we found ourselves in a kind of artistic cloud. You said: "In terms of Anglophone minority communities, ...CIC is exploring options for how it can best meet its obligations..."

First, could you tell me what proportion of funding is directed to the anglophone community in Quebec? Are there examples of investments or concrete projects that you could compare with the ones you described for the francophone communities?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: As you saw from my preliminary remarks, there is indeed a distinction to be made between the approach we take for Quebec and the one we take for the other provinces and territories. That is all a result of the Canada-Quebec Accord, which gives the province exclusive authority over the selection of immigrants and over settlement services, except in respect of refugees. So there is a large piece that falls to the province under that accord. We have to honour the commitments made in that accord.

Second, we have a good relationship with the Quebec Community Groups Network. I had an opportunity to meet with one of their representatives a few weeks ago to discuss options and the latitude we have for working with them. In money terms, it comes to \$63,000 per year. Up to now, the focus has been on research projects. We help them to thoroughly analyze the anglophone minority communities in Quebec, so as to know a little more about their composition and to identify measures they might use to attract immigrants or people. The investment relates mainly to research projects.

• (0950)

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Aubin.

We will take a short five-minute break.

• (0950)

(Pause)

• (0955)

The Chair: We are continuing the 31st meeting of the Standing Committee on Official Languages. We have nearly 45 minutes for questions and comments. We will begin with Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Menegakis, you have the floor.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for your testimony before us today.

As you know, we are studying the Roadmap for Linguistic Duality. The roadmap represents an investment of over \$1 billion by our government. Your organizations are partners in the roadmap. It is interesting to hear you talk about the numerous opportunities the roadmap has made possible for your organizations.

Can you tell us what areas or programs you would like to be focused on if the roadmap were to be renewed after it expires in 2013?

Ms. Denise Frenette: The roadmap has allowed for a lot of success to be achieved. I think that if it is renewed and the same approaches are retained, that will have a great deal of potential.

However, if the roadmap were renewed, it would be desirable to initiate that kind of dialogue with the communities to determine whether some adjustments should be made. The results of the evaluation would be taken into account and we could review our approach to see whether there are improvements to be made.

That said, as was mentioned earlier, the results have been very positive. So we can see the potential results of this kind of initiative.

Mr. Aucoin, would you like to add something?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Mr. Chair, to continue on from Ms. Frenette's comments, I will say that for our part, we are currently evaluating the programs we have implemented.

In terms of the steering committee, we hope to collaborate with our partners, including the FCFA, to do an assessment. I believe the implementation committee will be meeting in March and our next annual meeting is to be held in May. That will be the perfect opportunity for us to step back a little and review what has been

accomplished, and think about what we would like to do if the roadmap were renewed.

I find it hard to imagine that no emphasis will be placed on settlement services, in particular. We know that this need has been clearly identified and that this aspect of our programs is very important, not only to attract new French-speaking Canadians to francophone minority communities, but also to retain them. I would hope that this important element will continue to be given due weight.

[English]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Other witnesses have testified about how the road map has facilitated their interdepartmental communication. Would you care to comment on that? How has your organization—I'll start with ACOA, and then we'll go to CIC.

• (1000)

Ms. Denise Frenette: We already had a lot of structures in place around the official languages in terms of communication. That being said, there has been a specific focus on having tripartite communication around the road map and the focus, as well as with the use of our existing committee of RDÉE and ACOA, to tap into that well-functioning forum that allows for a good dialogue and ensures that we deliver the initiative as intended and achieve the results.

Wade.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Mr. Chair, when you look at the funding sources from the 34 projects that we funded—and I must say, even the ones that we did not fund—other federal departments were always involved, either eventually as a funding partner or with whom we had some concerns when we were evaluating. We took those into account and in the end decided not to fund them.

I would say that the economic development initiative, given the variety of things that it funded and the wide range of funding sources, as we said—I talked about the leveraging, and other federal departments were involved in that—definitely it increased our collaboration with them. We already talked about the collaboration we had with Citizenship and Immigration, which I think is a very good model. So I think we should pursue that and strengthen that in future.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Mr. Chair, we focused on three broad areas under the road map. We've talked about recruitment and promotion, but the other one speaks to the member's question, and that is the mechanisms we've put in place to ensure there is good coordination and fairly regular and sustained communication between the various actors in this field. As you know, many partnerships are necessary. So the primary vehicle would be the steering committee, but there is also the implementation committee, which brings together representatives from multiple federal departments, the provincial government, and employer reps, etc. There are 50 members on the steering committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menegakis and Mr. Sylvester.

[Translation]

And now it is your turn, Ms. Michaud.

Ms. Éline Michaud (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, NDP): I would like to welcome you and thank you for your presentations.

My first questions are for the representatives of ACOA.

I would like to come back to what my colleague, Mr. Godin, said a little earlier, primarily regarding the investments made or projects carried out in Newfoundland and Labrador. We did not have time to finish that question.

Could you tell us about the projects underway in Newfoundland and Labrador, and if there are any problems there, give us more detail?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: In terms of the EDI, I am personally very proud of the projects submitted by the francophone community in Newfoundland and Labrador. Five of the 34 EDI projects we received, 15% of the total, were from Newfoundland and Labrador. I can tell you about some of them.

There is the Association régionale de la côte Ouest, which submitted an application to us. Its representatives really wanted to upload all of their region's folklore, whether it be songs, history, all that, to make it more accessible to people who come to visit their region. So that may become a tourist attraction.

There is also the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, which wanted to expand the capacity of its community radio station. We know that for francophone minorities, community radio stations are very important; the same thing was done in Halifax. The federation wanted the St. John's community radio station to be able to reach other francophone communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. So we funded it.

• (1005)

Ms. Éline Michaud: Since I do not have a lot of time, I am going to interrupt you. You have given a few examples now.

So there are some projects underway. What is the approximate amount of the investments made in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: That is a good question. I am going to try to do a quick calculation.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Right. I am going to ask your colleague another question while we wait for you to find the answer. I am going to try to make the most of my time.

When you provided the information to us, one of the things you told us was that the agency had chosen to withhold about \$500,000 to cover operating and maintenance costs, leaving a grand total of \$5.7 million for contributions.

Can you give us a little more detail about what the \$500,000 was used for, exactly?

Ms. Denise Frenette: The \$500,000 is spread over the life of the program. It is used primarily to cover salaries and operating expenses, in part.

Ms. Éline Michaud: Perfect, thank you.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: I have found the answer to your question.

Mr. Chair, I can tell you that ACOA's contribution to the project in Newfoundland and Labrador is about \$400,000. To date, we have disbursed about \$151,000. Obviously, other sources of funding were found to add to the funds coming solely from ACOA. So there you are, it is about \$400,000.

Ms. Éline Michaud: For the remaining amount, is there a plan to invest it in the next few years, or will it be entirely disbursed by the end of the program?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Are you talking about the difference between the \$151,000 and the \$385,000?

Ms. Éline Michaud: Yes, that is right. I had not heard the figures clearly.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Out of the \$400,000 invested, \$151,000 has been disbursed. All the information we receive, even the preliminary evaluation data, suggest to us that there is very little chance that the additional amount will not be completely disbursed.

Ms. Éline Michaud: I have one minute left. I have a brief question for Mr. Saint-Germain and Mr. Sylvester.

You initially received \$20 million from the roadmap. However, apparently, you have spent 125% of that amount in three years. If the roadmap were renewed, what figure would you recommend be invested to meet all the needs? When there were cost overruns, that meant that funds were short in some places.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: You are correct. There seems to have been a cost overrun, since we drew on the settlement funds available to the department to invest in this very important area. We therefore exceeded the amounts that we had been given under the roadmap.

However, in terms of whether we would like to see a larger investment in the next roadmap, I think we should let the evaluation that is underway run its course, and then step back a little and see what the results of our discussions with our partners are before starting to ask ourselves what the costs would be.

The Chair: Fine, thank you.

Mr. Gourde, it is your turn.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to address the representatives of the ACOA. The francophone communities in the Maritimes benefit from your organization. Some initiatives involve promoting tourism and culture.

What initiative helps them most to promote this and attract tourists to their communities? Does this have a major influence on these communities?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Thank you for the question. It is very broad and it may be difficult for us to answer clearly. We can see the results of projects we have funded under the Economic Development Initiative and we can say that there have to be good product development strategies. As well, as we can see with the projects carried out by the Commission du tourisme acadien du Canada atlantique, you have to go beyond simple traditional marketing, and focus on offering things that visitors will be able to experience for themselves. They are trying to do that with the community organizations that support tourism development.

They want visitors to be able to experience the best of Acadian culture for themselves. That may mean learning to cook local dishes, learning to make hooked rugs, and so on.

This is in line with global and national tourism trends. It is one of the most important aspects for continuing to expand the tourism market in Atlantic Canada. They are thinking about unique experiences that people can be offered.

• (1010)

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Has ACOA supported activities or community initiatives in certain regions of the Atlantic provinces, for example building or repairing a community centre?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: In terms of the EDI, our funds were reserved mainly for projects that would develop various capacities. The EDI has not supported building projects, strictly speaking. There are other regular programs we can use for that. In her presentation, Ms. Frenette mentioned a few that we have funded under our regular programs, including the Innovative Communities Fund. Sometimes such things are funded under the infrastructure programs we manage on behalf of the government of Canada.

However, for EDI projects overall, and I think you have seen the list, you will see that we wanted to reach as many stakeholders as possible with as many projects as possible. If we had opened it up to building or renovation projects, we would have quickly exhausted the \$6.2 million from the EDI.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: What proportion of your clientele is francophone, as compared to the anglophone clientele in the Atlantic provinces? You talked earlier about ACOA employees. You said that 50% were bilingual. Are the others anglophone or francophone? Mr. Godin may not have the answer, but I think you do.

Ms. Denise Frenette: You are talking about the proportion of the clientele?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Yes, in relation to the number of bilingual, francophone or anglophone employees.

Ms. Denise Frenette: The Atlantic region is 12% francophone. For our employees, over 50% of our positions are designated bilingual. We are talking here about positions that would be occupied by bilingual individuals.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Mr. Chair, if you want a precise answer about the francophone proportion of our clientele, I think we are going to have to send you a specific answer. We do not have the figures at hand.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Harris.

[Translation]

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would also thank the witnesses for coming to meet with us.

My colleague Mr. Bélanger asked you some questions about the government's answers during the 40st Parliament. I would like to know how far along CIC's reply was. The 120-day time allowed was almost up. Was the reply almost completed?

• (1015)

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Mr. Chair, as I said earlier in reply to a similar question, the government's replies to this kind of report are

protected and confidential. Those decisions have the status of cabinet confidences. I have no comment to make on that question.

Mr. Dan Harris: Right.

My question is for ACOA.

You mentioned 34 projects, including NB Translation. On that point, you said that hundreds of companies had had translations done. I would like to know how much money was invested in that project.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Obviously, that is an important project. To date, we have invested about \$300,000 and we have \$600,000 left to disburse.

Initially, the process to introduce NB Translation in the small business community was relatively slow, but I can tell you that the ACOA team put in additional effort to attract more clients. The results achieved to date indicate that 100 small businesses and organizations that support small businesses have benefited from the services offered by the project. In addition, new partnerships have been created with the CBDC network, the regional and provincial associations of CBDCs, mainly in New Brunswick. That includes the 15 community economic development agencies in New Brunswick.

Mr. Dan Harris: I am going to ask you to stop here, given that we have only five minutes.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Yes.

Mr. Dan Harris: Thank you.

Have you heard about the \$10 million that the NRCC has invested in creating interactive language technologies? Is the NB Translation program part of that? The project targets small and medium businesses and partnerships with the government to improve the translation situation.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Yes, we are familiar with it. To my knowledge, that technology has not been used by the people at NB Translation in what they are trying to do for small businesses. The idea was to adapt translation for small businesses looking for a service. They really wanted to be alongside them and to respond to their needs through this project.

Mr. Dan Harris: I would like to suggest that more research be done on this.

[English]

to get the biggest bang for our buck.

[Translation]

If you have already spent \$300,000 and the NRCC has spent \$10 million, that makes a lot of spending.

In my opinion, it would be a good idea to try to put more emphasis on communication between departments and with the government, to get more results and spend the funds better.

I have one minute left. Very quickly, I will address everyone.

What have the effects been on ACOA and CIC of the work done by the Advisory Committee on the Public Service appointed by the Prime Minister?

Ms. Denise Frenette: I am going to answer for us only. I have not looked at the issue, but we could get back to you on this.

•(1020)

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Nor us. We could get back to you with that information after we ask the department. Absolutely.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Menegakis, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I have a couple of questions, and I want to start with CIC. Last year we had 43 million people visit Canada's immigration website. Of those, 56% were from non-Canadians outside of Canada. There's obviously a tremendous interest in coming to this country—in some part, I would assume, because this is a bilingual country. There are people who speak the French language who would like to come to Canada. It would be an attractive destination for them.

You testified about a Destination Canada job fair. I wonder if you can elaborate on that a little bit in the context of the francophone community and francophone applicants who would like to come to our country.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: It would be my pleasure to elaborate, and I'll ask my colleague, Yves Saint-Germain, to complement my answer.

I mentioned Destination Canada because it is fair to describe it as our flagship program for recruitment and promotion overseas. It's been growing in popularity, and I think its impact has grown over the years. We do this once a year, in November typically, in Paris, Brussels, and Tunis. It's an opportunity for us to bring Canadian delegations overseas, representatives from the provinces. For example, New Brunswick was represented in our last edition of the program. Employers are also available to make connections with folks from overseas who are interested in coming to Canada.

In response to your question about our website, we make an effort to reflect the bilingual nature of our country. It is an important asset for those who are looking for a new destination to be able to get the touch, look, and feel of the government. The department is there supporting immigration for them. So Destination Canada has been very important. This latest edition featured an exemption from labour market opinions for temporary foreign workers. This is an interesting angle that we tried to promote this time around. It means that employers could make job offers on the spot, without the need to check the labour market. It affords a privileged position to francophone immigrants and supports that priority for us. I think we had something like 150 job offers by virtue of that program. So that was a gain for us, and something we'll be looking to explore in future years.

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: I want to add that in terms of the CIC and promoting the country, we have, as you mentioned, on the CIC website a specific section dedicated to francophone immigration. It explains where communities are located across the country and gives profiles of those communities. This information has been produced in collaboration with Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes. It gives a sense of where people can actually settle in Canada in French.

The other thing is that we have a connection with the “Working in Canada” tool on the HRSDC website. It provides a sense of what kind of labour market exists and what types of jobs are available in those specific communities. It provides another incentive for potential candidates to apply for immigration to Canada.

With respect to Destination Canada, I'll share some good results. We tested this new model of labour market exemptions and arranged employment offers. The idea is to basically fast-track potential candidates as immigrants to Canada. Over 150 offers were received in terms of LMOs. Of those, 6% of participants to job fairs received a job offer, 28% received an expression of interest, and almost 20% got an invitation from an employer to stay in touch after arriving in Canada.

There are a lot of connections being made now between employers and immigrants. That means they'll be better able to secure a job when they land in Canada.

•(1025)

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menegakis.

[Translation]

Mr. Godin, it is your turn.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I have only five minutes, and it will go faster.

Ten million dollars has been invested in New Brunswick. Of that money, \$3.7 million has been spent. There has been an extension to 2014. Would ACOA like to see the roadmap continue?

Ms. Denise Frenette: As we said, we think the roadmap has had a positive impact. Renewing the roadmap would be seen positively by the agency; it would allow us to continue.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Have you heard anything from the government or your department to say that even if the roadmap were not renewed, the immigration program would continue?

Ms. Denise Frenette: There has been no discussion of that subject.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Has there been a summative evaluation? We are now at the midway point of the roadmap. Have you done evaluations with the community?

Ms. Denise Frenette: New Brunswick will be doing a specific evaluation of the immigration portion of the roadmap. The work has not yet started. ACOA itself will be evaluating it in the broader framework of its activities. So we do not have the results of the evaluation at present.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Under the agreement, does New Brunswick have to account to ACOA?

Ms. Denise Frenette: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Does that relate to the roadmap and the \$10 million?

Ms. Denise Frenette: Yes.

Mr. Yvon Godin: They do the evaluation, rather than you.

Ms. Denise Frenette: They will initiate the evaluation.

Mr. Yvon Godin: I am talking about the evaluation of the roadmap. They are the ones who do it?

Mr. Wade Aucoin: Both of them do it. The province of New Brunswick will do an evaluation only of the \$10 million. We will then have specific results for the \$10 million that has been invested in New Brunswick.

A little earlier, Ms. Frenette mentioned that we are also going to include the \$10 million in our regular evaluations for all of our programs. In those evaluations, we will probably not see specific results relating directly to that \$10 million.

However, we will be including the recipients or beneficiaries of all our initiatives, including those who have benefited from the \$10 million, using the methodology designed for the evaluations. Information will be published, but in our case it will not be specific.

Mr. Yvon Godin: For Newfoundland and Labrador, \$400,000 has been allocated and \$150,000 has been spent; \$150,000 is not a lot.

Is there a shortage of officials or agents capable of helping the communities move forward and implement their projects? They must have projects for more than \$150,000, since that figure is a drop in Chaleur Bay. It is not even a drop; make it half a drop.

Under part VII of the act, you are responsible for promoting the official languages. Usually it says "where numbers warrant", but part VII does not say that. So you have a responsibility to promote both official languages.

Mr. Wade Aucoin: As I mentioned in my earlier answer, all indications we have received up to now concerning these projects in Newfoundland and Labrador and the others that we are directly responsible for are that disbursing the full amount is not going to be a problem.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Four hundred thousand dollars is not a lot. You have only disbursed \$150,000. Why? Have there been delays because of a shortage of agents in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Ms. Denise Frenette: As a general rule, we see that when it comes to disbursements, there are in fact delays in the program, and there are efforts to be made in terms of catching up on spending. We are also in a good position to confirm that the money will be spent by the end of the program.

I agree: \$400,000 is in fact not a lot. But francophones in Newfoundland and Labrador make up a very small population. We are talking about 0.4% francophones.

Mr. Yvon Godin: Under part VII, you are supposed to spend money and promote the languages. You are again coming back to the fact that there are not many francophones and there is not much money to spend. You are supposed to promote the official languages.

• (1030)

Ms. Denise Frenette: I meant that they have in fact mobilized very well if they were able to...

Mr. Yvon Godin: To get \$150,000.

Ms. Denise Frenette: It is not \$150,000; it is \$400,000, 15% of the funds that were available. Those are not the only projects they may have received funding from; they may also have been funded under ACOA's regular programs.

Certainly we promote the official languages and we work actively with those communities. In every province of Atlantic Canada, under

section 41 of the Official Languages Act, we have a coordinator who makes specific efforts. They devote their time to doing promotion, working with the communities, and there is a person in Newfoundland and Labrador, as in all the other provinces in the Atlantic region, in addition to our business agents and our networks on site.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Godin.

[English]

Mr. Williamson.

Mr. John Williamson: Mr. Sylvester, I've done some quick math here, based on your numbers. Going back to 2010—and I realize you have updated numbers—just under 2% of French-speaking immigrants were settling outside of Quebec. Is that correct?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: I'm not sure what numbers you're referring to. I'm sorry.

Mr. John Williamson: For 2010, statistics indicate that 1.5%, or 3,481 permanent residents admitted to Canada outside of Quebec in 2010 were French-speaking immigrants. Where do those immigrants end up primarily?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: For the most part they end up in Ontario. I think about 70% go to Ontario and the rest are dispersed to other places. We may be able to provide you with a more detailed breakdown of that if you like.

Mr. John Williamson: In Ontario, can you be more precise? Do they go to Toronto specifically?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: My colleague is telling me he has this on the tip of his finger, so maybe he should—

Mr. John Williamson: That's fine.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Ottawa is second.

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: Besides Toronto, Ottawa is the destination of choice for francophone immigrants. But we also have immigrants going north to Sudbury, North Bay, and places like that.

Mr. John Williamson: In another paragraph it says a big challenge has been raising the number of French-speaking immigrants in regions outside of Quebec. I'm assuming that's because the decision to move to a new country is a big one. It's a new culture and a new system of government, and perhaps there is no family or ties of community. If you throw in language, that's another alienating influence or factor.

Do you feel that your aim of 4.4% is attainable? How do you feel that number can be reached?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: I suppose, Mr. Chair, I'd offer in response to that first a comment on what you've put your finger on in terms of the challenges. Yes, indeed, for francophone immigrants considering a move to a country like Canada, while our prosperity and the society we have is attracting immigrants from around the world, the language barrier is a real hurdle for them. This is why primarily francophone immigrants are attracted to the province of Quebec, where they will indeed have challenges, but nowhere near as acute perhaps as in other parts of the country.

What we're trying to do is work with the receiving communities to make sure those services that we are making available are well known to prospective immigrants so that they'll see that they have the support they need for general orientation and language training as well. There are beautiful parts of the country as well, where we have French language minority communities settling, and we're looking at nurturing and increasing the vitality of those communities.

With respect to the attainability of the target, the target was set in collaboration with a number of parties when we were working on the overall strategy, including the FCFA, and together we've collaborated on establishing this target. It was set presumably as a fairly high bar but one that we thought was attainable. Based on the results we've achieved to date, which are quite encouraging, it suggests that we're on track to do that.

I don't think we can, by any means, rest on our laurels. There's still an awful lot of effort needed. I think if we work with these networks and we work increasingly with the hosting communities and make linkages among those communities, employers, and all the settlement services there, we'll be able to do a better job of attracting francophone and minority groups to those communities.

• (1035)

Mr. John Williamson: As a follow-up, and correct me if I'm wrong, much of the decision really comes down to the individual, where that person would like to live, which is as it should be. Are there mechanisms in place where your department is able to shoehorn people into different parts of the country? If so, what are they? If not, that's understandable as well, I think.

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: The immigration system, as you know, is quite complex. We have different categories. The principal applicant decides to choose where he wants to settle. We also have the family class, which is a huge pull factor in terms of bringing in relatives from a similar country—family, friends. That's a huge pull factor for those communities. We have those tools. We also have under the refugee program the possibility to resettle refugees across the country.

So all these mechanisms under the immigration system can play out with the collaboration of the key partners—the employers and also the communities.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: The one thing I would add, Mr. Chair, is working with employers, because employment obviously is a huge draw. The other one, though, that may not be quite so obvious is the post-secondary institutions. If we can target our efforts towards those that offer post-secondary education in French, often there are spin-off benefits to that in employment in those very communities too.

So those are two other opportunities for us to attract.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Bélanger.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to come back to the 1991 accord. If I understood correctly, it has some effect on your ability to work with the anglophone community in Quebec.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: I would say that the accord does have an important role to play when it comes to how we deal with settlement services and selection of francophone immigrants in Quebec. Under the accord, responsibility for selection and for providing settlement services is assigned to Quebec. That significant part of the work is therefore handled by the province. That is why we limit ourselves mainly to research projects.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: You undoubtedly know that there were amendments to the Official Languages Act in 2005. Do you know what they require from the department?

Mr. Yves Saint-Germain: The act says that we have to take positive measures to support the communities, whether they be anglophones in Quebec or francophones outside Quebec.

In the case of positive measures, CIC has approached the ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles to resume the dialogue and have a discussion about needs. As well, we fund research projects, to determine the attraction and retention potential of the anglophone communities.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Would the department by any chance have requested an analysis or a legal opinion as to which one prevails, as between the Official Languages Act and the 1991 accord?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: The answer to that question is confidential.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Which do you think prevails? The Official Languages Act or the 1991 accord?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: I think the two laws are complementary. The two laws can be administered together. We work under the accord and the Official Languages Act.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: How is it that you think you are obliged to go through the government of Quebec in order to assist the anglophone community? Is it because of the accord?

• (1040)

Mr. Peter Sylvester: Mr. Chair, I would not say we feel obliged to go through the ministère. We make an effort to work with our provincial colleagues. However, we have meetings with the Quebec Community Groups Network, for example. We work closely with them on research projects, as my colleague described quite well.

We have also tried to see whether there was an opening, at the provincial level, to be able to set up a committee that would be similar...

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: There still isn't one.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: There is no committee. We were met with a somewhat negative reception from the province. That does not mean that we are stopping at that response. We are going to explore other avenues.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Mr. Sylvester, if I understand correctly, there is nothing to prevent the department from creating one if it wanted.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: In my opinion, no, there is nothing to prevent us from creating a committee.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: However, that option has not yet been adopted.

Mr. Peter Sylvester: I had an initial discussion with the QCGN in February. Its representatives raised the question and we are in fact in the process of considering how we could approach it.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: We will follow that with interest.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

I would like to come back to the question of polarization. You do not seem to like the word. I would like to make sure that we agree on one thing at least.

The population outside Quebec is 4.4% francophone. Those people are spread across Canada. Francophones account for 1.5%, or perhaps 1.8%, of immigrants. The effect is to weaken the francophone community in relation to the anglophone community outside Quebec. Can we agree on that, at least?

Mr. Peter Sylvester: In terms of numbers, yes, that is undeniable.

Hon. Mauril Bélanger: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bélanger.

I would like to thank all the members of the committee and all our witnesses for their testimony.

[*English*]

Thank you, everybody, for your questions and comments.

Thank you to our witnesses for appearing, and for the commentary and submissions. That will be valuable for our analyst as she prepares our draft report.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: Mr. Chair, excuse me for interrupting you. We have five minutes left.

The Chair: The clock is not right. We do not have five minutes left. We have three minutes.

[*English*]

Right now the next turn is for the Conservatives.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yvon Godin: If they do not want to use it, I have some questions to ask.

[*English*]

The Chair: Are there members who would like to ask any further questions?

You can ask a brief question, Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Absolutely. Thank you.

My question is for ACOA. I was interested to hear in your presentation—something that we knew, of course—that one-third of Canada's francophone minority community resides in the Atlantic region. Could you elaborate a little bit on the community involvement in your work? Do you work with the different francophone communities within the Atlantic region?

Ms. Denise Frenette: We work very closely with the francophone community. We have, as I've mentioned, a very strong presence in the community. We have district offices in the community. We work with the CBDCs as well as with other francophone groups, la FANE and La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, to name a couple. There is Conseil économique du Nouveau-Brunswick, and there's a list of people we work with. So we're very close with the community.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menegakis.

Thank you to everyone for their questions and comments and to our witnesses for appearing.

Without further ado, this meeting is adjourned.

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