

Appearance of ESDC officials before the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance (NFFN) for the examination of the Supplementary Estimates (C) 2023-24 on April 16, 2024.

1. Question from Senator Kim Pate: How will it [CDB] be linked to the Revenue Canada stream that we knew during the pandemic was the only system fit for purpose to roll out the benefits that were needed then on an emergency basis?

The Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) will be delivered using a modernized benefit delivery system and will not be delivered using the Canada Revenue Agency system used during the pandemic. ESDC's modernized benefit delivery system has different delivery infrastructures for different benefits/programs because of differences in the client base, different eligibility criteria, and different funding streams. It is not one system for all ESDC benefits.

There is ongoing work within ESDC involving the service delivery side of the organization and the policy side to prepare for the introduction of the benefit. ESDC will be using all the lessons that we have learned over many years of delivering programs like OAS, but these two programs are separate and will have different funding streams and delivery infrastructures.

2. Question from Senator Joan Kingston: Regarding the two items in the Supplementary Estimates (C) for the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities, how will the funding be distributed amongst the provinces and territories, what are the objectives, and how will the results be measured?

The two items in the Supplementary Estimates (C) for the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities are:

- \$2.6M to offset the effects of inflation experienced by the 14 recipient organizations (**Stream 1** of the program) and,
- \$9.7M to launch a new Employment Assistance Services (EAS) stream (**Stream 2** of the program).

Stream 1

Distribution

The Program has been funding the same 14 official language minority community (OLMC) organizations, with one organization located in each province and territory and one national Francophone and Acadian umbrella organization, since 1999.

At that time, the organizations came to an agreement regarding the distribution of funds among the organizations, and the Program continues to this day to use the same distribution model, including for this new indexation funding sought in Supplementary Estimates C. The model is largely based on the size of the OLMC populations in each jurisdiction.

Distributing the indexation funding in this manner is appropriate, given that the funding was meant to help offset the effects of inflation, which was felt across each organization, and the agreements that are being modified were signed only 1 year ago.

Objectives

The objectives of this stream are to strengthen OLMCs' capacity in the areas of:

- **Community Economic Development** by funding activities that support local action to create economic opportunities that improve social conditions;
- **Human Resources Development** through integrating the use of training, organization, and career development efforts to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness; and
- **Promoting Partnerships** to leverage funding and partnerships to maximize resources, and to ensure cohesive action around community priorities.

Measuring Results

The main indicator for this Stream is “the leveraging effect”. This indicator was designed to account for the OLMC organizations’ ability to diversify their sources of funding, for their level of community involvement, and for the broad range of activities they undertake, in the spirit of the “by and for” approach.

Success is determined by the leveraging effect, which is measured by the ratio of dollars raised (i.e. through investments external to the Stream, in-kind contributions, and revenue generated)

in comparison to every dollar invested through the Stream. The target is \$2 for every \$1 invested by the Program (a 2:1 ratio).

Over the coming year, the Department will be reviewing its performance measurement strategy for this stream. Funding recipients have been advised that their agreements will be amended to integrate new data collection requirements in support of this strategy. These will be implemented into Stream 1 projects starting in 2025-2026 to ensure that the 14 OLMC organizations have the time to fully embrace the new reporting requirements and work with their partners to integrate them into sub-projects, where applicable.

Stream 2

Distribution

A notional allocation model for this stream, inclusive of the item sought in Supplementary Estimates C, was created to estimate the percentage of funding that organizations operating within each jurisdiction would receive. This was based mainly on the relative size of each jurisdiction's OLMC labour force, and the challenges they face in ensuring their own vitality, and a minimum amount for jurisdictions with smaller OLMC populations.

The notional allocation is an estimate only, as funding to OLMC organizations within each jurisdiction will depend on demonstrated needs, organizational capacity, and the quality of the proposals received, as well as emerging needs and priorities. A Call-for-Proposals was launched April 11, 2024. It is expected that projects may commence as early as fall 2024. This flexibility will allow the Program to maximize programming and ensure that OLMC funding for employment assistance services can be allocated where it is most needed.

Objectives

The objective of this stream is to fund OLMC organizations to provide tailored EAS to individuals living in OLMCs so that they can find, obtain, or maintain employment. Under this Stream, it is imperative that each OLMC organizations' services are integrated into the broader provincial or territorial skills and employment delivery system in which they implement their project in order to fully support their clients' needs.

Measuring Results

OLMC organizations will report on a series of outputs and outcomes indicators including GBA+ data, the type of EAS and wrap-around services provided and post-intervention employment outcomes. All of this information will be used to demonstrate that the program is achieving its intended objectives and to report publicly on results. This information will be sufficiently detailed to allow further analysis for the program to assess whether any changes in approach are needed, as well as to support promotion of promising practices with OLMC stakeholders across Canada.

3. Question from Senator Joan Kingston: We were talking about the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities Program, and you talked about the fact that you were going to be putting out a request for proposals. Do you have any examples of organizations that have been successful in the past? Also, what are they actually doing in terms of employment assistance services through those contracts?

Currently, the EF-OLMC program contribution funding is limited to Stream 1, which supports a network of 14 organizations across Canada that promote collaboration at all levels and help OLMCs strengthen their capacity in the areas of Community Economic Development (CED) and Human Resources Development (HRD).

Organizations have demonstrated success, for example, by having developed mentoring coaching program supports, trained associations in integrating an entrepreneurial approach into the management activities, supported business creation and promoted economic growth of their community.

Limited employment assistance services (EAS) activities occur under HRD (Stream 1) since this is not the focus of organizations. This includes services such as career planning, job matching and CV development.

Budget 2023 provided new funding of \$208M over 5 years and \$54M ongoing for an expansion of the EF-OLMC to fund organizations to provide employment assistance services to their communities. The new EAS is comprised of four main activities: job search assistance, counselling and case management, unassisted services, and other supports, such as job coaching, job simulation experience, and providing mentorship, guidance and support to job seekers and entrepreneurs. A Call for Proposals (CFP) was launched on April 11, 2024. OLMC organizations have until June 20, 2024, to submit their applications for funding. Organizations funded under the stream 2 will report on progress achieved towards the intended outcomes and objectives of the project.