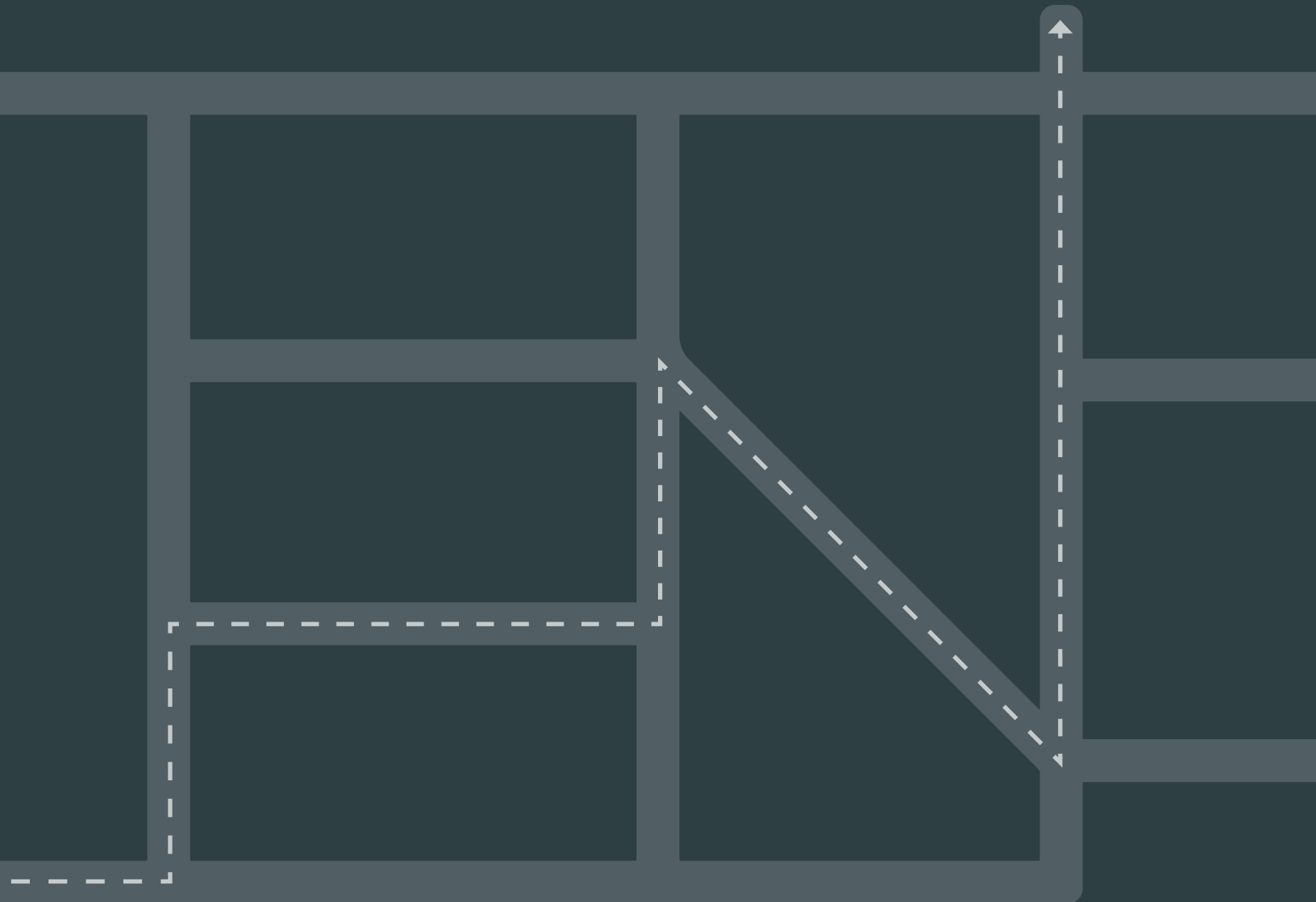





Municipal Economic Recovery Strategy 2021-2024



A ROADMAP FOR RESILIENT BILINGUAL
COMMUNITIES IN MANITOBA

A total of \$340.9 million to support Manitoba's bilingual municipal governments and their OLMCS

\$259.3 million
for infrastructure projects

TYPES OF INFRASTRUCTURE	TOTAL 2021-2024
 Sustainable development infrastructure	\$222.4 million
 Tourism infrastructure	\$27 million
 Digital infrastructure	\$9.9 million



\$11.6 million
for economic development and entrepreneurship projects



\$70 million
endowment fund for infrastructure to support the enhancement of Francophone and bilingual communities in Manitoba

This strategy is the result of extensive consultation with Manitoba's bilingual municipal leadership

The Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (AMBM) is the voice of bilingual municipal leadership in the province of Manitoba. The Association represents 15 local governments¹ committed to providing services in both official languages to their citizens and actively contributing to the development of the province's official language minority communities (OLMCs).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the mitigation measures implemented by the governments of Manitoba and Canada over the past year have had a significant impact on the economic development and financial health^{2,3} of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities, as well as on the vitality of their OLMCs, which are threatened more than ever with linguistic assimilation.

From July to September 2020, the AMBM conducted a broad consultation of its 15 member municipalities to identify their priority projects to be undertaken over the next three years.

This strategy is based on the vision and needs of its members, and proposes concrete actions and interventions in line with the economic recovery plans of the governments of Manitoba and Canada.

The AMBM and its members are committed partners in a strong recovery of the Manitoban and Canadian economy.

¹ The AMBM membership includes 14 rural municipalities in addition to Manitoba's capital, Winnipeg.

² However, the Safe Restart Agreement of 2020 between the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba has provided quick funding to municipalities so they can continue to provide essential services to their residents. See Government of Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Safe Restart Agreement, October 9, 2020 [Online] <https://www.canada.ca/en/intergovernmental-affairs/services/safe-restart-agreement.html>.

³ On March 25, 2021, the Government of Canada announced that the transfer of the Gas Tax Fund to municipalities will be doubled for one year, adding \$2.2 billion, and will become the Canada Community-Building Fund. We welcome this key step towards a recovery rooted in our communities. See Government of Canada, Minister of Finance, Support for Municipalities, March 25, 2021 [Online] <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2021/03/support-for-municipalities.html>.

Building strong and resilient communities through structuring investments

COVID-19 has highlighted many vulnerabilities in Canadian society as a whole. However, its greatest impact was observed in the most vulnerable communities, including Manitoba's Francophone and bilingual communities. It is therefore crucial that special attention be paid to them during the post-pandemic economic recovery, to bolster their resilience.

With regard to Manitoba's bilingual municipalities, in order to stimulate a robust exit from the crisis, the AMBM has developed a bold municipal economic recovery strategy.

The execution of this strategy will confirm our communities' ability to bounce back, to take charge and to lead large-scale projects successfully. This is only possible if we have the resources and tools to provide dedicated support to municipalities and their economic agencies to develop their capacities⁴.

It will also demonstrate an unprecedented synergy between our three levels of government – municipal, provincial and federal – to rebuild strong and resilient bilingual communities across Manitoba.

The proposed measures are targeted and will contribute directly to an accelerated recovery of the economy in addition to generating a return on investment for all public stakeholders involved⁵. They are also consistent with the spirit and intent of the Government of Manitoba's Budget 2021⁶ and the Government of Canada's Budget 2021⁷.



⁴ The Federation of Canadian Municipalities estimates that 60% of Canadian municipalities have five or fewer employees. AMBM members fall into this category. Their staffs are fully dedicated to day-to-day operations and do not have the expertise to develop or lead priority projects that are critical to community development.

⁵ At the time of writing, Manitoba's bilingual municipal leadership continues to fight the daily battle against COVID-19 in solidarity with the provincial and federal governments. Their top priority is to protect the health and safety of communities, in collaboration with public health and safety authorities.

⁶ Government of Manitoba, Protecting Manitobans, Advancing Manitobans – Budget 2021, Winnipeg, April 7, 2021 [Online] <https://www.gov.mb.ca/budget2021/index.html>.

⁷ Government of Canada, Budget 2021 – A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth and Resilience, Ottawa, April 19, 2021 [Online]. <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>.



The urgency and benefit of investing in the economy and infrastructure of Manitoba's Francophone and bilingual communities

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on communities. Specifically, it has revealed their precariousness. At the time of the outbreak, Manitoba's Francophone and bilingual communities were already facing the challenges of climate change, underdevelopment of their tourism potential, and profound digital marginalization. The crisis also intensified their extreme economic and infrastructure fragility. One year later, the need to act is urgent. Action must be taken now.

Municipalities own 60% of the essential infrastructure that supports the economy. This infrastructure must be continually renewed and maintained while new infrastructure must also be developed.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, every dollar invested in local infrastructure adds between \$1.20 and \$1.60⁸ to Canada's real GDP. There is no doubt then that infrastructure investment is one of the most powerful and scalable levers of economic growth, and an effective economic development tool across Canada.

The COVID-19 crisis provides an unprecedented opportunity for the three levels of government to join forces and capitalize on this leverage to build strong and resilient Francophone and bilingual communities across Manitoba.

8 Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Building back better together – Municipal recommendations for Canada's post-COVID recovery, Ottawa, November 2020, p. 9 [Online] <https://data.fcm.ca/documents/COVID-19/fcm-building-back-better-together.pdf>.

5 complementary areas of intervention



**Sustainable development
infrastructure**



**Tourism
infrastructure**



**Digital
infrastructure**



**Economic development &
entrepreneurship**



**Endowment fund for infrastructure
contributing to the enhancement of
Manitoba's Francophone and bilingual
communities**



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

In its report for economic recovery, the Industry Strategy Council of Canada⁹ recommends that Canada become the world leader in environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues in the areas of resources, clean energy and clean technology.

It is now clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the deepest and fastest recession since the Great Depression. It is equally clear that it would be utopian to think of “building back better”¹⁰ without substantial investment in sustainable development infrastructure.

A case in point: in its Fall Economic Statement 2020, the federal government announced the upcoming development of a \$100 billion green post-pandemic economic recovery plan over the next three fiscal years: “The stimulus will help us build out of this recession towards an economy that is greener, more innovative, more inclusive and more competitive.”¹¹ The plan will be built around investments that will, among other things, advance “the green transformation.” Measures will include “growing a green economy, investing in infrastructure that supports our communities.”¹² These measures will be specified in the 2021 budget.

\$222.4

MILLION

PROJECT
Extension of the
Natural Gas Line

COMMUNITY
Rural Municipality of
Lorne (*Local Urban Districts of*
Notre Dame de Lourdes, St. Leon
and Somerset)

COST
\$54 Million

⁹ Government of Canada, Minister of Industry (Industry Strategy Council), Restart, Recover and Reimagine Prosperity for All Canadians: An Ambitious Growth Plan for Building a Digital, Sustainable and Innovative Economy, Ottawa, October 2020, p. 53 [Online] [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/o62.nsf/vwapj/00118a_en.pdf/\\$file/00118a_en.pdf](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/o62.nsf/vwapj/00118a_en.pdf/$file/00118a_en.pdf).

¹⁰ Government of Canada, Minister of Industry (Industry Strategy Council), Restart, Recover and Reimagine Prosperity for All Canadians: An Ambitious Growth Plan for Building a Digital, Sustainable and Innovative Economy, Ottawa, October 2020, p. 74 [Online] [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/o62.nsf/vwapj/00118a_en.pdf/\\$file/00118a_en.pdf](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/o62.nsf/vwapj/00118a_en.pdf/$file/00118a_en.pdf).

¹¹ Government of Canada, Minister of Finance, Supporting Canadians and Fighting COVID-19 – Fall Economic Statement 2020, Ottawa, November 30, 2020, p. 70 [Online] <https://www.budget.gc.ca/fes-eea/2020/report-rapport/FES-EEA-eng.pdf>.

¹² Government of Canada, Minister of Finance, Supporting Canadians and Fighting COVID-19 – Fall Economic Statement 2020, Ottawa, November 30, 2020, p. 70 [Online] <https://www.budget.gc.ca/fes-eea/2020/report-rapport/FES-EEA-eng.pdf>.





SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The ambitions are lofty: surpass Canada's 2030 climate goals, act aggressively in achieving carbon neutrality and make Canada a world leader in clean technologies¹³. Expectations are therefore correspondingly high for all stakeholders, including Eco-West Canada (EWC), which has focused since 2014 on turning the response to sustainable development issues into a lever for economic growth, an expertise that will continue to be useful in achieving the targeted objectives.

In 2017, the Manitoba government released its Climate and Green Plan¹⁴ in which it stated its vision to become the cleanest, greenest and most climate-resilient province in Canada. In Manitoba, the vitality and prosperity of OLMCs are directly linked to sustainable development (the green economy). COVID-19 has clearly demonstrated that without a vision based on sustainable development (the green economy), these communities will be ill-equipped to face the challenges of tomorrow. The assurance of a good quality of life for future generations is unthinkable without a solid strategy to counter climate change.

PROJECT
Water Distribution
System Expansion

TARGET COMMUNITY
Rural Municipality
of Alexander

COST
\$6 Million



¹³ Canada, Governor General, A Stronger and More Resilient Canada: Speech from the Throne to Open the Second Session of the Forty-Third Parliament of Canada, September 23, 2020, Ottawa, September 23, 2020, p. 25 [Online] https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pco-bcp/documents/pm/SFT_2020_EN_WEB.pdf.

¹⁴ Government of Manitoba, A Made-in-Manitoba Climate and Green Plan – Hearing From Manitobans, 2017 [Online] https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/climatechange/climategreenplandiscussionpaper.pdf.



OBJECTIVE

Accelerate the shift to a green economy in Manitoba's Francophone and bilingual communities so that they can effectively participate in achieving the vision of a clean and green Manitoba and a greener and more sustainable Canada.

MEASURES

- Support the completion of **90 priority sustainable development projects¹⁵** with a total value of **\$213.5 million**,
 - including the acceleration of funding currently pending from both levels of government for a total value of nearly **\$14.2 million**.
- Take full advantage of the environmental expertise and knowledge from multiple Canadian municipalities built by EWC by providing each of the 14 bilingual rural member municipalities of the AMBM with an annual budget of \$50,000 (over 3 years) to access EWC's consulting services and expertise according to their needs; an investment of **\$2.1 million**.
- Support the creation of three decentralized (rural) business offices for Eco-West Canada so that the organization can provide ongoing support to rural bilingual municipalities across Manitoba with qualified resources in rural areas, an investment of **\$2.8 million**.
- Support businesses in bilingual municipalities in making the shift to environmentally responsible business practices and implementing projects that reduce their carbon footprint through targeted financial assistance of **\$4 million**.
- Learn from COVID-19 to invest more and with greater focus in the sustainable development infrastructures of Francophone and bilingual communities and make them a real lever for their economic development.

¹⁵ In this context, sustainable development infrastructure includes so-called green, social, and trade and transport infrastructure as it is planned and implemented with a view to increasing energy efficiency and climate protection.



TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Tourism was hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis. Due to widespread travel restrictions and a collapse in demand, the sector experienced the worst crisis in its history in 2020¹⁶. Further, the general outlook for a rebound in 2021 seems less and less optimistic, with most experts in the field not predicting a return to pre-pandemic levels until 2023: “UNWTO’s [World Tourism Organization] extended scenarios for 2021-2024 indicate that it could take between two-and-a-half and four years for international tourism to return to 2019 levels.”¹⁷

Domestically, if the borders remain closed until October of this year, Destination Canada does not expect a return to pre-pandemic levels until 2026. Prior to the pandemic, the tourism industry was Canada’s fifth-largest sector, responsible for \$102 billion in gross domestic product, supporting 225,000 small and medium-sized businesses, and sustaining one in ten Canadians.¹⁸

But since March 2020, of the 1.9 million jobs that tourism supported in Canada, 521,300 have been lost¹⁹. Unemployment in the tourism sector has surpassed the national rate. In Manitoba, in December 2020, there was a 31.7% decrease in employment in the sector compared to December 2019²⁰. Export revenue shortfalls are evident in all provinces and territories. Between January and March 2021, Manitoba lost 94% of its tourism export revenue compared to the same period in 2019 (-\$33.2 million in 2021 versus +\$35.4 million in 2019)²¹.

\$27
MILLION

PROJECT
Installation of Exhibits,
Murals, Ferry Gallery and
Exterior Design at the
St. Georges Museum

COMMUNITY
Rural Municipality of
Alexander

COST
\$5 Million

- ¹⁶ The loss is estimated at US\$1.3 trillion in export earnings, more than 11 times the losses recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis. See United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, January 2021, Vol. 19, Issue 1 [Online] <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/abs/10.18111/wtobarometereng.2021.19.1.1>.
- ¹⁷ United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, January 2021, Vol. 19, Issue 1 [Online] <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/abs/10.18111/wtobarometereng.2021.19.1.1>.
- ¹⁸ Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), 2021 Tourism Recovery Plan, January 2021, p. 2 [Online] https://tiac-aitc.ca/_Library/Coronavirus_2020/TIAC_Tourism_Recovery_Plan_2021_EN_Final_7.pdf.
- ¹⁹ Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), 2021 Tourism Recovery Plan, January 2021, p. 2 [Online] https://tiac-aitc.ca/_Library/Coronavirus_2020/TIAC_Tourism_Recovery_Plan_2021_EN_Final_7.pdf.
- ²⁰ Destination Canada, Revisiting Tourism: Canada’s Visitor Economy One Year into the Global Pandemic, March 8, 2021, p. 33 [Online] <https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/1342-Revisiting%20Tourism%20Report%20-%20March%208%2C%202021/Revisiting%20Tourism%20Report-%20Mar%208%2C%202021.pdf>.
- ²¹ Destination Canada, COVID-19 Impact and Recovery Report: International Summary, February 9, 2021 [Online] https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/1321-COVID-19%20Impact%20and%20Recovery%20Report%3A%20International%20Summary%20-%20February%209%2C%202021/COVID%20international%20infographic-Feb9_Hyperlinked_EN.pdf.



TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Over the whole of 2020, the province's lost tourism revenue due to the absence of foreign tourists amounts to \$213 million²². According to the latest and most optimistic projections from Travel Manitoba and the Conference Board of Canada, we are not expected to recover until 2024²³.

Hence the urgency to act now, boldly²⁴. Without bold government action, the bleeding will continue. More jobs will be lost: at the end of 2020, Manitoba had the second-highest unemployment rate in the country in the tourism sector at 18.3%, 11% higher than the provincial average of 7.5%²⁵. More and more businesses will be at risk of closing: between January and October 2020, the number of active businesses in the tourism sector in Manitoba decreased by 6.6%²⁶. With this in mind, industry professionals are calling on the federal government to “act quickly to set out a plan to safely reopen the country to both domestic and international visitors, and ensure Canada’s tourism economy can survive and recover.”²⁷

PROJECT

Development of parc des Pionniers Saint-Malo Pioneer Park

TARGET COMMUNITY
Rural Municipality of De Salaberry

COST

\$550,000

OBJECTIVE

Support the continued development of tourism in Manitoba's Francophone and bilingual communities through the revitalization, establishment, and marketing of new and distinctive experiences, as well as employment and entrepreneurship initiatives with a focus on certain disadvantaged groups.

- ²² Destination Canada, Revisiting Tourism: Canada's Visitor Economy One Year into the Global Pandemic, March 8, 2021, p. 30 [Online] <https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/1342-Revisiting%20Tourism%20Report%20-%20March%208%2C%202021/Revisiting%20Tourism%20Report-%20Mar%208%2C%202021.pdf>.
- ²³ The Conference Board of Canada, Friendly Manitoba's Tourism Left Colder: Manitoba's Travel Markets Outlook to 2024, February 18, 2021 [Online] <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=11007>.
- ²⁴ The Speech from the Throne opening the Second Session of the Forty-Third Parliament rightly emphasized the need to take bold action to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. See: Canada, Governor General, A Stronger and More Resilient Canada: Speech From the Throne to Open the Second Session of the Forty-Third Parliament of Canada, September 23, 2020, Ottawa, September 23, 2020, p. 4 [Online] https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pco-bcp/documents/pm/SFT_2020_EN_WEB.pdf.
- ²⁵ Destination Canada, Revisiting Tourism: Canada's Visitor Economy One Year Into the Global Pandemic, March 8, 2021, p. 32 [Online] <https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/1342-Revisiting%20Tourism%20Report%20-%20March%208%2C%202021/Revisiting%20Tourism%20Report-%20Mar%208%2C%202021.pdf>.
- ²⁶ Destination Canada, Revisiting Tourism: Canada's Visitor Economy One Year Into the Global Pandemic, March 8, 2021, p. 31 [Online] <https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/1342-Revisiting%20Tourism%20Report%20-%20March%208%2C%202021/Revisiting%20Tourism%20Report-%20Mar%208%2C%202021.pdf>.
- ²⁷ Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), 2021 Tourism Recovery Plan, January 2021, p. 2 [Online] https://tiac-aitc.ca/_Library/Coronavirus_2020/TIAC_Tourism_Recovery_Plan_2021_EN_Final_7.pdf.





TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

MEASURES

- Promote the implementation of **21 priority tourism projects** that create jobs in rural and urban, Francophone and bilingual communities, for a total value of nearly **\$17.7 million**,
 - including accelerated funding currently pending from both levels of government for a total value of nearly **\$500,000**.
- Take full advantage of the expertise and tourism intelligence built up by the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM) over the past 25 years to support the planning and implementation of tourism projects in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities: an investment of **\$1.2 million**.
- Increase the sector's financial envelopes to allow for the planning and completion of promising and structuring entrepreneurial projects aimed at capitalizing on the province's competitive advantage and on Francophone and bilingual tourism products in the AMBM territory, up to a total of **\$4 million**.
- Provide targeted support and services to women, immigrants and French-speaking Métis in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities as a priority in the area of employability and entrepreneurship through the CDEM. These three groups have been hard hit by the many job losses in the tourism sector – as they represent the bulk of the workforce – and require special attention: an investment of **\$2.3 million**.
- Create incentives to stimulate domestic tourism and the discovery of Francophone Métis culture, which will create jobs and support local businesses, thereby accelerating the recovery of the sector in Manitoba: an investment of **\$1.8 million**.
- Adopt political/administrative measures forthwith to support the industry in order to restore domestic and international consumer confidence and encourage the resumption of tourism activities in conjunction with mass vaccination efforts (by the governments of Canada and Manitoba).





DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

COVID-19 has demonstrated that digital infrastructure is essential for full participation in society and the economy. It has also demonstrated that Manitoba's bilingual municipalities lack the technological infrastructure (high-speed Internet and mobile connectivity) to fully seize the opportunities arising from the exodus from large cities through the adoption of a new digital nomadic world by businesses and professionals.

It was noted how critical it was for communities to have high-speed Internet and mobile connectivity (cellular network) to access real-time health information, continue to work, study and maintain their social connections; and for businesses to serve their customers.

The digital divide remains a reality in Canada and Manitoba. Rural Francophone and bilingual communities are particularly hard hit, many of which are among the "approximately 60% of rural communities [that] still do not have access to reliable, high-speed Internet."²⁸ The lack of digital infrastructure contributes to linguistic assimilation. Normalizing the French fact without the necessary technological tools to access content in the language of Molière: mission impossible.

With an announced investment of \$1.75 billion to connect 98% of Canadians to high-speed Internet by 2026 and the entire population by 2030, the federal government has grasped the urgency of the situation²⁹. In the last Speech from the Throne, the federal government promised to accelerate the connectivity timelines and ambitions of the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) to ensure that all regions have access to high-speed Internet.³⁰

\$9.9

MILLION

PROJECT
Broadband Internet
Infrastructure
Improvement

COMMUNITY
Rural Municipality of
St. Laurent

COST
\$1.2 M

²⁸ Government of Canada, Minister of Industry (Industry Strategy Council), Restart, Recover and Reimagine Prosperity for All Canadians: An Ambitious Growth Plan for Building a Digital, Sustainable and Innovative Economy, Ottawa, October 2020, p. 41 [Online] [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/o62.nsf/vwapj/00118a_en.pdf/\\$file/00118a_en.pdf](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/o62.nsf/vwapj/00118a_en.pdf/$file/00118a_en.pdf).

²⁹ Prime Minister of Canada, Connecting all Canadians to high-speed Internet, November 9, 2020 [Online] <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/11/09/connecting-all-canadians-high-speed-internet>.

³⁰ Canada, Governor General, A Stronger and More Resilient Canada: Speech from the Throne to Open the Second Session of the Forty-Third Parliament of Canada, September 23, 2020, Ottawa, September 23, 2020, p. 19 [Online] https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pco-bcp/documents/pm/SFT_2020_EN_WEB.pdf.



DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

A commitment it then made in its 2021 Budget by proposing to provide an additional \$1 billion in funding over six years to the UBF to connect rural and remote communities.³¹

And let's not forget the newly created Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB), a brand new Crown corporation that will invest \$35 billion of federal funding in transformative infrastructure projects.³² In March 2021, the CIB and DIF Capital Partners announced a joint investment of \$260 million to improve high-speed Internet access across the southern part of the province using the local expertise of Valley Fiber.³³

The provincial government has also made this issue a priority.³⁴ In March 2020, in its mandate letter to the Minister of Central Services, the Honourable Reg Helwer, the Premier of Manitoba directed the creation of a provincial broadband strategy.³⁵

As the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) notes, "Now the priority is to deliver funding as quickly and efficiently as possible to meet the urgent need for rural connectivity—and achieve the goal of truly universal Internet access."³⁶



PROJECT
Installation of a
Tower for Cellular Service

COMMUNITY
Rural Municipality of
Ellice-Archie

COST
\$750,000

³¹ Government of Canada, Budget 2021 – A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth and Resilience, Ottawa, April 19, 2021, p. 153 [Online]. <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>.

³² Government of Canada, Minister of Infrastructure, Canada Infrastructure Bank, February 3, 2021 [Online]. <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/CIB-BIC/index-eng.html>.

³³ Canada Infrastructure Bank, The CIB and private sector partners to invest CAD \$260 million to significantly expand broadband and connect Manitobans in underserved rural communities, March 26, 2021 [Online]. <https://cib-bic.ca/en/the-cib-and-private-sector-partners-to-invest-cad-260-million-to-significantly-expand-broadband-and-connect-manitobans-in-underserved-rural-communities/>.

³⁴ Government of Manitoba, Province Shining a Light on Dark Fibre for Rural Broadband Services, May 15, 2020 [Online]. <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=48177&posted=2020-05-15>.

³⁵ Government of Manitoba, Mandate letter from Premier Brian Pallister to Minister of Central Services Reg Helwer, March 3, 2020 [Online]. https://www.manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/executivecouncil/mandate/2020/central_services_mandate.pdf.

³⁶ Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Building back better together – Municipal recommendations for Canada's post-COVID recovery, Ottawa, November 2020, p. 16 [Online]. <https://data.fcm.ca/documents/COVID-19/fcm-building-back-better-together.pdf>.





OBJECTIVE

Accelerate the connection of all rural Francophone and bilingual communities in Manitoba to fast, reliable and affordable Internet and mobile services in order to strengthen their social fabric, attract new investment and take full advantage of opportunities arising from the exodus from large cities and the new digital nomadic lifestyle.

MEASURES

- Support **5 priority high-speed Internet and mobile** connectivity projects (cellular network) with a total value of **\$2.5 million**.
- Invest in digital infrastructure, including high-speed Internet and cellular telephony to unlock economic growth and investment (business expansion, business and investor attraction) in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities: a **\$6.5 million** investment.
- Take full advantage of the expertise and business intelligence built by the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM) over the past 25 years to assist in the planning and implementation of projects to connect all of Manitoba's bilingual rural communities to reliable and affordable high-speed Internet: an investment of **\$900,000**.
- Commit to a dialogue with bilingual municipalities to very quickly put in place a real action plan to bridge the digital divide that is holding back the economic development of many rural Francophone and bilingual communities.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Manitoba's bilingual municipalities play a predominant role in local economic development, with a direct impact on the vitality of their OLMCs. Their responsibilities in the area of economic development include proximity services to businesses, community economic development service infrastructures, development of industrial zones and parks, etc.

Given the scope of the responsibilities devolved to local governments, the AMBM and its two subsidiaries specializing in economic development (CDEM and EWC) are working to ensure that their members have the resources they need to be at the forefront of development in their territory.

Manitoba is an integral part of a far-reaching trade and transportation corridor through its network of efficient transportation routes and intermodal facilities. It has a vibrant business sector and an affordable business environment. This is especially true in rural areas where land and building costs and taxes are more than reasonable. Manitoba's bilingual municipalities have great strengths, but these are often overlooked within Canada and even more so on the international stage.

In 2020, the World Trade Centre Winnipeg launched its new trade strategy *Towards a Trade Strategy for Manitoba – Building on Local Clusters for Global Success*³⁷. The strategy illustrates the key sectors of Manitoba's economy that offer the best marketing opportunities for the province and identifies six key industry clusters of the future: digital and precision agriculture, proteins, next generation buses, transportation and logistics, aerospace and the urban economy (digital services, insurance, cultural and creative industries). Manitoba's 15 bilingual municipalities represent all of these industry clusters.

\$11.6

MILLION

PROJECT
Develop and Implement
an Economic Development
Plan

COMMUNITY
Rural Municipality of
La Broquerie

COST
\$150,000

³⁷ World Trade Centre Winnipeg, *Towards a Trade Strategy for Manitoba – Building on Local Clusters for Global Success*, October 1, 2020 [Online] <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:01b90871-d8fa-447b-a6a7-71fb49fd073#pageNum=1>.

Moreover, as the Governor General of Canada's September 2020 Speech from the Throne rightly noted, women, Indigenous peoples, racialized Canadians and young people are among the groups that have been most economically affected by the COVID-19 crisis. They are also often the lowest wage earners in the most precarious sectors and have been on the front lines during the pandemic.³⁸ Manitoba's bilingual municipalities are home to many of these minorities. The AMBM applauds the series of measures announced by the Government of Canada in its 2021 Budget³⁹ to support these same groups and wishes to partner with the federal government to ensure their well-being on its territory.

Finally, Francophone and bilingual communities are not immune to the demographic challenges facing Canada today. Immigration is one of the keys to successful economic recovery for Manitoba's bilingual municipalities, particularly Francophone immigration.

A marked increase in Francophone immigration will be necessary across the AMBM territory to offset the rapid aging of the population, stimulate economic growth, innovate with a wide range of new talents, perpetuate the French fact in Manitoba, maintain and increase the demographic weight of its linguistic minority and achieve the governments' objectives in terms of Francophone immigration, diversity and inclusion.

As Minister Mélanie Joly stated in her white paper on the modernization of the Official Languages Act (OLA): "Canada also has a duty to attract and facilitate Francophone immigration outside of Quebec."⁴⁰ Similarly, as the Honourable Marco Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, stated: "Immigration is essential to getting us through the pandemic, but also to our short-term economic recovery and our long-term economic growth."⁴¹

PROJECT **Designing an Asset** **Management Plan**

COMMUNITY
Town of
Powerview-Pine Falls

COST
\$50,000



³⁸ Canada, Governor General, A Stronger and More Resilient Canada: Speech from the Throne to Open the Second Session of the Forty-Third Parliament of Canada, Ottawa, September 23, 2020, p. 11 and p. 26 [Online] https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pco-bcp/documents/pm/SFT_2020_EN_WEB.pdf.

³⁹ Government of Canada, Budget 2021 – A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth and Resilience, Ottawa, April 19, 2021 [Online]. <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>.

⁴⁰ Government of Canada, Minister of Canadian Heritage, English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada, 2021, p. 4 [Online] <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/general-publications/equality-official-languages.html>.

⁴¹ Government of Canada, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Government of Canada announces plan to support economic recovery through immigration, October 30, 2020 [Online] <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/10/government-of-canada-announces-plan-to-support-economic-recovery-through-immigration.html>.



OBJECTIVE

Support economic development and job creation in Manitoba's Francophone and bilingual communities through investments in development, entrepreneurship support and immigration, with a particular emphasis on certain disadvantaged groups.

MEASURES

- Support the implementation of **9 priority economic development projects** that create jobs in rural and urban communities, Francophone and bilingual, for a total value of **\$900,000**.
- Provide economic development organizations working under the umbrella of Manitoba's bilingual municipal leadership with the resources they need to accelerate the development of their territories and adapt to the economy of tomorrow by investing **\$5 million** to:
 - improve the reception and support of investment projects;
 - target strategic sectors for planning;
 - develop a strategy and programs to increase the attractiveness and promotion of these communities; and
 - focus on developing new domestic and international business opportunities in collaboration with the World Trade Centre Winnipeg.
- Support strategies and measures aimed at substantially increasing Francophone economic immigration to Manitoba's bilingual municipalities, particularly in rural areas, by attracting a targeted workforce that meets the needs of local employers, as well as immigrant investors to seize the countless existing business opportunities; an estimated investment of **\$2.5 million**.
- Give special attention to entrepreneurship and employability of women, Indigenous peoples (Métis), racialized Canadians and French-speaking young people through customized initiatives and specialized consulting services of the CDEM: a measure estimated at **\$3.2 million**.



ENDOWMENT FUND FOR INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTING TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF MANITOBA'S FRANCOPHONE AND BILINGUAL COMMUNITIES

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly weakened the Francophone minority in Manitoba, threatening it more than ever with assimilation.

The presence of infrastructure dedicated to Francophones in OLMCs is crucial to building strong, dynamic and prosperous communities. This is especially true since these infrastructures stimulate the local economy and have a long-term effect on the economic development and sustainability of these communities.

Minister Mélanie Joly recognized in her white paper as a preamble to the modernization of the Official Languages Act (OLA) that “French is a minority language compared to English and that we have an increased duty to protect it. In order to achieve substantive equality between our two official languages, we must take concrete action. We must do this work together, with each other, in a climate of cooperation and acceptance. It is a matter of social cohesion.”⁴²

Similarly, on December 4, 2020, Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs Rochelle Squires issued a press release stating the importance of “promoting bilingualism as a key driver for post-COVID economic recovery”⁴³ for the province.

In the same spirit as the *Plan stratégique de la francophonie manitobaine* (Strategic Plan for Manitoba's Francophonie) which aims to increase community and institutional capacity and social structures, the AMBM and its members wish to contribute to increasing the number of Manitobans using French in their daily lives, both at home and in the public square.

The AMBM also wants to act boldly and create a paradigm shift: to help bring about the implementation of structures and infrastructure that meet the needs and aspirations of Manitoba's Francophone population instead of making them demand it.

\$70
MILLION

⁴² Government of Canada, Minister of Canadian Heritage, English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada, 2021, p. 4 [Online] <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/general-publications/equality-official-languages.html>.

⁴³ Government of Manitoba, Statement from Francophone Affairs Minister Rochelle Squires on the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, December 4, 2020 [Online] <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=49936>.

OBJECTIVE

Maintain and increase the number of infrastructures dedicated to Francophones in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities in order to protect the French language and move towards real equality between our two official languages in the province.

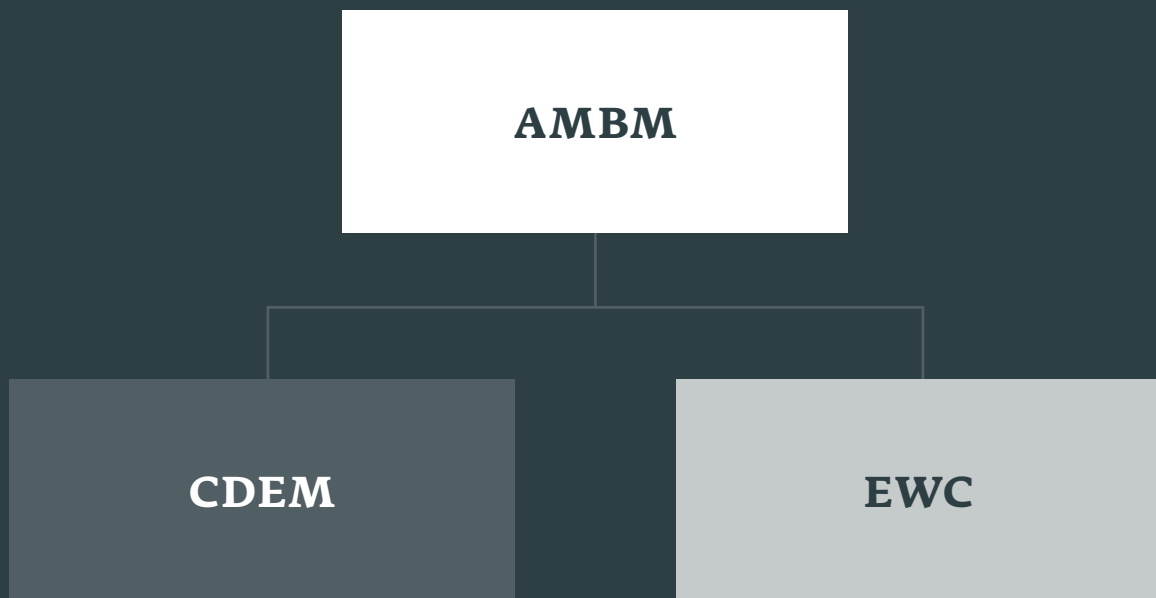
MEASURES

- Establish and implement a robust **\$70 million** endowment fund to provide local governments and Francophone organizations with financial leverage for the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects that specifically contribute to the vitality of Francophone minorities residing in the AMBM territory. This endowment fund will be operated with a vision of sustainable benefits in perpetuity, through a renewed and inclusive approach to investing in OLMCs and in partnership with Francofonds, the community foundation of Manitoba's Francophonie.
- Develop innovative indicators to document and measure the impact of infrastructure dedicated to Francophones in OLMCs (beyond the general ratio of return on investment) and their effects on the economic vitality of these communities. These indicators will make it possible to optimize the number of infrastructures by using an OLMC lens and by relying on the principle of equity, not equality.



ABOUT THE AMBM GROUP

Focusing on the vitality and prosperity of bilingual communities, the AMBM Group has developed a real political and economic strike force, bringing together under its umbrella three organizations with complementary missions: the AMBM, the CDEM and EWC.





ABOUT THE AMBM GROUP

THE AMBM

As a catalyst for the development, prosperity and sustainability of Manitoba's bilingual communities, the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (AMBM) is the political and strategic leader in bringing together, supporting and representing strong and united municipal governance. The AMBM has grown to include 15 Manitoba municipalities that have adopted a policy of offering services in French, and it continues its expansion.

GOVERNANCE

Each member municipality appoints an elected representative to the AMBM Board of Directors.

THE CDEM

Since 1996, the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM) has promoted, stimulated and organized economic development in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. The CDEM has a history of success and is recognized across Canada for its leadership. It has over 20 employees and offers its services in six different sectors: business support, community economic development, youth integration, immigration, employment and tourism.

GOVERNANCE

CDEM Board members are appointed by the AMBM.





ABOUT THE AMBM GROUP

EWC

Previously under the direction of CDEM, Eco-West Canada (EWC) is the latest addition to the AMBM Group (2017).

A unique model, EWC is a non-profit organization with a mandate to educate and support small and medium-sized municipalities across Western Canada and other provinces in greening their local and regional economies. EWC's main services include the creation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission inventories and energy audits, the development of local climate change action plans (LCAPs), the implementation of sustainable infrastructure projects, the development of value chains in various areas of the green economy, and the circular economy. EWC also supports municipalities in commercializing innovative environmental technologies, attracting foreign direct investment and training a skilled workforce.

GOVERNANCE

EWC Board members are appointed by the AMBM.





ASSOCIATION DES MUNICIPALITÉS
BILINGUES DU MANITOBA

ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA
BILINGUAL MUNICIPALITIES

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