GROUPE | GROUP
AMBM

Investing in Bilingual Municipalities Means **Creating a Prosperous Manitoba** and **Canada**

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORT

2024–2025



496 Million Dollars[1]

Estimated total investment in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities in 2024–2025, including the financial impact of the AMBM Group ($6.5 million).

1 This amount represents an estimate of the total investment, from known and confirmed federal and provincial government sources, in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. The majority of this investment supported essential municipal services and programs, as well as priority infrastructure projects within these municipalities.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

From Vision to Action: the Tangible Impact of Bilingual Municipal Leadership

The year 2024-2025 marked a turning point for our sixteen bilingual member municipalities. Under the theme "Investing in bilingual municipalities means creating a prosperous Manitoba and Canada", the AMBM Group forcefully demonstrated the concrete impact of its political, economic and ecological actions.

As illustrated in this report, strategic partnerships with the other two orders of government have unlocked major investments, such as $4 million in housing for bilingual rural municipalities, $29 million in joint funding for the Taché Community Center, $2.92 million in federal support for the renovation of the Saint Boniface Museum, and $885,000 in multi-year support for the rollout of the Municipal Maturity Model (3M).

Not to mention that the AMBM and several of its members have been vocal advocates for bilingual communities in the southeast, calling for regional designation of Sainte-Anne Hospital. Although this issue remains unresolved, it illustrates our municipalities' ability to mobilize collectively on critical health and infrastructure issues.

The rollout of the Municipal Maturity Model (3M), supported by a multi-year agreement with the Manitoba government and integrated into the new Canada–Manitoba Agreement on French Language Services (CMAFLS) 2023–2028, is a historic step forward. In 2024-2025, thanks to this financial support, a new milestone was reached: the AMBM assisted four bilingual rural municipalities—Ritchot, Saint-Laurent, Sainte-Anne, and Saint-Pierre-Jolys—in developing their action plans. This milestone confirms that the 3M is no longer just an innovative regulatory framework, but a concrete tool for transforming municipal practices.

Our subsidiaries also consolidated their strategic role. The CDEM continued its work in entrepreneurship, local development, recruitment of Francophone and bilingual talent, employability, youth, and tourism, while participating in structuring projects such as the PTH 75 Corridor and Destination Manitoba.

Eco-West Canada, for its part, accelerated the local energy transition with the installation of 20 charging stations in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, an electric car-sharing project in five bilingual rural municipalities, energy optimization of municipal assets, and the launch of a $3.2 million Green Impact Bond in Dunnottar. These advances have strengthened climate resilience and opened up new economic opportunities for our communities.

Finally, the AMBM Group stood out for its increased visibility, thanks to flagship events such as regular meetings of bilingual municipal leaders and roundtable discussions with elected officials who have an impact on our members, including the Honourable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba, the Honourable Adrien Sala, Minister of Finance, the Honourable Glen Simard, Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, as well as two federal ministers who were in office during the period, the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and the Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCAN). These powerful moments allowed bilingual municipalities to have their voices heard directly at the heart of the decisions that shape our future.

In short, our report reflects a year of growth, consolidation, and openness. Together, we've demonstrated that investing in our bilingual municipalities means committing in innovation, prosperity and vitality for Manitoba and Canada as a whole.



Ivan Normandeau

President of the AMBM and Reeve of the Rural Municipality of La Broquerie



Justin Johnson

Chief Executive Officer of the AMBM

The AMBM Group

Focusing on the vitality and prosperity of Francophone and bilingual communities, the AMBM Group has developed considerable political and economic leverage by bringing together three organizations with complementary missions: the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (AMBM), the Economic Development Council of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (*Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba,* or CDEM), and Eco-West Canada (EWC).

In doing so, municipal leadership has equipped its advocacy organization, the AMBM, with two economic subsidiaries, each with a complementary mandate and responding to the priorities of Manitoba's bilingual municipal governments.



AMBM

A driving force behind the development, prosperity, and sustainability of Manitoba's bilingual communities since the late 1980s, the AMBM is the political and strategic leader that brings together, supports, and represents strong and united municipal governance. The AMBM is a strong and well-established organization with 16 municipalities in Manitoba that have adopted a policy of offering services in both official languages.

CDEM

Since 1996, the CDEM has been promoting and supporting the economic development of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities, generating positive impacts on the vitality and sustainability of Manitoba's Francophone community. With a track record of success and recognized across Canada for its leadership, the CDEM offers its services in six areas of impact:

- Business support
- Local economic development
- Recruitment of Francophone and bilingual talent and employability
- Youth
- Tourism
- Communications

EWC

Since 2008, Eco-West Canada (EWC) has been mandated with promoting and supporting sustainable economic development in Canadian municipalities. Its activities mainly consist of assisting rural and urban municipalities in designing environmental projects based on reliable data, research and development, drafting funding applications, and project management.

EWC supports its municipal partners in the energy transition and green shift by promoting concrete solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency. The organization also helps increase the climate resilience of communities by equipping them to face the challenges of climate change and promoting local adaptation.

EWC specializes in the following sectors:

- Energy efficiency and building renovation
- Sustainable transportation and mobility (electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, feasibility studies)
- Wastewater treatment
- Waste management (composting, recycling, recovery, gasification)
- Low-carbon municipal clusters
- Circular economy and climate adaptation

A Year of Structuring Investments and Partnerships

The year 2024-2025 was marked by a series of major confirmed investments thanks to the political and economic leadership of the AMBM Group and the significant partnerships it maintains with the other two orders of government. These announcements are not the product of chance: they reflect ongoing consultation, representation, and collective mobilization. Together, the AMBM, the CDEM, and Eco-West Canada have demonstrated their role as catalysts, capable of transforming the priorities expressed by their sixteen bilingual member municipalities into concrete and visible results.

Productive Dialogue With Governments

The AMBM Group's strategy is based on regular, targeted dialogue with provincial and federal decision-makers. In 2024-2025, several roundtables and high-level meetings were held, including with the Honourable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba, the Honourable Adrien Sala, Minister of Finance, the Honourable Glen Simard, Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, as well as with two federal elected officials, the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the Honourable Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCAN).

These forums for dialogue made it possible to bring the priorities of bilingual municipalities directly to the heart of political decision-making. They also highlighted the growing maturity of the AMBM Group as a credible and indispensable partner, rooted in the community while connected to major provincial and federal policy directions.

Federal, Provincial and Tripartite Investments

COMMUNITY HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The housing crisis was one of the key issues of the year. Thanks to the advocacy efforts of the AMBM Group, a federal announcement of $4 million was confirmed to directly support housing construction in rural bilingual municipalities. This measure addresses pressing housing needs and is a concrete step toward attracting and retaining Francophone and bilingual families in our communities.

At the same time, a major $209.8 million announcement was made, resulting from a federal-provincial-municipal partnership to support infrastructure that promotes housing across Manitoba. The provincial-territorial component of the program reserves at least 20% of the envelope for rural communities, and according to preliminary analyses by the AMBM, nearly 30% of the overall funding—approximately $63 million—should directly benefit rural municipalities. Through its interventions, the AMBM has ensured that these investments contribute to the realization of infrastructure projects that promote housing in Manitoba's bilingual communities, thereby supporting the sustainable increase in municipal capacity and housing supply, including in the City of Winnipeg.

The joint investment of $29 million in the Taché Community Centre is another example of the strength of the tripartite partnership. This flagship project demonstrates how municipal action, supported by the AMBM Group, can rally the federal and provincial governments around a common vision of sustainable and inclusive development that benefits Manitoba's bilingual communities.

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

The Saint-Boniface Museum, a symbol of Francophone and Métis heritage, has secured $2.92 million in funding for its renovation. This federal announcement, to which the CDEM contributed strategic support, illustrates the recognition of the role of Francophone cultural institutions in Manitoba and Canadian identity.

Bilingual Municipal Services: A Historic Milestone

The rollout of the Municipal Maturity Model (3M) reached a decisive milestone in 2024-2025. Thanks to a multi-year agreement worth $885,000 between the AMBM and the Manitoba government, based on the Canada-Manitoba Agreement on French Language Services (CMAFLS), this joint initiative by the federal and provincial governments provided concrete support to the first four bilingual rural municipalities—Ritchot, Saint-Laurent, Sainte-Anne, and the Village of Saint-Pierre-Jolys—in developing their first action plans for the delivery of municipal services in both official languages.





Labour Market and Economic Development

The *Strengthening the Labour Market (SLM) in Manitoba's Bilingual Rural Municipalities* project, supported by $1.2 million in federal funding to the AMBM, enlisted the services of the CDEM to survey 1,177 employers in 14 bilingual rural municipalities and produce recommendations tailored to the realities of the bilingual market. This initiative shows how a detailed analysis of local needs can guide long-term workforce and economic integration strategies.

The CDEM also secured $3.6 million to support entrepreneurship, innovation, and employability. These federal funds have generated direct benefits: 108 businesses created, 203 jobs generated and an expanded French-speaking tourism offering.



Eco-West Canada: Consolidating the Energy Transition and the Green Economy

In 2024–2025, Eco-West Canada (EWC) confirmed its key role with Canadian municipalities in the area of energy transition and the green economy, by mobilizing structural investments and consolidating interprovincial and national partnerships.

EWC's structuring achievements include the installation of 20 charging stations in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, a study on regional transportation in southeastern Manitoba, an electric car-sharing pilot project in five bilingual rural municipalities, and energy optimization of municipal assets.

On the economic front, EWC has also innovated with the Green Impact Bond (its expertise has generated $3.2 million in the Municipality of Dunnottar, in partnership with Innovative NRG), a provincial study on composting, and a pilot project for recycling household appliances. These initiatives are based on consolidated partnerships (*Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association* (SUMA), Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)) and community energy planning carried out with QUEST.

These achievements demonstrate Eco-West Canada's ability to transform climate issues into economic and social opportunities, while positioning Manitoba's bilingual municipalities as leaders in climate resilience and energy transition in Canada.

Bilingual Municipal Leadership: A Model in Action

In 2024-2025, the AMBM continued to roll out its regulatory framework, which is unique in Canada: the Municipal Maturity Model (3M). A milestone in the history of Manitoba's bilingual municipal leadership, the 3M was designed to guide and support the delivery of municipal services in both official languages. It has now been adopted by all of Manitoba's bilingual rural municipalities, confirming their collective commitment to providing their residents with quality municipal services in both French and English.

The 3M closes the loop on bilingual government services in Manitoba. Following federal and provincial legislation on services in both official languages, the 3M marks the entry of bilingual municipalities into a clear and structured regulatory framework that complements their provincial and federal counterparts. The three orders of government are now aligned around similar objectives for the delivery of bilingual services, to the benefit of their populations.

Thanks to a multi-year agreement with the Manitoba government, which is part of the Canada–Manitoba Agreement on French Language Services (CMAFLS), the AMBM has reached a new milestone. During the fall of 2024 and the winter of 2025, the AMBM assisted four bilingual rural municipalities—Ritchot, Saint-Laurent, Sainte-Anne, and Saint-Pierre-Jolys—in developing their respective 3M action plans.

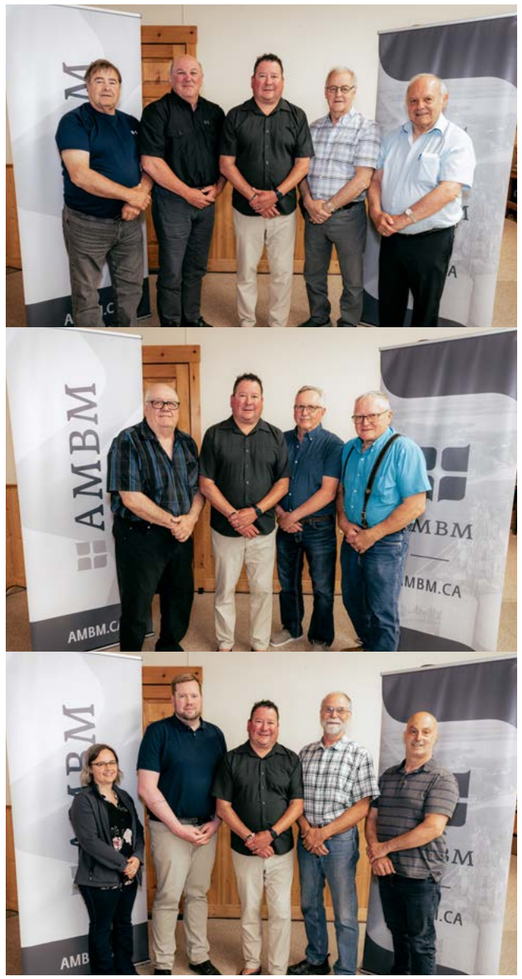
Each of these approaches made it possible to identify concrete priorities and plan the steps to be taken to advance their maturity in terms of bilingual municipal services. This progress confirms that the 3M is more than just an innovative regulatory framework: it is becoming a real tool for transforming municipal practices.

The year also saw growth in membership. The addition of four new rural municipalities—the rural municipalities of Sainte-Anne, Lorne, Grey, and Piney—brings the number of AMBM members to 16. This expansion increases the organization's representativeness and influence, while consolidating a supportive network that now represents nearly 60% of Manitoba's population. This territory represents nearly 80% of Manitoba's Francophone and bilingual population.

Manitoba's bilingual municipal leadership has also asserted itself through an active presence in key decision-making forums. The AMBM has increased opportunities for strategic dialogue, notably by organizing roundtables with provincial and federal ministers. The meeting with Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew, Finance Minister Adrien Sala, the roundtable discussion with Minister Glen Simard—Responsible for Francophone Affairs and Municipal Relations—and direct exchanges with federal ministers Marc Miller and Dan Vandal, helped put the priorities of bilingual municipalities at the heart of the political agenda.

Finally, the bilingual municipal leadership meetings continued to serve as a privileged forum for consultation and mobilization. They highlighted the collective strength of Manitoba's bilingual municipal leaders, who speak with one voice to defend the prosperity and vitality of their communities.

By consolidating its role as a key partner, the AMBM demonstrates that Manitoba's bilingual municipal leadership, rooted in the reality of the territories and supported by its partners in the other two orders of government, is a guarantee of concrete results for all of Manitoba and Canada.



Findings from the First Year of Implementation of the **Municipal Maturity Model (3M)**

The 2024–2025 year marks the first phase of support for the 3M, carried out in four bilingual rural municipalities—Ritchot, Saint-Laurent, Sainte-Anne, and the Village of Saint-Pierre-Jolys. Following an analysis of the final action plans submitted by this first cohort, several key findings emerged.

The municipalities receiving support demonstrated a clear and sustained commitment to promoting both official languages and continuously improving the delivery of bilingual municipal services. Although each action plan is tailored to local realities, the majority of the targeted indicators focus on Axis 1 of the 3M: Service delivery and communications with the public, a priority shared by the entire cohort.

These initial findings also provided a better understanding of the specific needs to support the gradual implementation of the model. Among these, the increased demand for language services stands out: in 2024-2025, the AMBM translated 506 documents, representing nearly 590,000 words, covering a wide range of municipal content—minutes, by-laws, internal policies, public communications, strategic documents, and immigration-related documents.

This 18% increase in translation requests reflects a growing need for language support and confirms the essential role of the AMBM translation service as a direct lever for the deployment of the 3M.

Several municipalities have also expressed a desire to strengthen their bilingual communications, particularly in social media, public information campaigns and municipal signage. The creation and dissemination of standardized bilingual templates—for public messages, construction site signs, and job postings—would facilitate the work of administrative teams and promote greater consistency in the dissemination of information.

These findings, from the first cohort of the 3M, will guide the next phases of deployment and the training and support activities offered by the AMBM, in order to sustainably strengthen the bilingual and organizational capacities of member municipalities.

Infrastructure and Housing: Building the Future of Bilingual Communities

In 2024–2025, infrastructure and housing were central priorities for Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. The AMBM and its subsidiaries worked tirelessly to raise awareness of these needs among provincial and federal governments, and several major announcements confirmed the importance of these issues for the future of communities.

Federal and Provincial Investments



The awareness and mobilization efforts of the AMBM Group bore fruit with the announcement of $209.8 million in joint federal-provincial-municipal funding under the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF) to support infrastructure projects that promote housing. This sizeable program aims to improve access to quality housing and stimulate sustainable land development. In this context, the AMBM ensured that bilingual municipalities were included and could benefit equitably from these funds.

In addition, separate federal funding of $4 million has been allocated to support housing construction in bilingual rural municipalities. This targeted and straightforward announcement underscores the recognition of the AMBM's role as a voice for communities facing particular challenges in attracting and retaining Francophone and bilingual workers.

Flagship Projects: Symbols of Vitality

Among the notable achievements, several community and heritage infrastructure projects stand out:

- Taché Community Center: a tripartite investment of $29 million has been confirmed for the construction of this multifunctional centre, which is set to become a true gathering place for the community. This project illustrates the strength of federal-provincial-municipal partnerships and the concrete impact of local mobilization supported by the AMBM.
- Saint Boniface Museum: Thanks to total federal funding of $2.92 million, coming from both the Community Spaces Fund of the Official Languages Support Program ($1.92 million) and the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program ($1 million), major renovations will be carried out at this historic site to preserve and showcase Francophone and Métis heritage.
- Sainte-Anne Hospital: Although no regional designation has yet been obtained, the AMBM and several of its member municipalities have done significant advocacy work with the Manitoba government. This issue remains a priority, as it directly affects access to health care in both official languages and the vitality of bilingual communities in the southeast.

Studies and Initiatives on Housing and Water

Alongside the financial announcements, the AMBM and CDEM supported several local studies and consultations aimed at planning the future of housing and infrastructure in bilingual municipalities. These included:

- the development of housing action plans in certain municipalities to identify specific needs and structure funding requests;
- public consultations held in communities such as Saint-Pierre-Jolys, Sainte-Anne and La Broquerie, where population growth requires consideration of residential supply;
- projects related to drinking water and lagoon management, particularly in Saint-Laurent and Lorne, which demonstrate the importance of ensuring modern and sustainable essential services.

In short, 2024-2025 will have confirmed that housing and infrastructure remain strategic levers for enhancing the attractiveness and quality of life in bilingual municipalities. By harnessing investments from several orders of government and increasing local planning efforts, the AMBM Group has laid the foundations for a more solid, sustainable future that is better suited to the realities of its communities.



Building Permits: Key Indicators of Municipal Vitality

The total value of building permits issued within a municipality is a key indicator of its economic vitality and growth.

In 2024, this value rose to $2,174,374,265, an 11% increase over 2023, reflecting sustained momentum in residential, commercial, and institutional investment.

These data also reflect growing pressure on public infrastructure and essential municipal services. Closely monitoring this information makes it possible to better quantify the economic development of bilingual municipalities and strengthen the case for increased investment in infrastructure modernization, the number one priority of the *Prosperity Framework for Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities*.



Attracting Skilled French-Speaking and Bilingual Workers

The issue of attracting and retaining skilled French-speaking and bilingual workers has emerged as a key challenge for the future of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. In a context of a widespread shortage of skilled workers, the AMBM Group has continued to implement the *Strategy to Support Economic Immigration in Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities*.

Structuring Pilot Projects

Two pilot projects stood out this year and demonstrated the AMBM Group's capacity for innovation:

- The Francophone Community Immigration Pilot Program (FCIPP) in Saint-Pierre-Jolys, which will be implemented in April 2025: the AMBM Group has begun to implement this project, which will position the Village as a model community by experimenting with new ways to attract and connect qualified Francophone and bilingual talent that meets the needs of local employers. The Saint-Pierre-Jolys experience will serve as inspiration for other bilingual rural municipalities.
- In 2024-2025, the AMBM consolidated its support for bilingual municipalities by strengthening the municipal structure for local economic development. Thanks to the support of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), a number of bilingual rural municipalities were able to consolidate or expand their internal capacities to fully integrate economic development and Francophone and bilingual immigration into their local priorities. This approach is part of the deployment of a flexible, decentralized development structure that relies on solutions led by the bilingual municipalities themselves in direct response to the needs of their rural communities. By supporting grassroots initiatives, the AMBM strengthens its members' ability to build communities that are more welcoming, dynamic and attractive to talent and investment.

Overview of the Project to Support Economic Immigration in Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities

In 2024-2025, the AMBM completed the final year of implementation of its *Strategy to Support Economic Immigration in Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities*, made possible thanks to the support of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). This project helped consolidate the role of bilingual municipalities as key players in attracting, welcoming, and retaining newcomers. Over five years, the AMBM and its partners laid the groundwork for rural Francophone and bilingual communities to become more welcoming, dynamic, and attractive places to live, capable of supporting their own growth.

This past year has highlighted the need for sustainable strengthening of municipal capacities in planning, housing, infrastructure, and reception services adapted to rural realities. The awareness-raising and mobilization work carried out has confirmed that the most effective solutions emerge from the municipalities themselves, who know their needs and challenges best. By supporting these communities in establishing local structures, sustainable partnerships, and integrated approaches, the AMBM has helped to permanently embed a culture of openness and shared prosperity in rural bilingual Manitoba.

Connecting the Recruitment of Qualified French-speaking and Bilingual Talent with Community Needs

As part of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP), the CDEM plays a central role as coordinator of the French-speaking strategic stream *Invitation au Manitoba*. Conducted in partnership with the Manitoba government, this strategic initiative aims to recruit qualified Francophone and bilingual talent from abroad whose skills directly meet the economic needs identified by employers in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. During the period, CDEM approved 347 applications for the virtual exploratory visit. Of these, 284 received an invitation letter from the Province of Manitoba to officially submit an application under the MPNP. CDEM organized 25 exploratory visits in collaboration with Manitoba's Department of Labour and Immigration.

By coordinating this stream of the MPNP, the CDEM contributes directly to the prosperity of bilingual Manitoba by linking international recruitment to the economic reality of rural municipalities. This model illustrates the strength of local leadership and the relevance of an approach based on the real needs of communities and their employers.





In 2024-2025, the CDEM carried out several complementary initiatives in parallel, which led to convincing results:

- 7,600 registrations received and more than 2,000 candidates preselected as part of international recruitment missions, notably in Abidjan and Dakar;
- 1,177 employers consulted as part of the *Strengthening the Labour Market* project, allowing for better alignment between local demand and candidate profiles;
- Initiatives to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion among businesses and municipalities to promote the sustainable integration of newcomers.

Through its comprehensive approach, the CDEM ensures a concrete link between international recruitment and the local economic fabric. It assists employers in identifying their needs, prepares candidates for settlement, and promotes their integration into welcoming work and living environments.



Economic and Tourism Development

In 2024-2025, CDEM reached 31,648 participants and clients, mobilized 245 partners, secured $1.6 million in project funding representing a leveraging effect of $9.8 million, and generated an estimated digital reach of 1.1 million people.

New 2025-2028 Strategic Plan
Pursuing Excellence. Building the Future.

During the period, CDEM also launched its new 2025-2028 strategic plan, under the theme “Pursuing Excellence. Building the future.” This plan outlines five strategic priorities: deep-rooted economic leadership, impactful programming, optimized synergies, increased visibility, and enhanced organizational performance.





Local Economic Development

Local economic development remains one of the pillars of the CDEM’s work. It consists of supporting bilingual municipalities and their economic development structures—economic development officers (EDOs) and community development corporations (CDCs)—in planning, coordinating, and carrying out projects that stimulate the economic and social vitality of their territory. These projects focus specifically on collective entrepreneurship, infrastructure, tourism, culture, and housing, in direct response to the needs expressed by communities.

In 2024–2025, the CDEM coordinated or supported 251 municipal projects, including 96 structuring projects with an estimated value of $650 million. Of this amount, more than $42 million in funding has already been confirmed, illustrating the CDEM’s ability to generate concrete leverage for the benefit of bilingual municipalities.

These 96 projects cover a wide range of local and regional initiatives, from improving municipal infrastructure to planning residential, industrial, and community development. Several of them focus on modernizing community and cultural facilities, enhancing the hearts of bilingual communities, and creating environments conducive to investment and local growth. Together, these projects help strengthen the attractiveness of bilingual municipalities and encourage the sustainable settlement of new Francophone families and businesses in Manitoba.

Through these initiatives, the CDEM does more than just support stand-alone projects: it helps build an ecosystem where bilingual municipalities have the tools, plans, and partnerships they need to develop in a way that is consistent, sustainable, and tailored to their realities.

Support for Businesses and Entrepreneurship

The CDEM offered a full range of services to entrepreneurs and employers: 590 participants in training courses and workshops, 157 business planning files, 41 financing support cases. The organization contributed to the creation of 108 businesses and 203 jobs, for an overall leverage effect of $4.2 million. The 12th edition of *Fosse aux lions* (The Lion’s Den) also helped stimulate entrepreneurial innovation.

Fosse aux lions: A Springboard for Francophone Entrepreneurship

The 12th edition of Fosse aux lions (The Lion’s Den), held in 2024–2025, confirmed the importance of this event as an essential showcase for Francophone innovation and entrepreneurship in Manitoba. This competition, organized annually by the CDEM, allows emerging entrepreneurs to present their business projects to a jury composed of strategic partners, mentors, and potential investors.

In 2024-2025, *Fosse aux lions* brought together:

- Four finalists who had the opportunity to defend their projects,
- The support of 13 partners, demonstrating the commitment of the entrepreneurial ecosystem,
- Significant mobilization of the Francophone business community.

The contest is more than just a competition: it is a springboard for innovative ideas, offering participants personalized support, media visibility, and opportunities for funding or mentoring. The event also helps to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs and strengthen the culture of innovation in bilingual municipalities.

In 2024, the prize was won by Awa Bissap, a company that won over the jury with its bold project rooted in local realities. This success demonstrates *Fosse aux lions*’ mission: to transform ideas into viable projects and strengthen Francophone economic vitality.



Employability and the Labour Market

The *Strengthening the Labour Market (SLM) in Manitoba's Rural Bilingual Municipalities* project, supported by $1.2 million in federal funding (for which the AMBM is the trustee), has surveyed 1,177 employers in 14 municipalities, presented eight reports to municipal councils, and held the first two diversity awareness workshops (Ritchot and Sainte-Anne), with 12 more planned for the next fiscal year.

At the same time, CDEM's services for job seekers reached 871 participants for training and the same number for career planning. The CDEM facilitated 3,392 job matches, in addition to organizing 48 internships and 39 mentorships. Two job fairs (including one in partnership with RDÉE Canada) brought together over 30 employers and resulted in more than 500 quick interviews.

Youth

Youth remain a priority, with financial literacy initiatives in 35 schools and 3 school divisions reaching 6,653 young people. CDEM also supported young entrepreneurs through its *Été en affaires* (Summer in Business, 2 participants) and *Entrepreneurs en herbe* (Budding Entrepreneurs, 14 participants) programs. At the same time, entrepreneurship camps gave six young people hands-on experience in entrepreneurship, developing their creativity, sense of innovation, and ability to implement real projects. These various initiatives help prepare Manitoba's next generation of Francophone entrepreneurs by offering young people practical skills, leadership opportunities, and an initial immersion in the entrepreneurial culture of their communities.

Tourism and Cultural Vitality

The tourism sector received $200,000 in support from the Tourism Growth Program to develop Francophone offerings. The *Jeudis Franco Thursdays* mobilized 63 small businesses, created 33 partnerships and generated an economic impact in excess of $160,000. The culinary initiative, *A Taste of Maple in Saint-Pierre-Jolys* and strategic support for other municipalities illustrate the diversity of CDEM's activities.

Other Flagship Initiatives and Structuring Projects

Other major projects also marked the year:

- Destination Manitoba, an international mission to recruit qualified Francophone and bilingual talent, held in Côte d'Ivoire, which attracted more than 7,600 registrations, led to the preselection of 930 candidates in Dakar and 1,250 in Abidjan, and resulted in ten presentations to local partners. Related digital activities reached more than 69,500 online views.
- The PTH 75 Corridor, a strategic initiative, brings together the municipalities of Emerson-Franklin, Morris, and Montcalm, as well as the CDEM and industrial and commercial players, such as Centreport Canada Ltd., the World Trade Centre Winnipeg, the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, and the Manitoba Trucking Association. Stretching from Pembina-Emerson to Centreport Canada, with east-west and northward extensions to Churchill, this corridor aims to position Manitoba as a strategic hub for North American trade and transportation. The creation of a regional caucus ensures a coordinated approach to maximizing local, regional and national economic benefits.

These results show that the CDEM acts as a real economic lever for Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. By combining support, innovation and strategic partnerships, the organization has succeeded in transforming public investment into tangible benefits: new businesses, jobs created, young people equipped with skills, increased Francophone tourism offerings and structuring projects of provincial and international scope. In short, every dollar invested in the CDEM generates added value that goes far beyond the economic sphere, contributing to the vitality and prosperity of all bilingual communities.

Green Economy and Energy Transition

In 2024–2025, **Eco-West Canada** (**EWC**) reaffirmed its leadership role in driving the energy transition and promoting sustainable development in municipal settings. Through its initiatives, the organization not only supported the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions but also generated direct economic benefits and strengthened local capacity for climate resilience.

Sustainable Mobility and Energy Infrastructure

EWC continued its efforts in sustainable mobility by installing 36 electric vehicle charging stations across Manitoba and Saskatchewan. These installations complement awareness initiatives under the Zero-Emission Vehicle Awareness Initiative (ZEVAI), which engaged hundreds of participants through workshops, webinars, and public events.

In addition, EWC completed a study on regional transportation in southeastern Manitoba, underscoring its pivotal role in planning low-carbon collective infrastructure. Two car-sharing pilot projects were also launched in the Rural Municipalities of Ritchot and Piney, testing innovative shared mobility models in rural areas.



Energy Efficiency and Climate Resilience

EWC supported several municipalities in improving the energy efficiency of their buildings. Notable achievements include:

- A planning study for a net-zero building at the *Manoir de Saint-Pierre-Jolys*.
- Assistance in planning a net-zero archival facility in partnership with South Central Regional Archives in Saint-Claude.
- Collaboration with Efficiency Manitoba on energy retrofit projects for arenas in De Salaberry and Saint-Pierre-Jolys, reducing operating costs while lowering carbon footprints.

The organization also strengthened climate awareness through educational tools, media campaigns, and strategic partnerships, making climate solutions more accessible to municipalities and residents.

Innovation and the Circular Economy

On the economic front, EWC advanced projects that combine ecological transition with economic vitality. In partnership with the province's first Green Impact Bond, EWC leveraged its expertise to validate results and evidence from Innovative NRG. This initiative enabled INRG to secure a $3.2 million partnership with True North Food, aimed at converting residual materials into energy—an example of how the circular economy can create viable financial models.

EWC also conducted a provincial study on composting, which analyzes the value chain of this sector and proposes concrete ways to develop a composting industry in Manitoba. In addition, a pilot appliance recycling project is paving the way for the creation of green jobs and more sustainable management of bulky waste.

Strategic Interprovincial and National Partnerships

EWC's strength also lies in its partnerships. In 2024–2025, the organization deepened its collaboration with the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) during the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) annual conference, reinforcing its interprovincial and national role. Participation in the Net Zero Communities Accelerator program with QUEST Canada facilitated GHG inventories and the development of community energy plans for rural municipalities such as De Salaberry (Manitoba) and Biggar (Saskatchewan)—providing a solid foundation for future energy and climate planning.

EWC's achievements in 2024–2025 demonstrate that the energy transition and green economy are not solely environmental issues—they are powerful drivers of economic and social development. By positioning bilingual municipalities as pioneers of climate resilience, EWC is helping build a more sustainable and prosperous Manitoba and Canada.



Culture, Identity and Reconciliation

In 2024–2025, the AMBM Group continued its commitment to promoting Manitoba's Francophone and Métis identity, while contributing to reconciliation efforts with First Nations.

Cultural and Heritage Projects

In 2024-2025, several key initiatives helped preserve and promote the Francophone and Métis heritage of bilingual municipalities. The Saint-Boniface Museum received a major investment of $2.92 million for its renovation, ensuring the preservation of this iconic site of collective memory. In the Rural Municipality of Alexander, the development of the Winnipeg River Heritage Museum and the installation of bilingual signage have increased the visibility of French in public spaces. The *Musée Saint-Joseph*, in the Rural Municipality of Montcalm, benefited from improvements to its security system and notable cultural activities, particularly in connection with the *Pavillon du pont* and the local festival. In Sainte-Anne, the Dawson Trail Museum added a gift shop and new community collaborations, while in Saint-Laurent, Phase II of the Métis Heritage Centre was completed and the 20th anniversary of the partnership with the Smithsonian Museum was celebrated. Finally, experiences such as *A Taste of Maple in Saint-Pierre-Jolys* combined culture, tourism, and entrepreneurship, illustrating the cultural vitality of these communities.

First Nations Reconciliation Initiatives

The AMBM Group also continued to take concrete steps toward reconciliation. The AMBM spoke out on the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation to reaffirm the importance of building lasting bridges with Indigenous peoples. The passing of Grand Chief Cathy Merrick prompted an official tribute highlighting her leadership and her decisive role in advancing First Nations rights. At the grassroots level, the Town of Powerview–Pine Falls, supported by the CDEM, led economic reconciliation initiatives, illustrating the integration of Indigenous perspectives into local development.





The AMBM Group

Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (AMBM)

The AMBM is the voice of Manitoba's bilingual municipal leadership. Acting politically and strategically, it leverages the added value that French brings to bilingualism to bolster the development, vitality and sustainability of its members and their communities.

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Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM)

The CDEM's leadership role is to be an indispensable partner in facilitating and supporting community and entrepreneurial economic development within the territory of members of the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities.

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Eco-West Canada (EWC)

Eco-West Canada promotes the sustainable economic development of Canada's rural municipalities through the planning and implementation of a green economy infrastructure.

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Jason Edward Stephen Schreyer

July 17, 1967 – April 29, 2025





AMBM

ASSOCIATION DES MUNICIPALITÉS BILINGUES DU MANITOBA

ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA BILINGUAL MUNICIPALITIES

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The AMBM, the CDEM and EWC would like to thank the Government of Canada and the Government of Manitoba for their financial support and continued commitment to their respective missions.

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