GROUPE | GROUP
AMBM

Our *Bilingual Advantage:*

A Strategic Driver of Growth for Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities

2025–2026

CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL REPORT

Manitoba's bilingual municipal leadership gathered in the Rural Municipality of St. Laurent on June 26, 2025.

377.9 Million Dollars[1]

Estimated total investment in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities in 2025–2026, including the AMBM Group's financial impact of $7.4 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 programmes, as well as priority infrastructure projects within these municipalities.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

***Our** Bilingual Advantage:* Delivering Concrete Results for the Growth of Our Communities

The 2025–2026 year will be remembered as a pivotal one for the AMBM Group and its sixteen member municipalities. It marked not only the continuation of transformative projects for our communities, but also the end of an electoral cycle and the strengthening of our position as an essential partner in municipal, economic and community development in Manitoba. In a period of political and institutional renewal, our network demonstrated that bilingualism is much more than a legacy: it is a true strategic driver of growth, innovation and prosperity.

Under the theme *Our Bilingual Advantage: A Strategic Driver of Growth for Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities*, we pursued our mission with determination, advancing the interests of our communities with the provincial and federal governments while supporting our members in achieving their local priorities.

As this report illustrates, the AMBM Group continued to deliver concrete results through close collaboration with the other orders of government. Whether through major investments in housing, community infrastructure, services in both official languages or economic development, our efforts helped position bilingual municipalities as essential partners in Manitoba's growth. The past year also underscored the importance of the partnership developed with the Manitoba government, whose continued support enables bilingual municipalities to strengthen their capacity for action, accelerate transformative projects and contribute fully to the economic and social development of their communities.

The year was also marked by the continued implementation of the Municipal Maturity Model (3M), now recognized as a practical tool for organizational transformation and the improvement of bilingual services within municipal administrations. With support from the Manitoba government and its integration into the 2023–2028 Canada–Manitoba Agreement on French-Language Services (CMAFLS), several municipalities continued or began their planning and modernization processes, demonstrating the capacity of bilingual communities to innovate and respond to the needs of their residents. The year also saw the completion of the *My Bilingual Municipality. Building Together.* platform, a new digital tool designed to support the assessment, monitoring and implementation of the 3M. Completed with support from the Manitoba government, this major project lays the foundation for a new phase of modernization and continuous improvement in bilingual municipal services.

At the same time, the AMBM Group strengthened the intergovernmental forums that enable bilingual municipalities to bring their voices directly to decision-makers. Regular bilingual municipal leadership meetings, together with roundtables held throughout the year, gave municipal leaders opportunities to engage directly with key provincial and federal government representatives.

These meetings fostered constructive discussions on priorities such as wastewater infrastructure, housing, economic development, economic immigration, health services and the vitality of rural communities. This sustained dialogue strengthened lasting relationships and placed the needs of our municipalities at the heart of government discussions. It also helped advance several strategic initiatives that will shape the future of our network, including the development of the AMBM's *Strategic Plan* (2026–2031) and a new economic immigration strategy tailored to the realities and needs of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities.

Our subsidiaries also continued to make an essential contribution to the prosperity of our communities. The Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (*Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba*, or CDEM) continued to support entrepreneurship, talent attraction and retention, community development, youth and tourism. Eco-West Canada, for its part, continued to advance initiatives supporting the energy transition, environmental innovation and the adoption of sustainable solutions that strengthen both the resilience and competitiveness of our municipalities.

Overall, this consolidated annual report highlights a year of consolidation, increased visibility and preparation for the future. Beyond the results achieved during the past fiscal year, 2025–2026 established the foundations needed for the AMBM and its members' next development cycle. We can be proud of how far we have come and confident in our ability to continue moving forward. Together, we continue to demonstrate that our bilingual advantage is a distinctive strength, a driver of growth and a strategic asset for our municipalities, Manitoba and Canada.



Ivan Normandeau

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



Justin Johnson

Chief Executive Officer
of the AMBM

Activating *Our Bilingual Advantage:* A Strategic Vision for the Future

Over the course of the year, the AMBM completed the development of its *Strategic Plan* (2026–2031), a new roadmap that will guide the organization's actions over the coming years.

Under the theme *Leveraging Our Bilingual Advantage to Build the Future of Our Communities*, the plan reaffirms the AMBM's role as the strategic voice of Manitoba's bilingual municipal governments and advances an ambitious vision aimed at strengthening municipalities' capacity for action, fostering their prosperity, and increasing their contribution to the development of Manitoba and Canada. It will serve as the framework guiding the AMBM's initiatives, partnerships and advocacy activities through 2031.

Vision

Strong and united bilingual municipalities, recognized as essential government partners in building a strong Manitoba and a strong Canada, where our bilingual advantage translates into attractive, sustainable, prosperous and resilient communities.

Mission

The AMBM is the strategic voice of Manitoba's bilingual municipal governments. It brings together, represents, and strengthens the capacity of its members while working with public decision-makers to mobilize the investments, tools, and resources needed to deliver tangible results, in partnership with bilingual municipalities, for the benefit of their communities.

Values

Municipal Autonomy

We respect the autonomy of bilingual municipal governments and recognize their authority to determine the priorities, needs, and solutions that best reflect their communities and local realities.

Bilingual Advantage

We support our members in activating their bilingual advantage, rooted in Canada's two official languages, as a strategic asset capable of generating prosperity for their communities, the province, and the country.

Responsible Municipal Governments

We support our members in exercising responsible, rigorous, and accountable local bilingual governance that serves the interests of the residents they represent.

Community Proximity and Public Trust

We value the engagement of municipal leaders and the essential role of local governments, whose close connection to the residents they serve contributes directly to community quality of life and confidence in public institutions.

Tangible Impact and Results

We act with effectiveness, discipline, and ambition to transform investments, tools, and partnerships into measurable results for our members and their communities.

Collective Strength

We unite our members around a collective strength that is proud, supportive, and united, built on trust, cohesion, and a shared commitment to advancing Manitoba's bilingual communities while contributing to a stronger Manitoba and a stronger Canada.

Membership and Clientele

The AMBM serves Manitoba's rural and urban bilingual municipal governments, which constitute its membership. In carrying out its mandate, the AMBM works closely with municipal leaders responsible for governing, planning, developing, and serving their communities in both official languages.

The AMBM Group

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

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



AMBM

A catalyst for the development, prosperity and long-term vitality of Manitoba's bilingual communities, the AMBM is the political and strategic leader that brings together, supports and represents the province's bilingual municipalities. With a network of 16 member municipalities that have adopted a regulatory framework for the delivery of services in both official languages, the AMBM supports strong, collaborative and innovative municipal governance while helping make linguistic duality a driver of development, attractiveness and growth for the communities it represents.

CDEM

Since 1996, CDEM has driven and supported the economic development of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities, generating positive impacts on the vitality and long-term sustainability of Manitoba's Francophone community. Building on numerous successes and recognized across Canada for its leadership, CDEM provides services across six areas of impact:

- Business Support
- Community Economic Development
- Employability and Immigration
- Youth
- Tourism
- Communications

EWC

Since 2008, Eco-West Canada (EWC) has had a mandate to promote and support the sustainable economic development of Canadian municipalities. Its activities primarily involve supporting rural and urban municipalities in developing environmental projects based on reliable data, conducting research and development, preparing funding applications and managing projects.

EWC supports its municipal partners in the energy transition and shift towards a greener economy by advancing concrete solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency. The organization also helps strengthen community climate resilience by equipping municipalities to address the challenges of climate change and supporting local adaptation.

The Municipal Maturity Model (3M): A Strategic Framework for Strengthening *Our Bilingual Advantage*

The Municipal Maturity Model (3M) remains a cornerstone of the AMBM and one of the primary tools enabling bilingual municipalities to turn their linguistic duality into a tangible advantage for their residents, institutions and economic development. Recognized by the Manitoba government as a framework for assessing and strengthening municipalities' bilingual capacity, the 3M has also become a structured framework that guides municipal administrations in the progressive improvement of their governance, communications and services in both official languages.

As part of the AMBM's new *Strategic Plan* (2026–2031), whose vision is to build strong, attractive, sustainable and prosperous bilingual municipalities, the 3M serves as a cross-cutting foundation guiding the AMBM and its members in the continuous improvement of municipal governance and the delivery of services in both official languages.

Several municipalities continued or began self-assessment processes for their 3M action plans. During the year, the AMBM supported its members in developing or renewing bilingual their municipal action plans, with the objective of supporting five new municipalities, the Rural Municipalities of De Salaberry, Lorne, La Broquerie and Montcalm and the Town of Sainte-Anne, in their commitment to the 3M, while supporting the renewal of plans for four municipalities already engaged in the process, the Rural Municipalities of Ritchot, Saint-Laurent and Sainte-Anne and the Village of Saint-Pierre-Jolys. These action plans are essential tools for translating the objectives of the model's regulatory framework into concrete action at the local level and ensuring structured progress towards higher levels of maturity.

Structuring Dialogue with Governments Around Shared Priorities

Over the past year, the AMBM developed and released the *Prosperity Framework for Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities*, a strategic document stemming directly from the priorities identified by its member municipalities. The framework puts forward a renewed vision for the development of our bilingual municipalities, founded on stronger intergovernmental partnership and recognition of their contribution to the economic, social and cultural vitality of Manitoba and Canada.

Structured around five strategic priorities and 23 recommendations to the Government of Canada, the document now serves as the primary reference guiding the AMBM's advocacy and engagement activities. It informs the AMBM's discussions with the federal and provincial governments and its institutional partners, while ensuring alignment between members' priorities and the organization's actions.



Meeting between the Honourable Uzoma Asagwara, Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, and municipal representatives from Manitoba's bilingual municipalities regarding the regional designation of Hôpital Ste. Anne Hospital.



Bilingual Municipal Leadership Meeting on March 19, 2026.

713,128 words translated in 2025–2026



The Honourable Glen Simard, Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs in Manitoba.

Municipal Engagement and Implementation of the Bilingual Municipal Signage Program

The 2025–2026 year marked an important milestone in the AMBM's evolution. In September 2025, the Manitoba government confirmed an investment of $1.6 million over three years, funded under the 2023–2028 Canada–Manitoba Agreement on French-Language Services (CMAFLS), to support several initiatives complementing the implementation of the 3M. This funding not only supports transformative projects within Manitoba's bilingual municipalities, but also strengthens the local capacity required to ensure sustained progress towards municipalities that are fully equipped to provide high-quality municipal services in both official languages.

To support the consistent and effective implementation of the 3M, the AMBM established a dedicated municipal engagement team to support its members. This multidisciplinary team coordinates projects, provides tailored support to municipalities, monitors performance indicators and develops tools to assist municipal administrations as they progress through the model's various levels. In addition to serving as an advisory resource for elected officials and municipal administrations, the team facilitates the sharing of best practices among municipalities and helps foster a culture of collaboration around municipal bilingualism.

Among the year's most significant achievements was the *Bilingual Municipal Signage Program* (BMSP), which quickly became one of the most visible and engaging projects associated with the 3M. Although the first year of implementation was shortened by the program's later launch, the results far exceeded initial expectations. While the performance framework called for the installation of 75 new bilingual signage units during the year, the program funded at least 24 projects representing nearly 800 bilingual signage markers, demonstrating exceptional engagement among participating municipalities. These investments directly increase the visibility of French in public spaces, improve the accessibility of municipal services and reinforce the bilingual character of member communities.

Key Findings from the Implementation of the Municipal Maturity Model (3M)

Experience gained through the first two cohorts implementing the Municipal Maturity Model (3M) has already produced several encouraging findings regarding its effectiveness as a tool for the continuous improvement of bilingual municipal services. During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, five new municipalities, the Rural Municipalities of De Salaberry, Montcalm, Lorne and La Broquerie and the Town of Sainte-Anne, began receiving support as part of the second cohort.

The self-assessment exercises, validation meetings and development of customized action plans demonstrated the importance of a flexible approach tailored to the realities of each municipal administration. Chief Administrative Officers generally highlighted the value of the support provided by the AMBM, particularly in structuring their planning, identifying realistic priorities and establishing a phased approach to improving bilingual services.

Follow-up with municipalities from the first cohort showed that several concrete measures had already been implemented, including the introduction of bilingual telephone messages, the addition of French-language content to municipal digital platforms, the adoption of practices supporting the production of municipal documents in both official languages, and the recruitment of bilingual staff to strengthen internal organizational capacity. Discussions also confirmed that sustaining best practices remains a challenge in a context where municipal administrations must contend with limited resources and competing priorities.

Lastly, the sustained growth in translation needs is another significant indicator of the evolution of municipal bilingualism. During 2025–2026, more than 713,000 words were translated for member municipalities, an increase of 21% over the previous year. This growth reflects both municipalities' increasing commitment to the active offer of services in both official languages and the relevance of the 3M as a structured tool supporting the development of a sustainable bilingual organizational culture within member communities.

Community Consultation in Rural Bilingual Municipalities

The year was also marked by the launch of the digital platform *My Bilingual Municipality. Building Together.*, a new residents' engagement tool developed as part of the 3M. The platform gives residents of Manitoba's bilingual rural municipalities an opportunity to share their comments, experiences and suggestions regarding municipal services in both official languages. It enables municipalities to better understand residents' expectations, gauge perceptions of bilingual services and incorporate this information into their planning and continuous improvement processes. By supporting a participatory, results-oriented approach, the platform directly strengthens municipal administrations' capacity to deliver services that respond to the actual needs of their communities.

To support the development of the model with evidence-based data, the AMBM also undertook research with *Probe Research*. This work provided a better understanding of residents' perceptions, assessed the impact of initiatives implemented and documented the benefits of municipal bilingualism for community attractiveness, quality of life and economic development. The findings will help guide the AMBM's future initiatives and demonstrate the strategic value of investing in bilingual municipal services.



Manitoba's bilingual municipalities were represented at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference in June 2025.



The Honourable Lisa Naylor, Manitoba Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, with CEO Justin Johnson at the Bilingual Municipal Leadership Meeting on March 19, 2026.

An Integrated Vision for Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities

In the same spirit, the AMBM continued to develop the *Our Bilingual Advantage* initiative, an approach designed to promote the active offer of municipal services in English and French while positioning bilingualism as a driver of development. This toolkit will equip municipalities to promote their bilingual services through visual resources, communications tools and consistent messaging. More than a promotional campaign, *Our Bilingual Advantage* seeks to strengthen the identity of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities and highlight the social, economic and demographic benefits associated with their bilingual character.

The year was also marked by an extensive strategic planning exercise that led to the adoption of the AMBM's *Strategic Plan* (2026–2031): *Leveraging Our Bilingual Advantage to Build the Future of our Communities*. This process confirmed that the Municipal Maturity Model (3M) now serves as a foundational and cross-cutting framework for all of the AMBM's activities. By focusing on the development of attractive, sustainable, prosperous and resilient bilingual communities, the strategic plan positions the 3M as an essential tool for translating our bilingual advantage into tangible results for member municipalities.

The five strategic levers identified, ranging from bilingual municipal leadership to strengthening organizational capacity, directly support municipalities as they advance towards greater maturity in governance and service delivery in both official languages.

This vision also complements the new *Strategy for the Success of Bilingual Economic Immigration in Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities* (2026–2030), whose objectives naturally align with those of the 3M, particularly in the areas of community attractiveness, infrastructure development, newcomer settlement, strengthening community capacity and municipal leadership.

Taken as a whole, the 3M has become much more than an assessment tool or framework. It is a genuine driver of transformation and development for Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. By simultaneously supporting infrastructure development, service improvement, skills development, resident engagement, economic attractiveness and community identity, the 3M enables AMBM member municipalities to fully activate their bilingual advantage and build communities that are increasingly inclusive, resilient, prosperous and future-focused.



***Our Bilingual Advantage**, a strategic asset for Manitoba's bilingual municipalities.*

Investment in Our Bilingual Municipalities

The 2025–2026 fiscal year unfolded in a particular context for several federal infrastructure programmes. In April 2025, the federal general election led to a significant slowdown in decision-making processes associated with Government of Canada funding programmes, creating a period of uncertainty for many municipalities with shovel-ready projects. Although several bilingual municipalities continued their planning and preparatory work, timelines associated with certain programmes were delayed as a result of the election and the government transition that followed.

Restructuring Federal Programmes

In fall 2025, the federal government led by Prime Minister Mark Carney announced, as part of its budgetary direction, a restructuring of several existing funding programmes as well as the creation of the *Build Communities Strong Fund* (BCSF). This new fund brings together new federal investments and certain existing mechanisms, including the *Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund* (CHIF), with the aim of simplifying access to funding and better responding to the priorities of Canadian communities.

However, the transition to this new approach extended over several months. Final programme terms, eligibility criteria and application processes associated with the BCSF had still not been clarified. This situation delayed the review and processing of several municipal projects across the country, including projects led by AMBM member municipalities. Beyond these administrative delays, the situation had significant repercussions for municipal investment in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities.

Alongside their efforts related to the *Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund* (CHIF), bilingual municipalities continued working to access federal programmes supporting community infrastructure. However, experiences with the *Green and Inclusive Community Buildings* (GICB) programme highlighted the challenges that lengthy processing times and a lack of predictability in funding decisions can create for rural communities. Projects were submitted in fall 2024, but proponents received no updates for more than a year. It was not until the end of January 2026 that two municipalities were informed that their applications had been unsuccessful.

This situation illustrates the challenges municipalities face when planning transformative investments in an environment where decision-making timelines remain uncertain. It also highlights the importance of ensuring that the design and administration of federal infrastructure programmes take into account both the realities of rural development and the particular needs of Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs).

Throughout the year, the AMBM continued its advocacy with the federal government to ensure recognition of the strategic contribution bilingual municipalities make to Manitoba's economic, demographic and linguistic vitality. Although the Government of Canada has committed to directing at least 20% of certain federal investments to rural areas, rural bilingual municipalities continue to face significant challenges in accessing infrastructure programmes suited to their realities.

The AMBM will therefore continue its efforts to ensure that federal programmes better recognize these realities and that rural bilingual communities have more equitable, predictable and appropriate access to available funding sources.

$3.1 billion in building permit value in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities

Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

Wastewater treatment infrastructure is one of the most essential components of the development and growth of rural Manitoba communities. Beyond its fundamental role in public health and environmental protection, this infrastructure directly determines municipalities' capacity to welcome new residents, support residential and commercial development, attract investment and respond to the future needs of their populations. Without sufficient wastewater treatment capacity, several municipalities are constrained in their growth potential despite favourable economic and demographic prospects.

Throughout the year, this issue featured prominently in discussions led by the AMBM and its members. At numerous roundtables, bilateral meetings and advocacy activities with provincial and federal decision-makers, municipal leaders from bilingual municipalities regularly emphasised the urgent need for increased investment in this strategic area. Municipalities stressed that modernizing and expanding their infrastructure is not simply a technical issue, but a prerequisite for economic development, attracting new households and successfully strengthening the vitality of bilingual communities.

The scale of the need is clearly illustrated by the requests submitted to the Manitoba Water Services Board (MWSB). Collectively, Manitoba's fifteen bilingual rural municipalities identified more than $74 million in wastewater treatment infrastructure needs. By comparison, the provincial funding envelope currently available for the entire programme is approximately $24 million, creating a significant gap between the needs identified by communities and the financial resources available. This gap alone demonstrates the scale of investment required to enable bilingual rural municipalities to remain competitive, accommodate growth and meet current and future regulatory requirements.

Despite the scale of the identified needs, the year also brought significant progress for several bilingual municipalities. In November 2025, Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew announced provincial investment to support two major regional projects: the Red-Seine-Rat Wastewater Cooperative (RSR) and the Pembina Valley Water Cooperative, as well as an investment in the City of Winnipeg's North End Sewage Treatment Plant.

These initiatives bring together several AMBM member municipalities and demonstrate the value of a collaborative approach to addressing wastewater infrastructure challenges. This government support represents an important step towards advancing projects that have been awaited for several years and confirms the potential of regional infrastructure as a solution for supporting residential, economic and demographic growth in rural communities. Through its advocacy and mobilization role, the AMBM works to advance strategic investment in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities to ensure their competitiveness, strengthen their position as regional hubs and support their long-term economic development.



The Honourable Mike Moyes, Manitoba Minister of Environment and Climate Change, with Dany Robidoux, Executive Director of Eco-West Canada (EWC), an AMBM subsidiary.



The Honourable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba, and AMBM President Ivan Normandeau at the Bilingual Municipal Leadership Meeting on March 19, 2026.

Government Working Group for Hôpital Ste. Anne Hospital

Thanks to the sustained efforts of the surrounding municipalities, namely the Town of Sainte-Anne, the Rural Municipality of Sainte-Anne, the Rural Municipality of La Broquerie and the Rural Municipality of Taché, the issue of regional designation for Hôpital Ste. Anne Hospital remained at the forefront of discussions. Municipal representatives made a point of raising this priority at every municipal leadership meeting and with provincial decision-makers.

This coordinated mobilization contributed to the announcement, in March 2026, of the creation of a Government Working Group on the regional designation of Hôpital Ste. Anne Hospital. The group held its first meeting before the end of March 2026, and its work will continue to establish the parameters and conditions required to secure regional designation, an important step for the future of health services in the region.

Beyond Hôpital Ste. Anne Hospital, several AMBM member municipalities continue to advance important priorities related to access to local health care. Issues raised during the year included maintaining and strengthening emergency and ambulance service capacity, adding coordination resources in certain facilities, and improving access to specialized diagnostic equipment. Whether it involves a regional health coordination position for the Red River region, establishing an ambulance station in the Rural Municipality of Lorne, or access to a CT scanner in the Winnipeg River region, the AMBM remains attentive to the priorities identified by its members and supports their efforts to strengthen the delivery of health services in Manitoba's bilingual communities.



At the Bilingual Municipal Leadership Meeting on March 19, 2026, the Honourable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba, announced the creation of the government working group on the regional designation of Hôpital Ste. Anne Hospital.

Provincial Funding Programmes

Under the 2025–2026 intake of Manitoba's provincial Growth, Renewal and Opportunities (GRO) for Municipalities programme, ten rural bilingual municipalities submitted a total of eleven projects representing nearly $4.7 million in funding requests.

The programme has a total provincial funding envelope of $42 million and enables rural municipalities to receive contributions of up to 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of $5 million per project.

Eligible projects include public safety, roads, bridges and active transportation, community infrastructure, multimodal transportation, as well as solid waste management and organic waste diversion. Following the evaluation process, nine projects submitted by our member municipalities were approved for funding totalling nearly $3.9 million, representing approximately 9.3% of the available provincial funding envelope.

The programme guide recognizes the Municipal Maturity Model (3M) as a structured framework for bilingual municipalities. This recognition reflects the collaboration established between the AMBM and the department of Municipal and Northern Relations (MNR) to support the continuous improvement of municipal governance and the delivery of services in both official languages. Among the projects approved was a regional project, an intermunicipal collaborative approach that the Manitoba government particularly encourages and values because of its broader benefits and impact across multiple communities.

As part of its monitoring and support activities, the AMBM also shared information with its member municipalities about various funding opportunities offered by the Manitoba government.

These included the *From the Ground Up: Safe Healthy Communities for ALL* programme, which supports projects that contribute to improving quality of life, safety and community resilience. By sharing this information and maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the department of Municipal and Northern Relations (MNR), the AMBM helps better equip bilingual municipalities to identify and implement initiatives that respond to the needs of their residents.



Yvan St. Vincent, Mayor of the Town of Sainte-Anne, at the December 11, 2025 roundtable with the Honourable Uzoma Asagwara, Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care.

Leveraging Provincial Programmes for the Benefit of Bilingual Communities (2025–2026)

One Manitoba Growth Revenue Fund
$7.441 million in bilingual municipalities

Strategic Municipal Investment Fund – Municipal Operating:
$154.3 million

Green Team
$4.239 million

Mobility Disadvantaged Transportation Program
$48,974

Momentum in Community Development

The momentum of real estate and economic development in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities continues to stand out. In 2025, the value of projects authorized through building permits reached $3.1 billion, an increase of 14% over the previous year.

This indicator reflects the strength of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional investment driving community growth and enhancing their attractiveness. It also highlights the role of bilingual municipalities as engines of economic development and drivers of regional prosperity.

This sustained growth, however, is accompanied by increasing pressure on public infrastructure and essential municipal services. Tracking this indicator therefore provides a concrete measure of the economic growth of bilingual municipalities and strengthens the case for strategic investment in infrastructure modernization, Priority No. 1 of the *Prosperity Framework for Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities*.



Laurent Tétrault, Andy Loewen and Fernand Piché, councillors for the Rural Municipality of La Broquerie, in conversation at the Bilingual Municipal Leadership Meeting on January 22, 2026. The Rural Municipality of La Broquerie is part of the Red-Seine-Rat Wastewater Cooperative (RSR), a project that would enable the construction of 20,000 new homes, create 3,400 jobs and generate $1.9 billion in economic impact.

A Strong Voice for Bilingual Municipalities: Advocacy, Engagement and Influence

Over the past year, the AMBM continued to grow and strengthen its role as the voice of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities with all orders of government. Guided by its advocacy mandate, the AMBM expanded opportunities for dialogue with elected officials and decision-makers to advance the priorities and needs of its members. This approach rests on a fundamental principle: the AMBM is only as strong as its members. Effective advocacy depends on a thorough understanding of the realities, challenges and aspirations of the municipalities it represents.

With this in mind, the AMBM undertook a strategic tour of its member municipalities during the year. This approach was designed to gather information directly from communities, hear the concerns of municipal councils and their administrations, and better understand the issues specific to each community. The information gathered through these meetings enables the AMBM to support its advocacy with the provincial and federal governments with concrete examples and needs clearly identified by municipalities.

This commitment to being more present with its members and strengthening the reach of its advocacy activities was reflected in the organization of roundtables, as well as participation in meetings with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). Together, these initiatives helped strengthen relationships among municipalities, encourage the sharing of expertise and bring a strong, coordinated municipal voice to governments.

Strategic Tour of AMBM Members

The strategic tour of AMBM members reflects our commitment to meeting directly with municipal leaders in order to further ground the organization's work in the realities of its members and strengthen a collective commitment to strong, dynamic and prosperous bilingual communities. These meetings provided a clearer understanding of local priorities, informed the AMBM's government advocacy efforts and strengthened relationships with the municipalities it represents. They also highlighted several shared challenges, particularly growing housing infrastructure needs and wastewater treatment challenges, two issues that are essential to the sustainable development and growth of communities.

In this spirit, the AMBM used each of these meetings as an opportunity to present the municipalities visited with a recognition plaque for display in their council chambers. This symbolic gesture recognizes their official status as AMBM members and their commitment to delivering municipal services in both official languages, in accordance with the adoption of their by-law related to the Municipal Maturity Model (3M). This recognition highlights the leadership of municipalities that choose to make bilingualism and inclusion pillars of their local governance.

The tour also provided an opportunity to take stock of a concerning reality facing several of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. Municipal elected officials and employees are experiencing increasing pressure in the performance of their duties as incidents of harassment and intimidation become more frequent. These behaviours often go beyond simple disagreement and place a significant human and organizational burden on municipal councils and administrations. This reality affects the well-being of those who serve their communities and undermines municipalities' ability to ensure healthy, stable and sustainable local governance, an essential foundation of our local democracy.



Council of the Rural Municipality of Ellice-Archie during the AMBM team's visit on February 11, 2026.


Members of the Rural Municipality of Alexander council during the AMBM team's visit on March 10, 2026.



Council of the Village of Saint-Pierre-Jolys during the AMBM team's visit on February 3, 2026.


Council of the Town of Powerview-Pine Falls during the AMBM team's visit on February 23, 2026.


Council of the Rural Municipality of St. Laurent during the AMBM team's visit on March 17, 2026.

National Advocacy through the FCM

The AMBM continued its engagement within the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to ensure that the realities of bilingual municipalities and Official Language Minority Communities (OLMCs) are reflected in national discussions and policy directions.

In this regard, an important step forward was achieved with the explicit inclusion of issues affecting OLMCs in the report *The Future of Rural Canada*. The report recognizes, in particular, that rural Francophone minority communities face specific challenges, including recruiting and retaining a qualified bilingual workforce and delivering municipal services in both official languages. It also recommends that the federal government apply a linguistic lens to its rural policies, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, economic development and workforce planning.

For the AMBM, this represents a significant achievement that now provides a concrete foundation for its advocacy efforts and for advancing the needs of its member municipalities with the federal government.

In addition, as part of the FCM's Advocacy Days, the AMBM participated in several strategic meetings with parliamentarians, ministerial representatives and other municipal leaders from across the country. These discussions provided opportunities to advance the priorities of member municipalities, raise decision-makers' awareness of the realities facing rural bilingual communities, and strengthen the alliances needed to move important regional priorities forward. This active presence at the national level helps ensure a strong, coordinated municipal voice that is representative of Manitoba's bilingual communities.



Laurent Tétrault, Deputy Reeve of the Rural Municipality of La Broquerie and a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Board of Directors, where he is one of Manitoba's representatives.

6 roundtables with provincial and federal decision-makers



The Honourable Uzoma Asagwara, Manitoba Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, at the December 11, 2025 roundtable with municipal leaders from Manitoba's bilingual municipalities.

A Strategic Partnership with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities

The AMBM continued to strengthen its relationship with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) to advance issues of shared importance to Manitoba municipalities. This collaboration included discussions and joint efforts related to water and wastewater infrastructure needs, public safety, rural development and municipal funding. In this context, the AMBM contributed to a study conducted by *Probe Research* for the AMM to better document municipal priorities and challenges. By working closely with its sister association, the AMBM was able to bring forward the specific realities of bilingual communities while supporting advocacy priorities that benefit Manitoba's municipal sector as a whole.

This collaboration also resulted in the French translation, in partnership with the AMM and Strong Cities Network (SCN), of the *A Toolkit for Manitoba Municipalities: Addressing Anti-Government Hate and Harassment*. This initiative made a practical resource available to Francophone and bilingual municipal elected officials to help prevent, recognize and manage situations involving harassment and hate targeting municipal representatives.

These initiatives demonstrate the commitment of the AMBM and the AMM to strengthening municipal collaboration and advancing concrete solutions to the issues facing Manitoba communities, while ensuring that the perspective of bilingual municipalities is fully reflected in the discussions and actions undertaken.



Ginette Lavack, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services and Member of Parliament for Saint-Boniface–Saint-Vital, at the Municipal Leadership Meeting held on June 18, 2025, in the Rural Municipality of St. Laurent.

Roundtables and Municipal Leadership Days

On a quarterly basis, in June, September, January and March, the AMBM held its bilingual municipal leadership days, bringing together municipal elected officials, Chief Administrative Officers, Economic Development Officers (EDOs) and other key municipal administration staff. These meetings provide an important forum for collaboration, allowing municipalities to bring their priorities and concerns directly to provincial and federal government decision-makers.

Over the past year, participants had the opportunity to engage with the Honourable Wab Kinew, Premier of Manitoba; the Honourable Uzoma Asagwara, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care; the Honourable Lisa Naylor, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation; Ginette Lavack, Member of Parliament for Saint-Boniface–Saint-Vital and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services; as well as members of Manitoba's New Democratic and Progressive Conservative caucuses.

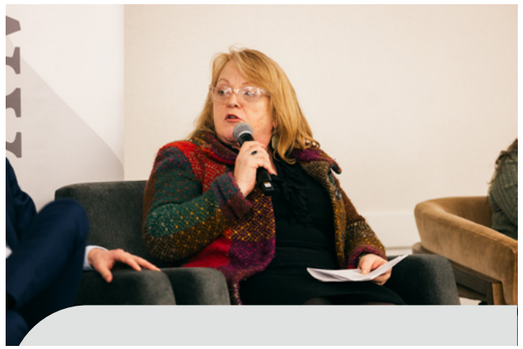
Beyond their advocacy role, these leadership days also include a professional development component tailored to municipal realities. Topics addressed included the active offer of bilingual services, funding opportunities related to climate change adaptation, and the development and updating of municipal policies. Having become key gatherings for many municipal elected officials and administrators, these meetings reflect the growing importance of collaboration, sharing best practices and strengthening the capacity of Manitoba's bilingual communities.

CDEM: A Driver of Prosperity for Bilingual Municipalities

In 2025–2026, the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM) continued its mission of supporting Francophone economic development through a series of transformative projects benefiting bilingual municipalities, entrepreneurs, employers, young people and newcomers.

Guided by its new *Strategic Plan* (2025–2028), CDEM strengthened its results- and innovation-driven approach. Key achievements during the year included the launch of the new Employability Centre, development of the Business@CDEM entrepreneurship strategy, the opening of a second office to foster greater synergy among AMBM Group services, and support for the implementation of the Francophone Community Immigration Pilot (FCIP) in the Village of Saint-Pierre-Jolys.

CDEM also strengthened its collaboration with Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the *Bureau de l'éducation française* (BEF), World Trade Centre Winnipeg (WTCW), the *Chambre de commerce francophone de Saint-Boniface* (CCFSB), and the *Centre d'emploi et de ressources communautaires* (CERC) in Saint-Pierre-Jolys. These partnerships expand the reach of available services, support the attraction and retention of a Francophone workforce, foster entrepreneurship and strengthen the economic vitality of bilingual communities.



Madeleine Arbez, Executive Director of the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM), an AMBM subsidiary.



The Honourable Malaya Marcelino, Minister of Labour and Immigration, meeting with the Saint-Pierre-Jolys municipal council as part of the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) and the Francophone Community Immigration Pilot (FCIP).

214 economic development projects funded, 116 new businesses created, 250 entrepreneurs supported and 8,427 young people mentored

Developing Communities, Supporting Entrepreneurs and Strengthening Economic Vitality

In 2025–2026, CDEM's Tourism sector continued its efforts to strengthen the attractiveness and visibility of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. Through *Jeudis de la francophonie*, community partnerships and tourism development projects, CDEM supported 63 small businesses and generated more than $160,000 in economic impact.

The team also supported several municipalities in improving their tourism infrastructure and resources, including through the Tourism Growth Program, the Saskatchewan–Manitoba agritourism corridor and participation in major promotional events such as the *Salon VR Montréal* and *Rendez-vous Canada*. These initiatives help strengthen the positioning of bilingual municipalities as distinctive destinations and stimulate their economic development.

Alongside its tourism development activities, CDEM worked closely with member municipalities to advance transformative projects in their communities. The Community Economic Development (CED) sector played a leading role in supporting municipalities with the planning, financing and implementation of projects related to community infrastructure, recreational and sports facilities, tourism development and heritage enhancement.

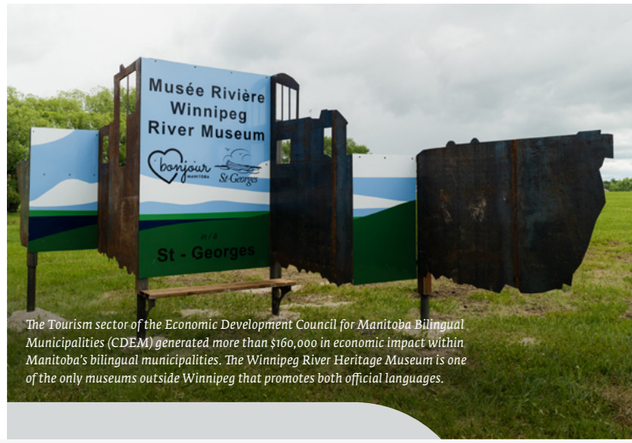
This collaborative approach across the tourism and economic development sectors helped maximise the impact of local initiatives and strengthen communities' capacity to achieve their development priorities.

Throughout the year, the CED sector supported municipalities in advancing major projects related to community infrastructure, tourism, recreational and sports facilities, and heritage enhancement. In total, more than 214 projects were supported in rural member municipalities, representing investments of more than $428 million, of which more than $42 million had already been secured.

Entrepreneurial support remained at the heart of CDEM's work in 2025–2026. Through advisory services, support programmes and training activities, the organization contributed to the creation of 116 new businesses and 199 jobs, while supporting more than 250 entrepreneurs in starting, growing and strengthening their businesses. Entrepreneurs received tailored support with business planning, securing financing, marketing, networking and accessing specialized resources. The programme also offered eight entrepreneurship training sessions, with 181 participants in *Business Start*, while working closely with the youth sector to support the next generation of entrepreneurs.

The year also marked the conclusion of the *Strengthening the Job Market* project, an initiative designed to address employers' workforce needs, support the growth of businesses in Manitoba's rural bilingual municipalities, and foster market development through the hiring of a qualified bilingual workforce. As part of the project, an economic study was conducted to document workforce needs in each participating municipality. Employer outreach activities were also undertaken to encourage the hiring of candidates from diverse backgrounds and strengthen intercultural capacity in workplaces. In total, 14 municipal surveys were conducted and 1,177 employers were consulted.

Taken together, these initiatives demonstrate CDEM's role as a strategic partner in local economic development and its contribution to the sustainable prosperity of AMBM Group member communities.



The Tourism sector of the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM) generated more than $160,000 in economic impact within Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. The Winnipeg River Heritage Museum is one of the only museums outside Winnipeg that promotes both official languages.

Preparing the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs and Professionals

In keeping with the *Prosperity Framework for Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities*, which recognizes the importance of investing in youth to develop the entrepreneurs, skilled workers and leaders of tomorrow, CDEM continued its initiatives aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial spirit, employability and leadership among Francophone and bilingual youth.

During the year, 476 financial literacy workshops were delivered to 8,427 young people in 56 schools, while 79 business simulations enabled 1,132 young people to develop their entrepreneurial skills in a practical setting. These activities help build essential knowledge in financial management, decision-making and entrepreneurship, while raising young people's awareness of career and business opportunities in their communities.

Flagship initiatives such as *Un monde de choix* and *Le Petit Marché* provided concrete opportunities for career exploration, mentorship and hands-on entrepreneurial experience. *Un monde de choix* brought together 185 students and 36 mentors, creating a valuable forum for young people to connect with professionals from a variety of sectors. *Le Petit Marché*, meanwhile, brought together 27 young entrepreneurs who generated more than $1,895 in sales, demonstrating the impact of experiential learning on the development of entrepreneurial skills.

By connecting young people more closely with the workplace, businesses and inspiring role models, CDEM is helping to build a generation that is engaged, innovative and well equipped to contribute to the economic prosperity of bilingual municipalities and the long-term vitality of Manitoba's Francophone community.



Norman Dupas, President of the Saint-Boniface Francophone Chamber of Commerce (CCFSB); Madeleine Arbez, Executive Director of the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (CDEM); and André Brin, Executive Director of World Trade Centre Winnipeg (WTC Winnipeg), at the announcement of CDEM's acquisition of the half-licence for WTC Winnipeg.

Attracting and Retaining Francophone and Bilingual Talent

In a context where access to a skilled workforce remains a major challenge for communities and businesses, CDEM's employability and economic immigration sector continued its efforts to attract, integrate and retain Francophone and bilingual workers in Manitoba.

During the year, the two editions of the Job Fair brought together 52 employers and 547 job seekers, generating more than 1,380 speed interviews and creating concrete opportunities to match employers with candidates. The new Employability Centre also offered 10 programmes and 12 workshops, supported 1,309 registered clients, shared 19,126 targeted job postings, and established 58 new partnerships with businesses seeking Francophone and bilingual workers, further strengthening its capacity to respond to Manitoba's labour market needs.

Francophone and bilingual economic immigration continued to play an essential role in the development of bilingual municipalities. During the year, 503 immigrants received support, 370 applications were processed and 315 people participated in exploratory visits, including 223 candidates selected by the Manitoba government. These initiatives help raise awareness of employment and settlement opportunities available in the province's Francophone and bilingual communities.

CDEM also continued to support the implementation of the Francophone Community Immigration Pilot (FCIP) in the Village of Saint-Pierre-Jolys. In 2025–2026, six designated employers were participating in the programme, strengthening communities' capacity to attract and retain Francophone and bilingual workers. The year also saw the selection of the first candidate under this initiative, an important milestone in supporting the demographic and economic growth of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities. This gradual progress reflects a commitment to building local capacity in a sustainable and responsible manner, at a pace that respects the needs of participating communities.

Through these actions, CDEM contributes directly to the prosperity of AMBM Group member communities by responding to workforce needs, supporting employers and fostering the long-term settlement of new talent in Manitoba's bilingual communities.

Eco-West Canada: A Strategic Partner for Manitoba's Bilingual Municipalities

During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, Eco-West Canada (EWC) continued to support rural and bilingual municipalities in Manitoba in the areas of sustainable transportation, electric mobility, climate change adaptation and green infrastructure development. Several initiatives undertaken in partnership with AMBM member municipalities helped strengthen municipal capacity, secure significant funding and advance transformative projects.

Sustainable Transportation and Regional Mobility

EWC completed the feasibility study for the *Southeast Regional Transportation Initiative* (SERTi) in collaboration with several municipalities in the region, including the bilingual Rural Municipalities of Taché, Ritchot, De Salaberry, Piney and La Broquerie; the Town of Sainte-Anne; the Village of Saint-Pierre-Jolys; and the Rural Municipalities of Stuartburn and Hanover.

This initiative significantly strengthened the participating municipalities' capacity to advance their sustainable mobility projects. Through the studies undertaken and the support provided, communities now have the tools required to access government funding programmes and plan the deployment of infrastructure tailored to their needs.

The project also contributed to the launch of the Rural Municipality of Ritchot's first regional car-sharing service, *Red River Rides – Roulez Rivière-Rouge*, an innovative initiative that will serve as a model for other rural regions. Building on this work, a $10 million federal funding application was submitted to support the implementation of a broad sustainable mobility network in southeastern Manitoba. The progress achieved also resulted in a $400,000 commitment from the Manitoba government in the spring 2026 budget to support the preparation and development of the project's next phases, confirming partners' interest and confidence in this regional vision for sustainable transportation.

At the same time, the *Manitoba Rural Transit Initiative* (MRTi) brought together numerous Manitoba municipalities around zero-emission transportation. More than 20 meetings, workshops and awareness activities were held, positioning Manitoba as a leader in sustainable rural mobility.



Martin Van Osch, Chief Administrative Officer of the Rural Municipality of Piney, at the Bilingual Municipal Leadership Meeting on March 19, 2026.

Electric Mobility and Charging Infrastructure

EWC also helped accelerate the transition towards electric transportation in the Prairies by supporting the deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in communities, businesses, hotels, convenience stores and Indigenous communities. With financial support from Natural Resources Canada, more than $827,000 was invested in approximately 20 projects across Saskatchewan, generating more than $2.1 million in total investment with contributions from local partners.

Key achievements included:

- supporting the installation of public and private charging stations in several urban and rural communities;
- supporting Indigenous communities in the development of sustainable energy and mobility infrastructure;
- improving the charging network along regional transportation corridors; and
- increasing access to charging for residents, businesses, visitors and vehicle fleets.

These investments help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, alleviate electric vehicle range anxiety in rural areas and better prepare Prairie communities for the growing adoption of electrified transportation. The programme also leveraged more than $1.27 million in complementary contributions, demonstrating EWC's significant capacity to attract investment and catalyze transformative projects for the region's energy transition.

Climate Change Adaptation

EWC continued its work supporting municipalities with climate change adaptation. Several rural municipalities in Manitoba received support in assessing their climate risks and preparing applications to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation (LLCA) programme.

In addition to its awareness-building and support work with numerous rural communities, EWC played a key role in securing funding for the development of climate change adaptation plans. Through its technical expertise and assistance with funding applications, several municipalities secured the resources needed to undertake structured planning exercizes. These included the Village of Saint-Pierre-Jolys, the Rural Municipality of Saint-Laurent and the Rural Municipality of Taché, which received support to develop their climate change adaptation plans.

These projects will enable municipalities to better assess the climate risks they face, strengthen the resilience of their infrastructure and better guide future investments in the context of climate change.

$2.1 million in economic impact

Outreach and Partnership Development

EWC strengthened its national profile by becoming a recognized provider of services in both official languages with the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) under the Climate-Ready Infrastructure Service (CRIS) programme.

This partnership enables EWC to make its expertise available to Canadian municipalities in areas such as energy efficiency, resilient infrastructure, zero-emission transportation and climate planning.

The collaboration also strengthens EWC's position as a leading player in sustainable municipal development and opens the door to new opportunities for support and funding for municipalities in Manitoba and elsewhere in Canada.

Throughout the year, EWC strengthened its presence among municipal, provincial and federal partners. Its active participation in AMBM, AMM and FCM conferences, as well as various specialized networks, helped increase opportunities for funding and collaboration for the benefit of Manitoba's bilingual municipalities.

EWC's activities in 2025–2026 demonstrate the importance of specialized support in advancing the energy transition, climate resilience and sustainable development of rural communities. Through its partnership with AMBM member municipalities, the organization helped advance several transformative projects that will continue to generate significant economic, environmental and social benefits in the years ahead.



Dany Robidoux, Executive Director of Eco-West Canada (EWC), with Robert Plitt, Vice-President, Strategy and Development at the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI), at the announcement of an agreement between the two organizations to advance climate resilience in Manitoba's bilingual municipalities.

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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ASSOCIATION DES MUNICIPALITÉS BILINGUES DU MANITOBA

ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA BILINGUAL MUNICIPALITIES

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Manitoba

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