

The New Inclusive Definition of Francophone (IDF)

Questions and Answers

1. Why has it been necessary to "calculate" the IDF? Is there not already a census for identifying Francophones?

This is an excellent question. In fact, all of the definitions of "Francophone" are derived from the same data at the source: the Statistics Canada censuses, conducted every five years. These censuses are based upon the responses to a series of questions that are organized according to sub-categories. This breaking down of the responses into sub-categories helps to provide a finer and more subtle image of the population, but also opens the door to many types of interpretation. In this case, the OFA has developed an approach that will be able to broaden the definition of "Francophone".

2. Which Francophones does the IDF include? Who does it exclude? Why?

The IDF will look at people whose mother tongue is not French, who have some knowledge of French and who speak it at home.

However, it excludes people who speak French when they have identified English as their mother tongue.

This approach is based on the presumption that for those people, the provision of French-language services by the government cannot be justified, since they certainly do speak English.

3. What was the consultation process used by the OFA to develop the IDF?

The OFA decided to consult parties involved at the technical and community levels:

At the technical level, the OFA has benefited from the support of specialists from Statistics Canada, an independent expert advisor, the main analyst at the Trillium Foundation and specialists from different provincial ministries.

At the community level, the IDF has received the approval of the Board of Directors of the AFO and of the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs' Provincial Advisory Committee.

4. Definition of the IDF:

The variable is calculated based on three questions in the census concerning mother tongue, the language spoken at home and knowledge of the official languages.

The IDF estimates the number of persons whose mother tongue is French, plus those people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English (allophones) but who speak French.

5. What is the difference between the estimates based on mother tongue and the new definition of "Francophone"?

The "mother tongue" category includes Francophones solely on the basis of French as one or more of the "languages learned at home in childhood and still understood" (at the time of the census).

The IDF broadens the mother tongue indicator, and adds those persons who speak French, whose mother tongue is neither French nor English and for whom French is one of the languages spoken at home.

To do this, it takes into account the knowledge of French and the language spoken at home.

6. Can the number of Francophones obtained with the IDF be compared with those estimated based on mother tongue or the first official language spoken variable?

Yes, it is possible to compare the results obtained with the three different variables, but only to a certain degree. With regards to the 2001 census, we will have to wait several more months before we have the number of Francophones obtained with the IDF. Also, with the 2006 census, the OFA no longer uses the mother tongue criterion, which limits comparison possibilities between the three variables.

7. Is the IDF being accompanied by new funding, or will it be in the future?

No. It is a statistical definition and not a new government program.

8. Will the IDF broaden the procedures for admission into the French-language schools? Why?

No, the procedures for admission into the French-language schools are based on constitutional rights entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The IDF does not have authority to modify these terms.

9. What is the impact of the IDF for those Francophones who will now be included? Will they have new rights? Why?

No. It is necessary to understand that the IDF is not being implemented in order to create new rights or privileges. In fact, the IDF does not have an impact on the individual level, but on the community level, since it modifies the statistical profile of the Francophone community in Ontario.

However, the IDF will have a profound impact on a personal level, in terms of the feeling of pride and belonging. Many individuals or families, whose belonging to the Francophone community is a real part of their lives, have been excluded from that community in terms of statistics until now. In this way, the IDF is correcting the overly simplistic approach of the previous definition.

10. Will the IDF force the ministries to change the posting of provincial services? Will it force the government to provide more French-language services? Why?

The IDF is not legally binding. Ministries are required to comply with the *French Language Services Act* and the government is maintaining its commitment to "actively provide" French-language services. In this context, the impact of the IDF will be felt in terms of the ability of certain communities to justify their potential efforts to obtain designation under the *Act*. Designation acknowledges both the demographic and political reality of a community.

EXAMPLES OF FRANCOPHONES WHO ARE NOW RECOGNIZED BY THE IDF

For example, the IDF includes a person born in:

- Ottawa, whose mother tongue is Arabic, who *speaks French and English* and who speaks Arabic at home.
- Russia, whose mother tongue is Russian, who *speaks French and English* and who married a Franco-Ontarian; they speak French at home.
- Haiti, whose mother tongue is Haitian Creole, who *speaks French and English* and who married a Haitian; they speak Creole, English and French at home.
- Spain, whose mother tongue is Catalan, who has lived in Montréal, who *speaks French and English* and who married a Cuban; they speak Spanish and French at home.
- Kitchener, whose mother tongue is German, who *speaks French and English* and who lives in a couple in Toronto; they speak English and French at home.
- Vietnam, whose mother tongue is Vietnamese, who has lived in Brussels and who *speaks French*.