

Chapter 5

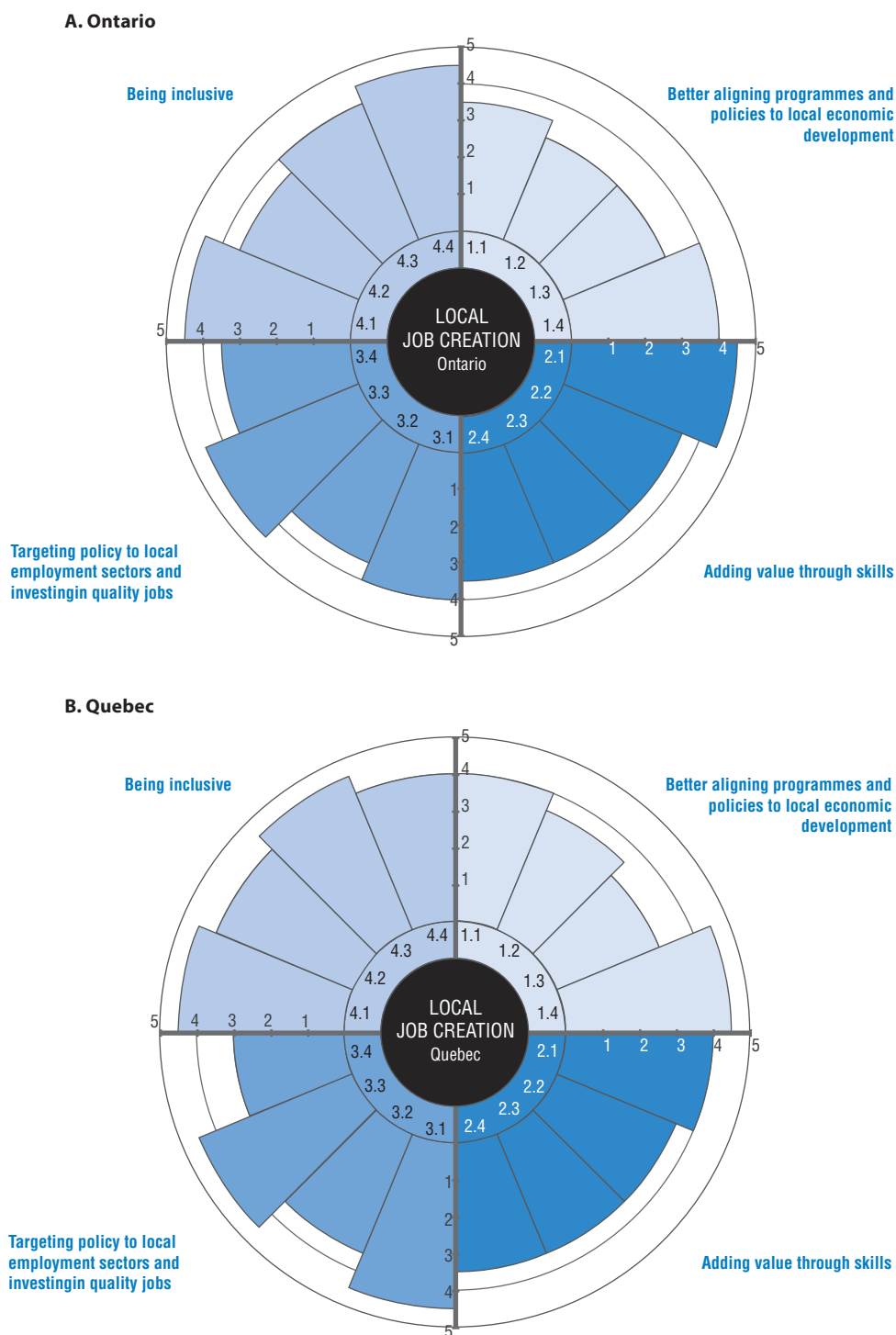
Local job creation dashboard findings in Canada

This chapter highlights findings from the local job creation dashboard in Ontario and Quebec. The findings are discussed through the four thematic areas of the study: 1) better aligning policies and programmes to local employment development; 2) adding value through skills; 3) targeting policy to local employment sectors and investing in quality jobs; and 4) inclusion.

Overview

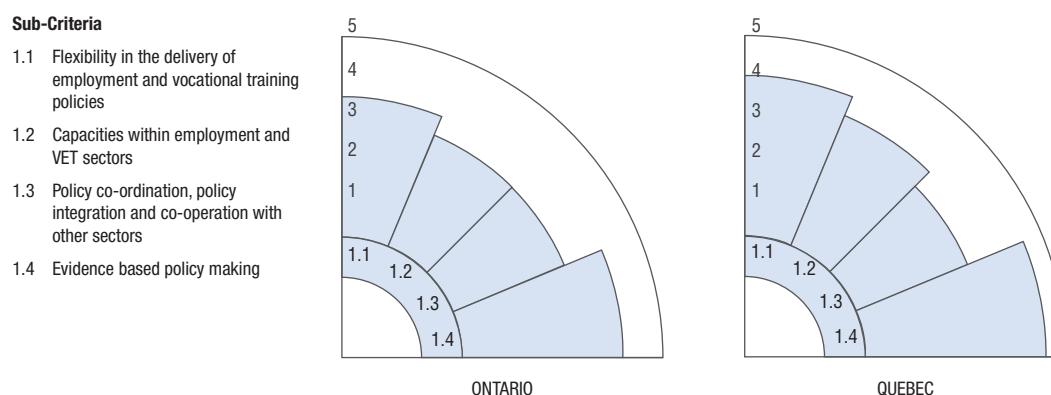
Each of the four thematic areas of the study is presented and discussed sequentially, accompanied by an explanation of the results. The full results of the Local Job Creation dashboard in Ontario and Quebec are presented in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1. Local Job Creation dashboard results for Quebec and Ontario



Theme 1: Better aligning policies and programmes to local economic development

Figure 5.2. Dashboard results: Better aligning policies and programmes to local economic development



1.1. Flexibility in the delivery of employment and vocational training policies

Flexibility within employment services

The OECD defines flexibility as “the possibility to adjust policy at its various design, implementation and delivery stages to make it better adapted to local contexts, actions carried out by other organisations, strategies being pursued, and challenges and opportunities faced” (Giguère and Froy, 2009). Flexibility deals with the latitude that exists in the management system of the employment system, rather than the flexibility in the labour market itself. As noted by the OECD, the achievement of local flexibility does not necessarily mean that governments need to decentralise or regionalise policies (Giguère and Froy, 2010). Governments just need to give sufficient latitude when allocating responsibilities in the fields of designing policies and programmes; managing budgets; setting performance targets; deciding on eligibility; and outsourcing services. It is important to differentiate between flexibility in the service delivery framework (operational flexibility) and flexibility in the ability of local actors to design strategies (strategic management flexibility).

Looking at flexibility in the management of employment and training policies between the federal and provincial level, both provinces exercise a considerable degree of flexibility in determining how services are organised and delivered. Provinces are given funds from the federal government to design and administer active labour market programmes. Flexibility in the use of federal funding is limited in determining client eligibility. Programme funding from the Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs) is for EI-eligible clients and may not be adjusted at the provincial or local level. However, federal funding for non-EI eligible clients is provided through the Labour Market Agreements (LMAs), the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers, as well as the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD). In some provinces, including Quebec and Ontario, some of the budget allocations for public employment services, apart from LMDAs and LMAs, may come from the government.

Ontario

In Ontario, Employment Ontario is a network of mostly not for profit service providers operating under a contract with the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. These services providers deliver employment services through a common performance management framework, which includes a range of indicators and targets that are monitored by the Ministry. Local service providers are required to report on activities through a common case management platform, which is used for administration and evaluation purposes. Services providers have limited flexibility to design strategies outside of the terms and conditions of the Employment Ontario contract. Furthermore, there is limited flexibility for providers to adjust client eligibility or programme design features. Budgets are allocated within specific terms and conditions with limited flexibility to move funding between programmes. Service providers do not have flexibility to set performance targets or make adjustments to take into account local employment conditions. Performance targets are not negotiated with local service delivery organisations, however, changing local conditions may be considered in the evaluation of a service provider’s performance.

Service providers have flexibility in service delivery as they are able to determine what available services within their organisation should be provided to the individual client – ranging from facilitated self-services, such as the use of a computer (to search for job openings or to prepare a résumé) to intensive counselling. If a client is not eligible to receive “assisted services” through a service provider, they are referred to an organisation where they may be able to receive services.

As a rule, service providers have budgets they must use within a specific framework, and funding may rarely be transferred from one programme to another. Moreover, the strategies that service providers implement may depart only slightly from the terms of the contract concluded with Employment Ontario.

Quebec

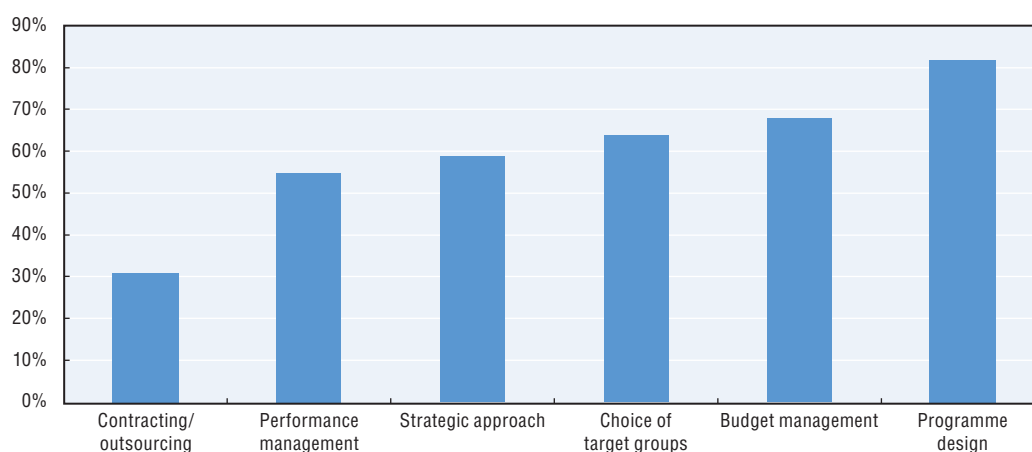
In Québec, the employment service is a civil service function where staff in the local employment offices (*centre locale d’emploi*) are government employees who report through a local and regional management structure to the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity (*Ministère de l’Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale*). The Ministry provides regional offices with considerable flexibility in how programmes and services are designed and managed. Each regional office gets a broad budget allocation for services and can deploy those resources according to established needs and priorities within these budgets. The regional office can also design programmes which are delivered at the local level.

With regard to flexibility, regional employment offices and local employment centres (*centres locaux d’emploi*, CLEs) have considerable autonomy in determining how to target employment and training programmes to local client groups within a flexible funding pool allocated from the Emploi-Québec regional budget allocation. In terms of outsourcing services, it is the regional directorate that negotiates and manages service agreements. However, the local employment centres determine which providers deliver the programmes. Services delivered under these types of contracts are based on expected outcomes in terms of volumes or clients to be served and performance indicators (back to work, back to school), the parameters for which are established at the provincial level by Emploi-Québec.

Results from the OECD questionnaire

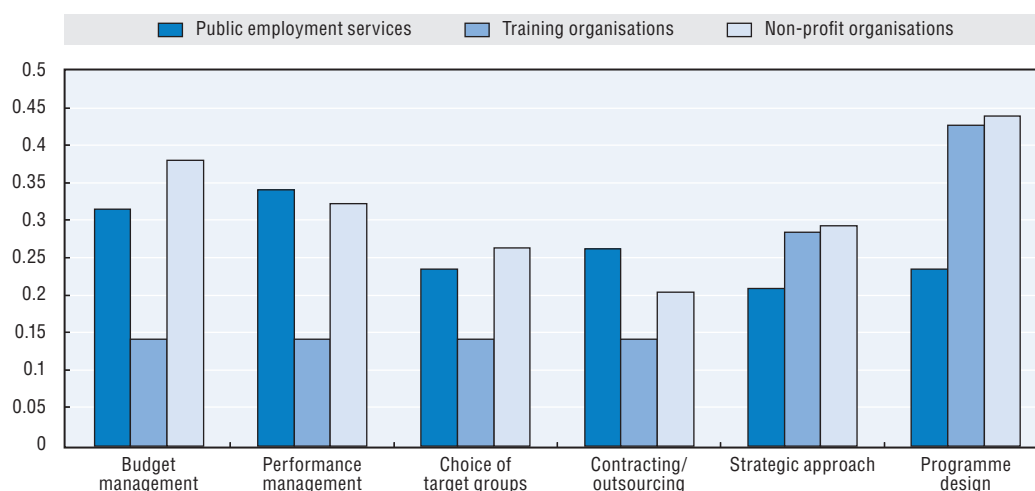
The OECD distributed a questionnaire to employment service providers in both Ontario and Quebec to ascertain their views on how much flexibility they enjoy in designing programmes and strategies for local job creation. In Ontario, employment service providers indicated programme design and budget management are areas, in which they would like to have more flexibility. The choice of target groups was another area that was identified for greater flexibility in the management of employment programmes and services – more than 60% of respondents indicated that it was a high priority (see Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3. Areas in which local offices would like to have more flexibility, Ontario
% of respondents stating that is a high priority



In Quebec, the questionnaire was distributed to the government's local employment centres (*Centres locaux d'emploi*, CLEs), as well as non-profit and training organisations, which are contracted to deliver some employment and training services under *Emploi-Québec*. For the CLEs, budget and performance management were areas identified as a high priority for flexibility in the management of employment programmes and services.

Figure 5.4. Areas in which local offices would like to have more flexibility, Quebec
% of respondents stating that is a high priority



Nevertheless, overall, the responses from the employment centres indicated additional flexibility in the management of employment programmes was a low priority. This may possibly reflect the high level of flexibility that already exists within the employment system. For the training and non-profit organisations, an average of 40% responded that programme design was a high priority for flexibility in the management of employment and training programmes.

Flexibility in vocational education and training

Ontario

In Ontario, contracted services providers can refer individuals to training programmes where it is determined that this is the most appropriate intervention. The most generous funding for training is provided under the LMDAs and individuals must qualify under the provisions of Employment Insurance Act. The local colleges have considerable flexibility to design and deliver courses within a broad accountability and quality framework. Since 1998, colleges have been mandated by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities to collect and report performance data in five areas – graduate satisfaction, student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, employment rate, and graduation rate (Colleges Ontario, 2013). The colleges are community-based and maintain close linkages with employers, unions, and other stakeholders in the community. Because of these linkages, the programmes and courses delivered by each college are well informed by local demand. Each college has a Programme Advisory Committee, which reports to the President of the college through a Board of Governors. This Committee helps to define graduate requirements and course content.

In terms of the future planning of training, the colleges rely on locally based research conducted by the local Workforce Planning Boards, the Chambers of Commerce or Sector Councils on growth occupations. In general, the colleges adjust course provision as necessary based on local labour market intelligence. Local labour market information can also inform the design of new training programmes. For example, Confederation College in Thunder Bay has recently introduced mining preparation courses, which were informed by a local labour market study sponsored by the Northern Superior Workforce Planning Board and the Mining Industry Human Resources Council on the importance of the growing mining sector in the Thunder Bay region.

Quebec

Local employment centre staff come to an agreement with each client, depending on their profiles (work experience, education and training), needs and aspirations (vocational choices), as well as the features of the local and regional labour markets, as to the optimal path to employment, which may entail taking part in one or more active measures, including training.

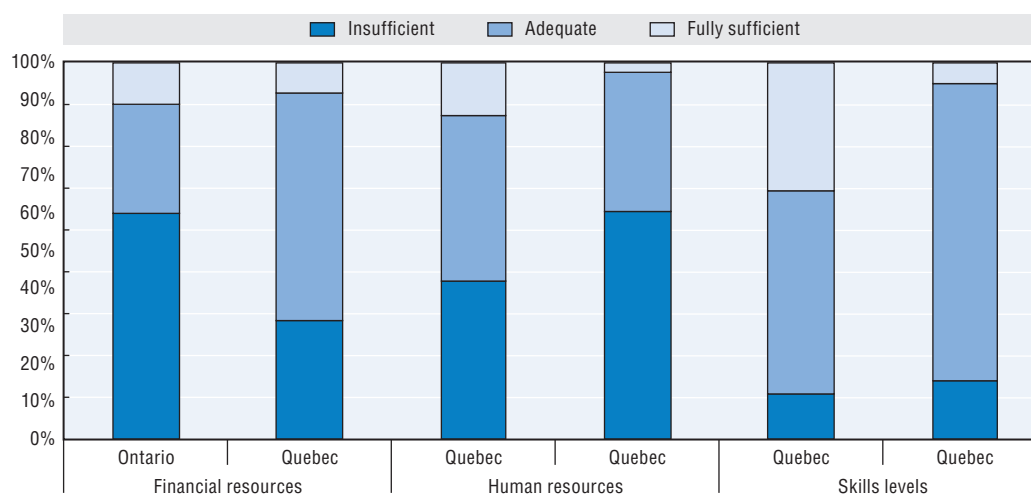
The determination of local training needs is done through consultation tables involving Emploi-Québec, the colleges, school boards, other training providers, local economic development representatives and industry representatives. The colleges and school boards have limited flexibility to adjust training programmes and courses to local demand. Training courses are difficult to re-design or cancel because of the incumbency rights of teaching staff. Furthermore, it can be difficult to design and deliver new training programmes because they require approval from the provincial level.

Another source of inflexibility within the training system in Quebec is in the area of adult education. It is difficult if not impossible for people who have not completed their secondary studies to access the technical training programmes run by the CEGEPs, for lack of the required credits. Training courses that could be offered jointly by school boards and CEGEPs, so that the missing credits could be accumulated at the same time as the training, would be one way to help get drop-outs back.

1.2 Capacities within employment and VET sectors

This study examined capacity at the local level by looking at the financial resources, human resources (e.g. number of staff), and skills levels of local employment and training organisations.

Figure 5.5. Employment offices with sufficient, adequate and insufficient capacities in Ontario and Quebec



Note: for Quebec only responses from public employment service are used in this graph.

Ontario

During the OECD study visit, local service providers from the employment and training sectors indicated that capacity is adequate. In the areas of financial resources, the number of staff, and their skill levels, there was a general sense that resources are sufficient for delivering objectives. However, in both Hamilton and Thunder Bay, it was noted that additional resources could be helpful to extend services and training to a number of disadvantaged groups.

The results from an OECD questionnaire contrast some of the views of local stakeholders from Hamilton and Thunder Bay. 29% of respondents considered financial resources to be adequate while 11% responded that they were fully adequate. Staffing levels (e.g. the number of staff) were seen as generally adequate. 58% of respondents indicated that they were adequate to fully sufficient. Staff competencies were rated as sufficient or fully sufficient by 88% of respondents.

Quebec

During the OECD study visit, it was noted that programmes to promote workplace training and career development of those already employed were low on resources. The local employment centres have small teams of advisers that promote services to employers and help businesses, and primarily small employers, with human resource management planning, as well as with training and employee skills development. The small number of these staff relative to the number of employers in each region would suggest that only a small percentage of employers can actually be contacted each year.

Looking the results of the OECD questionnaire for Quebec, with respect to financial resources, 68% of respondents indicated that they were adequate to fully sufficient to achieve organisational objectives. The skills levels of staff also appear to be quite strong and contribute to well-functioning programmes in 84% of cases. Resourcing levels are determined by region at the provincial level with the Regional Director General having discretion on allocations amongst the region's CLEs.

Responses from the vocational and technical training sector indicate that the skills levels of (network) staff may be an issue as 33% of sector respondents deemed these skills insufficient to achieve organisational goals. In Quebec, CEGEP and school board staff work under fairly similar conditions, although salary scales and other benefits may vary between the two systems. Special programmes of the CEGEPs and school boards may make use of contract or temporary employees.

1.3 Policy co-ordination, policy integration and cooperation with other sectors

Ontario

At the provincial level in Ontario, it appears that the co-ordination between ministries is relatively weak with silos between ministries in the policy development process. Various ministry representatives indicated that policy development occurred largely inside individual ministries. While different ministries do meet at the regional level the working through of implementation issues is most frequently handled at the local level. In particular, the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities may be missing opportunities to strengthen policy coherence by more closely aligning its efforts with the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, and Employment. Policies for the Northwest region where Thunder Bay is located have not been worked through in an integrated manner and locally a Northern Policy Institute has been established to help bring greater focus to the particular requirements of the region.

While subcontracted service providers deliver similar basic employment services, such as support with job-searches, counselling and job-matching, some have more specialised services and client groups. The extent to which service providers are co-ordinated at the local level to ensure unemployed job seekers know their eligibility for services with an organisation and which types of services are provided is limited. During the OECD study visit, it was noted that it can be difficult for unemployed job seekers to navigate the complex number of services and organisations locally, which may impede their motivation to receive support.

Locally, there are a number of governance structures in place, which connect employment, training, and economic development stakeholders however the role of the local level in designing employment and training strategies is limited. There are 26 Workforce Planning Boards operating across Ontario, which conduct localised research and engage organisations

and community partners in local labour market projects (see Box 5.1). The Workforce Planning Boards do not design or fund local strategies for employment and job creation; their mandate is primarily to develop local labour market information for community planning.

Box 5.1. Workforce Planning Boards in Hamilton and Thunder Bay

In both Hamilton and Thunder Bay, the Workforce Planning Boards play a significant role in bring together local organisations, including employers, unions, employment and training organisation, as well as equity groups (e.g. women, francophones, visible minorities and persons with disabilities)

In Hamilton, Workforce Planning Hamilton (WPH) is a local community organisation that builds solutions to labour market issues by engaging stakeholders and working with other partners. The Executive Director of Workforce Planning Hamilton is a permanent member of Hamilton's economic development committee, the chair of the sub-committee on employment for the Hamilton Immigration partnership and a member of a poverty reduction roundtable, literacy committees and postsecondary advisory group. Each year, Workforce Planning Hamilton produces a Labour Market Plan. The Labour Market Plan is the result of Workforce Planning Hamilton's annual local planning process that identifies priority labour market issues in Hamilton and documents their project and partnership solutions. The Labour Market Plan is a community document and, as such, it can be used by organisations and individuals to inform labour market projects in Hamilton. In addition to producing the Labour Market Plan, WPH's annual strategic plan consists of four projects and a few project partnerships every year. These activities rely on the Labour Market Plan and discussion at the Board table.

In Thunder Bay, the Northern Superior Workforce Planning Board engages local community partners in a locally-driven process to identify and respond to key labour market trends. The Executive Director of the Board also participates in committees on economic development in the Thunder Bay area and works closely with the local colleges and university. Similar to Workforce Planning Hamilton, the Northern Superior Workforce Planning Board produce a Labour Market Plan, which is focused on the Thunder Bay region. The Board also produces other labour market reports, which are focused on specific sectors and occupations. For example, in 2013, the Board produced a report on the Mining Industry in Thunder Bay. The report contained detailed information on the outlook for the mining industry as well as potential skills shortages that would be foreseen from increased employer investment in the region.

Source: Workforce Planning Ontario (2013), *Introduction to Workplace Boards*, available at www.workforceplanning.ca.

In addition to the Workforce Planning Boards, there are other committees, which bring together local stakeholders on various thematic issues. For example, in Hamilton, there is the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, which brings together leaders from the immigrant service provider sector, businesses, unions, community-based organisations, health, local government, media, educational institutions and youth. Through federal funding provided in 2009 by Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, it is leadership forum tasked with implementing a multi-faceted immigration strategy for Hamilton. There is also the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, which is a forum dedicated to reducing poverty in the Hamilton area. This roundtable does not offer programmes or direct services. Its role is to build an understanding about the need to invest in poverty reduction to create a healthier, inclusive and more prosperous Hamilton. The roundtable works locally, provincially and federally on policy and systems-level change to achieve long-term solutions to poverty.

In Thunder Bay, a local committee has been established to implement the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy (TBUAS). The committee was launched in the City of Thunder Bay in 2003, with a goal of addressing urban aboriginal family poverty. The TBUAS is currently administered by Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoan. The Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee is the community body that oversees the strategic direction of the TBUAS and ensures it remains a community driven initiative. The committee is comprised of Aboriginal service organisations, community partners, federal, provincial and municipal representatives.

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy focuses on actions to improve the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal people in order to create a sustainable and healthy community. Addressing issues related to poverty are a key priority. Findings from the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Task Force Report indicate that a high percentage of Thunder Bay's urban Aboriginal children and their families are living in extreme poverty. Over the last eight years, the TBUAS has made efforts in bringing awareness, collaboration and action on the many issues facing the Aboriginal community in Thunder Bay (Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy, 2013). Through extensive community consultation, community strategies have been and continue to be developed that identify priority areas and solutions to move the project forward.

Quebec

Policy integration and co-ordination in Quebec is largely based on administrative regions with a cascading system of governance structures within and across ministries. There are robust government structures in place which bring local partners together. They tend to be very specific purpose-driven with permanent committees facilitating inter agency planning and ad hoc committees addressing particular problems.

Against this backdrop, the regional councils of labour market partners (*Conseils régionaux des partenaires du marché du travail*, CRPMTs) are among the leading instruments of co-ordination. Meeting quarterly, the councils' primary aim is to co-ordinate local employment services. In the region of Estrie, for example, this council includes the regional Director General of Emploi-Québec, six representatives from union organisations, six employer representatives, four representatives from the training sector and two representatives from community organisations, as well as one representative from each of the three government ministries (Education, Industry, and Immigration). The council identifies challenges in the regional labour market, helps formulate and approves a regional action plan for employment measures to address those challenges, and proposes programmes and initiatives to the Labour Market Partners Commission (*Commission des partenaires du marché du travail*).

At the regional level, in addition to the CRPMT, there is the regional administrative forum (*conférence administrative régionale*) which brings all Ministries and agencies operating in the region together about every three months. The purpose of these meetings is to inform actors of new developments within a ministry and to identify areas of collaboration, while avoiding overlap. At the regional municipal county level, the local development centres (*centre local de développement*) bring key local employment and education players together as part of the economic development planning processes.

In some cases, local consultation committees are formed to respond to specific local labour market issues. In Shawinigan, a Diversification Committee (*committee de diversification*) meets every three months with the goal of attracting important economic development projects into the city. The diversification committee was originally formed following the closure of one of the major employers to administer funds that had been established to help diversify the city's economy. The Committee became a vehicle for bringing together the economic,

employment and education actors in a way that promoted common planning and co-ordinated action. The Diversification Committee brought local organisations and actors to produce a local action plan that then guided the activities of the individual actors. Significant local resources were committed to the plan and a number of innovative arrangements used to make various funding streams work together.

One of the priorities identified by the committee was to promote a culture of entrepreneurship with the municipality noting that many dynamic small businesses would be needed to replace the large employers who had left the region. This led to the establishment of an incubation hub and training centre in an abandoned factory. The innovation centre (*centre d'innovation*) involves a high degree of interaction between local stakeholders and creates a focal point for the city's strategy of developing and attracting start-ups. The centre offers space to new businesses on a commercial lease basis and has resident capacity to provide training, establish mentorships and promote interactions among entrepreneurs in the community.

In Estrie, the local development centres appear to have strong relationships with the universities. Inopol (the local development centre in Sherbrooke) and the University of Sherbrooke work closely together on bioscience projects. Its other associations with the university and colleges are linked to its other fields of interest in the Townships' regional niches (*créneaux d'excellence*).

1.4 Evidence-based policy making

Ontario

There is a labour market and information research unit within MTCU, which produces a series of comprehensive reports about labour market trends within the Employment Ontario regions. In terms of monitoring employment service providers, Ontario has invested in a case management system that tracks the majority of clients supported by Employment Ontario programmes and services. While this system tracks client outcome information, the extent to which the Ministry tracks the net benefits (e.g. the incremental impact) of its employment programmes and services to unemployed job seekers is unclear.

One challenge in terms of data collection and analysis in Ontario relates to the poor correspondence between Statistics Canada's Economic and Employment Insurance Regions and Employment Ontario regions. The geographic boundaries are different, which limits the use and applicability of information. Furthermore, the Employment Ontario regions do not align with functional travel to work areas. Their geographical coverage is quite wide, which limits the ability to ascertain more specific local labour market characteristics. Furthermore, the boundaries of CMSMs, which deliver a number of social services and programmes do not align with geographical units of analysis undertaken by Statistics Canada (e.g. Census Metropolitan Areas, Census Division, and Census Sub-division).

Actors in both case study areas extensively use census data produced by Statistics Canada. The Census has historically contained a wealth of information used to establish labour market trends, which are broken down at the local level. The Labour Force Survey is also frequently used but there can be reliability and suppression issues when data is disaggregated to the local level. With the elimination of mandatory reporting on the census long form, there may be repercussions for local information generation. The first release of data from the new National Household Survey occurred on May 8, 2013. A note accompanied the results stating "estimates and trends from other data sources suggest that certain population groups may be overestimated or underestimated." The overall impact will take time to assess.

Locally available data is used quite comprehensively to inform local strategies and programmes. In Hamilton, McMaster University worked with the Hamilton Spectator (the local newspaper) using Statistic Canada's data to gather information on the concentration of individuals living in poverty in central Hamilton. This information and evidence was a catalyst for local strategies, which targeted individuals living in poverty in these areas. In Thunder Bay, a policy institute has recently been created for Northwestern Ontario to expand the availability and use of locally based information.

As highlighted earlier, the Workforce Planning Boards undertake comprehensive local labour market reports, which identify trends, opportunities, and priorities for their region. Their research and publications provide up-to-date labour market information that can help job seekers and employers make informed decisions about careers, education, employment and business plans.

Quebec

Québec's regional approach provides particular strengths when it comes to the production and use of evidence and information. The 17 administrative regions of Quebec correspond to Statistics Canada's economic regions so data generated is available to the regions. As all ministries use the same regional boundaries, data co-ordination is aided by the use of identical administrative boundaries.

Census data is used extensively and contains a wealth of information used to establish labour market trends, which are broken down at the local level. The Labour Force Survey is the other national data source used extensively by the regional economists. Emploi-Québec also conducts short-term labour market prospective exercises (on four-year periods) covering the province as a whole and each of the 17 regional directorates. These exercises provide Emploi-Québec staff, as well as all concerned participants, with relevant information on salaries, demand for labour, estimated unemployment rates and assessments of job prospects for a number of trades and professions. In addition, ad-hoc surveys are also conducted regionally to determine supply and demand of labour (as well as potential employer reported shortages and training requirements).

Quebec ministries still dominate the production of regional data, the bulk of which is carried out from their headquarters. The exception to this is Emploi-Québec, which has a regional economist in each Regional Office. Funding allocations and operational decisions are made based in part on the use of information provided by these economists from their analysis of statistical data.

There appears to be good capacity at the regional level to use data and information to inform local strategies. The Estrie region recently completed a major study on public transportation which looked at the availability of public transport across the region and its impact on access of jobs. In 2010, the Mauricie region completed a similar study and had undertaken travel to work analysis for the Trois-Rivières and Shawinigan areas.

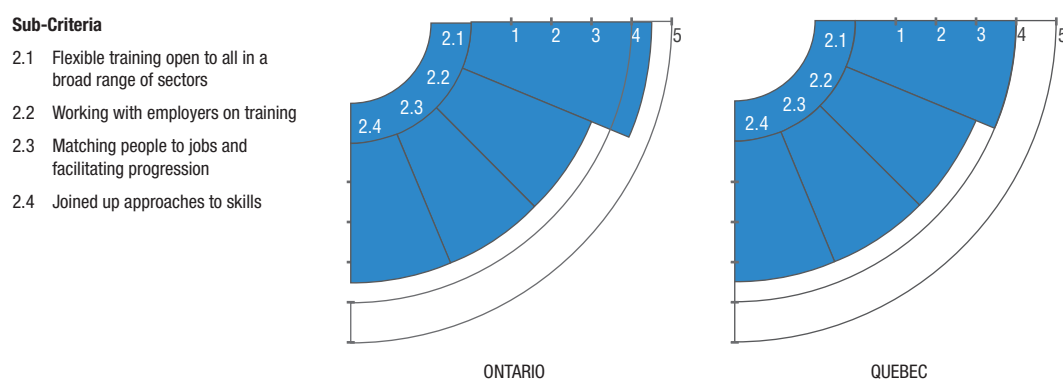
The various data available to Emploi-Québec's regional directorates are very frequently used for regional planning purposes and help to check whether outcomes have in fact been achieved, in particular with regard to labour market trends and the characteristics of client groups. For Emploi-Québec, regional budget allocations are based on data covering a number of socio-economic variables, including data on the characteristics of businesses, labour, employment insurance providers, and social welfare recipients. The use of budgets according to employment measures, including the use of training, is established on the basis of regional labour market characteristics. Assessments are made regularly, and

budgets are tracked continuously in order to ensure that the use of employment measures and services is adjusted regularly.

Performance is monitored using quantifiable targets that are set in conjunction with Emploi-Québec’s annual planning cycle and in the regional action plans. For example, the 2011-12 targets for Estrie included: the number of new cases, number of new cases involving EI recipients; number of new cases involving social assistance recipients; number of new cases involving immigrants; persons assisted in finding work; number of EI claimants assisted to find work; number of persons on social assistance assisted finding work; number of social assistance recipients who were assisted who had no major barrier to work; number of businesses assisted for the first time; and, number of apprentices registered.

Theme 2: Adding value through skills

Figure 5.6. Dashboard results: Adding value through skills



2.1. Flexible training open to all in a broad range of sectors

Ontario

Ontario’s 28 publicly funded community colleges offer a range of training opportunities for individuals which can be adapted to employer demand. Colleges are known to be flexible, responsive to local labour market needs, and accessible to learners from different backgrounds. They play a key role in providing occupationally oriented education and training. This includes a range of modular and after-hours training, which is linked to the Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF). The OQF is part of Ontario’s strategy to improve the quality, accessibility, and accountability of its postsecondary education system by offering descriptions of credentials and apprenticeship certificates. The main purpose is to outline the knowledge and skills that should be expected of holders of each type of qualification and the relationship between qualifications. A large number of programmes also include a focus on developing high-level generic skills, such as networking, communication, leadership, innovation, and problem solving.

At least 12 of Ontario’s colleges operate on a year round basis and offer a range of co-op opportunities, which combine classroom study with practical work-based experience. There are some colleges, which offer online learning courses. Colleges participate in the delivery of the Second Career programme, which was introduced to activate recently laid-off individuals by providing long-term skills training into high-skill, demand occupations.

Both Mohawk College in Hamilton and Confederation College in Thunder Bay deliver training programmes, which are funded through the Ontario’s government Second Career Programme (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2. Ontario’s Second Career Programme

The objective of the Second Career Programme is to provide laid-off workers and unemployed individuals with long-term skills training to help them find employment in occupations with demonstrable labour market prospects in Ontario. Eligibility is for individuals who have been laid off since January 1, 2005 and are unemployed or working an interim job; and are choosing to retrain for a career that is in demand. Individuals are not required to be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI).

The programme provides financial support for tuition, books, travel and other expenses to help eligible workers participate in training programs. Individuals are eligible to take college training programmes in a range of occupations ranging from plumbers and electricians to community and social service workers, and early childhood educators. Individuals may qualify for financial support of up to CAD 28 000.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (2010a), Second Career Programme, programme information, Toronto, Canada.

There are a number of programme options for adults who wish to enrol in continuing education programmes. For example, Mohawk College in Hamilton has 46 000 continuing education enrolments – three times as many as its full and part time enrolments. Training can be customised to employer requirements and developed as part of a company’s career management process. To improve access and interest in pursuing vocational education among youth, Mohawk College in Hamilton has introduced a fidelity programme called the Future Ready programme. It is a reward programme that allows students to accumulate points that can be used to help lower the cost of tuition fees. Students accumulate points by participating in activities and related events hosted by the college that highlight postsecondary pathways and clarify career options. The programme enables prospective students to earn up to 1 000 points that they can use to help pay for tuition when they enrol in a full-time Mohawk College programme (Mohawk College, 2013).

Quebec

Quebec has some 48 CEGEPS offering two streams of education: 1) preparation for university studies and 2) technical training. All studies lead to certificates – either a DEC or an AEC (see Chapter 3). In addition, 70 school boards offer curricula leading to a Diploma of Vocational Studies, an Attestation of Vocational Specialisation or an Attestation of Vocational Studies. The duration of study varies by programme. There are 130 programmes leading to a Diploma of Vocational Studies, 24 to an Attestation of Vocational Specialisation and 36 to an Attestation of Vocational Studies, offered in 21 training sectors.

The CEGEP in Sherbrooke is the largest outside of Montreal and has approximately 6 200 students studying in 32 programmes (23 technical programmes) covering a broad range of sectors. The CEGEP in Trois-Rivières has 4 400 students with 14 pre-university programmes and 26 technical programmes. Additionally, there are 3 000 students involved in continuing education.

Not all courses are available in all locations. In Shawinigan, Trois-Rivières, and East Angus, for example, students must in some cases travel elsewhere for some courses that are offered by the vocational education institutions in other areas. Sherbrooke is well-served by a university and a CEGEP. The fact that course are not always available may be related to insufficient demand locally but it could also be the result of the process for provincial authorisation to deliver certain types of programmes. As highlighted earlier, CEGEPs must receive central authorisation to deliver training programmes and it is difficult to launch new training programmes which respond to local demand.

CEGEPs are building up after-hours training but these efforts are not as well developed as other provinces, such as Ontario. Programmes to support part time training through loans and grants are not as well developed as those for full time studies. CEGEPs do special training programmes, which are generally paid for by employers. These programmes are responsive to employer needs and developed in close collaboration with the company commissioning the training. However, this tends to be larger employers with SMEs being more difficult to engage.

2.2. Working with employers on training

Ontario

While service providers under Employment Ontario work with employers to match unemployed people to jobs, local stakeholders indicated that there is little opportunity for service providers to engage employers in efforts to promote workplace training. While the Workforce Planning Boards publish comprehensive local labour market reports, they are able to do limited outreach to employers to increase and promote workplace training opportunities. This may relate to the lack of existing programmes, which allow employers to be directly engaged. The recent report on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services recommended that the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities direct Workforce Planning Boards to encourage employers to increase investments in workplace-based training (Drummond, 2012).

Ontario's colleges appear to have good working relationships with a number of local employers in their communities. Employer satisfaction with training that is undertaken is high in both Thunder Bay and Hamilton. In a survey of employers who hired college graduates in 2011-12, 97.5% indicated that they were very satisfied with the quality of their training at Confederation College, while at Mohawk College, 94.3% reported very high satisfaction. At Collège Boréal, 85.7% of employers reported a high satisfaction rate (MTCU, Key Performance Indicators Colleges 2013). As highlighted earlier, each college has a Programme Advisory Committees (PAC), which is composed of employers to assist in keeping the programmes offerings relevant and can alert the colleges to training gaps. Both Confederation College and Mohawk College have PACs for the majority of their programmes.

SMEs are much more difficult to engage and in Ontario, there does not appear to be any targeted programmes, which specifically focus on their training needs. Ontario has attempted to increase the supply of skilled trades by encouraging young people to choose apprenticeships. In 2009, the Ontario College of Trades was established to regulate the trades and promote the trades as a career. As an independent, industry-driven body, the College of Trades is raising the profile of and promoting involvement in skilled trades. The College was introduced to make the system of apprenticeship training more responsive to the evolving skills and training needs of Ontario employers and consumers. The College of Trades is governed by a Board of Governors that is comprised of 21 members representing both employers and employees in the sector and the general public.

The Ontario government has committed to increasing the number of apprenticeship training opportunities. The Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities has a number of apprenticeship offices in regions across Ontario, which supports individuals and employers in apprenticeship programmes. Ontario has apprenticeship programmes for more than 150 trades across the four sectors of construction, industrial/manufacturing, motive power, and services. The Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities has produced fact sheets for the 58 most popular trades. There are also a range of programmes available to both individuals and employers from both the federal and Ontario government to encourage apprenticeship training opportunities. Employers have access to signing bonuses and tax credits (see Box 5.3) while individuals have access to grants, scholarships, tax deductions and loans for tools.

Box 5.3. Programmes to encourage employers to participate in Apprenticeship Training

Employer Signing Bonus: The CAD 2 000 Employment Signing Bonus encourages employers in the trades to register new apprentices in sectors where there is a high demand for skilled workers. This initiative assists employers to hire and register apprentices who have left school and require upgrading to meet the registration standards for apprenticeship training.

Apprenticeship Completion Grant: The Apprenticeship Completion Grant (ACG) is a taxable cash grant of CAD 2 000 maximum available to registered apprentices who have successfully completed their apprenticeship training and obtained their journey person certification in a designated Red Seal trade on or after January 1, 2009.

Apprenticeship Training, Tax Credit: The Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit (ATTC) is a refundable tax credit. It is available to employers who hire and train apprentices in certain skilled trades. The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) administers the programme on behalf of Ontario through the federal income tax system. The ATTC is based on salaries and wages paid to an apprentice. The maximum credit for each apprenticeship is CAD 10 000 per year. The maximum credit over the first 48-month period of the apprenticeship is CAD 40 000. The ATTC is available to Ontario businesses that hire and train apprentices in certain skilled trades.

ACGs and ATTCs are also available in other provinces, including Quebec.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (2010b), Apprenticeship Training in Ontario: A Guide for Employers and Sponsors, Toronto, Canada.

Both Colleges in Hamilton and Thunder Bay have active apprenticeship programmes. Mohawk serves 4 500 apprenticeship students annually, and is one of the largest trainers of apprentices in Ontario. ArcelorMittal Dofasco in Hamilton has one of the largest apprenticeship training programmes in Ontario with CAD 100 million invested in the past ten years. One of North America's leading steel operations, the company hires about 30 apprentices each year and currently employs about 1 600 qualified tradespeople in 13 trades. By 2018, Mohawk college is committed to transforming the delivery of apprenticeship programmes by: employing back-to-back education modules, blended and online learning to reduce the time apprentices are away from the workplace and accommodating employer workload priorities, resulting in improved apprenticeship completion. The college is also looking at enabling apprentices to complete portions of their workplace hours by expanding the in-school component to include real world, living lab work experiences and co-op placements.

Ontario has an Aboriginal Apprenticeship Board (AABO) that promotes apprenticeships among the provinces aboriginal youth. Programmes are particularly active in the Northern part of the province where resource development is bringing employment opportunities closer to aboriginal communities. Recently, the creation of the Centre for Aboriginal Apprenticeship Research (CAAR) was introduced, a new programme offering a unique apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship training model to the surrounding First Nation communities.

Thunder Bay's Confederation College provides pre-apprenticeship training to strengthen academic and work skills to increase successful completions while Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training organisations promote apprenticeships in aboriginal communities, identify promising candidates and developing partnerships with employers like Detour Gold a mining company near several remote communities that will require 500 on site workers. These intensive programmes with Aboriginal communities are increasing the number of apprenticeships among aboriginal youth.

Quebec

Each local employment centre has a team dedicated to business services, which does outreach to businesses and co-ordinates the measures and services offered to them in the area of human resource management and employee training. These teams are small and interact principally with larger employers and those businesses that have a relationship with the local employment centre. With regard to recruiting, a number of employers use private recruitment agencies for higher skilled jobs. The needs of SMEs are sometimes grouped to provide a more accessible and effective response.

The Labour Market Partners Commission (*Commission des partenaires du marché du travail*) has a number of levers it can use to influence incumbent worker training, including administering the Act to promote workforce skills development and recognition (see Box 5.4). The Commission establishes relations with some 30 sector work force committees.

Each administrative region has a labour market partner council devoted to more local decision-making related to work force training and development. Emploi-Québec supports these regional activities and sits on the various committees that have been set up for consultations between employers, educators, trade unions and other local partners. The role of CEGEPs and other colleges in the realm of co-ordination with employers is particularly important as they maintain contacts with them while providing a substantial portion of the training available for employed workers. CEGEPs also play an important role in technology development and transfer for industries in their regions.

School boards also play an important role in adjusting to the needs of businesses. They offer the bulk of the educational training required by apprenticeship programmes in Quebec. About forty of them are offered through the Red Seal Programme to allow mobility between provinces. In Quebec, apprenticeship sometimes raises concerns, with long periods to complete training and apprentices abandoning their training, but efforts are being made to promote and bolster apprenticeship programmes. Moreover, the Labour Market Partners Commission aims to make apprenticeships more attractive through the skills development and recognition framework and the Workplace Apprenticeship Programme (see Box 5.5).

Box 5.4. The Act to promote workforce skills development and recognition

The Act to promote workforce skills development and recognition has been in place in Quebec for nearly 20 years. All companies registered in Quebec with a payroll exceeding CAD 1 000 000 are required to invest at least 1% of their payroll in training, or pay an equivalent amount to the province's Workforce Skills Development and Recognition Fund. The purpose of this Act is to improve workforce qualifications and skills through investment in training, concerted action between management, unions and community partners and the education sector, the development of training modes and the recognition of employed workers' skills.

A review of the Act was completed by Paul Bélanger and Magali Robitaille in 2008. The review found that Between 1997 and 2002, participation in workplace training in Quebec increased significantly; from 21% to 33% – the fastest growth rate in Canada. The report shows that over the six-year period, Quebec dramatically closed the gap with the average Canadian rates of participation in training (though Quebec still lags slightly behind the national average).

There have been several changes to the Act since it was first introduced in 1994. In 2001, the Labour Market Partners Commission adopted a General Framework for Skills Development and Recognition to support formal workplace training. In 2007, the Act to promote workforce skills development and recognition authorised the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity to issue vocational qualification certificates to any person meeting the requirements for skills recognition under a workplace skills development strategy. By virtue of that same Act, Quebec's sectoral workforce committees are responsible for developing vocational standards and workplace apprenticeship strategies, which Emploi-Québec then applies and makes available to businesses.

In 2003 the original threshold which included all firms with a payroll of CAD 250 000 was raised to its current level of CAD 1 000 000 exempting 70% of the firms originally covered by the Act.

Source: Bélanger, P. and M. Robitaille (2008). *A Portrait of Work-related Learning in Quebec*, Work and Learning Knowledge Centre, Ottawa, Canada.

Box 5.5. Workplace Apprenticeship Programme

The Quebec educational system offers a number of vocational and technical training programmes that provide access to the labour market. As an alternate pathway for those who are already employed and for businesses, the Labour Market Partners Commission and Emploi-Québec offer workplace apprenticeship programmes on a voluntary basis.

The Workplace Apprenticeship Programme (*Programme d'apprentissage en milieu de travail*, PAMT) develops labour force skills via a shadowing scheme. An experienced worker plays the role of "buddy" and passes along to the apprentice the skills needed to fully master the trade. This is a simple and flexible way of imparting knowledge, and above all it is one well suited to the everyday realities of the workplace. For some trades, other types of strategies are used: self-apprenticeship, e-learning, and mentoring.

Apprenticeship follows a structured learning plan and is based on vocational standards formulated by industry-wide labour committees. The standards describe the skills specific to each trade and enjoy broad consensus thanks to consultations with the employers and workers concerned.

Box 5.5. Workplace Apprenticeship Programme *(continued)*

There are workplace apprenticeship programmes for over 70 trades – a number that is rising steadily, according to the needs of employers. These include traditional trades and more contemporary ones, such as that of a video games tester.

To take part in the PAMT, businesses must simply ensure that their facilities and working conditions are suitable for apprenticeship. Emploi-Québec lends support throughout the duration of the programme and supplies the tools needed for training free of charge: an apprenticeship notebook for apprentices and a guidebook and briefing session for buddies. Apprenticeships vary between three and 36 months, depending on the trade and the apprentice's prior experience. Apprentices must be at least 16 years old and be employed by the business. Apprenticeships are taken on voluntarily and may be ended at any time.

At the end of the apprenticeship, the vocational qualification certificate issued by Emploi-Québec constitutes official recognition and attests that the worker has mastered the skills needed to practice the trade. In the event of partial success, a certificate of mastered skills specifies the abilities that the person had acquired at the time the process was terminated.

Source: Emploi-Québec (2014), *Workplace Apprenticeship Programme*, available at www.guide-qualification.emploiquebec.gouv.qc.ca/normes-professionnelles/liste.asp.

2.3 Matching people to jobs

In both Ontario and Quebec, employed and unemployed individuals have access to the Job Bank administered by Service Canada. In Quebec, they also have online access to labour market information and to Emploi-Québec's online placement service. These web portals provide electronic listings of jobs provided by employers from everywhere across Canada. They include training, career, and worker information to help provide individuals with information on potential career opportunities as well as the required skills and knowledge to work in various occupations and sectors.

Ontario

As part of the Employment Ontario performance management framework, employment service providers report on the number of employed clients after six months so this creates an incentive to match job seekers to sustainable jobs. During the OECD study visit, local stakeholders noted that as unemployment rates have improved, the remaining unemployed are challenging clients with multiple barriers to re-entering the labour market making them more difficult to find a successful job match. It was indicated that within some employment service providers, there are individuals who attempt to build strong relationships with employers which support matching unemployed people to jobs.

Career guidance is being redesigned to target younger students to ensure young people have good information to make labour market decisions and to ensure that postsecondary educational pathways are clearly articulated into either college or university. Ontario's colleges engage in a number of activities to ensure high school students are aware of their programme offerings. Efforts are made along with high school career counselling often in the second year of secondary education to create awareness of college offerings. A number of dual credit programmes are being offered that allow high school students to complete their studies while at the same time beginning a college programme. For example, the

Mohawk College Bridge Programme allows students to simultaneously complete two credits towards their Ontario Secondary School diploma while gaining two elective credits towards their college programme as a part time college student at Mohawk.

Ontario’s Workforce Planning Boards take an active role in producing local labour market information that can inform career guidance programmes. Hamilton Workforce Planning supports an employment “crawl”, which is designed to connect employers and university graduates (see Box 5.6).

Box 5.6. “Hamilton Employment Crawl”

Each year McMaster University, in conjunction with Hamilton employers and supported with labour market information from Workforce Planning Hamilton, organises tours of local companies. “Crawls” are organised by sectors and each crawl involves visiting five enterprises to hear directly from management and staff what is happening in their field as well as upcoming job opportunities.

The tours are followed by a networking opportunity with employer participants at a reception hosted by the University (“Employment Crawl”). Recently, four crawls were offered focusing on areas identified by economic development as targeted growth areas for the city. The four fields were:

- Manufacturing/Clean Air and Technology
- Creative Industries and Communications
- Food Processing/Goods Movement and Transportation
- Life Science and Health Care

Workforce Planning Hamilton produced a brief “Employment in Hamilton” providing participants with employment growth data by industry and occupation as well as the top 10 growth occupations with forecasted requirements.

Source: McMaster University (2013), Hamilton Employment Crawl 2013, available at <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/careers/events/networking-events/hec.html>.

In Thunder Bay, the North Superior Workforce Planning Board conducted an Aboriginal Trades and Employment Symposium. Held in partnership with Northwest Training & Adjustment Board and the Sioux Lookout Area Aboriginal Management Board, the one day event – held once in Dryden and once in Thunder Bay – saw Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) living in Northwestern Ontario come together to learn more about the apprenticeships and trades opportunities within sectors such as mining and forestry. Information was presented on academic requirements necessary for entering these fields and apprenticeship opportunities that were available to them. Representatives from industry, unions, colleges, and training institutions were present to speak with participants about their career goals and direct them toward opportunities that might help attain these goals. Information was disseminated through presentations, booths, literature and one-on-one conversations.

Quebec

In addition to the universal placement and labour market information services available on its portal, placement assistance activities are carried out in Emploi-Québec's network. In making job placements through these activities, Emploi-Québec officials attempt to match job-seekers and firms to produce stable, long-term employment. Follow-up on individuals is conducted, subject to staff availability. Informal relationships are forged between the CLE and employers to help promote sustainable employment placements. Staff indicated that their credibility with employers is critical and they do their best to maintain good relationships by promoting good job matches. Interviewees in both Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke spoke of an increased number of clients facing multiple barriers to employment, demanding more resources of the client service team. Employer service staff follow-up as part of their mandate, but limited resources prevent them from contacting each employer and every person placed.

In Québec, career counselling for youth is handled by secondary schools and colleges, employability development organisations and local youth employment centres (*carrefours jeunesse-emploi*). Despite all this, young people sometimes seem at a loss about where their careers are heading. The committee for professional and technical training (*comité de la formation professionnelle et de la formation technique*) in Mauricie brought together the various actors associated with education and the workplace to complete a study of students in the three CEGEP/colleges in the region in 2010. The study indicated that 40% of students were choosing their course of study without any indication of what field of work they would be entering.

A great deal of effort has been placed on making labour market information available to youth through web based applications and to extend conversations about career choice to students in secondary school. Each local youth employment centre offers career counseling for job seekers and the CEGEPS have an orientation service to help students select a course of studies that corresponds to life choices they are making. As part of this counseling, individuals are exposed to labour market information showing where growth in labour demand is occurring.

The local youth employment centres work closely with both the educational sector and the local business community. Projects to orient youth in careers (in particular those at risk of dropping out) have been developed with school boards across the province. IDEO 16-17 use an intensive approach with 16 and 17 year olds in establishing life and career goals and setting academic objectives to meet those goals. Participants are assigned a mentor who works with the student for up to a year meeting regularly providing advice and guidance and helping arrange resources if necessary.

In addition to intensive programmes, the local youth employment centres hold job fairs that bring together local employers and those seeking to establish themselves in the labour market. *Priorité Emploi Estrie* is an annual weeklong event involving local economic development actors, the Chamber of Commerce, *Emploi-Québec*, the local youth employment centres, services for new Canadians, the regional council of elected officials, several economic development councils and the local newspaper. Held in Sherbrooke in March 2012, the event has over 85 organisations sending representatives, offering some 2 000 jobs – over 5 000 job seekers visit the job fair.

2.4. Joined-up approaches to skills

Ontario

In Hamilton and Thunder Bay, economic development officials recognise the importance of attracting and retaining talent for local growth. Local strategies have been taken to ensure that inward investors have been supported through a skilled workforce. In Hamilton, Maple Leaf foods established a new processing plant in the region, which was supported by the development and delivery of a new training programme to develop the skills of employees at the facility. This initiative was supported by the Workforce Hamilton Board and economic development officials within the City. This example demonstrates the significant capacity in Hamilton to build strong connections among the key players in the local area involved in skills activities.

In Thunder Bay, there is a strong recognition that joined up approaches to skills need to be strengthened. A couple of large employers do participate in training development and employment groups but the remoteness of their location complicates participation in these types of initiatives. During the OECD study visit, it was highlighted that many service providers try to do outreach following a hub and spoke model but traveling to stakeholders across a vast area consumes resources. Local stakeholders acknowledged that they do a better job of preparing people to enter the workforce than at up-skilling the existing workforce to attract value added jobs and investment. Local stakeholders recognise that the relationship between economic development and postsecondary education could be further strengthened to better support potential inward investors into the Thunder Bay region. Within the mining sector, many employees are employed based on a “fly-in, fly-out” model, which limits the economic development benefits for the local community.

Quebec

In Quebec, the smaller communities appear to have recognised and have established effective joined up mechanisms for working together. The larger centres of Sherbrooke and Trois-Rivières integrate their activities through close partnerships with the universities in their communities. Trois-Rivières has been expanding an aviation park, which requires the identification of skills needed and a recruitment process to bring these individuals into the local community. In Sherbrooke, the health and bio-sciences sector have created a nexus of joined up activity between the University, CEGEP and local development centres.

Shawinigan has built a local skills strategy around creating more SMEs and expanding entrepreneurship. As briefly highlighted earlier, the city has established a new Entrepreneurial Centre that will develop business people and incubate businesses ideas (see Box 5.7). The CEGEP has developed a programme for entrepreneurs and modified its curriculum in the trade’s area to promote self-employment and small business development.

Haut-Saint Francois has looked for opportunities that allow it to leverage its proximity to Sherbrooke identifying niches of small activities that promote local economic activity. For example, a recycling facility is being established that will process organic waste from Sherbrooke.

Box 5.7. Diversification Committee and Entrepreneurship Centre, Shawinigan (Comité de diversification et Centre d'entrepreneuriat, Shawinigan)

Entrepreneurial activity is seen as one of the keys to diversifying the local economy of Shawinigan. For many years, Shawinigan was an industrial town built around its large electric power facility and heavy industry. Industrialisation brought steady well-paying work in forestry, aluminium production and textiles. The city became a victim of structural changes in the global economy with many employers shutting down their operations. With the impending closure of another enterprise in 2009, prominent people in the community were brought together to look at the future of the city considering its strengths and weaknesses. Based on this collaboration, the city is pursuing an approach that looks to develop a community of entrepreneurs and small business operations as a sustainable economic base.

What is of particular interest about this approach is the partnership of a number of different actors each guided by a different policy focus (e.g. economic development, education or employment) to implement a local horizontal approach. The mechanism for this integration was a small amount of funding directed to the municipality by a departing employer.

A Diversification Committee was established composed of key funding and government agencies. The committee realised that in order to be effective, they would have to create a common local plan that would inform their vertical accountabilities. Specific areas of collaboration have been the strategic use of non-governmental and governmental funding to maximise total grants. An entrepreneurial forum was created to:

- Promote entrepreneurship as a career.
- Increase the percentage of individuals choosing an entrepreneurial path.
- Develop entrepreneurial attributes among the youth.
- Grow synergies among organisations that develop the economy and community.
- Recognise creativity, solidarity and communal engagement.

In collaboration with the school commission, Shawinigan opened the entrepreneurship centre in 2013. It represents a unique project in the province of Québec positioned as a tangible action brought about by the entrepreneurial forum with the collaboration of the Diversification Committee.

The entrepreneurship centre is located in an old textile factory which has been completely renovated. The city of Shawinigan advanced CAD 3 million for the project with approximately CAD 2 million coming from other sources. The entrepreneurship centre offers skills development programmes along with other supports that will allow the growth of a critical mass of entrepreneurs. Future entrepreneurs will be supported over a 5 year period:

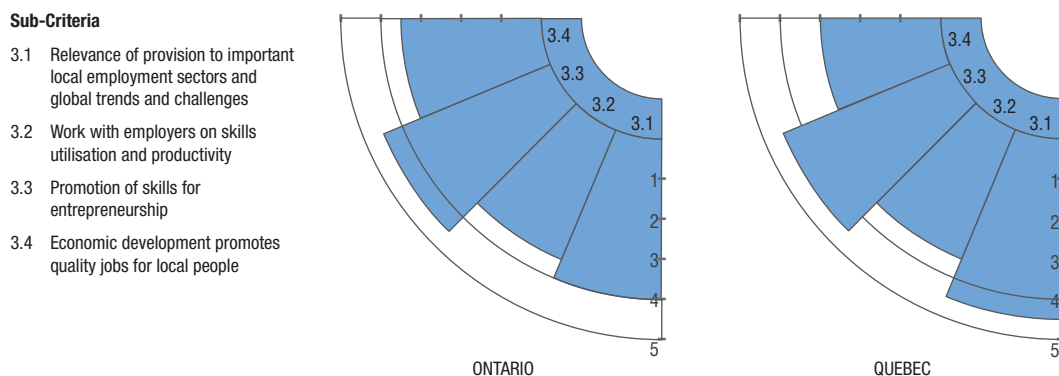
- The first 18 months focused on training and start-up.
- The second 18 months will be dedicated to management and operations within space provided in the Centre.
- The final two years will be given to consolidating the operations of the new enterprise and its relocation into the community.

The textile factory will rent commercial and office space at market rates to established businesses as a way of generating revenue for the centre.

Source: Ville de Shawinigan (2013), *Centre d'entrepreneuriat Shawinigan*, available at www.shawinigan.ca/Affaires/centre-d-entrepreneuriat-shawinigan_12.html.

Theme 3: Targeting policy to local employment sectors and investing in quality jobs

Figure 5.7. Dashboard results: Targeting policy to local employment sectors and investing in quality jobs



3.1. Relevance of provision to important local employment sectors and global trends and challenges

Ontario

As previously highlighted, local analysis on employment sectors is carried out by the Workforce Planning Boards. These boards look at local labour market trends across their region, which inform training provision at the colleges in Hamilton and Thunder Bay. In Thunder Bay, the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) has been recently focused on the mining industry expansion in the region and has published in conjunction with the Mining Industry Human Resources Sector Council (funded in part through ESDCs sector council programme) a report on expected regional job growth in that industry. The Board is currently working with individual mine operators to better develop labour market intelligence on demand for mining skills in the region.

Informed by sector studies conducted by the Northern Superior Workforce Planning Board, Confederation College is supporting the Northern medicine initiative and focusing on mining readiness in anticipation of strong developments in that sector. NSWPB has partnered with Employment Ontario, North West Local Health Integration Network, Northwest Training & Adjustment Board, and *Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario* to conduct a comprehensive study outlining the major human resources needs within the health sector across Northwestern Ontario over the next 5-10 years.

Hamilton is one of a few Canadian cities, which have taken a cluster-based approach, focusing on specific industries and sectors that can help to diversify its local economy. The economic development office of the city has identified six key clusters for business development, which include advanced manufacturing, agribusiness and food processing, life sciences, goods movement, creative industries, and clean technology. During the OECD study visit, it was noted that both small and large businesses in Hamilton see benefits from clustering including a local specialisation in labour skills, higher density of supplier networks, and knowledge spill overs from across firms working in the same industry.

One of the City's earliest investments in innovation and technology was the Hamilton Incubator of Technology (HIT). In 1993, a CAD 4 million municipal investment launched the opening of a modern 40 000 square foot building. Over the past 16 years, the Hamilton incubator has been home to dozens of early stage technology-based businesses including: advanced manufacturing and materials, biotech, environmental, information and communication and health care or medical devices. These early stage companies employ a high percentage of technicians, engineers or scientists who engage in extensive R&D to produce new products and services and support Hamilton's broader economic development objectives. In 2009, the City of Hamilton changed the name of the incubator from HIT, to the Hamilton Technology Centre (HTC) assigning programming responsibilities to the Hamilton Small Business Enterprise Centre.

In the goods movement sector, the Hamilton Workforce Planning Board's 2013 Labour Market Plan notes that there have been several recent economic development advancements within the sector. The port of Hamilton has been the recipient of investments totalling CAD 100 million. The Hamilton Airport announced plans for a CAD 12 million cargo terminal in January 2013. The facility is expected to generate 400 direct and indirect jobs. In November 2012, Workforce Planning Hamilton distributed an employer survey, which gathered information from 19 local employers about future employment and growth opportunities.

Quebec

Each region in Quebec has identified niche sectors which provide a focus for economic development activities. The niche sectors (*les créneaux d'excellence*) consist of a cluster of employers operating in the region who both co-operate and compete with each other. The firms are linked with universities, technology centres and training as well as information networks and business support. The actors are grouped in a defined territory where there are researchers, high-level workers, a skilled workforce and a community familiar with the industry.

Many local communities are also focusing on the benefits of the green economy. In Haut Saint Francois, efforts are being made exploit opportunities within this sector. As highlighted earlier, the area is planning to install an organic waste processing facility capable of taking in waste flow from across Estrie. The facility employs a mix of more skilled technical and lower skilled workers in the green sector. The CEGEPs are adjusting their curriculum to build opportunities in the green sector by increasing attention in traditional training to subjects like energy efficient construction and practices around waste handling and disposal as well as introducing programmes focused on wind power and solar energy.

Universities and CEGEPs have research and technology transfer facilities, which promote innovation in the local economy. For example, the CEGEP in Trois-Rivières has a technology transfer centre (Innofibre) which is specialising in cellulose based products bringing industry and applied research together and providing a training platform for students. In Sherbrooke, University Pole bring together eight higher education institutions who work in partnership to develop academic offerings to students, foster the emergence of collaborative research projects and transfers their knowledge to the population and business community to generate wealth. Thanks to University Pole, Sherbrooke hosts more than 40 000 students each year within its two universities and 4 colleges. Institutions can adapt their programmes according to the specific needs of businesses. The co-operative

programme is available in more than 40 educational programmes at the Université de Sherbrooke, producing highly qualified graduates who are ready for the workplace.

As stated earlier, each region has a regional labour market partners council composed of six members representing labour, six representing business, two members from local community organisations, four from educational institutions and the Regional Director General of Emploi-Québec, who serves as the council's secretary. There are also five observers, including the Director General of the Council of Elected Officials and the regional directors of ministries with employment- and labour-related portfolios. The regional council is responsible for identifying labour market problems and challenges in the region, developing strategies for the regional labour market and adapting programmes to local realities. The local economic development authorities influence labour force planning both from a global competitive perspective as well as local adaptation through the regional niches and priority sectors and through the regional economic development plan.

The regional council can establish particular areas for attention. In Mauricie, forest products remain an important industry even following significant consolidation. Labour force planning in this area is assisted through, *inter alia*, technical research facilities at the CEGEP in Trois Rivières specialised in pulp and paper under the name Innofibre, the forest products sector labour market committee, Emploi-Québec and operators in the region. This close association of postsecondary institutions with public employment services and employers helps keep training relevant in a changing industry as well as altering the employment services of shifting employment requirements.

3.2. Work with employers on assuring decent work and skills utilisation

Skills utilisation entails how the workforce is structured and the relationship between an individual's skills and the needs of business. How efficiently employers are utilising the skills of their employees is not only a key to a firm's productivity, but to better working conditions and greater job satisfaction for employees, who can enjoy greater autonomy. Closer attention to how skills are harnessed limits exclusively supply-side or 'provider driven' training solutions, which in many cases fail to address the breadth of an enterprise's organisational context. Instead, employment and training organisations are encouraged to take on a workforce development role, from a standpoint of product development and innovation in the organisation of work (Froy, Giguère and Meghnagi, 2012).

Ontario

Previous OECD research looked at skills utilisation approaches in Ontario and demonstrated the important role that colleges can play in this area (Verma, 2012). This previous study highlighted efforts that were undertaken by Niagara Colleges to work with local employers to build high quality employment through centres of excellence, which incubate high-tech firms and attract high-skilled jobs. In Particular, Niagara College was very active in working with employers in the wine industry to support incremental innovation and evolve product market strategies. While colleges can play an active role, there is not an explicit policy focus on skills utilisation that has been articulated from the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities.

In both Hamilton and Thunder Bay, specific initiatives to promote incremental innovation and assist companies in moving up product value chains were not observed. However, colleges in both regions have developed a capacity to build and deliver courses for business that can be tailored to their requirements. In addition, the large number of

courses in continuing education enables employers and employees to upgrade their skills. Some work has been done to try to bring several small employers together so that training can be given to larger groups at a lower cost but these arrangements are limited.

Larger employers generally have in place good human resource management systems that allow for the internal development and advancement of staff. In both Hamilton and Thunder Bay, there is collaboration in specific sectors between employers, the colleges and universities to ensure that skilling employees keep these industries competitive globally. Hamilton saw its steel industry restructure shedding thousands of jobs and changing the type of skills required of workers. ArcelorMittal (formerly Dofasco) has an effective professional human resources department that ensures that its workforce is constantly upgrading their skills to stay competitive in the global industry. Human resources staff participate in the local workforce planning activities and are active in promoting company needs to the college which works closely with the company to support its training requirements. In Thunder Bay, efforts are focused on the mining sector with North American Palladium and the forestry sector with Resolute Forest Products.

SMEs face significant challenges in this area. There is relatively limited ability to do significant HR planning work and in many cases relatively less formal training that has been undertaken by the owners or senior staff in HR management. Four agencies (the Chamber of Commerce, economic development, the Workforce Planning Boards and the colleges) are reaching out to employers in both case study areas but the large number of employers and the relatively few resources available to each organisation means the coverage is weak. In Thunder Bay, another issue relates to the “culture of mobility” among mine operators, who covers the travel for employees to fly into the community to work as opposed to providing training to up-skill workers in existing entry-level positions.

Quebec

In recent years, Emploi-Québec has been focusing on working with employers on human resource management practices under the assumption that employers who have good human resource practices tend to have better operations with more stable and productive employees. The resources available, however, limit the number of employers that can be visited. It is therefore also important to identify employers for which support could be useful. Other important factors are employer interest and availability, which vary but are lowest among small employers who are preoccupied with day-to-day operations of their company.

Sector labour committees supported by the Labour Market Partners Commission are taking a greater interest in developing workplace capabilities and are offering work analysis to facilitate job laddering within the sector. This can help employers look at internal development of employees as an option to external recruitment as well as better assist employees in making career decisions including investments in continuing education. Businesses could make greater use of this solution, given the recruiting problems in certain areas, and the fact that workforce ageing could exacerbate the difficulties in the future. An increasing role of the committees is to promote improvements in the organisation of work and better use of labour. Activities include sharing of best practices, thematic comparisons and pooled development of training.

Other agencies are helping businesses to tackle these issues, including the CLDs, school boards and CEGEPs. They are trying to convince firms to take a broader approach to their immediate labour market requirements and to analyse all of their production processes, the organisation of work and their long-term development opportunities. This task being

a cumbersome and intensive one for businesses, in certain regions, such as Haut-Saint-François, these three institutions and the CLE have undertaken to share the firms' files in order to establish a deeper and more integrated relationship with local businesses.

Some CEGEPs are making especially strong commitments to this mission of promoting the use of skills within businesses, yet this task does not appear to figure prominently, as such, in their mandate. In some cases, CEGEP executives see it rather as a fundraising exercise against a backdrop of budgetary pressures, insofar as the funding of such activities may come from the firms, which may deduct the cost from their 1% training tax (only if their aggregate payroll exceeds CAD 1 million). As a result this function of fostering the use of skills will not be financed by government funding, but by raising funds from businesses in connection with their training activities.

Emploi-Québec in Mauricie has recently made efforts to assist local employers to attract and retain workers by developing guides and human resource management support tools. The Alliance of Chambers is working with Emploi-Québec to increase exposure of management practices to their members and identify firms that are having difficulties.

3.3. Promotion of skills for entrepreneurship

Ontario

Clients who are eligible for Employment Insurance have access to the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit, which provides unemployed people with income and entrepreneurial support while they develop and start their business. Successful applicants experience intensive business skills development training while completing a comprehensive business plan that fully supports their business idea. In addition, participants are provided with on-going business advisor counselling services and income support for up to 42 weeks while they develop and implement their business plan. Support for starting a business or becoming self-employed is also supported for non-EI eligible individuals through LMAs with the provinces and territory.

At the local level, Hamilton and Thunder Bay have a well-developed approach to promoting entrepreneurship. Both communities have created a fit for purpose approach to entrepreneurship building on the local assets and culture of their regions. Colleges in both regions have self-employment and entrepreneurial course work in most trade courses and offer additional stand-alone programmes.

The Thunder Bay and District Entrepreneur Centre is funded through a partnership between the Province of Ontario and the City of Thunder Bay and offers various small business seminars; guides and information packages specific to starting a business in Northwestern Ontario; information on government programmes and services and other financial programmes; assistance with preparing a business plan; and referrals to various agencies or resources.

The Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre acts as a catalyst to create jobs by supporting innovative entrepreneurs to establish and/or expand their businesses. Aboriginal service providers also offer support to aboriginals looking to start their own business. In practice, there is a long culture of starting your own business in Northern Ontario and these new support capabilities are helping ensure a higher rate of success.

In Hamilton, the Hamilton Small Business Enterprise Centre (HSBEC) works within the City of Hamilton to provide a multitude of resources for entrepreneurs launching or expanding their business. The Innovation Factory (iF) helps advance Hamilton's

innovation community. In addition to providing expert resources for entrepreneurs and fostering connections across the community that accelerate growth, iF runs acceleration programmes. The notion behind the acceleration programme is that every person and every organisation can and should be innovative. Services are designed to help make this happen for entrepreneurs and companies in the start-up cycle and for established organisations.

The City and community partners felt that there remained a gap between available expertise and an “environment” for young companies to interact, collaborate and innovate. The newest initiative is a “made in Hamilton” response based on the successful model of the Innovation Synergy Centre of Markham (ISCM), Ontario. It will rely on public-private partnerships to address six key areas: Clustering of business resources; accessing university research, colleges and key researchers; providing business infrastructure support to growing businesses; accessing business mentorship networks; assisting with access to capital; and providing a Business Centre which will facilitate meetings in-person or remotely

The McMaster Innovation Park houses laboratory, office, teaching, training and conference facilities, in support of research and development in a number of key industrial areas: advanced manufacturing and materials, nanotechnology, bio-technology, and other areas in which McMaster University has recognised research strengths and fit within the key clusters of economic development.

Quebec

Quebec has a somewhat lower rate of entrepreneurial activity than the Canadian average over the last decade (Business Development Bank of Canada, 2012). However, it is taking measures to increase entrepreneurship and has been improving its position in recent years. Self-employment is promoted as an option in employment courses. It is also covered at the CEGEPs and school boards as part of their vocational and technical training.

Similar to Ontario, individuals who are eligible for Employment Insurance are also eligible for new business creation support via an employment measure known as “Support for Self-Employment”. This measure is also available to individuals who receive welfare benefits. Financial assistance and technical support are provided for 52 weeks to develop a business plan and get a business off the ground.

In Mauricie, entrepreneurship is seen as the principle source of the region’s future employment growth. As highlighted earlier, the Entrepreneurship Centre in Shawinigan is an example of a major push to promote and nurture SME development in that community. It has been estimated that there are about 50 organisations with the equivalent of 47 full time positions involved in the development and support of entrepreneurship. The CEGEP in Trois-Rivières offers an optional course in entrepreneurship and has an Enterprise Development Centre which has provided training and help for business for over 20 years. Additionally, there is a business transfer centre, which promotes good business practices across the region.

In Estrie, Bishop’s university has the Dobson-Lagassé entrepreneurship centre, which has the mission of encouraging education and practice in entrepreneurship among students. The University of Sherbrooke has an entrepreneurship institute, which promotes student participation in creating new companies and offers a range of specific activities and services to support beginning entrepreneurs including courses and training programmes, faculties and guidance on business start-up processes.

3.4. Economic development promotes quality jobs for local people

Ontario

In Ontario, the dominant consideration for inward investments is the sustainability of the employers. Less attention is given to the types of jobs than the number of jobs. The types of jobs are indirectly influenced through the focus on building particular clusters. Hamilton promotes its proximity to large markets in both Southern Ontario (e.g. Toronto) and the United States, while Thunder Bay promotes its location as a gateway to Western Canada. Hamilton advertises the ease of doing business within the municipality and has built a model of situating its economic development group with the city administration as opposed to establishing an independent corporation.

Procurement practices and regulations focus attention on public value rather than employment and training objectives. During interviews conducted for this study, staff working in the area of infrastructure signalled that employment was not part of the criteria used in the selection of projects.

Thunder Bay has a living wage policy that stipulates that contractors with the city must pay a wage that allows the worker to have housing and live reasonably within the community. Hamilton has taken a similar approach to ensure that contractors with the city are paying sustainable wages. Living wage practices influence local businesses by setting a ‘fair wage’ for the local living conditions (see Box 5.8). These types of initiatives can provide an incentive for employer to further invest in the skills of their employees. In these situations, employers may make greater efforts to ensure employee production output is correlated to the wages paid.

Box 5.8. Hamilton Living Wage Campaign

The Living Wage Hamilton coalition is comprised of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, the Hamilton Community Foundation, McMaster Community Poverty Initiative, Social Planning and Research Council, and Workforce Planning Hamilton.

A living wage is the hourly wage needed for a family to afford basic everyday expenses, such as housing, food, clothing, utility bills, and child care. In 2011, Hamilton’s living wage rate was calculated at CAD 14.95.

Living Wage Hamilton is currently developing a Living Wage Employer Recognition Programme. The programme will include three levels that will recognise the living wages employers already pay and the steps they want to take towards ensuring all workers earn at least a living wage. The details of the programme are part of the conversations Living Wage Hamilton is holding with employers and workers across the city.

Source: Living Wage Hamilton (2013), Programme Information, available at http://livingwagehamilton.ca/wp/?page_id=11.

Quebec

The administrative organisation of government services and the Regional Council of Elected Officials provide strategies which co-ordinate activities to promote employment within economic development strategies. In considering inward investment proposals, municipal governments must consider benefits including local taxes, knock on economic benefits, as well as the quantity and quality of jobs being created.

Quebec has also favoured the development of social economy enterprises such as co-operatives that usually take into account a larger range of objectives that favour employment and training. A good example is a co-operative microbrewery in Shawinigan that has created a range of local jobs in the restaurant and distribution industry. The co-operative is proud of its local origins and committed to developing the local labour market. In Haut Saint-Francois, an organic vegetable operation has had the effect of producing a large number of local jobs.

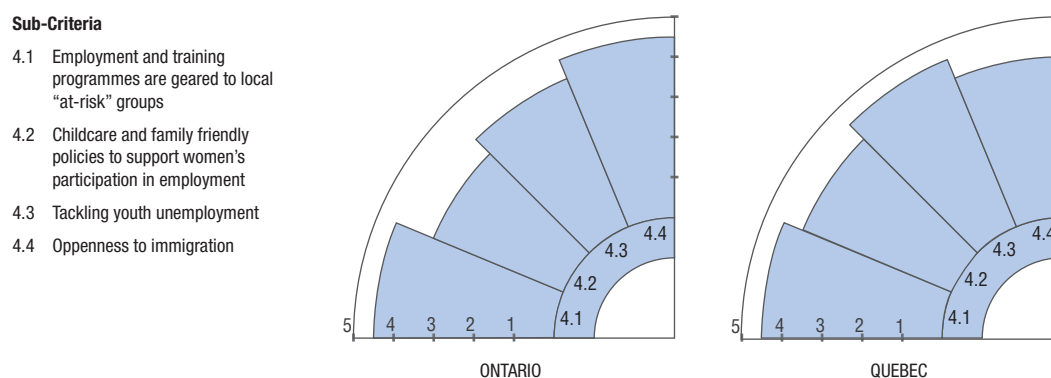
In promoting economic development and inward investment, Mauricie focuses on its proximity to Montreal, its accessibility by all modes of transport as well as its energy and natural resources and service sectors. The Estrie region promotes its proximity to the United States as well as its university assets. Given the recent recession, both regions are focused on attracting jobs with less consideration around the job types.

Québec places limitations on the extent to which municipalities can direct procurement activity, so there is no specific provisions that will favour local labour. Anti-corruption activity will likely further de-emphasise employment related objectives in municipal procurement.

Québec has been innovating with some of its contracting for green energy by making the extent to which bidders are working in collaboration with local groups a condition for funding. While this is to ensure that bidders are doing a good job of engaging local communities, innovations in employment and training benefits can be seen. A recent example is the provinces decision to increase the amount of wind-generated electricity that is bringing large suppliers and local groups together.

Theme 4: Inclusion

Figure 5.8 Dashboard results: Inclusion



4.1. Employment and training programmes are geared to local "at-risk" groups

Ontario

In Ontario, there are comprehensive efforts made to provide employment and training programmes to defined at risk groups. This includes specific targeted programmes for youth, immigrants, aboriginals and others who are quite far removed from the labour market. There appears to be a high level of data and information on their labour market and employment outcomes. MTCU tracks employment related outcomes for many under-represented groups who participate in Employment Ontario programmes and services.

Ontario has two social assistance programmes to help eligible residents who are in financial need: 1) the Ontario Disability Support Programme; and 2) Ontario Works. Ontario Works is managed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and administered by the municipalities. Many Ontario Works service providers are also Employment Ontario service providers. Individuals on social assistance have access to employment and training programmes through Employment Ontario as well as Ontario Works.

In Thunder Bay and its surrounding communities there are a number of francophones so efforts through the L'Association des francophones du Nord-Ouest de l'Ontario (l'AFNOO) to increase services to Northern Ontario's French speakers is important. In Hamilton, the College Boreal plays a similar role. There are a number of small francophone communities in the northwest and a small francophone community in Hamilton.

During the OECD study visit, one of the issues raised was how low population density among some under-represented groups means that some do not receive the tailored or targeted support, which may be needed. For example, in Thunder Bay, immigrants are served under general programmes, while in other parts of the province, they would have access to tailored programming.

There are extreme pockets of poverty in both Hamilton and Thunder Bay. In Thunder Bay, there is a larger Aboriginal community that faces a number of barriers to employment. In Thunder Bay between 10% – 15% of the city's population is aboriginal, exact numbers being hard to determine because not all aboriginals self-identify and aboriginals have historically not fully participated in the census. About 48% of Thunder Bay's aboriginal population is considered poor (Thunder Bay Economic Justice Committee, 2007). As part of the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy, a neighbourhood capacity programme was launched that uses outreach workers who deliver in-school and after-school programming that focuses on proper nutrition and regular physical activity for children at seven elementary schools with high concentrations of aboriginal children. The programme has shown positive impacts on families in terms of their social and health well-being (Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy, 2013).

In Hamilton, 19% of the population were below the low income cut-off with two neighbourhoods in the core of the city having rates of over 40%. For example, the average life expectancy of a downtown resident in Hamilton is 55 years compared with an individual living in the suburbs that have an average life expectancy of 85 years. A Poverty Reduction

Box 5.9. Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction was formed in 2005 to tackle the City's unacceptable levels of poverty. Roundtable members come from across Hamilton and include leaders from the business and non-profit sectors, from government, education and faith communities as well as individuals who experience poverty daily. The goal is to reduce and eliminate poverty through the aspiration of Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child.

The Roundtable does not offer programmes or direct services. Their role is to build understanding about the need to invest in poverty reduction to create a healthier, inclusive and more prosperous Hamilton. The roundtable works locally, provincially and nationally on policy and systems-level change to achieve long-term solutions to poverty.

Source: Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction (2013), Overview, available at http://hamiltonpoverty.ca/?page_id=28.

Roundtable was created in 2005 to address the high number of individuals living within the core of the city in extreme poverty. Hamilton used a neighbourhood development approach, working directly with residents and community partners to set priorities and develop action plans to build healthier communities. The Hamilton Community Foundation took a decision to focus all of its resources towards poverty reduction which made additional funding available to neighbourhoods to compliment resources from the federal, provincial and community organisations.

Quebec

Similar to Ontario, comprehensive efforts are made in Quebec to provide specialised training for persons belonging to groups that are under-represented in the labour market, including programmes for youth, immigrants and those who are far removed from the labour market. In both Mauricie and Estrie, there are pockets of individuals who have not worked for many years that require specialised outreach and intensive support to gain access to the labour market.

Box 5.10. Quebec’s Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion

Quebec enacted a law to combat poverty in 2002. The law establishes national strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion that is intended to progressively make Quebec, by 2013, one of the industrialised areas with the lowest number of persons living in poverty.

The goals of the strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion, as defined in the Act are to promote respect for and protection of the dignity of persons living in poverty and combat prejudices in this regard; improve the economic and social situation of persons and families living in poverty and social exclusion; reduce the inequalities that may be detrimental to social cohesion; encourage persons and families living in poverty to participate in community life and social development; and develop and reinforce the sense of solidarity throughout Québec, so that society as a whole may participate in the fight against poverty and social exclusion.

The Act requires that the government establishes an action plan and reports regularly on progress. The first action plan was established in 2004-05 allocating CAD 2.5 billion over 5 years. The plan covers a number of areas while favoring employment as the principal vehicle to reduce poverty and promote inclusion. The plan provides for

- the full indexation of social assistance benefits for those with significant work limitations;
- the creation of a participation premium for social assistance recipients who are able to work, as well as partial indexation of their benefits; the establishment of a work premium; an increase in the minimum wage; and a new universal refundable tax credit for low-income families with children.
- initiatives to improve access to affordable housing, adapt the dwellings of people with disabilities, support employment for people with disabilities, facilitate the integration of immigrants and members of visible minority groups,
- continued support to develop high-quality early learning and child care services, support young parents and children, facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market, support academic success and literacy programmes in underprivileged areas, and promote the social participation of seniors living on low incomes.

Source: Ministère de l’emploi et solidarité sociale (2012) Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion available at www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/grands-dossiers/lutte-contre-la-pauvrete/index_en.asp.

In Québec, students must have completed high school before attending a CEGEP. Most non-completers who wish to get their secondary-school diploma register for adult general-education programmes offered by the school boards. While that is effective for most, a sizeable number of non-completers would benefit from a college environment. The CEGEPs have introduced some programmes to bring technical training to the disadvantaged as a way of addressing this gap but they rely on project funding and on the commitment of CEGEP staff to secure funding for these types of programmes. During the OECD study visit, it was mentioned that these programmes are not well integrated into the overall CEGEP administration.

Within the context of Quebec's anti-poverty strategy, considerable progress has been made in making work a more attractive option and providing disadvantaged groups with pathways to work. Quebec is in the 10th year of the strategy and publishes annual reports on progress. Quebec has recorded the lowest level of incomes below the low income cut off measures in the last 30 years. While the two regions of Mauricie and Estrie have a similar unemployment rates, Mauricie has had a somewhat higher rate of poverty at 13.5% as compared with Estrie at 12.7%. Both regions have higher rates of poverty relative to the provincial average (Statistics Canada, 2011).

4.2 Childcare and family friendly policies to support women's participation in employment

Ontario

Ontario has invested heavily in providing early childhood education on a province wide basis by establishing full day kindergarten for four and five year old children. Ontario began phasing in the Full-Day Kindergarten Programme in September 2010 with full implementation in all schools by September 2015. Each school is also encouraged to offer before and after-school programming (e.g. child care) on site, with the goal of creating a seamless day for children and parents.

Workplaces are for the most part adapting to workers who need to balance personal and workplace demands. There are a number of publications that can help employers build family friendly policies and workers in firms with more than 50 employees have additional protection under Ontario's Employment Standards Act. Ontario has a high participation rate of women of about 62% equal to the national average and about 9% points lower than that of men, which is 71%. In Hamilton and Thunder Bay, the participation rates of women are 64% and 63% respectively (Statistics Canada, 2012).

As the population ages, there will be increasing pressure on employees with aging parents who will need to support family members with appointments and other activities. There is not yet a well-developed system in Ontario to assist with the support for aged care.

Quebec

Québec provides subsidised supports for a range of child care services available to parents at a cost of CAD 7 per child per day, such as: childcare centres, day care centres, and home childcare providers. In 2011, the programme was serving 215 000 pre-school children. A recent study concluded that nearly 70 000 mothers were induced to hold jobs as a result of the subsidised child care – an increase of 3.8% in women's employment (Fortin, Godbout, and St-Cemy, 2008). Waiting lists can be long for subsidised spaces, therefore, the Québec government has recently announced that an additional 30 000 spaces will be created.

The labour force participation rate of mother's is 73% in Quebec, which grows to 77% when considering those mothers with children over the age of three. The Ministry of Family (*ministère de la Famille*) also promotes activities with employers to create flexibility so that family work life balance can be better achieved. The Ministry has a tool kit to help employers adapt their workplace to make it more family friendly. While large employers have for the most part adopted measures that make it easier to reconcile family and work life, smaller employers have been more reluctant to make changes.

While the programmes in Québec are administered at the provincial level, participation rates in Mauricie and Estrie differ. In 2012, the female participation rate in Estrie was 65.3%, which was slightly above the provincial average of 65.1%. Mauricie has a significantly lower female participation rate of 56.3% (Statistics Canada, 2012).

4.3. Tackling youth unemployment

Ontario

Ontario has been very successful in increasing high school graduation rates which stand at 81% up from 68% ten years ago. Northern students are less likely to pursue postsecondary education and aboriginal students have lower high school graduation rates than the rest of the population. More than half of aboriginal students drop out of school.

Ontario is experiencing higher rates of unemployment among its young people. 16.2% for those 15-24 years of age are unemployed. The rates vary between young men (17.5%) and young women (14.9%) (Statistics Canada, 2013). This represents approximately 178 000 unemployed young people. The Ontario government announced in its recent 2013 Budget a new Youth Jobs Strategy to help an additional 30 000 young Ontarians find employment (see Box 5.11).

Box 5.11. Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy

In Canada, the Ontario government has announced a new Youth Employment Strategy in its 2013 Budget. This strategy is designed to help more young people find jobs, while also ensuring the employers can hire the skilled workers they need in today's economy. The entire strategy is supported by a total investment of CAD 295 million over two years, and is estimated to create 30 000 new job opportunities. The strategy focuses on jobs, entrepreneurship and innovation for youth in Ontario and includes the following new programmes:

- Ontario Youth Employment Fund: This fund provides hiring incentives to employers to offer young people in all regions of the province an entry point to long-term employment. Youth who participate in the programme would learn life and work skills while earning income. It would also help employers better tap the youth talent available in the province.
- Ontario Youth Entrepreneurship Fund: Supports the next generation of entrepreneurs through mentorship, startup capital and outreach supports.
- Ontario Youth Innovation Fund: Supports youth to lead and manage industrial research, development and commercialisation. It would also support young entrepreneurs at universities and colleges.
- Business-Labour Connectivity and Training Fund brings together business, labour, educators and youth to better prepare young people to develop the skills they need to succeed.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance (2013), *Budget Backgrounder: Youth Job Creation*, Toronto, Canada.

In Thunder Bay, Confederation College adapts a number of its programmes to accommodate aboriginal youth who do not have the necessary skill level to begin college level studies. Vocational students are provided with additional academic support in mathematics and other subjects to ensure they can master the college level course work. Negahneewin College was established as a college within a college which challenges the status quo yet recognises a history rich in aboriginal and non-aboriginal relationship building in northern Ontario. Beyond academic support Confederation College has Aboriginal Student Support Services which offers counselling, career information and referrals to community services if required.

In Hamilton, high school graduation rates are linked closely to the economic conditions of the neighbourhood where the school is located. The School Board will be closing a number of schools over the next few years due to declining enrolments and will open three new schools. Mohawk's College in Motion initiative has been placing representatives in high schools and community centres, starting in the second school semester. The Mohawk advisers make presentations on the transition to post-secondary institutions and set up one-on-one time with students looking to plan their life after high school. The programme is part of Mohawk's Access Project, a plan focused on increasing high school graduation and post-secondary participation rates among at-risk youth.

Quebec

Although the drop-out rate in Quebec has declined over the last two decades, it remains higher than the national rate. Using the average rate over the three-year period between 2009-12 Quebec experienced a 10.6% rate of drop-outs as opposed to the national average of 8.1% (Statistics Canada, 2012).

The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sport (*Ministère d'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport*, MELS) measures school leaving as those individuals who leave high-school without diploma or qualification. These rates are higher than the Statistics Canada drop-out rate as they do not take into account those who later return to school and get some form of credential but are good estimates of the work load associated with youth initiatives. Using the Quebec definition, Mauricie had an early school leaver rate of 18.8% in 2010-11, which was even with the provincial average, but the rate for Estrie, at 19.5%, was slightly higher (MELS, 2012).

Québec has undertaken major efforts to reduce its dropout rate and each administrative region has a plan to improve completion rates. For the last several years, efforts have focused on promoting academic persistence among 16-17 year olds who are most vulnerable to dropping out. Programmes like IDEO 16-17 and Youth in Action identify youth at-risk of dropping out and provide intensive academic and social support to ensure the completion of secondary studies. These programmes are uniform throughout all regions in the province. In Estrie, the partners for education success (*partenaires pour la réussite éducative*) provides a focus on early signs of learning difficulties in particular with language and math so that this does not become a problem in later years. In Mauricie, a number of days dedicated to academic persistence bring attention to the issue and connect young people who need services with organisations who can help.

Quebec has a broad network of youth employment agencies (111 across Québec). These agencies are brought together under an umbrella organisation called the Youth Employment Agency Network. Its mission is to regroup support and represent the centres by developing, promoting, and defending their member interests with the government and equipping them with tools necessary to facilitate the transfer of expertise and knowledge. A major activity includes providing province wide training for its member organisations.

Box 5.12. Youth in Action (*jeunes en action*)

Youth in Action is a programme for young adults who want to either return to school or find employment. The programme aims to develop social, professional, and personal autonomy through individual meetings, group workshops, and special learning projects. This is an intensive 20 hour a week programme running from between 20-52 weeks. The average stay in the programme was 24 weeks in 2012. There are professionals that accompany participants and financial aid is available up to 52 weeks – the average in 2012 was 16.4 weeks. Eligibility criteria for youth in action are between 18-24 years; must not be currently studying or working; and have or want to have a professional objective and be motivated to act and put it in motion.

The programme helps develop professional skills, facilitate a return to school and manage proactive job search techniques, including preparation of a CV and interview tips. In 2012, there were 2 474 new participants and 1 217 individuals active in the programme on 31 March, 2013.

Jeunes en action also focuses on building social skills, such as effective communication, interpersonal relationships, including conflict resolution and accepted work place behaviours as well as developing personal skills, such as setting and managing priorities including organising and mastering a daily agenda

Programme content involves IDEO 16-17 (a sister programme for those still in school but at risk of dropping out) a personalised action plan with individual follow-up, and meetings, exploring community milieu, academic, and other resources, workshops on job search, effective communication, healthy relationships, and mental health issues.

Source: Ministère de L'Emploi et de la Solidarité Sociale (2012), *Youth in Action Programme Description*, available at www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/solidarite-sociale/programmes-mesures/jeunes-en-action/index_en.asp.

What is unique about this in Canada is that all responsibilities have been delegated to these local forums which are composed of individuals aged between 16-35. In Mauricie, there are five local youth employment centres (*carrefour jeunesse-emploi*). They offer a unique youth focused window of services and assistance. Specific services offered include assistance in writing a CV and letter of introduction, simulated interviews, counseling on career and specific job search, academic counseling and support for starting a business.

In Estrie, there are seven local youth employment centres. In addition to the services offered by these organisations, Sherbrooke has a range of special programmes. One includes a project to promote entrepreneurial activity among young people in the greater Sherbrooke area in collaboration with the young entrepreneurs of Quebec (*l'entrepreneuriat jeunesse du gouvernement du Québec*).

A unique effort in Quebec involves the youth regional investment funds (*Fonds régional d'investissement jeunesse*) established through the Youth Secretariat as part of its youth action plan 2009-14. Each region has a forum which is responsible for receiving applications, analysing the proposals and funding projects. The Forum is also responsible for providing ongoing administrative oversight for all projects approved and report to the youth secretariat. Projects funded promote youth integration socially, culturally and professionally working with existing organisations in a complimentary fashion; and promote the establishment of youth in support of their contributions to the economy and social structure of the region.

4.4. Openness to immigration

Ontario

In 2011, Ontario received about 100 000 immigrants – about 40% of Canada’s total. English-as-a-Second Language (ESL), French-as-a-Second Language (FSL) and citizenship and language classes are offered by school boards, community agencies, colleges and universities in Ontario. Many school boards also offer adult non-credit ESL and FSL classes that are funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

In Hamilton, immigration is becoming an increasingly important component of its labour force. The city has established the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, which brings together leaders from many sectors of the Hamilton community, including the immigrant service provider sector, businesses, unions, community-based organisations, health, local government, media, educational institutions and youth. HIPC is one of CICs Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP). HIPC provides a leadership forum through collaboration with local partners in order to implement a multi-faceted Immigration Strategy to support the attraction, settlement, retention and economic participation of immigrants as well as create a welcoming community for newcomers. The strategy focuses on improving settlement services such as housing, language training, education and employment support. It also takes steps to eliminate exclusionary practices in organisational policies and programmes.

Workforce Planning Hamilton produced a guide entitled “your new life in Hamilton; building a successful working life” that speaks about future jobs in Hamilton; about where to get foreign credentials evaluated; and, gives tips and advice from local employment counselors. Mohawk College has a prior learning assessment and recognition programme, which recognises other experience in addition to the credential recognition process.

Three important links to employment for newcomers are the recognition of credentials obtained outside Canada, proficiency in the language of work and bridge training in some cases to meet Canadian requirements. The federal government has invested heavily in creating a national system for foreign credential assessment and recognition and in Ontario credentials are reviewed centrally in Toronto. In Hamilton Mohawk College offers in addition to English as a Second Language programmes, enhanced workplace language and workplace communications programmes for internationally trained professionals. Courses cover language of work, culture and modes of communication as well as specialised vocabulary. Mohawk also offers prior learning assessment to give credit for studies already taken and to minimise the course work required to obtain a Canadian credential if that is required.

In Thunder Bay, because of a smaller population pool Confederation College offers a more limited number of language courses. Confederation like Mohawk offers prior learning and assessment services to assess studies for Canadian credit where that is needed.

Quebec

In 2011, Quebec received 51 737 immigrants, which was a small decrease from the previous year. In 2011, Mauricie received just 293 immigrants, while Estrie received 1 010 immigrants. The numbers of immigrants settling in the two regions has remained fairly constant over the last five years.

With such small numbers settling in these regions, the services available to newcomers are not well developed, which in turn means that these regions are less favoured as settlement destinations. Estrie in particular realises that immigrants will need to play

a larger role in the development of the region and is taking steps to promote Sherbrooke as a settlement destination and increasing its capacity to provide the services newcomers require. One of the key performance measures for Emploi-Québec in Estrie is the number of new immigrants using the public employment services.

Quebec offers a general service of comparing foreign credentials to Quebec's system. The comparative evaluation for studies done outside Québec (*Évaluation comparative des études effectuées hors du Québec*) is a document issued by the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities (*ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles*) that provides a general description of the educational documents presented for evaluation as well as the curriculum followed outside Québec. It indicates how the studies completed outside Québec compare to the Québec education system and its main diplomas (or educational benchmarks).

Quebec has both formal and informal programmes to fight discrimination. The business counsellors at the local employment centres work with employers to overcome workplace barriers. To attract new immigrants, the City of Sherbrooke and local employers have put in place multilateral initiatives. In co-operation with its human resources department, the City is also developing another initiative pertaining to employment equity, multiculturalism and the elimination of racism. There are a range of ethno-cultural organisations that can help newcomers integrate – one of the oldest being the support service to new Canadians (*service d'aide aux néo-Canadiens*). Established since 1954, this organisation provides a full range of services to help immigrants integrate into the social, economic and cultural life of the region, in co-operation with the resources available in the community.

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