



# Supporting French Research and Knowledge Dissemination Consultative Feedback

July 31, 2025

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (the Federation) welcomes the External Advisory Panel on the Creation and Dissemination of Scientific Information in French's consultations on the creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge in Canada. Francophone researchers serve as leaders in Canada's scientific ecosystem despite disproportionate barriers to the creation and dissemination of their research. This panel's work will serve as a foundation to improving access and dismantling barriers to Francophone knowledge creation and dissemination across Canada.

## Existing challenges in the creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge in French

As a bilingual non-profit organization that supports the humanities and social sciences across Canada, the Federation represents many Francophone institutions and associations. The Federation supports the dissemination of research in French through its Scholarly Book Awards program, which is funded by SSHRC and administered by the Federation. This program includes publication grants as well as translation and open access grants.

In 2023-2024, despite a high approval rate (over 95%) for publication grant applications in French, only 24 of the total 144 grants were for French-language works. This disproportionate number of total grants suggests a greater challenge in access.

This is not an isolated issue. With barriers to knowledge dissemination in French, it is not uncommon for a Francophone researcher to conduct and/or publish research in English, rather than in French, due to the disproportionate level of visibility and access in English versus French. This reality contributes to the erosion of French as a language of scientific knowledge and limits the diversity of perspectives available within Canada's research ecosystem.

To address the challenges of creating and disseminating knowledge in French, the Federation recommends that the Government of Canada:

- Strengthen investment in infrastructure, publishing, and funding mechanisms that support research in French
- Implement targeted outreach to Francophone researchers, especially those in minority language settings across Canada
- Provide systemic support through policy and program design that actively removes barriers and promotes linguistic equity



## A strategy to ensure the vitality and sustainability of Francophone research

French-language research supports work that is culturally and regionally specific, particularly within Francophone communities. Language-accessible science improves policy relevance, community trust, and equity, especially in the humanities and social sciences where linguistic and cultural context are essential to impact.

To secure the vitality and sustainability of research in French, the Government of Canada should review its allocation of research funding through the granting councils to Francophone research. In 2023, various SSHRC awards had a low percentage of French award winners. For example, 19% of Talent grants, 14.5% of Insight grants, and 24% of Partnership grants were awarded to applications submitted in French.

In addition to these disproportionate percentages of French award winners, it is important to note that the Canada Research Chairs Program specifies targets based on various identity factors but not language. This program provides high level recognition of a researcher's accomplishments and work. With no linguistic requirements for the selection of these chairs, it is easy for Francophone researchers, especially those outside of Quebec, to be overlooked by the program. Chairs in French must be on equal footing with English chairs, decreasing the sense of isolation that persists within Francophone science production throughout Canada.

In a strategy to ensure the vitality and sustainability of research in French, the Federation recommends that the Government of Canada:

- Review existing linguistic requirements for research funding to identify potential barriers that Francophone researchers might face,
- Implement a proportional or otherwise dedicated percentage of funds for Francophone research within each federal funding program to encourage Francophone applications and award grants, and
- Introduce linguistic representation requirements to the Canada Research Chairs program and other national programs that spotlight Canadian researchers. Creating, disseminating, and recognizing scientific knowledge in French

Existing open access programs such as Érudit are essential to the creation, dissemination, and recognition of Francophone research. However, it is urgent that these digital infrastructures be used to disseminate knowledge in French alongside English with bilingual metadata standards and indexing tools. Otherwise, the continued isolation of French scientific knowledge across Canada will persist.

In the humanities and social sciences, researchers, including those conducting research in French, are particularly likely to publish monographs and edited volumes. Yet current open access infrastructure and funding models often prioritize journal publishing, leaving books, especially those published by small or university presses, at a disadvantage.



As the federal government continues to invest in its research ecosystem and strives to address national priorities, steps must be taken to ensure that any future legislative changes and policies accommodate the unique challenges and barriers to Francophone research.

To bolster the creation, dissemination, and recognition of Francophone scientific knowledge, the Federation recommends that the Government of Canada:

- Expand existing open access programs, like Érudit, to a national multilingual platform that places French on equal footing with English,
- Support open access publishing for French-language books, including translation, digital production, and dissemination, and
- Ensure that reviews of existing legislations, such as the Access to Information Act, take into consideration the unique barriers facing Francophone researchers.

## Conclusion

Francophone researchers across Canada continue to face barriers to knowledge creation and dissemination. Through continuous community engagement, a careful review of existing programs, and adopting a linguistically inclusive policy frameworks, the Government of Canada can bolster French-language researchers.

Building greater integration between French and English research avoids isolation and encourages knowledge sharing which is key to ensuring the sustainability of Francophone research across Canada. More than ever, we must continue to mobilize and bolster Francophone research as a driver of social, economic, and innovative change.