

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A new report by the Conference Board of Canada makes the case for increased immigration levels in the Ottawa-Gatineau region

Ottawa, October 28, 2020 — Given the Ottawa-Gatineau region's aging population and low birth rates, immigrants are vital to the region's economic competitiveness and growth, according to a new study entitled [*Four Futures: the Economic Impact of Immigration in the Ottawa-Gatineau Region*](#).

The report, produced by the Conference Board of Canada, looks at the demographic and economic impacts of immigration over the last decade and forecasts growth in the region between 2019 and 2036 under four analytical scenarios that explore the links between immigration, employment and economic growth in the region.

The four analytical scenarios are as follows:

- 1) A benchmark scenario that maintains the current (pre-pandemic) immigrant arrival trends in Ottawa-Gatineau. Annual real gross domestic product (GDP) growth would average 1.9 per cent and total GDP would increase by \$34 billion in 2036.
- 2) A fictional, no-immigration scenario, constructed for analytical purposes to illustrate what would happen if no new immigrants arrived in the region. Annual real GDP growth would average 1.7 per cent and real GDP would be \$5.5 billion lower than the benchmark scenario.
- 3) A higher level of immigration scenario in which Ottawa-Gatineau would raise its intake from 11,005 immigrants in 2018 to 19,500 in 2036. Annual real GDP growth would be 2.1 per cent and the increase in total GDP would be \$37 billion from 2019 to 2036.
- 4) A higher level of immigration scenario, but this time combined with improved labour market outcomes for immigrants. Total increase in GDP would be about \$900 million higher than under the previous scenario.

“Immigration continues to be an important driver of Canada’s social and economic well-being, especially as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Pedro Antunes, Chief Economist at The Conference Board of Canada. “This is true for the national economy and at a local level such as the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Immigration will help to underpin the area’s economic competitiveness and future growth.”

Canada’s aging population, with an increasing number of people leaving the workforce and fewer young people working and paying taxes, threatens to limit economic growth

and strain social supports and health care in the Ottawa-Gatineau area. A solution to this challenge is to welcome even more immigrants to the region. This will be even more relevant after the COVID-19 pandemic that has put a strain on Canada's economic and fiscal standing.

The region currently attracts about three per cent of the newcomers arriving in Canada each year, that is, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. To sustain the region's economic productivity and growth, a high rate of immigration is needed.

"The findings of the *Four Futures* report point to the critical importance for Ottawa and Gatineau stakeholders to explicitly plan for the level of immigrant attraction that will sustain our economic growth and social development. The analysis is compelling and clarifies for us the linkages between immigration, employment, and the city's overall economic growth" Hindia Mohamoud, Director of the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP).

Background

The *Four Futures: the Economic Impact of Immigration in Ottawa Gatineau* was jointly commissioned by the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) and the Ottawa Employment Hub, with funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Ontario's Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

The report responds to the priorities of OLIP partners in the economic sector, and is part of a series of research and information gathering conducted by the OLIP partners to facilitate shared understanding as the basis of continued collaborative planning.

About the Conference Board of Canada

The Conference Board of Canada is the country's leading independent research organization. Their mission is to empower and inspire leaders to build a stronger future for all Canadians through trusted research and unparalleled connections. Follow The Conference Board of Canada on Twitter @ConfBoardofCda

About OLIP

The Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) is a multi-sectoral partnership involving 60 local organizations working on a shared vision and common priorities designed to build local capacity to attract, settle, and integrate immigrants. Learn more about OLIP's work at www.olip-plio.ca.

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