



FRENCH TO FOLLOW?

Revitalizing Official Languages in the Workplace

CCMD
Action-Research
Roundtable on
**Official Languages
in the Workplace**

CHAired BY
MICHAEL WERNICK

BY
PATRICK BOISVERT
AND
MATTHIEU LEBLANC



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A WORD FROM CCMD

Public managers rely on many types of research to stay on top of our constantly changing government workplace. Basic research lays down a solid foundation of understanding by describing and explaining the world in which public managers live. Applied research adds a practical edge by drawing out the decision-making implications of research findings. Action-research takes this practicality a step further. It provides timely and concrete advice to pressing challenges; advice that speaks to managers' lived experience. It does this by involving managers at every stage of the research process. In short, it aims to take inquiry out of the research shop and move it onto the workplace floor - a key feature of a public service organization that learns.

This guide comes from CCMD's third wave of Action-Research Roundtables. This year, our discussions with managers brought to light three research areas:

- Crisis Management
- e-Learning
- Official Languages in the Workplace

These topics relate directly to the day-to-day challenges managers face and are of strategic importance to the Public Service as a whole. With regards to the official languages, they are a renewed commitment of the government expressed in the Speech from the Throne on September 30, 2002 and one of the deputy ministers' strategic priorities for 2003-2004.

This report is the outcome of the work done by the Action-Research Roundtable on Official Languages in the Workplace. Overall, the report complements well the Action Plan on Official Languages that was unveiled in March 2003. It proposes possible ways of improving the linguistic capacity of employees of the Public Service of Canada and suggests an approach for managers that is designed to institute a culture that fosters the use of both official languages in the workplace.

Action-Research

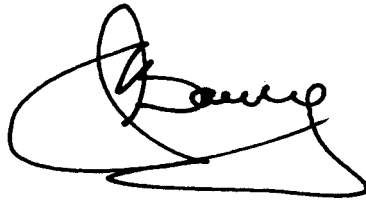
CCMD's action-research process brings together practitioners and experts from both inside and outside government to develop practical advice for dealing with pressing management challenges. The research process revolves around the deliberations of a diverse Roundtable - an ideal forum for rapidly pooling and scrutinizing knowledge, insights and experiences. The research is conducted over a one-year period.

The management challenges are selected by managers and senior executives according to their urgency and importance to the Public Service as a whole. The objective is to provide leading-edge, focused and practical products that public managers genuinely value and actively use in their work.

The Roundtable is supported by a secretariat composed of scholars and Public Service researchers.

I believe that you will agree that this document will prove to be extremely useful in our ongoing efforts to make the Public Service of Canada a workplace which encourages the development of both linguistic communities in ways that are consistent with the vision and values of the Canadian society as set out in the *Official Languages Act*.

I would like to thank the Roundtable's Chair, Michael Wernick, Associate Deputy Minister, Canadian Heritage, for his commitment and leadership. I also applaud the invaluable contribution of the Roundtable members who volunteered their time and expertise because they firmly believe in the importance of official languages in the Public Service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jocelyne Bourgon', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Jocelyne Bourgon
President
Canadian Centre for
Management Development



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

It is difficult to imagine a set of issues that go more directly to the core of what it means to be the Public Service of Canada than those surrounding language. These issues have in the past stirred passions and created division, both outside and inside this complex institution. Therefore, it was with some trepidation that I accepted the invitation to assume the chair of this Roundtable.

Of course, the challenge was impossible to resist. I feel I must attempt to convey as best I can the spirit and underlying approach of the Roundtable. All of us came to the exercise with a depth and breadth of personal experience. Some had wrestled formally and directly with issues of language. Others had simply progressed through the ranks and encountered these issues first hand in a series of work environments. What the group shared, in my view, was a clear sense that we wanted to tackle the issues in a very direct and forthright manner, not shying away from uncomfortable truths or controversial findings. However, this determination was constantly tempered by a desire to open up the issues in a way that would be accessible and useful. The Roundtable wished to produce something that would go well beyond exhortations and rhetoric to offer pragmatic guidance to its colleagues in senior and middle management. I leave it to the readers to decide how well we succeeded.

Readers should not assume that every member of the group was equally in favour of every recommendation. We had a lively exchange from a range of perspectives. However, we do agree that these ideas should be put forward for very serious debate and consideration and that there is an urgent need for more concerted attention to the issues surrounding language of work. The Public Service of Canada must reflect the values and the diversity of the Canada we strive to serve.

The Roundtable is pleased with the recent announcement of the Government of Canada regarding increased funding for the official languages. As readers will notice, the recommendations of the Roundtable go in the same direction as the measures and investments proposed in the Action Plan on Official Languages unveiled in March 2003.

Finally, let me thank the members of the Roundtable, who were unfailingly generous with their time and their knowledge, and the group of official language champions who shared their experiences and insights. In particular let me thank Patrick Boisvert and the team at CCMD who supported our work with skill and grace under pressure.



Michael Wernick

Chair

CCMD Roundtable on Official Languages
in the Workplace



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The members of the Roundtable wish to thank the many individuals who contributed to the production of this report. The Roundtable also wishes to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of the secretariat and the collaborators who have overseen the revision and publication of the report. Their collaboration was essential to the success of the Roundtable's deliberations.



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INTRODUCTION

The Public Service of Canada is not merely the sum of its functions. It is, in itself, an important national institution that must strive to reflect the basic traits of the country that it serves and to adopt Canada's values.

At the beginning of the new millennium, the Public Service is undergoing a complex, varied modernization and reform program. It is essential that it exemplify Canada's linguistic duality not only from the standpoint of service delivery but also as regards the composition of its human resources and the work environment that it creates. The language of work has posed an ongoing challenge to the federal Public Service for over 30 years, one that successive governments have sought to address. This challenge parallels that of achieving inclusion and diversity in the Public Service. Diversity and the official languages are two of the country's core values that coexist and are mutually beneficial.

In the Speech from the Throne of January 30, 2001 and of September 30, 2002, the federal government reiterated its commitment "to enhance the use of our two official languages in the federal Public Service, both in the workplace and when communicating with Canadians." As a result of this commitment, the Government of Canada unveiled its *Action Plan on Official Languages* in March 2003. The Action Plan contains investments and measures that will significantly support efforts to build an exemplary Public Service with respect to the language of service and the language of work. The Privy Council Office also maintains the official languages as one of the strategic priorities of the Public Service of Canada in 2003-2004. For a second consecutive year, deputy ministers will be required to maintain their commitment, as official languages remain one objective of their performance evaluation.

The Roundtable's deliberations have made it possible to define in each Public Service organization a dynamic that engenders interaction between two separate factors, i.e. capacity and use.

One factor found in any organization is its **capacity** to function in both official languages. This capacity depends on the language skills of its staff, which, in turn, are determined by recruitment, promotion and personnel retention practices, the resources allocated to enhancing staff language skills, and translation, interpretation, meeting facilitation, software and information technologies infrastructure.

The other factor is the **use** that the organization makes of the official languages, which is not necessarily tied to capacity, deemed to be more a measure of potential use than actual practice. Use depends on an array of organizational standards such as official codes and the example set by management, the emotional and psychological atmosphere prevailing in the workplace, the effect of precedents and previous practices that shape the organizational culture and values, and the nature of the work that the organization performs.

Interaction between capacity and use is complex. At best, a virtuous cycle of mutual reinforcement can be sought. "Good practices" attract employees with sound language skills and encourage them to remain, and maintain respect for and exchanges between the linguistic communities in the organization. Moreover, such practices help employees to keep up to date and maintain their language skills longer, thus reducing the need



for training and skills upgrading. However, mediocre practices undermine capacity and engender a marked drop in use. Unilingual workplaces will have trouble attracting and retaining employees who deem it important to be able to use the other official language in the workplace and will be less attractive to employees wishing to improve their English and French. To undermine capacity ultimately weakens the language of service.

This report first examines the official languages in the past and focuses on progress achieved in this respect, then looks at the current and emerging situation through an analysis of capacity and use with regard to the official languages in the workplace. It broaches the sweeping cultural challenge surrounding the language of work and the need to undertake a change of culture centred on basic values such as respect and inclusion if we are to revitalize the official languages in the workplace.

Basic premise: a Public Service that serves Canadians


The Canadian social fabric

During the watershed years of the 1960s, the country was ripe for serious reflection. In 1963, the federal government created the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (the Laurendeau-Dunton Commission), which spent seven years taking an X-ray of Canadian society. Its first finding was that the country was in the "central crisis of its history" and that, to resolve this, it would have to grant everyone the right to an education in his or her own official language and make the federal Public Service bilingual. Consequently, the *Official Languages Act* was passed in 1969. One of the key objectives of the revised Act of 1988 was the harmonious cohabitation of the country's English- and French-speaking communities. The Act clearly stipulates that the government is committed to affording the agents of the institutions of Parliament and the government the equal opportunity to use the official language of their choice in the implementation of the institutions' objectives.

Even today, the federal government, through its official languages policy, continues to display its determination to emphasize Canada's linguistic duality as a core value and a source of vitality and unity. This is the message that the agencies responsible for promoting bilingualism and linguistic duality in the country convey, i.e. the Treasury Board, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Moreover, the Speech from the Throne of January 30, 2001 and of September 30, 2002 and the unveiling in March 2003 of the *Action Plan on Official Languages* reflect the government's renewed commitment to maintain linguistic duality from the standpoint of education, community development and an exemplary Public Service

Public and community services

Since the adoption of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969, the Canadian government has committed itself to granting English and French the same status by guaranteeing that Canadians and the official language communities enjoy certain basic language rights. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* adopted in 1982 and the *Official Languages Act* of 1988, which gives effect to the



guarantees in the Charter, reconfirm this equal status. The Charter also stipulates the means by which public services are to be delivered in either official language.

All in all, the government wants all Canadians to "feel at home" when they deal with the federal administration, i.e. to feel free to use English or French in their dealings with the State in keeping with the objective of fairness and equality. Bilingualism in the federal government is not only a legal obligation but is, above all, a question of knowing how to communicate with Canadians.

As an employer, the federal government reflects Canadian society


The federal government has also undertaken to fulfil its legal obligations through the principle of equitable participation by offering equal opportunities to members of both language groups with respect to hiring and advancement in the Public Service. The fulfilment of this commitment means that staffing in federal institutions reflects the presence in Canada of the two official language communities. Indeed, the proportion of French-speaking Canadians in the Public Service exceeds the proportion of French-speakers in the general population. The current participation rate of French-speaking Canadians in the Public Service is 31%, although they account for 23% of the population of Canada.

As we will see in the next section, the *Official Languages Act* of 1988 has also clarified the legal basis for the language of work. The clarifications stemming from the 1988 Act focus, in particular, on the designation of "bilingual" regions, employee rights, and the obligation for federal institutions to create workplaces in which employees may use the language of their choice.

Legislation: meeting the challenge

Carrying out the Act to the letter

Carrying out the Act to the letter means respecting its outward sense or significance. In a narrow sense, since 1969, considerable progress has, broadly speaking, been achieved. The legislative measures that have enabled individual Canadians and public servants to take advantage of their language rights and government support are the *Official Languages Act* (1969), the *Parliamentary Resolution on Official Languages in the Public Service* of 1973, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and the amended *Official Languages Act* (1988). Today, the Act governs all facets of parliamentary debate and deliberations, legislation, the administration of justice, communications with the public and service delivery, the language of work, participation by French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians, and the promotion of French and English. It also stipulates the responsibilities and obligations of the Treasury Board with regard to the official languages, the role of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and legal recourse.



The Act deals explicitly with the language of work and Part V is devoted entirely to it. In particular, the Act stipulates the conditions under which federal government employees may use English or French in the workplace in designated bilingual regions. The choice of the language of work in designated regions enables employees to feel at home in the workplace.

The Act sets out the obligation for federal government departments, agencies and Crown corporations to offer their employees a work environment in which they may use the official language of their choice. Moreover, the employer is obliged to offer a number of services and tools in both official languages, i.e. staff supervision, work instruments, computer systems, central and personal services, and meetings.


There are rules that govern communications between the regions and the Act stipulates the roles played by senior executives, managers and supervisors with respect to the creation and promotion of a working climate conducive to the use of either official language.

When all is said and done, we can conclude that the 1969 Act was a decisive factor in defining action and that the amendments to the 1988 Act contributed significantly to clarifying rights and obligations concerning the language of work. The 1988 Act demands an approach that must go beyond legal correctness. The application of the Act focuses, above all, on culture and behaviour. It demands compliance that is rooted in values in order to be fully effective.

The spirit of the Act

The "spirit" of the Act is its general intent or real meaning. It must be acknowledged that we have come a long way since the Act was adopted in 1969. Many Canadians now regard linguistic duality as one of the country's core values. Statistically, the number of bilingual Canadians has doubled since 1970. Moreover, according to the Department of Canadian Heritage, all opinion polls clearly confirm support for the official languages, especially among young Canadians. In many instances, attitudes have changed and growing numbers of Canadians have recognized the benefits and importance of bilingualism.

Be that as it may, the government has, over the years, encountered numerous obstacles in the administration of the Act and the project is far from complete. For example, the Commissioner of Official Languages claims that, since 1970, change has been too slow and often too superficial. She maintains that the situation appears to stem from a lack of leadership by senior federal government managers, who seem to have neglected to adequately fulfil the requirements set down in the Act. In addition to these obstacles, mention should be made of the delegation of certain fields of jurisdiction to the provincial governments and to private-sector companies, combined with the budget constraints to which the federal government has been subjected to over the years. These obstacles have exacerbated the problem, which in turn has somewhat undermined the official languages over the past 15 years.

A green-tinted image of a microscope is positioned at the top of the page, with its lens and eyepiece visible. The background is a solid green color.

Progress with respect to the **language of work** has not been considerable when compared, for example, with the **language of service**. Indeed, everyone agrees that the language of work is the poor relation under the institutional bilingualism policy. While legislative measures have undeniably allowed a considerable number of public servants to work in their first official language, it must be acknowledged that systemic barriers persist that prevent individuals from using the official language of their choice in the Public Service.


Sharing responsibility for bilingualism in the workplace

The latest reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat focus on responsibility for bilingualism in the workplace. The Commissioner and the President of the Treasury Board recently decided to join forces in order to create an environment more conducive to the use of both official languages. They emphasize the leadership that senior management in the Public Service must display and the change of attitude, behaviour or culture that is necessary and without which it will be hard to obtain concrete, long-term results and almost impossible to attain the objective that the government has set for itself.

From an administrative standpoint, numerous government bodies and agencies share responsibility for the official languages, including the language of work. Mention should be made, in particular, of the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat, which oversees the elaboration and coordination of policies and programs pertaining to communications, public services, the language of work and equitable participation by English-speakers and French-speakers in the Public Service; the Commissioner of Official Languages, who ensures that federal government departments and agencies respect the letter and spirit of the Act and acts as a language ombudsman; and the Department of Canadian Heritage, which coordinates federal government initiatives to support the French-speaking and English-speaking minorities and promotes French and English in Canadian society. The Privy Council Office, the Public Service Commission and the Committee of Deputy Ministers of Official Languages also play an important role. In addition to these agencies that assume specific responsibility for the official languages, responsibility for bilingualism is incumbent on all federal government departments and agencies that are responsible for complying with provisions in the Act and achieving the government's objectives with regard to the official languages. Despite cooperation between the bodies responsible for implementing the *Official Languages Act*, bureaucratic red tape often mitigates the results.


Bilingualism in the workplace: fact or fiction?

An exemplary Public Service not only offers Canadians quality services in both official languages but also respects the language rights of its employees. While the Act makes provision for ideal conditions, public servants are fully aware that the situation in everyday life is different. The Commissioner of Official Languages and the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat are the first to recognize that the anticipated results are not always achieved.



A cursory examination of the official reports of the Commissioner of Official Languages and the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat reveals the numerous obstacles that are hampering the use of both official languages, especially French, in the Public Service. The obstacles most frequently cited over the years include:

- the absence of work tools in the employee's chosen official language, e.g. directives, manuals, internal memos, working papers, training guides, telephone messages, and so on;
- the absence of central and personal services in both official languages;
- the absence of computer tools such as software in both official languages;
- lack of knowledge among employees of rights and obligations with respect to the official languages;
- the linguistic profile of bilingual positions does not always reflect genuine needs related to the tasks to be performed in the second language;
- the occasionally random designation of bilingual positions;
- information sessions that take place in one language only;
- meetings that take place in one language only;
- the unilingualism of supervisors and senior managers;
- the impossibility of writing documents in the first official language;
- the difficulty for many civil servants who receive language training to put into practice their newly acquired skills (lack of confidence, lack of opportunity, and so on);
- lack of leadership displayed by senior management.



Mention should also be made of the comments noted during the Consultation by Official Languages Champions conducted in 2001. The key points are indicated below:

- draft documents circulate all too often in only one language, usually English, in regions where the language of work is French, the NCR and other bilingual regions;
- central agencies do not practice what they preach: meetings often begin with a word of welcome in French but substantive issues are discussed in English only;
- to ensure that they are understood, French-speaking employees work in English;
- once English-speakers complete their language training, they find it hard to maintain and consolidate their knowledge of French;
- language training does not focus sufficiently on public servants' language of work; to be effective, courses must be geared to the specialized language in the learner's workplace;
- senior managers in government departments do not set an example;
- problems have been noted with regard to language training: managers are systematically interrupted during the courses; numerous cancellations complicate the programming of courses, and so on;
- visible minority employees whose first language is neither English nor French often find it harder than English-speakers or French-speakers to learn either official language.

While this list is not exhaustive, it does enable us to define the nature and complexity of the problems that employees raise most frequently. A number of reports emphasize the obstacles' repercussions on Public Service employees. In some instances, French-speaking employees fear being regarded as obstinate if they persist in working in their language. Others hesitate to work in their language for fear of adversely affecting their performance appraisal and, consequently, their career advancement. For this reason, many French-speakers choose English as their language of work, which may over time lead to a loss of skill in the employee's first official language or even to assimilation in the workplace.

We must not overlook extra-linguistic factors that mean that the use of English as the language of work is solidly rooted in certain government departments and agencies. Given the economic prestige enjoyed by English and demographic imbalance between English-speakers and French-speakers, the French language does not, unfortunately, always enjoy its rightful place in the federal Public Service.

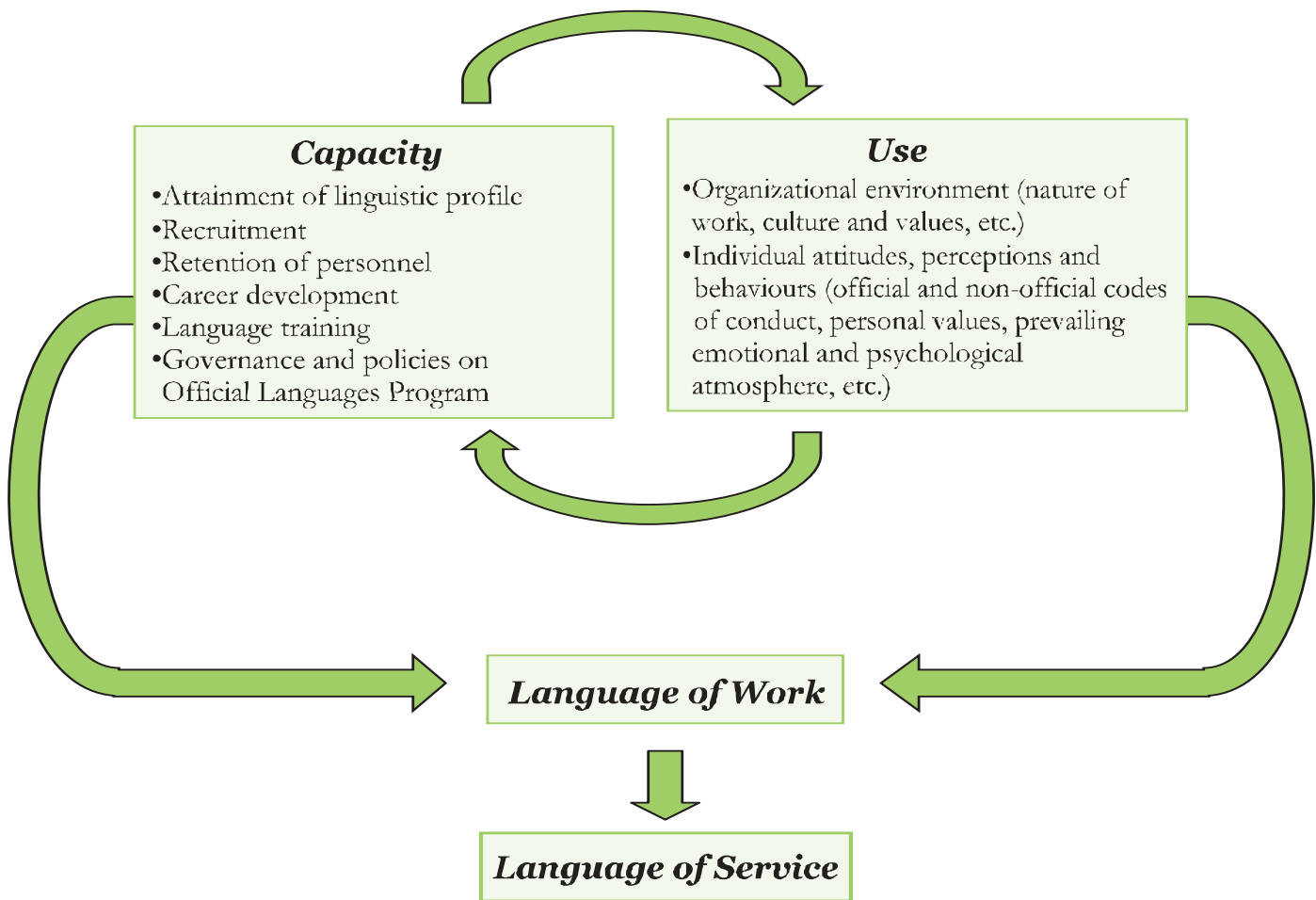
Analytical model focusing on capacity and use

In order to clarify the current and emerging context with respect to the language of work, the Roundtable is proposing a descriptive analysis centred primarily on empirical data. The analysis will examine capacity and use, two interacting factors that are present in each public service organization.

Capacity means the ability of an organization to function in both official languages. It is affected, in particular, by the equitable representation among staff of the two linguistic communities, the recruitment and retention of personnel, the attainment of the linguistic profile in respect of bilingual positions and staffing policy governing such positions, language training, and the governance of official languages programs.

Use refers to the effective use in organizations of the official languages. This factor may or may not be closely linked to capacity, which is more a yardstick of potential use rather than actual practice. Use is affected by conditions in the organizational environment and individual attitudes, perceptions and behaviour, e.g. the nature of the work performed by the organization, organizational culture and values, the official and unofficial codes of conduct of managers and employees, the emotional and psychological atmosphere prevailing in the workplace, and so on.


Interaction between capacity and use is complex. Ideally, we should strive for a virtuous cycle of mutual reinforcement. Efforts to bolster and maintain linguistic capacity should normally engender enhanced use of the official languages in the workplace. However, failure to support capacity will undermine it and lead to a rapid drop in such use. The weakening of linguistic capacity and the absence of effective use of both official languages will undermine the language of service.



Impact of the new information technologies and horizontal management

The impact of the new information technologies is apparent in all spheres of government operations. The modernization of service delivery has led to a broader government presence on the Internet through the Canada Site and the Government On-Line initiative. Access to the Internet is growing and interactivity with the public in both official languages will grow even more. Broadly speaking, existing means of communication in the Public Service, such as e-mail and videoconferencing, are constantly generating greater opportunities for interaction between employees in both official languages.

The increasing complexity of the challenges facing the Public Service, including that posed by the information technologies, is affecting its management method, which is tending to become increasingly horizontal. Horizontal management implies closer collaboration among government departments and between national



headquarters and regional offices. Consequently, contact between unilingual and bilingual regions may also become more frequent.

The information technologies and horizontal management are unquestionably generating new demands with respect to service delivery in both official languages and the establishment of bilingual workplaces. Under the circumstances, it is all the more urgent to implement measures and provide resources that make it possible to reinforce the linguistic capacity of public servants and adapt the workplace in such a way that it ensures genuine respect for both official language communities.

Language capacity of Public Service employees

Participation rate


The principle of equitable participation found in the *Official Languages Act* is an important linchpin for ensuring that members of both language communities enjoy equal opportunities with regard to hiring and promotion in federal institutions. This principle makes it possible to ensure that the proportion of English-speakers and French-speakers in federal government institutions reflects the composition of the general population. Respect for this principle is a prerequisite to the use in the workplace of both official languages.

It is apparent that the efforts of federal institutions overall in recent years have borne fruit. The participation rate of French-speakers in the Public Service is 31%, although they account for 22.9%¹ of the general population. The proportion of French-speakers varies from one Public Service job category to the next. In the key job categories, the participation rate of French-speakers stands at 28% in the management category, 25% in the scientific and professional category, 24% in the technical category, 36% in the administrative and foreign affairs category, 33% in the administrative support category, and 25% in the operations category.² There is a more pronounced overrepresentation of French-speakers in job categories, e.g. administrative support, that provide other public servants with services compared with categories related to institutional mandates.

The Roundtable is of the opinion that we must be extremely vigilant with regard to the maintenance of the representation of French-speakers, especially in terms of jobs related to institutional mandates, i.e. the management, scientific and professional and technical categories. We must also rectify the overrepresentation of French-speakers in the administrative and foreign affairs and administrative support categories in order to reflect the proportion of French-speakers in the general population. To foster a work environment that genuinely reflects linguistic duality, it is essential that French-speakers be represented equitably in all spheres of the operations of government departments and agencies.

¹ Statistics Canada, 2001 Census.

² Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Official Languages Annual Report, 2001-2002*.



Despite this progress, the under-representation of English-speakers in the Québec region persists (they account for 7.5% of federal public servants in Québec but 13% of the general population.)³ A recruitment strategy focusing particularly on English-speaking Quebecers is necessary to remedy the situation. The federal government's commitment in this respect must produce concrete results if we are to truly attain the principle of equitable participation by both official language communities.

- It is necessary to pursue efforts to maintain equitable participation by French-speakers, especially in job categories related to the institutional mandates of government organizations, and to remedy the overrepresentation of French-speakers in job categories in which they provide other public servants with administrative services.
- It is necessary to implement a recruitment strategy to remedy the under-representation of English-speakers in the federal Public Service in Québec.

Attainment of the linguistic profile and the bilingualism bonus

Attainment of the linguistic profile

One indicator of the successful development of bilingual federal government employees is the degree of attainment of the language requirements governing various positions.

In 2002, designated bilingual positions accounted for 37% of all Public Service positions and 28% of the positions required the highest level of skill in the second language and 67%, the intermediate level.⁴ Approximately 84% of employees occupying bilingual positions satisfied the language requirements. It should be noted that French-speakers occupy a high proportion (78%) of designated bilingual positions.⁵ However, a problem persists in that a number of employees in bilingual positions do not satisfy the relevant language requirements.


Some 78% of EX management positions are designated bilingual and 98% of the positions require proficiency to the C-B-C level. As of March 31, 2002, only 72% of the managers had satisfied the language requirements.⁶ The government committed itself to setting March 31, 2003 as the cut-off date by which all managers must satisfy the language requirements pertaining to their positions. The Roundtable supports this commitment. This is an opportunity for the government to set an example by sending a clear message that the official languages must be a priority among employees wishing to climb the rungs of the hierarchical ladder.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Official Languages Annual Report, 2001-2002.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*



A recent survey⁷ among upcoming managers reveals certain problems encountered in the attainment of the linguistic profile of managers in the EX, EX minus 1 and 2 categories. It is noteworthy that only 34% of respondents are proficient to the C-B-C level. Given the role that middle managers and supervisors must play in day-to-day operations in the workplace, this finding suggests that the language skills of the individuals concerned are wanting. It would be advisable to enhance the language skills at the C-B-C level of all middle managers and supervisors in the bilingual regions where the duties performed warrant doing so and to invest additional resources in language training. This opportunity cost should enhance the quality of relations between supervisors and employees and, as we will see later, prepare the upcoming generation of bilingual executives.

Similarly, it is important to review the definition of language requirements pertaining to middle management and supervisory positions in unilingual regions because of the proliferation of horizontal initiatives involving the bilingual regions (national headquarters) and unilingual regions. Raising the linguistic profile in the latter regions should foster more extensive bilingual collaboration, for example when interregional task forces or projects are set up.

Bilingualism bonus

The bilingualism bonus was introduced in 1977 to recognize the skills and efforts of employees in designated bilingual positions. The \$800 bonus is paid to employees who pass language proficiency tests regardless of the actual use of the other language in the workplace. The amount awarded and the administration of the bonus no longer make it possible to attain the initial objective. It must be acknowledged that for some employees the bilingualism bonus symbolizes the importance of bilingualism while for others it is an irritant. While opinion is divided on the matter, it is desirable to reassess the effectiveness of the bonus in conjunction with a review of the Official Languages Program and the modernization of human resources. The question of the bilingual bonus clearly cannot be settled unilaterally since it must be subject to negotiations between the government and the unions. One possible solution that warrants examination,

- The government must maintain its commitment to ensure that all managers at the EX level satisfy the language requirements.
- The government must invest more extensively in language training for middle managers working in the bilingual regions and make them proficient to the C-B-C level when their duties warrant doing so.
- The government must review the definition of language requirements pertaining to middle managers and supervisors in unilingual regions in order to foster the establishment of bilingual staff relations in conjunction with horizontal initiatives involving unilingual and bilingual regions.
- The government and the unions should reassess the effectiveness of the bilingualism bonus in conjunction with a review of the Official Languages Program and the modernization of human resources and consider the possibility of reinvesting funds allocated to the bonus in employee training and skills upgrading.

⁷ Public Service Commission of Canada, *Executive Succession Reconsidered: Planning for Public Service Renewal*, 2002.

especially by the unions, is to reallocate the funds earmarked for the bonus to employee language training and skills upgrading through the establishment of dedicated learning accounts.

Staffing of bilingual positions

According to the annual report of the Public Service Commission, bilingual imperative staffing⁸ accounted for 36% of all external and internal Public Service appointments while bilingual non-imperative staffing accounted for 7%.⁹ As of March 31, 2001, 97% of the individuals hired to fill bilingual positions satisfied the relevant linguistic profile.¹⁰ While the Public Service can rely on a critical mass of bilingual candidates to fill positions, we may well wonder about the relevance of continuing to staff on a bilingual non-imperative basis.

Non-imperative staffing action also has unwanted consequences. Employees who occupy bilingual non-imperative positions are not encouraged sufficiently to meet the language requirements. This has for consequence to weaken the linguistic capacity of employees in bilingual non-imperative positions and means that the linguistic profile of bilingual positions does not always reflect genuine needs stemming from the duties to be performed in the second language. Employees who do not satisfy the language requirements of their positions or who do not use or maintain the language skills acquired at government expense suffer no significant repercussions. Non-imperative staffing action should be discouraged or carried out more strictly since it does not encourage the employees concerned to achieve the requisite language competencies. Language training and the attainment of the linguistic profile should be achieved upstream rather than downstream as is the case for bilingual imperative staffing. These measures would help enhancing the value of language skills without making them a strict requirement tied to the position. The staffing policy governing bilingual positions could be clarified to specify the procedure for ascribing language requirements to the positions to be filled.

- It is necessary to review the policy governing the staffing of bilingual positions in order to clarify the attribution of language requirements to the positions to be filled. Bilingual imperative staffing should become the norm and exemptions to the attainment of the linguistic profiles of employees in designated bilingual positions should require the approval of deputy heads.
- It is necessary to pay particular attention to the needs of the middle managers who must play a broader role in staffing bilingual positions and developing the language skills of employees in conjunction with the modernization of human resources management.

8 In the case of bilingual imperative staffing, bilingual candidates must satisfy the language requirements before they apply for the position.

9 Public Service Commission, Annual Report 2000-2001.

10 *ibid.*



Exemptions from the attainment of the linguistic profile by an employee occupying a bilingual position should also require the sole approval of deputy heads.

It remains to be seen how the adoption of the *Public Service Modernization Act* will affect the Official Languages Program. There is every indication that the new legislation will maintain the power of deputy heads to determine requirements respecting the official languages from the standpoint of the necessary qualifications and the power of the Public Service Commission to assess official languages competencies, among other qualifications. However, we anticipate that the new legislative framework will create an environment in which middle managers assume broader responsibility for human resources management. Consequently, such managers will have to assume a bigger role in staffing bilingual positions and developing the linguistic capacity of employees. The official languages must be included in middle managers' priorities in order to maintain a workplace conducive to bilingualism and ensure the quality of public services offered in both official languages.

Availability of bilingual staff: recruitment, career development and personnel retention

Nearly half of federal public servants will be eligible to retire by 2010. Under the circumstances, recruitment and personnel retention pose a daunting challenge to the Public Service. We propose to examine the effect of the official languages on recruitment, career development and personnel retention practices.

Recruitment

One-quarter of Canadians now entering the labour market are bilingual. The latest Census reveals a downturn between 1996 and 2001 in bilingualism among young English-speakers living outside Québec.¹¹ Despite the decline in bilingualism, the investments and measures geared to education stipulated in the *Action Plan on Official Languages* should help remedy the situation and double by 2013 the number of bilingual Canadians between 15 and 19 years of age. Over the long term, the Public Service can probably rely on a significant pool of bilingual candidates. One means of bolstering the Public Service's linguistic capacity is to recruit bilingual candidates to fill designated bilingual positions. This measure could, *a priori*, favourably affect the integration of new employees and significantly reduce language training costs at the beginning of their careers.

English-speaking university graduates appear to be drawn to learning the other official language. A study devoted to Public Service recruitment of graduates reveals that the second and third factors that influence English-speaking students' career choices are the possibility of learning another language and of working in their mother tongue.¹² Such language-related indicators were not apparent among the French-speaking university graduates questioned. Recruitment strategies should emphasize the advantages of bilingualism to

¹¹ 2001 Census.

¹² Public Service Commission, Research Directorate, *Facing the Challenge: Recruiting the Next Generation of University Graduates to the Public Service*, 1997.

attract potential candidates to the federal Public Service. Potential unilingual English-speaking and French-speaking candidates must be assured that they will receive all of the support necessary to become bilingual. Public servants who do not feel at ease working in their first official language are the most likely to leave, as is true of members of the visible minorities, who believe that they are neither welcome nor appreciated.

Some 68% of respondents to a survey of recently hired members of the visible minorities indicated that English is their first language, which is also true of new employees who do not belong to a visible minority. Roughly 19% of respondents said they spoke a language other than French or English and 12% said that French was their first language.¹³ The linguistic profile of new employees from the visible minorities will affect language training, which must be adapted more specifically to the needs of members of the visible minorities whose first language is neither French nor English.

Career development and personnel retention

Language training poses an important problem from the standpoint of the career development of middle managers, especially English-speaking employees, and the members of the visible minorities.

Middle managers

A recent survey conducted among employees at the EX, EX minus 1 and 2 levels reveals that 51% of the respondents claim to want to improve their knowledge of the other language and 36% believe that their current language competencies are an obstacle to career advancement.¹⁴ Language training and competencies upgrading are one of the most pressing needs facing middle managers. The difficulty of meeting the language requirements of a position is one reason for which 30% of respondents are not seeking to obtain a management position. In light of the challenge posed by the recruitment of replacement managers, it is all the more important to invest in language training for middle managers. Sources of dissatisfaction with regard to career advancement can also adversely affect personnel retention among Public Service middle managers.

- Recruitment strategies should place special emphasis on hiring bilingual candidates to fill bilingual positions.
- Recruitment strategies should rely on bilingualism to attract English-speaking and French-speaking candidates and members of the visible minorities. Moreover, they should clearly stipulate that new employees will receive the necessary language training.
- It is necessary to satisfy the language training needs of middle managers in the Public Service in order to foster personnel retention and ensure the availability of bilingual replacement managers for positions at the executive level.
- It is necessary to satisfy the pressing language training needs of members of the visible minorities in order to facilitate their career advancement in the Public Service and foster personnel retention.

¹³ Public Service Commission, *Recently Hired Visible Minorities: Recruitment Experience, Job Satisfaction and Career Plans*, 2002.

¹⁴ Public Service Commission of Canada, *Executive Succession Reconsidered: Planning for Public Service Renewal*, 2002.

Visible minorities

Knowledge of the second official language is the main skills upgrading concern among members of the visible minorities. Approximately 65% of members of this group say that they need language training and 42% claim that their linguistic profile has hampered their career advancement.¹⁵ The learning of the second official language should not hinder broader integration by members of the visible minorities into the Public Service. The problem of obtaining language training may exacerbate the problem of personnel retention among the members of the visible minorities in the Public Service. Consequently, the Public Service must pay close attention to this problem and commit itself to investing the necessary resources to satisfy the needs of this group, which is particularly at risk.


A Public Service that invests in its development: training and language evaluation

Language training is a key factor in ensuring that public servants achieve the language skills required by their positions. If bilingualism is acknowledged to be a basic skill, language training must be regarded as an essential component of learning and career development plans. We must indicate to employees, especially ambitious ones, that their language skills affect their career but also that the Public Service will provide training and tools to enable them to learn the second official language. A learning account to which the employer contributes could be established to compensate and allow for the development of promising employees who aspire to management positions.

One of the problems frequently noted by the Roundtable is the maintenance and use in the workplace of language skills. Special emphasis must be placed on follow-up to language training to ensure that the language skills acquired are maintained. The use of a second official language demands that managers and employees make an additional effort, not merely an apparent effort but a genuine one. Funds would have to be invested to develop pedagogical tools and flexible training programs adapted to employees' learning styles. Online learning is one form of skills upgrading that can, among others, help maintain the individual's ability to understand the second language in its written form and to write the language. However, the key challenge facing employees is to maintain their ability to speak the second language.

Another follow-up measure that focuses more specifically on the use of the second language consists in increasing the frequency of the language evaluations administered by the Public Service Commission. The evaluation of the ability to understand the written language and to write it could be conducted every five years as is now the case. However, the oral interaction test would be compulsory every two or three years, which could encourage employees to more assiduously maintain their oral skills in the second language and allow for better recognition of individual progress. It would also be advisable to eliminate the exemptions from the oral interaction test component of the language evaluation from which some employees now benefit. Such exemptions do not encourage employees to maintain their language skills.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*



The need to anchor language skills at the outset of an employee's career is one of the most promising means of bolstering the linguistic capacity of public servants. The upstream integration of language skills would promote the use of both official languages in the workplace. The effect of language training on operations is more limited at the beginning of an employee's career. Newly hired employees will be willing to invest in language training at the beginning of their careers provided that the Public Service strongly encourages them to do so and provides them with all of the necessary resources. Young candidates are more mobile and language training could be accompanied by immersion in the second language for a set length of time, e.g. two years, as soon as they take up their duties or through assignments in other regions of Canada. The Management Trainee Program aimed at new candidates is a model to be emulated. The program requires unilingual candidates to become bilingual before taking up their duties and offers the possibility of assignments across Canada.

Efforts to achieve diversity in the Public Service will affect the language training of members of the visible minorities. Emphasis must be placed on their educational needs, especially individuals whose mother tongue is neither French nor English. Some members of the visible minorities experience genuine attitudinal barriers to learning the other language because of the diversity of cultural heritage and experience. Adapted learning strategies must be developed for this group.

- Language training must be considered an essential component of learning and career development plans and remind employees that their language skills affect their careers.
- It is necessary to invest the appropriate resources to anchor language skills at the outset of employees' careers and establish a language training program for newly hired employees that includes an assignment or immersion in the second language.
- It is necessary to invest in follow-up to language training in order to foster the maintenance of the language skills acquired, i.e. to develop skills upgrading programs and flexible educational tools adapted to the employees' learning style.
- It is necessary to invest additional resources in the evaluation of employees' language skills to increase the frequency of oral interaction tests, and to eliminate exemptions in respect of the oral interaction test.
- It is necessary to satisfy the specific educational needs of members of the visible minorities by developing the appropriate language training program and support measures.



Use of the official languages in the workplace

Linguistic imbalance and employee satisfaction

Linguistic imbalance

The findings of a recent study on attitudes toward both official languages in the Public Service of Canada¹⁶ confirm the existing linguistic imbalance in the Public Service. The study reveals that a bigger proportion of French-speakers claim to know English (85%) than English-speakers claim to know French (32%). Bilingual English-speakers who work in bilingual regions spend 14% of their time speaking French; bilingual French-speakers working in bilingual regions spend 43% of their time speaking English. A large proportion of job aids circulate in English only. The respondents claim that 62% of the working papers they receive are in English, 11% are in French and 27% in both languages. Some 22% of documentation received in unilingual French-speaking regions appears to be available in English only. Bilingual public servants write 30% of their documents in French and 70% in English. Even in unilingual French-speaking regions in Québec, 32% of working papers are written in English.

In light of these findings, the Roundtable has emphasized the widespread practice of relying on the services of consultants who work almost exclusively in English. Some effort must be made in this respect to foster more equitable use of French, especially in documents and interviews. One practical, realistic measure would be to tighten contractual standards governing professional services to ensure that consultants work in both official languages.

Employee satisfaction

The latest *Public Service Employee Survey*¹⁷ included for the first time six questions on the official languages in the workplace. The questions focused, in particular, on job aids and equipment, the training available, career advancement, the writing of documents, communication with supervisors, and communication during meetings.

First, let us examine the survey's findings in light of the language requirements of the position occupied. A considerable number of employees occupying designated bilingual positions are dissatisfied with written communication and the language spoken during team meetings. Roughly one bilingual employee in five claims that he does not feel free to write in his own language and 17% of respondents say that they do not feel free to use their own language during meetings. If the language of work is, as a rule, English, it is likely that it is mainly bilingual French-speaking employees who are dissatisfied.

¹⁶ NFO CFgroup, *Attitudes Toward Both Official Languages in the Public Service of Canada*, study prepared for the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, August 2002.

¹⁷ Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002 *Public Service Employee Survey*.

2002 Public Service Employee Survey
According to the language requirements of the position (bilingual employees)

<i>Survey question</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Bilingual</i>
3. When I prepare written materials, including electronic mail, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ Strongly disagree	21%
23. When I communicate with my immediate supervisor, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ Strongly disagree	12%
38. During meetings in my work unit, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ Strongly disagree	17%


Source: 2002 *Public Service Employee Survey*.

As for the survey findings by region, employee dissatisfaction with regard to the language of work is markedly higher in the NCR. The highest dissatisfaction rates concern the drafting of documents in the language of the employee's choice (18% in the NCR and 16% in bilingual regions of Québec). These findings reflect the persistent problem concerning written communication. As for oral communication during meetings, 15% of the respondents from the NCR claim that they do not feel free to use the language of their choice, compared with 11% in designated bilingual regions in Ontario.

2002 Public Service Employee Survey
According to region (bilingual employees)

<i>Survey question</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>NCR</i>	<i>Québec (bilingual regions)</i>	<i>Ontario (bilingual regions)</i>	<i>Other bilingual regions</i>
3. When I prepare written materials, including electronic mail, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ Strongly disagree	18%	16%	9%	7%
23. When I communicate with my immediate supervisor, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ Strongly disagree	10%	3%	8%	4%
38. During meetings in my work unit, I feel free to use the official language of my choice.	Mostly disagree/ Strongly disagree	15%	6%	11%	5%

Source: 2002 *Public Service Employee Survey*.



While the survey's findings are positive from the standpoint of hierarchical communications, employees nonetheless display considerable dissatisfaction. Bilingual employees (12%) and employees in the NCR (10%) display the highest dissatisfaction rates. These findings indicate that managers need to make an additional effort to fully respect the employees' right to be supervised in the language of their choice in the NCR and in designated bilingual regions. Senior managers and supervisors have an important role to play in the everyday implementation of the policy. They must set a good example when communicating with employees and during meetings to foster the full use of both official languages in the workplace.

All in all, we can conclude that French is under-utilized in the Public Service and that there is appreciable dissatisfaction with oral, written and hierarchical communication. Work remains to be done to create and maintain a work environment favourable to the full use of both official languages. While bilingualism in the workplace demands collaboration by all employees, French-speakers working in designated bilingual regions, where English is dominant, have an important role to play in fostering the use of French. With the support of their managers, French-speakers must take advantage of their right to express themselves in the language of their choice. By choosing English, French-speakers are exacerbating imbalance between both official languages and are encouraging neither the maintenance nor the enhancement of French in the workplace.

- Senior management and supervisors must set an example with respect to bilingualism in the workplace in conjunction with hierarchical communication and during meetings.
- French-speakers have an important role to play in promoting the use of French and they must also, with the support of their manager, take advantage of their right to express themselves in the language of their choice.
- In practical terms, contractual rules governing professional services should be tightened to ensure that consultants work in both official languages.
- Good practices and existing support tools in respect of the language of work must be used and tested to foster the effective use of both official languages in the workplace.

Employee attitudes toward the language of work

The study of attitudes toward the official languages in the Public Service¹⁸ reveals that over 80% of public servants are fairly satisfied with the manner in which official languages policies affect them personally. Most employees are willing to make an effort to encourage bilingualism in the Public Service. However, a considerable lack of knowledge appears to persist among public servants concerning the specific language policies defined in the *Official Languages Act*, especially as regards the language of work. For this reason, there is a striking need to more effectively communicate the letter and, above all, the spirit of the Act in order to dispel any ambiguity and enable employees to understand the policy's purpose.

To clarify the opinions and attitudes of public servants with regard to official languages policy, data from the study were divided into seven separate groups. Nearly 47% of the respondents fall into three groups that display a positive attitude toward the official languages and look favourably upon government initiatives in this respect. A fourth group that accounts for roughly 12% of respondents also appears to look favourably upon government intervention but has high expectations. This group mainly comprises French-speakers in minority environments. Approximately 17% of respondents who belong, above all, to a linguistic majority working in the regions believe that the situation is satisfactory and that nothing needs to be done. The two groups that are least in favour of bilingualism are made up primarily of older men in western Canada (10.7%) and Québec French-speakers (13.7%). These findings demonstrate the need to take into account possible sources of resistance and adapt awareness measures in order to more effectively influence attitudes and behaviour.

When all is said and done, linguistic behaviour is rooted in perceptions and attitudes toward the official languages and is also determined by personal experience. It is extremely important to focus on employee attitudes and perceptions in order to create a culture that supports the official languages. The challenge consists in creating a culture in which the official languages are not perceived as a burden for managers and employees but instead as an integral, positive part of a workplace centred on the basic values of respect and inclusion.

- It is necessary for deputy heads to take advantage of public servants' support for bilingualism in order to revitalize efforts concerning the language of work.
- It is necessary to promote the rights and obligations of employees and managers concerning the language of work and to remedy erroneous perceptions of the scope of the requirements of the official languages policy.
- It is necessary to rely on employees' perceptions and attitudes to create a culture in which linguistic duality is recognized as an integral, positive part of a workplace centred on the basic values of respect and inclusion.

¹⁸ NFO CFgroup, *Attitudes Toward Both Official Languages in the Public Service of Canada*, study prepared for the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, August 2002.

Relying on the organizational culture

Our examination has made it possible, first and foremost, to pinpoint a series of measures that can bolster the Public Service's linguistic capacity and, what is more, should enhance the use of both official languages in the workplace. An improvement in the linguistic capacity of public servants will depend, by and large, on administrative reforms and the resources allocated to the Official Languages Program.

However, the Roundtable has concluded that it is within the purview of each organization to act vigorously with respect to the use of both official languages in the workplace. Numerous factors pinpointed in the course of our examination of the language of work reveal the need to initiate a change of culture centred on the core values of respect and inclusion. French is under-utilized and ignorance persists concerning the scope and demands of the official languages policy, especially as it pertains to the language of work. In order to make the language of work a key priority, it will be crucial to change the attitudes and perceptions that shape employees' linguistic behaviour.

To put it plainly, the proposed change of culture is an essential condition for revitalizing bilingualism in the workplace. As we will see in the following sections, this initiative will require the leadership of deputy heads, the support of Official Languages Champions, and the development of an intervention strategy adapted to the needs of government departments and agencies.

The importance of leadership displayed by deputy heads

The leadership displayed by deputy heads is a decisive factor that will make it possible to initiate the revitalization of the official languages in the workplace. Deputy heads must acknowledge that we have fallen behind in this regard and reconfirm the need for their organizations to reflect linguistic duality, a core value. They must explicitly state the need to launch a renewal and heighten awareness of the relevance of change. Moreover, they must allocate the appropriate resources that will allow for the implementation of change and appoint an agent of change who ensures the visibility of the measures proposed.



Official Languages Champions as agents of change

Official Languages Champions must play a leading role in promoting the official languages in their organizations. Their support will be essential to revitalize the language of work. They will foster managerial leadership in their organizations and broaden the influence of the official languages. Deputy heads should give them a mandate to elaborate an intervention strategy focusing on the language of work and determine the factors and resources needed to effect change.

An intervention strategy aimed at promoting the language of work

Evaluation of the language of work


Before they can elaborate an intervention strategy, government departments and agencies must assess the state of the language of work. The diagnosis must focus on a lucid, realistic evaluation of the unsatisfactory situation, with particular emphasis on: 1) the collection and analysis of data on the situation; 2) data analysis; and 3) the pinpointing of the most significant factors. A full diagnosis should:

- define the unsatisfactory situation;
- note and explain discrepancies between the unsatisfactory situation and the desired situation;
- take into account links between and reciprocal impact on the organization and the environment;
- determine the organization's responsiveness to change;
- assess the infrastructure and resources available in the organization; and
- examine general trends.

The definition of objectives, strategies, means of action and the resources needed to revitalize the language of work will normally be determined in light of the factors pinpointed during the diagnosis.

Guidelines for a strategy

The intervention strategy to be elaborated in respect of the language of work must be integrated into the management framework of the existing Official Languages Program in each government department and agency. Bearing in mind the diagnosis, the process of elaborating the intervention strategy consists in: 1) selecting those means that seem the most effective in achieving the objective pursued, in light of the organization's specific context; and 2) organizing the means in such a way that they produce the desired effect. We are proposing a number of guidelines to help government departments and agencies elaborate their strategy aimed at fostering the use of both official languages in the workplace, drawn from good practices or initiatives under way in other departments (see Appendix 1). These initiatives contain basic components that



the Roundtable believes should be an integral part of the strategy to be adopted by government departments and agencies.

Establish an accountability framework

The Official Languages Program in government departments and agencies should rely on a structure and a management process through which all of the organization's managers are accountable for the performance of their area of responsibility with respect to the language of work. Managers are obliged to make key commitments in this respect and are evaluated each year according to performance indicators centred on results and the degree of satisfaction of the employees for whom they are responsible. The accountability framework makes it possible to foster a commitment by senior and middle management and ensure leadership at all levels.

Involve employees at all levels

Employees must be a party to the management of the Official Languages Program in their departments. To encourage employee involvement, employees must be able to participate in the elaboration of measures aimed at promoting and enhancing the use of both official languages in the workplace. Such involvement can be sought, in particular, through consultations, exchanges of good practices, networks and opinion polls. Employees must be able at all times to notify their supervisors or other officials of problems or concerns pertaining to the language of work.

Evaluate performance

Performance appraisal is tied to the notion of managerial accountability and to the ongoing enhancement of a workplace conducive to the use of both official languages. Evaluation instruments should include performance indicators focusing on the language of work, i.e. oral and written communication, job aids, supervision, training and skills upgrading, and meetings. Feedback and opinion polls conducted among employees reveal employees' concerns and make it possible, if need be, to remedy the situation.

The dialogical approach

The dialogical approach may prove useful in fostering mutual understanding between individuals and in creating an environment for discussion centred on respect and values. This method proposes a dialogue that allows participants to explore presuppositions, ideas, beliefs, and the individual and collective emotions that subtly control their interactions. As William Isaacs puts it, a dialogue is a "shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together. It is not something that you do to another person. It is something you do with people.... Dialogue is a living experience of inquiry within and between people." Dialogue consists in listening willingly and makes it possible to connect individuals to experience. All in all, the dialogical approach is entirely suited to awareness sessions or team discussions of the language of work.



Heighten awareness among employees and managers

Awareness sessions centred on a dialogical approach must be offered to promote the rights and obligations of employees and managers with regard to the language of work. Such sessions should make it possible to correct misconceptions concerning the scope of requirements in the official languages policy. Moreover, they should facilitate discussions among participants that highlight the importance of mutual respect and values surrounding the language of work. Employees and managers must be aware that they embody the *Official Languages Act* and the attendant policies and that their behaviour directly affects the creation of a workplace conducive to the use of both official languages. Discussions should focus on all facets of the language of work, i.e. oral and written communication (internal communication and communication between the regions), bilingual meetings, supervision, training, the maintenance of second-language skills, and so on.

Support for innovation with respect to the official languages

The *Action Plan on Official Languages* unveiled in March 2003 makes provision for \$14 million in funding to help government departments and agencies implement targeted measures that foster better management of the official languages, a change of organizational culture, new service delivery methods, and language learning in the workplace.

It is to the advantage of government departments and agencies to resort to two new funds, i.e. the Official Languages Innovation Fund and the Regional Partnerships Fund. The Treasury Board and federal government institutions will operate the Official Languages Innovation Fund on a cost-sharing basis with respect to initiatives aimed at enhancing the management of the Official Languages Program (service delivery and language of work) and a change of culture. The promoters of initiatives must demonstrate their seriousness through the definition of objectives and the measurement of results. The project evaluation process must be rigorous. The Regional Partnerships Fund should enable the regional offices of government departments to collaborate to support projects that satisfy local needs from the standpoint of service delivery, equitable participation by French-speakers and English-speakers, and the language of work in designated bilingual regions. The basic requirements will entail an evaluation of the projects and the pooling of good practices in order to publicize successes in federal government institutions.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this report, we have reviewed progress with respect to the official languages over the past three decades. Our examination reveals that the *Official Languages Act* of 1969 and amendments to the Act in 1988 have played a decisive role in the recognition of language rights and support by Canadians and federal government institutions for bilingualism. Despite considerable progress, we note that the Official Languages Program in federal government institutions has faltered somewhat over the past decade. The language of work is lagging behind when compared to the language of service. Serious problems hampering the use of both official languages persist, especially French, in the workplace.

The Roundtable has also examined the current and emerging situation in order to better pinpoint issues related to the language of work and suggest possible solutions. For the purpose of our analysis, we chose two factors that interact dynamically, i.e. the linguistic capacity of public servants and the use of the official languages in the workplace. The results of the analysis underpin the recommendations presented below.


Recommendations concerning the linguistic capacity of Public Service employees

Participation rate

- 1) The Public Service must pursue efforts to maintain equitable participation by French-speakers in job categories related to the institutional mandate of organizations and remedy the overrepresentation of French-speakers in job categories in which they provide administrative services to other public servants.
- 2) The Public Service must implement a recruitment strategy to remedy the under-representation of English-speakers in the federal Public Service in Québec.

Attainment of the linguistic profile and the bilingualism bonus

- 3) The government must maintain its commitment to ensuring that all managers at the EX level attain the relevant language requirements.
- 4) The Public Service must invest more extensively in language training for middle managers working in bilingual regions and make such managers proficient to the C-B-C level when their duties warrant doing so.

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- 5) The Public Service must review the linguistic requirements pertaining to certain middle management and supervisory positions in unilingual regions in order to foster the establishment of bilingual work relations in conjunction with horizontal initiatives between unilingual and bilingual regions.
 - 6) The government and the unions must reassess the effectiveness of the bilingualism bonus in conjunction with the review of the Official Languages Program and the modernization of human resources and examine the possibility of reinvesting funding for the bonus in employee training and skills upgrading.

Staffing of bilingual positions

- 7) The Treasury Board must review the policy governing the staffing of bilingual positions in order to clarify the attribution of linguistic requirements to the positions to be filled. Bilingual imperative staffing should become the norm and exemptions to the attainment of the linguistic profile for employees in designated bilingual positions should require the approval of deputy heads.
- 8) The Public Service must play close attention to the needs of the middle managers who must play a broader role in staffing bilingual positions and the development of employee language skills in conjunction with the modernization of human resources management.

Recruitment, career development and personnel retention

- 9) Recruitment strategies must focus, in particular, on bilingual candidates to fill bilingual positions.
- 10) Recruitment strategies must enhance the attractiveness of bilingualism among English-speakers, French-speakers and members of the visible minorities and should clearly specify that newly hired employees will receive the necessary language training.
- 11) The Public Service must satisfy the pressing language training needs of its middle managers to foster personnel retention and ensure the availability of bilingual replacement managers for positions at the executive level.
- 12) The Public Service must satisfy the pressing language training needs of members of the visible minorities in order to facilitate their career advancement in the Public Service and to foster personnel retention.




Training and language evaluation

- 13) The Public Service must regard language training as a key component of learning and career development plans and indicate to employees that their language skills will affect their careers.
- 14) The Public Service Commission and government departments must invest the appropriate resources to anchor language skills at the beginning of employees' careers and establish a language training program for newly hired employees that includes an assignment or immersion in the second language.
- 15) The Public Service Commission and government departments must invest in follow-up to language training to foster the maintenance of the language skills acquired, i.e. develop skills upgrading programs and flexible educational tools adapted to the employees' learning styles.
- 16) The Public Service Commission must invest additional funds with respect to the evaluation of employees' language skills to increase the frequency of oral interaction tests and eliminate test exemptions.
- 17) The Public Service Commission must satisfy the specific educational needs of certain members of the visible minorities by developing the appropriate language training program and support measures.

Recommendations concerning the use of the official languages in the workplace

- 18) Senior and middle managers must set an example with respect to bilingualism in the workplace in conjunction with hierarchical communications and during meetings.
- 19) French-speakers have an important role to play in promoting the use of French and, with the support of their managers, they must take advantage of their right to express themselves in the language of their choice.
- 20) Contractual rules governing professional services must be tightened in order to ensure that consultants work in both official languages.
- 21) Departments and managers must rely on existing good practices and tools with regard to the language of work and test them in order to foster the effective use of both official languages in the workplace.
- 22) Deputy heads must take advantage of the support of public servants for bilingualism in order to revitalize efforts centred on the language of work.

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- 23) Departments and agencies must promote the rights and obligations of employees and managers with respect to the language of work and remedy erroneous perceptions concerning the scope of the requirements of the official languages policy.
 - 24) Departments and agencies must rely on employee perceptions and attitudes to create a culture in which linguistic duality is recognized as an integral, positive part of a workplace centred on the core values of respect and inclusion.

The Roundtable has proposed recommendations concerning the linguistic capacity of public servants in order to foster debate on the choice of measures and the resources needed to bolster this capacity. However, efforts to strengthen linguistic capacity must be accompanied by measures that allow for the creation of a work environment conducive to the use of both official languages. The recommendations concerning the use of the official languages reveal the importance of initiating a change of culture centred on the core values of respect and inclusion and the importance of focusing on the attitudes and perceptions that shape employees' linguistic behaviour.

More specifically, the Roundtable has examined the question of a change of culture with respect to the language of work by proposing the broad outlines of an approach to change in government departments and agencies. The leadership displayed by deputy heads and Official Languages Champions as agents of change will be essential to revitalize the language of work. Government departments and agencies must conduct an organizational evaluation that highlights the objectives, means of action and resources necessary to elaborate and implement an adapted intervention strategy with respect to the language of work. The intervention strategy should take into account the following guidelines: the establishment of an accountability framework, a commitment from employees at all levels, systematic performance appraisal, and heightened awareness among managers and employees. It is in the interests of government departments and agencies to rely on the innovation funds announced in the March 2003 Action Plan aimed at supporting departmental initiatives pertaining to the Official Languages Program.

The Roundtable believes that its recommendations and approach to a change of organizational culture are pragmatic and feasible. The recommendations must support decision makers responsible for language policy, deputy ministers and managers in their efforts to build an exemplary Public Service from the standpoint of the official languages. We must not forget that failure to intervene vigorously with regard to the Public Service's linguistic capacity and the use of the official languages in the workplace risks undermining the language of service. The Roundtable is convinced that federal government institutions will renew their commitment to fulfilling their obligations pursuant to the *Official Languages Act* and to restoring a culture favourable to both official languages in the workplace.



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APPENDIX 1

GOOD PRACTICES ON THE LANGUAGE OF WORK

STATISTICS CANADA

Matrix Organization of the Official Languages Program

Objectives

The Official Languages Program at Statistics Canada relies on a matrix organization centred on three basic principles, i.e. management leadership, managerial accountability, and employee participation.

The matrix organization fosters consultation and participation by interveners at all levels of the organization in order to obtain feedback concerning the management of the official languages. Statistics Canada takes into account the specific context of all sectors of the organization and assesses the possible effect on them of new measures and policies respecting the official languages. In this way, it can ultimately ensure that the measures implemented serve the Bureau overall.

Leadership and visibility

Human resources management at Statistics Canada is one of the key responsibilities of line executives and relies on management committees.

All senior managers belong to at least one of these committees, to which they are regularly assigned on a rotating basis. Human resources specialists participate in the committees, but line executives take the initiative and approve decisions.

Official Languages Committee

For 25 years, the Official Languages Committee has provided advice on the direction and content of the Official Languages Program and overseen the management of translation and terminology services and language training.

The committee reports to the Subcommittee of the Human Resources Development Committee, which reports in turn to the Policy Committee, chaired by the chief statistician and comprising seven deputy chief statisticians, including the Official Languages Champion and the director general of human resources.



Official Languages Champion

The Subcommittee of the Human Resources Development Committee acts as the operational organ of the Human Resources Development Committee. Co-chaired by two deputy chief statisticians, one of whom is the Official Languages Champion, it is made up of a number of directors general, including the director general of human resources, and directors.

In addition to ensuring the Official Languages Program's visibility in all of the Bureau's functional activities that the Policy Committee oversees, the Official Language Champion's presence on the committee ensures that account is taken of the Official Languages Program when decisions are made concerning employee recruitment, training and skills upgrading.

Official Languages and Translation Division

The Official Languages and Translation Division supports the Official Languages Committee, elaborates guidelines under the Official Languages Program, and advises managers on legal requirements and the implementation of policies and programs. The division elaborates and manages the departmental language training program, plans and oversees individual employee training, and informs employees of their rights and obligations with respect to the official languages. It is also responsible for managing translation services for the Bureau overall, controlling the quality of all texts translated, and the management, standardization and dissemination of terminology specifically related to Statistics Canada's operations.

The Official Languages Committee also supervises two permanent subcommittees and various ad hoc committees, indicated below.


Subcommittee on Terminological and Linguistic Standardization

The Subcommittee on Terminological and Linguistic Standardization reports to the Official Languages Committee and is responsible for standardizing terminology and language use in both official languages at Statistics Canada to enhance the quality and effectiveness of written communication and thus help employees to work in the language of their choice.

Official Languages Coordinators Subcommittee

An official languages coordinator represents each of the 60 divisions at Statistics Canada. The coordinator listens to his colleagues' concerns in order to pinpoint situations that foster or hamper the use of the two official languages in the workplace and may suggest to directors concrete ways of enhancing bilingualism in their services.

The Official Languages Coordinators Subcommittee is responsible for 1) pinpointing and implementing means and tools to support divisional coordinators in their duties and facilitate the exchange of best practices; 2)



planning and proposing initiatives to promote bilingualism throughout the Bureau; and 3) acting as an intermediary between the Official Languages Committee and the network of divisional official languages coordinators.

Ad hoc committees

In 1997, the Official Languages Committee asked each division to set up its own discussion group on the language of work, also called the divisional official languages committee, to enable employees to participate in the implementation of measures aimed at promoting the use of both official languages in the workplace.

The surveys conducted by Statistics Canada over the past 10 years among its employees and the studies and internal audits that it carries out as needed allow the Official Languages Committee to closely monitor the official languages in the workplace and recommend measures to enhance the effectiveness and image of the Official Languages Program throughout the Bureau. Task forces and focus groups are established as needed to analyze the questions raised. The findings of the surveys, studies and audits are used to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses with respect to the language of work and are subject to rigorous follow-up in order to maintain past achievements and remedy shortcomings.

Various tools, described below, support managers in the implementation of the Official Languages Program.

Regular meetings with line executives

Advisors in the Official Languages Division regularly meet with directors from national headquarters and the regional offices to take stock of the official languages in their sectors, review the relevant objectives, and establish strategies and commitments aimed at improving the situation. These evaluations are consolidated and submitted to senior officials to provide an overview of the situation in the organization. Visits are structured to emphasize the progress achieved and the objectives attained so that interveners can seek inspiration in their successes to better concentrate their efforts on areas that can be improved.

Workshop on the language of work

In order for employees to exercise their language rights and respect their colleagues' rights, they must be aware of these rights and know how to take advantage of them in the workplace. A practical workshop on the language of work has been offered since the beginning of the year to Statistics Canada employees and managers.

Through videos, role playing, personal reflection and group discussions, participants are encouraged to discover their rights and obligations with respect to the official languages and, in particular, to discuss active offer, inter-office communications, bilingual meetings, supervision, training, competitions and the maintenance of second-language skills.



Employee opinion poll

The employee opinion poll helps to identify employee concerns with respect to the use of both official languages in the workplace and, as the case may be, make the necessary commitments to help them work in the official language of their choice.

GUIDELINES

At Statistics Canada, the Official Languages Program concerns everyone and each employee may participate in decision making. The strategy centres on the principle of the accountability of line executives and relies on performance indicators based on results and level of employee satisfaction.

The matrix organization of the committees fosters collegiality at the top and reinforces through buy-in a commitment by senior management. These factors make it possible to enhance the Official Languages Program's effectiveness and maintain its visibility.

Managers must set an example with regard to bilingualism. Their leadership in promoting the equitable use of both official languages in their fields of responsibility is especially important since employees who see their superiors acting concretely believe that they truly have the possibility of using the official language of their choice in the workplace.

English-speaking and French-speaking employees participate in the implementation of measures aimed at promoting the use of both official languages in their workplaces through consultation, the establishment of networks, and the exchange of best practices.

The exchanges that take place at all levels make it possible to ascertain the acceptance threshold with regard to certain practices and formulate recommendations that take into account the organization's culture.



CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY (CCRA)

Pilot Project on Language of Work - Quality Management System

An approach based on the ISO 9000 standard

In the summer of 1997, the deputy minister at Revenue Canada advocated the establishment of recognized standards governing the quality of service, in keeping with the impending creation of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. National headquarters launched an appeal to the regions to define initiatives likely to attain this objective. Five ISO 9000 certification pilot projects were accepted, two of them in the Québec region.

ISO is a specialized international agency for standardization that establishes standards in fields such as engineering and the environment. The ISO 9000 standard governs quality assurance and makes provision for a quality management system based on the principle of continuous improvement. The ISO 9001-2000 standard clarifies the notions of a customer-based approach and a commitment by management by requiring the measurement of these factors and the level of attainment of objectives. Given the resounding success of this approach in the other ISO projects that the CCRA has undertaken, it was decided to seek inspiration in these projects to carry out a pilot project devoted to the language of work at the CCRA.

Objectives of the Quality Management System - Official Languages

The success of the five ISO pilot projects encouraged management to rely on the same approach to administer the *Official Languages Act* from the standpoint of the language of work. In February 2002, the CCRA Management Committee approved the implementation of the Quality Management System - Official Languages pilot project, based on the ISO standard, which in fact adopts a hybrid approach.

In its action plan on official languages, the CCRA adopted the objective for 2002-2003 of providing its managers with the tools needed to create and maintain a workplace in which employees are able to use the official language of their choice.

The pilot project centres on a basic commitment to create in the CCRA a workplace that respects each employee. It allows for the adoption of measures and tools that foster the creation of a workplace in which French and English are used equitably in a spirit of mutual respect. The pilot project is an important measure that will allow the CCRA to better comply with the *Official Languages Act* with respect to the language of work.



The two sections of the Quality Management System

The Quality Management System is a tool aimed at encouraging employees to comply with the *Official Languages Act* and familiarizing them with the requirements of the Act and the means of applying them in their everyday work. The Quality Management System has two sections, the first of which focuses on the management of the system itself, comprising five procedures:

- management review (periodic review by senior management of the quality management system and adoption of remedial and preventive measures);
- rectification of discrepancies (procedure accessible to all employees for pooling best practices and detecting and remedying discrepancies);
- evaluation of interveners' satisfaction (measurement of the quality management system's effectiveness);
- internal audits (verification of the effectiveness and implementation of management review, rectification of discrepancies and evaluation of interveners' satisfaction procedures);
- system management (a procedure accessible to all employees to suggest enhancements to the system and its procedures).

The second section provides CCRA employees and managers with procedures and tools to help them establish and maintain a workplace that respects each employee's language preferences. To this end, the pilot project is focusing on requirements related to the language of work in the following fields:

- awareness of rights and obligations respecting the language of work;
- written and oral communication;
- common, widespread work tools, including an InfoZone Web site;
- supervision and performance appraisal;
- bilingual meetings (conferences, teleconferencing, task forces, and so on);
- training and skills upgrading (initiatives elaborated by and for the labour sectors participating in the pilot project).

Quality promise

The quality promise stems from the values underlying Part V of the *Official Languages Act* and the pilot project's objectives. To this end, the Project Committee, comprising representatives of National Headquarters, Customs, Taxation, the Human Resources Branch, the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat and the Québec region, has elaborated the quality promise that underpins the Quality Management System - Official Languages.

Extensive consultations among interveners in various sectors of the CCRA have confirmed that the quality promise reflects both the spirit of the *Official Languages Act* and the CCRA's values, i.e. integrity,



professionalism, respect and collaboration. The Commissioner and the Project Executive Committee approved this promise at a ceremony to unveil the quality promise on June 12, 2002.

The quality promise states:

"As an employee of the Agency, and with its support, I pledge that I will contribute to a working environment that fulfills the provisions of the Official Languages Act on language of work, and the related policies, in a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect."

The commitment to CCRA values implies that each employee adopts through his gestures and words the organization's core values, which underpin all initiatives. Regardless of their hierarchical level, employees must strive to act in keeping with the organization's values, display support for the CCRA's core values of integrity, professionalism, respect and collaboration, and thus maintain the organization's integrity. The quality promise respecting the official languages focuses on the defence of the organization's ethical and social standards (integrity); the attainment of the highest performance standards (professionalism); the rights of others (respect); and cooperation with others to achieve common goals (collaboration).

A quality management system demands that managerial staff and employees commit themselves fully in order to create a working environment in the CCRA that is conducive to the use of French and English.

Looking to the future

The pilot project initially involved participants working at National Headquarters and their counterparts in the Québec and Northern Ontario regions to ensure that participants occupy positions with different linguistic profiles and work daily in either official language. The deputy commissioners from the Compliance Programs Branch and the Customs Branch took advantage of the opportunity to display their commitment to comply with Part V of the *Official Languages Act* and determine the divisions and work sectors that they wished to have participate in the pilot project. During the project's implementation in November 2002, roughly 900 people took part in the project. They work in the sectors indicated below:

- Québec region: all of the Client Service Division of Customs Operations and the international tax divisions of the Laval and Montréal tax services offices;
- Northern Ontario region: the International Tax Services Office in Ottawa;
- National Headquarters: the International Tax Directorate, the Laboratory and Scientific Services Directorate, and Operational Policy and Coordination (Customs).

In 2003-2004, during the second year of the pilot project, the number of participants is expected to double with the addition of new directorates and one or more additional regions. In 2004-2005, the project will apply to the CCRA overall.



CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA

Accountability Framework

The Canadian Constitution, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act* all recognize the advantages of having a bilingual country and maintaining two viable linguistic communities across the country.

To reflect its vision of the country, the *Official Languages Act* sets forth certain requirements and commitments for which each federal institution must be held accountable in the implementation of its various programs.


Among the commitments to be made, some are more specific to the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) mandate in matters of citizenship and immigration. Under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*, the Department is committed to enhancing the vitality of English-speaking and French-speaking minorities, supporting their development and promoting the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society. In the federal government, there are 27 federal institutions that are identified as having an important role to play in the implementation of this part. CIC is one of them.

The *Official Languages Act* also requires that federal institutions serve the public in the language of choice in certain offices designated for that purpose (Part IV). Federal institutions must also ensure that in bilingual regions the workplace is conducive to the effective use of both official languages and officers and employees have the right to use either official language (Part V). Finally, under Part VI, CIC is committed to ensuring that the composition of its workforce tends to reflect the presence of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians in Canada.

The purpose of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* is among others to support the development of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada.

Enhancing the vitality of both official languages minorities while at the same time promoting the use of English and French, as languages of work constitute a real challenge to CIC. To this end, the accountability framework developed by the Department defines and specifies the roles and responsibilities devolved upon managers and employees.

The framework also places emphasis on a new partner, a change agent, the Official Languages Champion, whose mandate is to improve the visibility of the official languages program within the Department. The Champion's role is specified in the accountability framework. Although at the heart of official language issues within the Department, the Champion nevertheless does not replace the manager and shall not constitute another management level.



In addition, certain departmental branches such as Selection, Refugees, Integration, the Regions, International Region, Communications as well as Strategic Policy, Planning, and Research (SPPR) and Human Resources (HR), due to their mandate, have specific responsibilities in the area of official languages.

Three of those branches play a strategic support role to the other branches. They are: Communications with respect to Parts IV, V, VI and VII, Human Resources for Parts IV, V, VI and SPPR with regard to Part VII. The latter has the main responsibility to define CIC position and policies with regard to Part VII in consultation with all the other branches.

Selection, Refugees, Integration, Regions and International Region play a front-line role in the promotion of the development of the two official language minorities, as well as in the promotion of the use of English and French in Canadian society. These branches are responsible for taking any necessary steps to integrate the requirements of Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* into departmental activities.

The accountability framework covers all levels in the Department and defines roles and responsibilities of those levels: assistant deputy ministers, directors general and managers. It also covers employees. Employees are indeed the first to deal with the Department's clients. Consequently, employees whose responsibility is to serve the client in the language of choice and fail to do so deprive the client of the exercise of a right and prevent their superior and the whole departmental organization to fully exercise their accountability.

The Minister and Deputy Minister will be provided with better support to fully assume their accountability should this accountability framework be appropriated by all staff. The framework will then constitute a tool to ensure equality of the English and French languages at Citizenship and Immigration.



APPENDIX 2

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON THE LANGUAGE OF WORK

Performance appraisal

Documents available on the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat Web site
(www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ollo)

- Diagnostic Grid (1998)
- Self-Evaluation Checklist for the Manager/for the Employee (2002)

Documents available on the Public Service-Wide Employee Survey Web site
(www.survey-sondage.gc.ca)

- Public Service-Wide Employee Survey (2002 and pending)

Heightened awareness among managers and employees

Documents available on the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat Web site
(www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ollo)

- The Hit Play - Chairing Bilingual Meetings (2002)
- Chairing meetings: How to successfully conduct meetings in both official languages (1990)
- English and French in the workplace: what federal employees need to know (1995)
- You have the floor: meetings in both official languages (1992)
- *Official Languages Act*: annotated version (2001)

Recognition of excellence

Information available on the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat Web site
(www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ollo)

Statistics Canada: Official Languages Excellence Award - To recognize important achievements, remarkable initiatives and best practices related to the Official Languages Program, Statistics Canada has created an "Official Languages Excellence Award," given each year by the Chief Statistician.



Information available on the Web site of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
(www.ocol-clo.gc.ca)

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages: Léon Leadership Award - The Commissioner of Official Languages recently instituted the Léon Leadership Award of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Each year, the award pays tribute to an executive of a federal institution who has displayed outstanding leadership in promoting linguistic duality and in implementing the Official Languages Program in the institution.