



THE **NEXT LEVEL**

NORMALIZING A CULTURE OF INCLUSIVE LINGUISTIC DUALITY IN
THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE WORKPLACE

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

The Public Service of Canada is a source of pride and the envy of our international partners. In 2017, Canada ranked at the top of a new International Civil Service Effectiveness Index. In addition to its qualities of professionalism, impartiality, integrity and diversity, our public service also reflects the linguistic duality of our country and provides services to citizens in the official language of their choice.

This unique feature has evolved over time and much progress has been made since the entry into force of the *Official Languages Act* in 1969: the range of bilingual services has increased, official language minority communities are better supported, bilingualism is valued by the vast majority of Canadians, more parents are choosing to have their children receive bilingual education and the capacity of the Public Service in both official languages has steadily increased.

Yet all the benefits of linguistic duality have not fully been realized. For example:

- too many public servants working in bilingual regions do not feel comfortable using their language of choice in their workplace;
- some managers do not demonstrate a good ability to work with their employees in the language of their choice;
- some public servants have difficulty meeting and maintaining the language requirements for their positions;
- some public servants see official language requirements as a barrier to hiring and/or promotion;
- meetings sometimes fail to facilitate the use of both official languages;
- the Public Service could take better advantage of new technologies to support the learning and use of official languages; and
- leaders do not always lead by example.

The Clerk of the Privy Council, as head of the Public Service, asked us to examine these issues by consulting with public servants across Canada; analyzing trends, results and best practices; and to make recommendations. Blueprint 2020 articulated the vision of a modern, flexible, committed and diverse workforce. In this context, it is important to review and update our approach to official languages to ensure that it is well aligned with the everyday reality of federal public servants and reinforces the inclusive vision of Blueprint 2020.

This report highlights some areas where improvements are needed but also stresses a strong consensus across the Public Service: linguistic duality is a fundamental value that must be promoted.

We have put forward recommendations that would, if implemented in their entirety, lead to significant changes in our approach to official languages in the workplace. Some current practices need to be questioned because, in the opinion of a large number of public servants consulted, they no longer meet the needs of a modern and dynamic public service. We understand that some of these recommendations will be difficult to adopt or implement immediately. We also know that change will have to happen gradually and with the on-going input from public servants. We must ensure that Departments continue to exercise available flexibilities, as necessary, in order to achieve other important objectives, including enhancing the representation of Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. But to reap the full benefits of linguistic duality, build on the current spirit of public service renewal and maintain excellence and inclusion, it is important to act.

We would like to thank the hundreds of public servants who participated in our consultations and generously shared their ideas, best practices, hopes and concerns with us, and acknowledge the leadership of our teams throughout this process.

Patrick Borbey and Matthew Mendelsohn

INTRODUCTION

Canada has a rich history of linguistic duality. It is part of our core values, enriches our culture and workplaces in immeasurable ways, and is symbolic of our commitment to diversity and inclusion. Our dedication to linguistic duality is enshrined in the Canadian Constitution and in legislation, which gives equal status to English and French in federal institutions, guarantees the rights of citizens to access federal services in the official language of their choice and gives employees of federal institutions in bilingual regions the right to work in the language of their choice.

The Public Service is charged with putting into action the core elements of the legislation, and has made many investments to ensure that linguistic duality is reflected in its structures and practices. There have been many positive outcomes to these investments. Over the past 10 years, there has been a steady increase in the number of bilingual positions, and in the number of employees meeting the language requirements of their positions. There are also governance structures and monitoring processes to champion official languages within the Public Service, to measure progress and to promote awareness.

The integration of linguistic duality across the Public Service through consistent standards and governance has established a strong foundation for official languages and is an important step toward creating a diverse workforce and an inclusive work environment.

The Public Service is currently undergoing a process of renewal. The Blueprint 2020 Initiative was launched in 2013 to develop a vision for a world-class public service with a capable, confident and high performing workforce that engages citizens, provides value for money, and makes use of smart technologies. One of the keys to achieving this vision will be to hire a diverse workforce that is representative of the people it serves.

In April 2017, a report on diversity in the workplace found a positive link between diversity, revenue and productivity, particularly in sectors that depend on creativity and innovation, communication, legal and professional services (Momani & Stirk, 2017). It also encouraged organizations to look beyond the numbers; diversity and representation are not enough. Organizations must create work environments that are inclusive and give all employees the opportunity

to participate, to contribute and to realize their potential. The focus of that research looked at elements of diversity beyond bilingualism but its findings speak to the importance of an inclusive culture, where both English and French languages have an equal place in our work environments, if we want to accomplish the goals of the Blueprint 2020 Initiative.

The last comprehensive review of the use of official languages in the Public Service workplace was conducted by an Action-Research Roundtable on Official Languages in the Workplace at the Canadian Centre for Management Development (Canadian Centre for Management Development, 2003). This work proposed recommendations for improving the linguistic capacity of employees of the Public Service and creating a culture that fostered the use of both official languages.

With almost 15 years passed since the publication of this report and as Canada celebrates the 150th anniversary of confederation, it is a great opportunity to take stock of the current use of both official languages in the workplace and to evaluate how we, as a public service, can take the next step to preserve the spirit of the legislation, strengthen our linguistic duality and empower the use of both official languages in innovative and meaningful ways.

This report is the result of the work of a committee composed of representatives from Canadian Heritage, the Privy Council Office, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Public Service Commission of Canada, the Canada School of Public Service, Public Services and Procurement Canada, and the Chair of the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions. It was informed by data provided in the most recent Public Service Employee Survey (2014), the Annual Reports on Official Languages, the Census, and a series of consultations involving public servants across the country, at all levels.

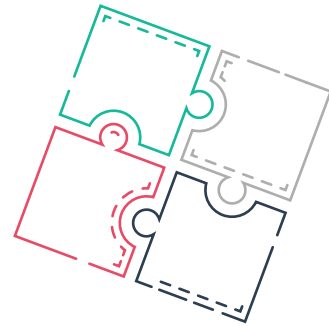
This report examines the key concerns that were identified through consultations and provides recommendations that may shape a future Public Service – one that genuinely includes both English and French, where all public servants feel empowered to use the official language of their choice.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?



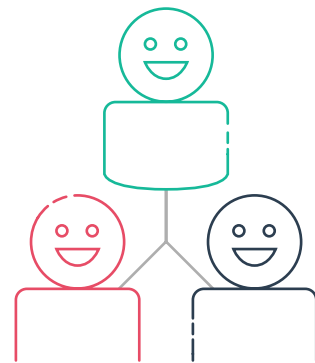
LANGUAGE OF WORK

The language of work of the Public Service should genuinely include both English and French. Public servants should feel empowered to use the official language of their choice.



DIVERSITY

The Public Service should represent the people it serves. Recruitment, retention, performance management and training strategies should be aligned to support diversity and embrace both official languages.



STEWARDSHIP

Public resources to support official languages should be used in an effective, efficient and accountable way. Investment in training and tools should focus on short and long term needs and new technologies, and should be used to maximize outcomes in a fair and accessible manner.

CONTEXT

Before discussing the challenges regarding the use of official languages in the workplace, it is helpful to understand the rights and obligations established by the current policy framework.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The cornerstones of Canada's official languages framework are the Canadian Constitution, *the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and *the Official Languages Act*. *The Official Languages Act* (the Act), which initially came into force in 1969, gives English and French equal status in the Government of Canada, making them the official languages of Canada. The Act has undergone several changes over time, and was repealed and replaced with a new *Official Languages Act* in 1988, and further amended in 2005.

The main goal of the Act is to ensure that Canadians have access to federal services in the official language of their choice. The Act also specifies the obligations of federal institutions, as a bilingual employer. It gives employees of federal institutions in designated bilingual regions the right to work in the official language of their choice. This includes the right to be supervised, to write, speak and train, and to receive personal and central services in their language of choice.

The Act also gives responsibility to Treasury Board to provide general direction and coordination for the policies and programs of the Government of Canada relating to language of work and the equitable participation of English- and French-speaking Canadians in federal institutions.

SUPPORTING POLICY

The policy framework for official languages in the Public Service includes a suite of policies and directives to guide federal institutions on how to comply with and implement the Act. The policies are both outward and inward facing. They set expectations for the use of official languages in service delivery to the public. They also set expectations for the Public Service as a bilingual employer, which are aimed at ensuring that:

- employees can use the official language of their choice and the work environment is conducive to the use of both official languages;
- English- and French-speaking Canadians have equal opportunities for employment and advancement in institutions; and
- there are appropriate governance structures, mechanisms, and resources in place to ensure coherent management of the institution's official languages obligations.

At a more granular level, this includes direction on all aspects of the work environment including leadership, communications with employees, work instruments, supervision, access to language training, the bilingualism bonus, establishing the linguistic requirements for a position, language qualification standards, etc.

1960–1962

Royal Commission

(Glassco Commission)

Raises the issue of bilingualism in the Public Service

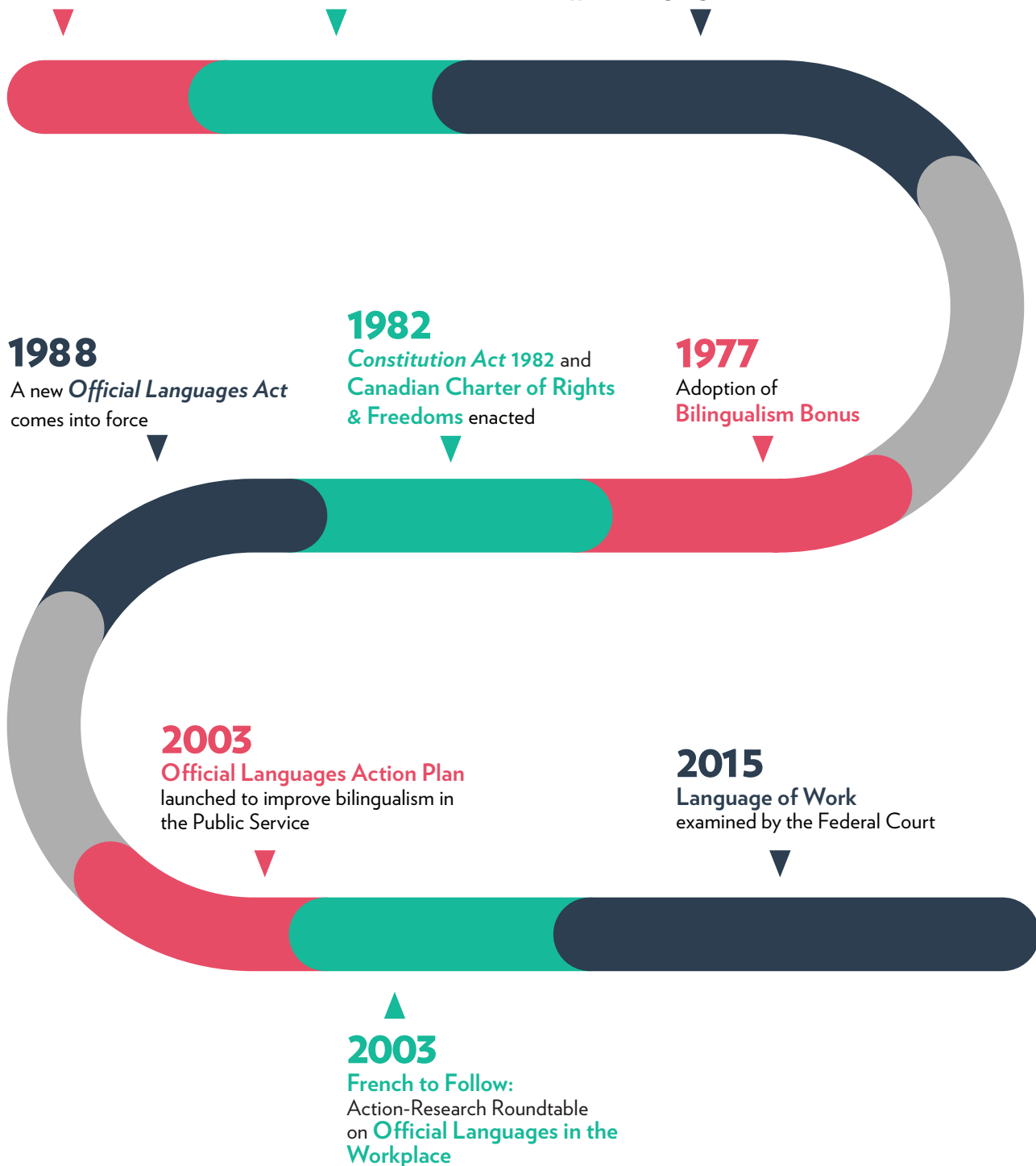
1963

Royal Commission

on bilingualism & biculturalism

1969

In response to Royal Commission, *Official Languages Act* passed



THE LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS

Like all communities, the Public Service has its own corporate lingo. It is important when we talk about the issues that everyone has the same understanding of key terms:

DESIGNATED BILINGUAL REGION:

These are regions of Canada where federal institutions are required, as prescribed by policy, to ensure that their work environments are conducive to effective use of both official languages.

BILINGUAL POSITION:

A position that requires the use of both languages to perform the functions and duties of the position.

BILINGUALISM BONUS:

A monetary bonus provided to non-executive staff in a bilingual position, if they meet the language requirements of their position. It is an annual payment of \$800. The eligibility requirements and conditions are set out in a National Joint Council Directive.

LANGUAGE QUALIFICATION STANDARDS:

The language qualification standards apply to all positions that require the use of English and French. They define the level of proficiency for written comprehension, written expression and oral expression in the second official language. There are 3 levels of proficiency in the 3 different areas in the language qualification standards: A (lowest), B and C (highest).

LINGUISTIC PROFILE:

Reflects the level of proficiency required for a bilingual position based on the functions and duties of the position. The profile for positions providing service to the public or to employees is BBB or higher. The profile for positions that require a superior level of proficiency is typically CBC.

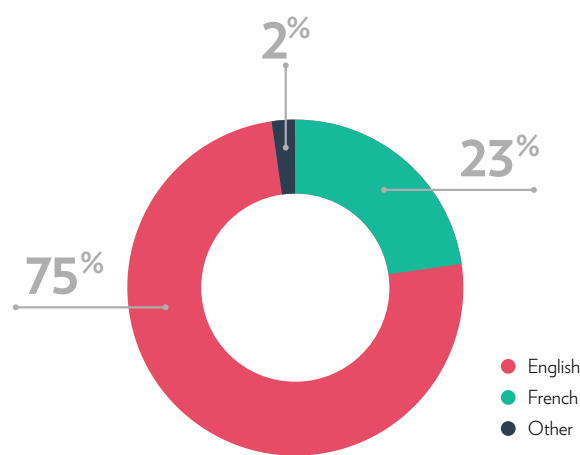
CURRENT STATE OF BILINGUALISM: REPORT CARD

Understanding the data surrounding the current state of bilingualism is essential to take stock of how we are performing as a public service on this issue. The landscape and culture around bilingualism has shifted in Canada over the past 50 years. These key statistics help identify areas where we have made progress, and where we can do better.

English is the predominant language spoken in Canada, with **75%** of the population identifying English as their first language, and **23%** identifying French as their first language.

FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE — CANADA

FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE,
CANADA (2016)

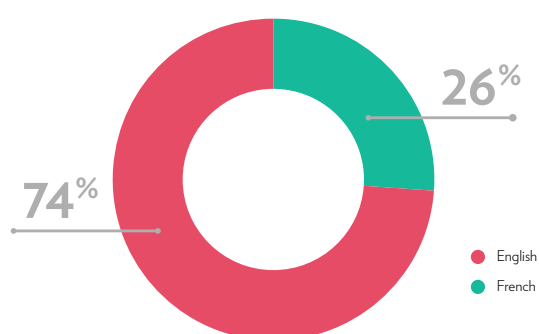


SOURCE: CENSUS, 2016

REPRESENTATION OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

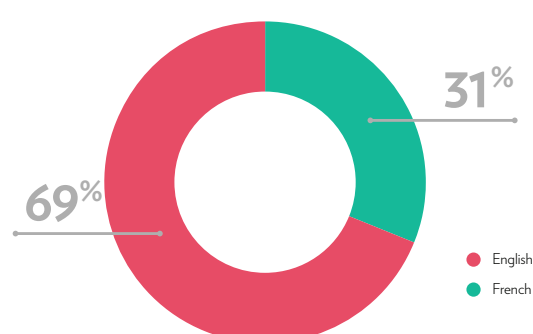
The Public Service mirrors the general population with **74%** of public servants identifying English as their first language and **26%** of employees identifying French as their first language. In executive positions there is a higher representation of Francophone employees; **31%** of employees in executive positions identify French as their first language.

FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE,
PUBLIC SERVICE (2015–2016)



SOURCE: ANNUAL REPORT ON
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, 2015–2016

FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE,
PUBLIC SERVICE EXECUTIVES (2015–2016)



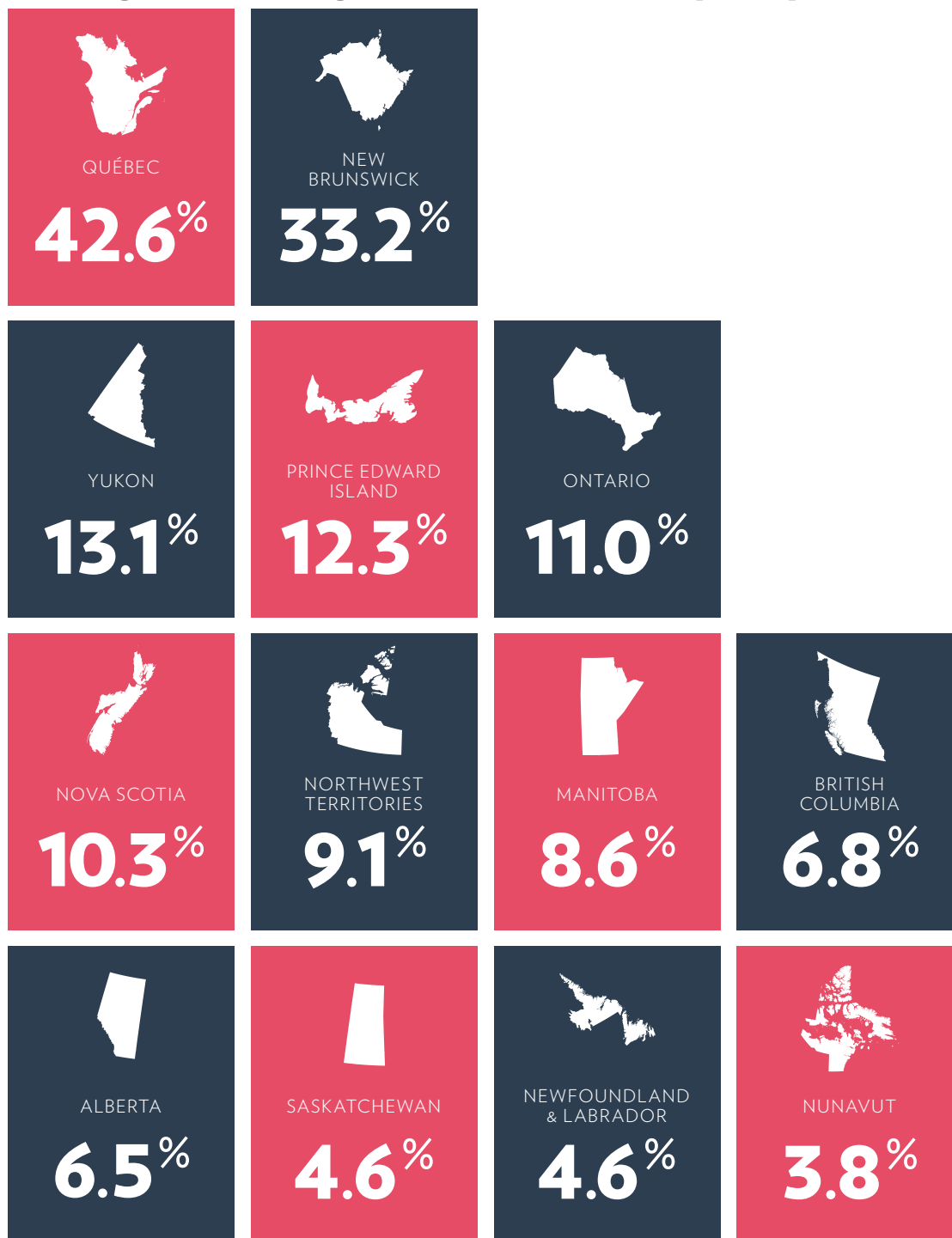
SOURCE: ANNUAL REPORT ON
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, 2015–2016

BILINGUALISM IN CANADA (GENERAL POPULATION)

RATES OF BILINGUALISM IN CANADA

The rate of English-French bilingualism in Canada is approximately **17.9%**, and has remained relatively stable since 2001.

At the provincial level, the rate of bilingualism varies significantly across the country; Québec and New Brunswick have the highest rates of bilingualism at **42.6%** and **33.2%** respectively.



SOURCE: CENSUS, 2016

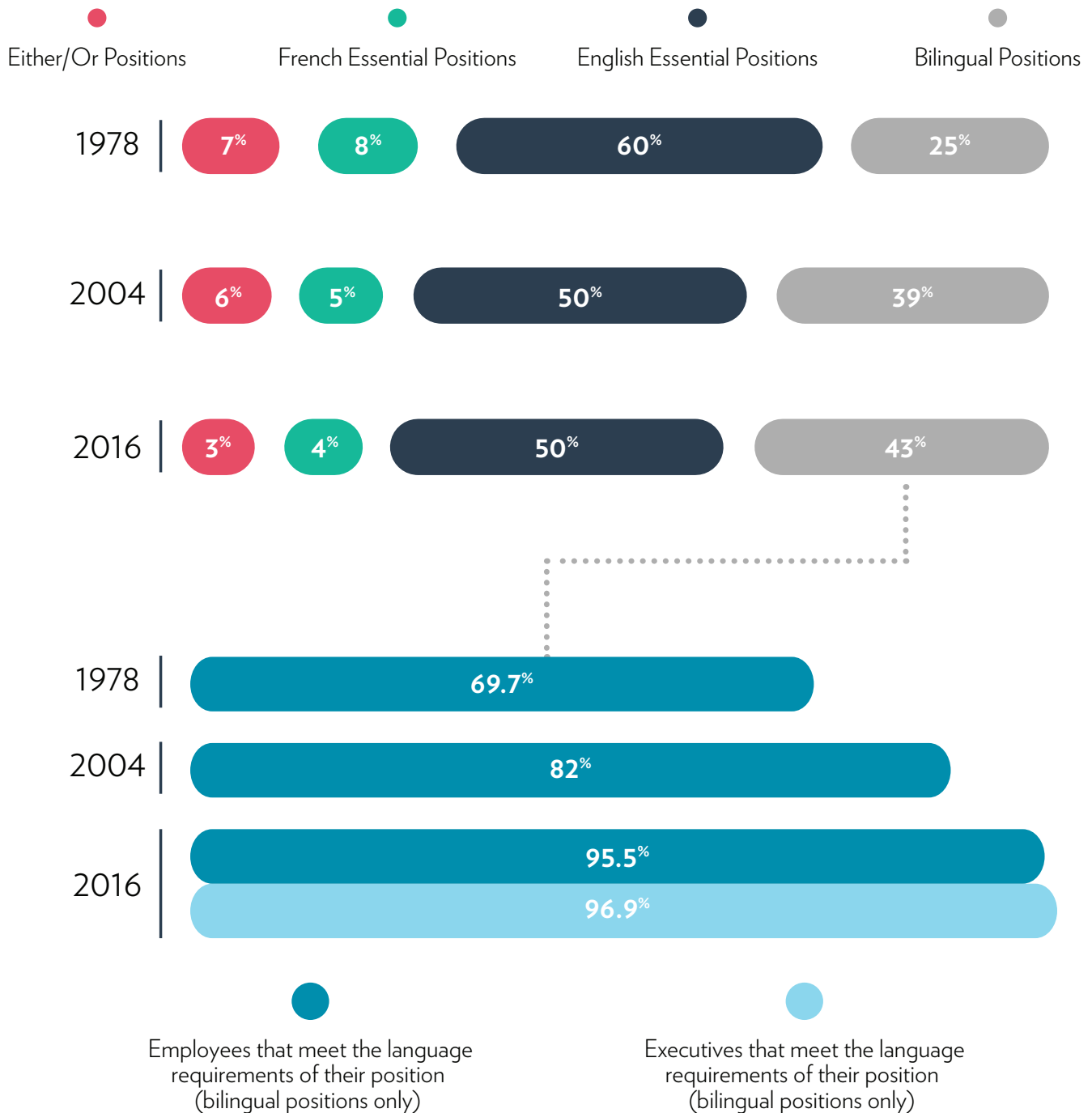
SECOND LANGUAGE EDUCATION RATES

Approximately **8.3%** of elementary and secondary school students are enrolled in French immersion programs in Canada (Elementary-Secondary Education Survey for Canada (2014-15), 2016). Approximately **41.3%** of students are taught French as a second language as part of their regular course offerings.

CAPACITY

The language capacity of the Public Service is increasing: the number of bilingual positions has doubled in the last 40 years and now represents **43%** of all federal positions. The compliance rate is also increasing: in 2016, **96%** of all employees met the language requirements of their positions and **97%** of employees in executive positions met the language requirements of their position.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS OF FEDERAL PUBLIC SECTOR POSITIONS



SOURCE: ANNUAL REPORTS ON OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Departments and agencies are developing the governance structures to manage official languages requirements. According to the recent Annual Reports on Official Languages (AROL)¹:

67%

of federal institutions have an Official Languages Action Plan, or have another planning instrument to ensure that their language obligations have been met (AROL, 2014-15);

71%

of federal institutions with performance agreements² have included performance objectives for implementing the *Official Languages Act* (AROL, 2015-16); and,

89%

have champions or co-champions who meet regularly to discuss official languages and meet periodically with the Network of Official Languages Champions (AROL, 2015-16).

37 out of 38

LARGE AND KEY INSTITUTIONS³

also have an Official Languages Committee or network that meet regularly to discuss questions regarding the use of official languages.

¹The Annual Reports on Official Languages are based on federal institutions' responses to the Review on Official Languages. There are 200 federal institutions that are subject to the requirements of the *Official Languages Act*. Not all institutions submit responses in each review period. In 2014-15, 67 institutions submitted responses. In 2015-16, 86 federal institutions submitted responses.

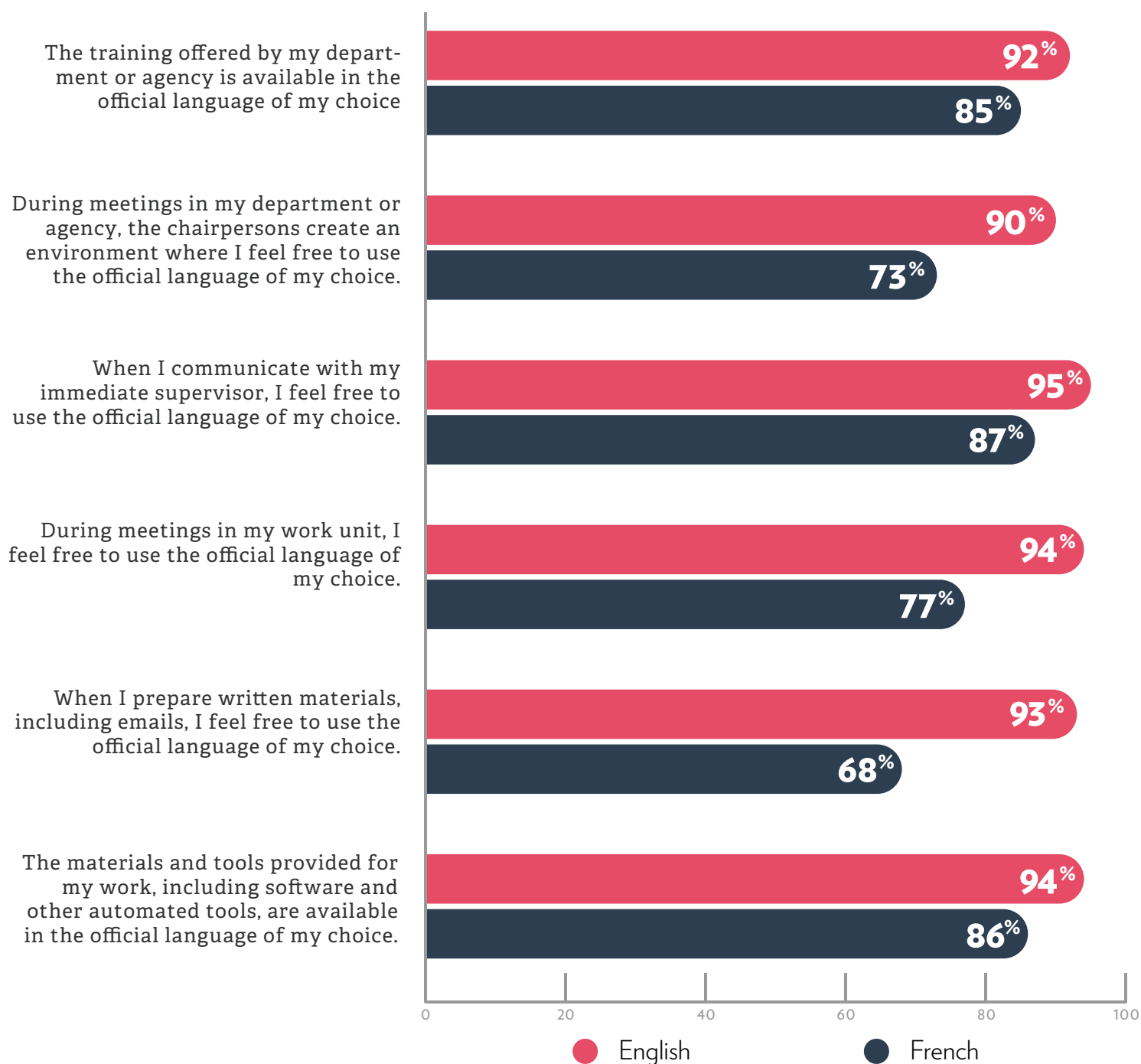
²For the 2015-16 Annual Report on Official Languages, 5 of the institutions that reported did not respond to this question either because they do not use performance management agreements, or because of their institutional size, were not required to respond to this question.

³The distinction between small and large or key institutions is based on size and mandate in relation to official languages. See Appendix A of the 2015-16 Annual Report on Official Languages for a list of large and key institutions.

EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES

The 2014 Public Service Employee Survey gives some insight into how employees perceive the level and quality of bilingualism in their respective workplaces. It suggests that employees do not always feel free to use the language of their choice.

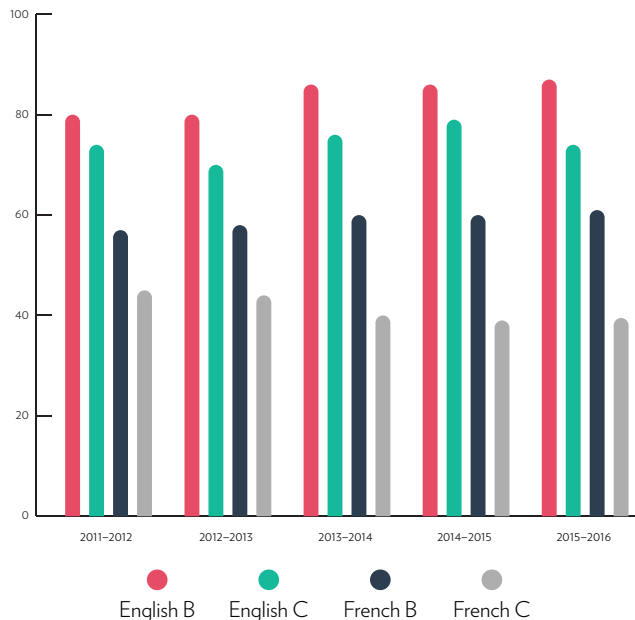
The responses are the least positive for employees whose first official language is French and who work in the National Capital Region or other bilingual regions of Ontario, or employees whose first official language is English and who work in bilingual regions of Québec.



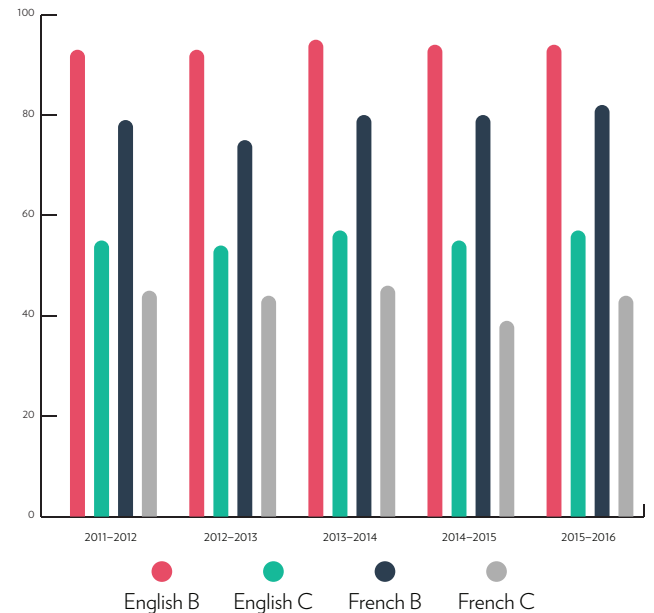
SOURCE: PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEE SURVEY, 2014

SECOND LANGUAGE EVALUATION (SLE) PASS RATES

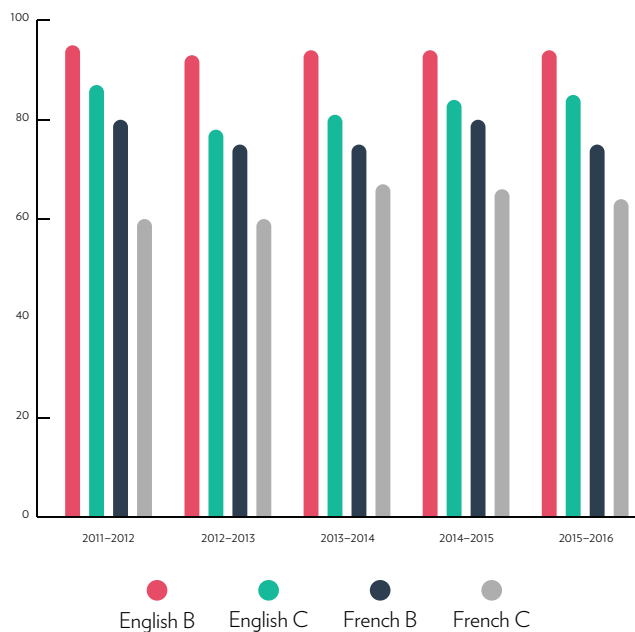
SECOND LANGUAGE EVALUATION,
WRITTEN EXPRESSION



SECOND LANGUAGE EVALUATION,
ORAL EXPRESSION



SECOND LANGUAGE EVALUATION,
COMPREHENSION



THE PASS RATE FOR ALL THREE SLE SKILLS (WRITTEN EXPRESSION, READING COMPREHENSION AND ORAL EXPRESSION) IS HIGHER FOR ENGLISH TESTS THAN FRENCH TESTS FOR BOTH PROFICIENCY LEVELS (LEVEL B AND LEVEL C). THE PASS RATES ARE LOWEST FOR LEVEL C FRENCH TESTS OF WRITTEN AND ORAL EXPRESSION, WHERE ONLY 35 TO 45% OF EMPLOYEES PASS THE TEST.



WHAT'S MISSING?

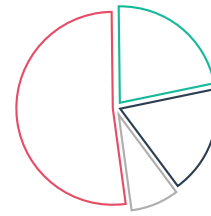
It is difficult to get a complete picture of the state of our two official languages in the Public Service, as there are a number of areas with limited data for assessment.

Canada is a diverse country and not all students have access to bilingual education. It is important that we continue to represent this diversity through our recruitment and hiring processes, and that we welcome people to the Public Service with a variety of linguistic backgrounds. This means that language training will always be a part of the organizational culture and an important tool for developing the next generation of leaders, and for increasing the use of both official languages in the workplace.

There is currently very limited data related to the costs and effectiveness of language training or investment in tools to support bilingualism in the workplace. Data that would be interesting includes:

- average cost of language training;
- average duration of language training; and
- average cost for leave related to language training (e.g., lost productivity, replacement cost).

Lastly, most of the current data related to the use of official languages is focused on measures related to diversity and representation. These numbers are important and will continue to be significant benchmarks for the future. We also need to consider key indicators that focus on inclusion in the workplace with respect to the use of official languages.



BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Over a 6-month period, the project team engaged public servants on their experiences with the use of official languages in the workplace.

FORMAT	# OF PARTICIPANTS
GCConnex CONSULTATION:	ONLINE - 50
ONLINE CONSULTATION WITH DIRECTED QUESTIONS	EMAIL - 300
CROWDSOURCE WORKSHOP	25
ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS (DEPUTY MINISTERS)	20
SURVEY OF DEPARTMENTS (DEPUTY HEADS)	45
ARMCHAIR DISCUSSION AT THE CANADA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE	440
DISCUSSION FORUMS WITH KEY COMMUNITIES	600+

We wanted to hear about experiences, barriers, and best practices. We also asked for ideas. We surveyed departments, and conducted interviews with Deputy Ministers. The Innovation Hub conducted an online consultation through GConnex, and brought people together for a one-day crowdsourcing workshop.

We also conducted a broad outreach to key communities in the Public Service, including the Official Languages Champions, all regional Federal Councils, Visible Minorities Champions and Chairs Committee, Champions and Chairs Circle for Aboriginal Peoples, Persons with Disabilities Champions and Chairs Committee, Federal Youth Network and the National Managers' Community.

Throughout this process we heard from hundreds of public servants across the country, at all levels. Overwhelmingly, the response to consultations was positive, respectful and innovative (Roy, 2016).

Public servants working in bilingual regions described many positive experiences. They have experienced examples of strong leadership with managers who actively promote bilingualism and share their own perspectives on bilingualism.

SMALL STEPS TO BIG CHANGE: BEST PRACTICES IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Bilingualism in the workplace is a complex issue that has roots beyond the Public Service. Throughout the consultations, we were inspired by the many projects underway and practices in place at the departmental level that are increasing the use of both official languages in daily activities. These micro efforts to pilot new ideas are contributing to a culture of experimentation and innovation and can provide a path for incremental steps to big change. We would like to highlight below some of these efforts and showcase the potential they offer.

INCREASING AWARENESS

Information sessions: Increasing awareness by organizing round-tables to familiarize staff with the official language obligations.

Single window for official languages: Setting up a single window portal for official languages on departmental intranets to centralize resources and increase awareness. These offer practical tools for using both languages in the workplace (e.g., telephone messages, conducting meetings).

Integrating both languages in daily routines: Sometimes a gentle nudge is enough to get staff over fears or frustrations.

Departments are adopting creative ways to include both languages in their daily routines by:

- alternating the language for regular meetings; and
- sponsoring regular second language days, e.g., *French Wednesday*.

INVESTING IN LEARNING

There are many different strategies in use to increase access to language training:

On-site training: Some departments have hired a full or part-time language teacher to help staff advance, and practice their second language.

Learning by doing: Others are exploring experiential learning programs such as programs that pair up English and French employees, and placement programs that put employees in other organizations to improve their language skills.

PROVIDING THE RIGHT TOOLS

Providing access to language learning and translation tools facilitates daily use of both official languages to produce and understand documents.

The Translation Bureau and National Research Council of Canada developed the Language Comprehension Tool, a translation tool that can support quick translation of short texts and help with second language comprehension.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency created a translation standard for scientific documents.

SETTING THE TONE

Using inclusive language: Language is a powerful tool. The Dare Campaign is a great example of using bold terms to initiate open dialogue on official languages.

Senior managers walk the talk: Staff are more comfortable using both languages when their senior managers lead by example. During consultations, we heard about many great leaders who are inspiring their staff.

Encouraging tolerance: It can sometimes be embarrassing to practice a second language. Departments are implementing different ways to encourage employees to try and to encourage tolerance in return. The “Apprentice: I am writing in my second language” logo is a great example.

Departments are also using simple tools to remind staff that we work in a bilingual environment and to give staff the opportunity to highlight their language preferences. Here are a few examples:

- setting-up the internal telephone directory to allow staff employees to indicate their preferred language of communication; and
- creating signs to indicate that meetings are bilingual, or to highlight their language preferences.



KEY CONCERNS

We appreciated the honesty and the level of engagement that employees offered during consultations. Not everyone's experience with the use of official languages in the workplace is positive. It is important to hear and to understand these concerns if we want to continue to build on the progress that has been made over the past 20 years.

THE LANGUAGE OF WORK IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE IS ENGLISH

English is the dominant language for most daily activities and Francophone employees do not consistently feel that they can work in the language of their choice:

- most written materials are prepared in English and most meetings are conducted in English, particularly for the core items of discussion; and
- there are symbolic attempts to introduce French to meetings, typically at the beginning or end of a discussion but it is generally not sustained throughout the meeting.

We also heard that in order to be understood on important issues, Francophone employees feel they must work in English. This is eroding our capacity to write good briefing materials in French, and creates an environment where it is difficult for staff to maintain their bilingual competencies due to a lack of ongoing and sustained experience using both official languages.

THE LANGUAGE QUALIFICATION STANDARDS DO NOT NECESSARILY MEAN EMPLOYEES CAN FUNCTION IN THEIR JOB IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The qualification standards for establishing the language requirements of a position are set by Treasury Board policy. They give consideration to the level of the position (executive or non-executive), and the functions and duties of the position. Under the current policy, all executive positions at the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) level or equivalent, and most executive positions in bilingual regions, are designated bilingual and require a superior level of proficiency in the second official language. Similarly, non-executive positions are designated bilingual if the functions and duties of the position require the use of both English and French.

Given these policy requirements, staff should reasonably expect their immediate supervisors and executive team to have a high level of proficiency in both official languages. The feedback we heard in consultations indicates this expectation is often being met but not always.

There is an impression that the language qualification standards are not sufficiently rigorous or not well designed to measure an employee's functional ability to use both official languages. This has created a culture where employees participate in language training to pass a test, but have not integrated the use of both official languages into daily routines in practice which undermines full inclusion.

We also heard concerns that the language profile of a position may not always align with the needs of the position. This has created an impression amongst many employees that the language requirements are sometimes established to meet superficial targets to comply with the policy framework.

THE BILINGUALISM REQUIREMENTS ARE PERCEIVED AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT

During our consultations, no topic stimulated as much discussion as language training. Language training is a limited resource. In addition, there is no government-wide policy which sets out who receives access to language training, the amount or the format. These decisions are delegated to Deputy Heads and are implemented differently across the Public Service to address the needs of each organization.

In practice, access to intensive language training is often allocated through talent or performance management processes, and some staff may never have access to in-person language training. For some public servants, mostly employees who did not learn French prior to entering the labour market, they expressed concern that this makes it difficult to acquire the language skills needed to advance in their careers, and could limit access to bilingual positions to individuals who entered the Public Service bilingual.

There are also employees who face barriers to learning another language. This has created a tension between the objectives of the *Official Languages Act* and the duty to accommodate for disabilities.

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS NOT CONSISTENTLY OR SUFFICIENTLY INVESTING IN OR MAKING ACCESSIBLE TOOLS TO ENABLE A BILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT

The tools available to staff to support a bilingual work environment are limited. Documents are generally written in one language and sent outside of the department to the private sector or the Translation Bureau for translation. This is costly and slow, and the results are often criticized for being inconsistent or of poor quality. Simultaneous interpretation for meetings is also challenging to access, and is generally limited to key meetings with external stakeholders or parliamentary functions.

Employees use online resources such as Google Translate or Babelfish to translate written materials, such as correspondence or briefing materials. Although these tools are relatively efficient and effective for daily interactions and comprehension, the quality of translation is not sufficient for official purposes and the tools don't reflect some of the terminology used in the Public Service. Their use is also generally discouraged for security reasons.

The Public Service is not driving innovation to enable a bilingual work environment; we are not routinely using or exploring emerging technologies that may facilitate *on the ground* simultaneous translation and give staff tools to continuously learn or interact with colleagues on daily tasks in both languages.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE IS NOT REWARDING EXCELLENCE AND LEADERSHIP IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The performance framework for official languages is very binary. Employees are required to demonstrate through testing that they meet the linguistic requirements of their position. Test results are valid for 5 years, and testing is typically only re-administered when an individual changes positions.

The bilingualism bonus, which was initially introduced in 1977 to reward skills and efforts of employees in bilingual positions, is completely detached from the use of official languages. It is awarded to all non-executive staff in bilingual positions who meet the language requirements of their position, regardless of whether both official languages are used in practice.

This has reinforced the *pass the test* culture, where performance is not connected to the actual use of official languages, efforts to retain acquired language skills, or the values of excellence, inclusion and respect. As a result, resources are often allocated to training for a test, and retraining every 5 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To make meaningful progress to improve the use of both official languages in the workplace, our priorities should include action around 5 themes:

1. **LEADERSHIP:** Strengthen accountability and recognize leaders who promote and contribute to a bilingual environment.
2. **POLICY:** Establish the governance structures and requirements to support a bilingual work environment.
3. **CULTURE:** Cultivate a positive attitude towards linguistic duality, encourage the use of preferred language of work, and shift the emphasis towards openly using a second language rather than perfecting it.
4. **TRAINING:** Develop a culture of learning by providing new training opportunities and supporting employees who embrace and commit to this challenge.
5. **TOOLS:** Invest in tools and emerging technologies that will make the Public Service bilingual by design.



LEADERSHIP

Leaders have an important role in creating inclusive work environments by identifying barriers, facilitating participation and setting the tone. This was emphasized during consultations: employees expressed greater freedom to use the language of their choice when their senior managers, including the Deputy Heads, set the tone within their organizations by encouraging, and in some cases requiring, the use of both languages, and themselves using both languages on a regular basis.

With over 250,000 employees, the Public Service must engage all levels of management to create a diverse and inclusive culture of linguistic duality. Through direct engagement from top leadership and targeted changes to the Performance and Talent Management Frameworks, the Public Service can set clear expectations and promote the behaviours that will lead change. The Public Service should also explore mechanisms to encourage and support employees who demonstrate a commitment to learning.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Treasury Board Secretariat and federal institutions take steps to increase accountability and recognize leaders who are actively contributing to increasing the use of both official languages in the workplace through Performance and Talent Management Frameworks. This should include, but not be limited to:

- requiring federal institutions to include in their official languages plan elements on the promotion of bilingualism with ambitious and measurable objectives for official languages, in particular, language of writing and of meetings;
- including language training as part of the employee Learning Plan template;
- including a language component in the Performance Management Program for Executives (EXs) and establish that a senior executive can only achieve a higher score in their performance appraisal when the language targets have been achieved and maintained; and
- including text in the letter of offer for executives that they must at all times comply with the language requirements of their position (i.e., achieve and maintain).

RECOMMENDATION:

That measures be taken to increase accountability for investments in training and to support employees who demonstrate a commitment to learning and promoting bilingualism in the workplace. In particular, employees who have already received access to language training should be expected to concretely demonstrate, before receiving any further help in this regard, that they have made efforts to improve their skills and that they have contributed actively to creating a bilingual workplace.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Public Service Commission of Canada, the Canada School of Public Service and the Treasury Board Secretariat build on existing work to establish an *OL: What Works* portal for the Public Service to coordinate the dissemination and exchange of best practices and intervention tools that are currently in use.



The Public Service has made great strides to increase the capacity to communicate in English and French by increasing the number of bilingual positions, establishing governance structures and monitoring compliance. There is still room for improvement to create consistency in the level of proficiency for supervisory positions and to ensure that employees who meet the language qualification standards can perform the functions and duties of their positions in both official languages.

The language qualification standards (see Glossary on page 7) should be modernized to ensure that they are sufficiently robust to distinguish between a wide spectrum of abilities, and to measure an employee's ability to perform the functions and duties of their position in their second language. The assessment process should also be efficient, and incorporate *real-world* feedback on an employee's use of both languages.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Treasury Board Secretariat, in consultation with the Public Service Commission of Canada:

- modernize the language qualification standards for bilingual positions to ensure that the standards align with the functional expectations for daily tasks, and allow a distinct measure for basic oral and written comprehension; and
- take action to increase the linguistic profile for bilingual supervisory positions to a superior proficiency level (e.g., CBC or equivalent).

RECOMMENDATION:

That federal institutions take measures to ensure that all employees in bilingual positions maintain their second language skills and meet the requirements of their positions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Public Service Commission, in consultation with the Treasury Board Secretariat, take steps to expedite the process of assessing second language skills while maintaining the robustness of the process. This could include:

- an *OL reference check* to incorporate input from an employee's superiors and colleagues in the language evaluation;
- recognizing, as proof of the second language skills of an applicant or employee, the results obtained in external standardized tests corresponding to the new language qualification standards; and
- a pilot project delegating authority to hiring managers to assess oral proficiency at the B level.



There is a natural tendency for English to be the dominant language in groups of federal employees when there is a mix of both Francophones and Anglophones. If all employees understood their second official language (even without necessarily being able to speak or write it), everyone would be able to use the official language of their choice while being assured that they could be understood by their colleagues.

Focusing on *receptive* bilingualism in the Public Service through staffing and recruitment, while also giving employees the tools to improve their ability to speak and write in their second language, will strengthen linguistic duality in the workplace and promote inclusion.

Educational institutions have an important role by producing graduates with the skill sets that are needed for today's labour market. As the largest employer in Canada, the Public Service also has an opportunity to identify bilingualism and cultural awareness as critical skills for our workplaces, and to engage universities and colleges on different initiatives that are underway or could be developed in support of this goal.

In May 2017, Universities Canada announced a new agreement to enhance student mobility, and address the need for French-language teachers (L'Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne, 2017). It is hoped that this agreement, which encourages Canadian students in French-language teaching and Francophone programs to study or work in France, can contribute to the development of the French language in Canada by fostering student mobility between our two countries. These types of initiatives with targeted educational goals could be quite effective at addressing skills gaps, and increasing the level of bilingualism in the Public Service.

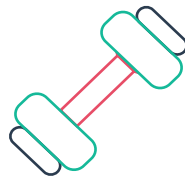
RECOMMENDATION:

That the Public Service Commission of Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat and Canadian Heritage increase awareness of the Government of Canada's language of work requirements by:

- launching an awareness campaign to raise the number of students who know and support federal language of work requirements and are taking concrete steps to improve their second language skills;
- developing a recruitment strategy to increase recruitment of bilingual employees, and promote official languages on Public Service recruitment sites to make it easier for job seekers to find positions with language profiles that correspond to their current or future skills;
- designing and implementing a mandatory component for all orientation programs for new staff to familiarize them with their language rights and obligations; and
- incorporating automated prompts and reminders on the rights and linguistic obligations of public servants in IT tools that they routinely use.

RECOMMENDATION:

That federal institutions promote *receptive bilingualism* by hiring people who demonstrate a basic ability to follow conversations and read documents in their second official language, or by offering and encouraging employees to participate in basic language training to achieve this level of comprehension.



TRAINING

During consultations, many employees were happy and grateful for the investment of time and money that was made for their second language training, but some employees complained that they do not have access to training, or it is not well suited to their needs. There is also a broad consensus that some employees do not put enough personal effort and commitment into their own training.

It is important to remember that bilingualism sits within a larger umbrella of inclusion and the Public Service should value language acquisition and skills, whether it is the first, second, or third language, including Indigenous languages.

Providing access to effective language training that can support functional and professional proficiency will be critical to increasing the use of both official languages in the workplace and to increasing diversity and inclusion in the Public Service.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Treasury Board Secretariat initiate discussions with the National Joint Council to repurpose the bilingualism bonus to establish a new fund to be used exclusively for the development of non-executive employees' language skills, and co-managed with the bargaining agents.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Treasury Board Secretariat and Canadian Heritage support the improvement and maintenance of employees' French or English skills by creating and managing an inter-institutional second language practice program. This program should enable employees of an institution to participate in short exchanges (micro-assignments) in offices where the predominant official language is different from their own, and enable employees to take part in a structured language mentoring or coaching system.

RECOMMENDATION:

That measures be taken to enhance employees' access to effective French or English second language courses that are tailored to their learning needs and to empower employees to participate in such courses. In particular, it is recommended that:

- all federal institutions be required to have an annual Official Language plan to improve the language skills of its employees, including employees at offices based in unilingual regions and those who belong to employment equity groups;
- all federal institutions be required to create a *personal language training account*, enabling all employees to receive a certain number of hours of language training, in French or English, as a first or second language. For some employees, this could also include American sign language, Langue des signes québécoise, or an Indigenous language;
- the Canada School of Public Service conduct a comparative effectiveness study of the various second language teaching methods that are or could be offered to employees, particularly taking into account the needs of members of employment equity groups; and
- Public Services and Procurement Canada work collaboratively with the Canada School of Public Service to develop tools and offer language training in all regions of Canada, including the adoption of new approaches and innovative technologies.



Technology is a valuable tool in shifting organizational culture, and the level of sophistication of language translation tools for both written and oral interactions is rapidly increasing.

In 2016, Google introduced a new system for machine-assisted language translation that uses neural networks to translate entire sentences, not just words or phrases, to improve the sophistication of translation and make it sound more like people speak (Turovsky, 2016). It also learns over time. Internally, the Translation Bureau also launched a language comprehension tool to support quick comprehension of short texts in the other official language. There are also new technologies, like Skype Translator, that combine voice recognition with machine translation and computer-generated speech to offer simultaneous interpretation in multiple languages.

These types of tools could be important enablers to turn interest into action, and over time, enhance learning of English and French. It is important to continue to invest in language training but we should also be actively exploring technologies that can enable simultaneous interpretation for staff who are not bilingual. This will increase the opportunities for unilingual staff to use the official language of their choice, regardless of the setting.

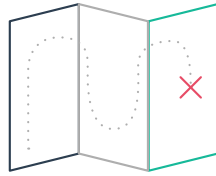
RECOMMENDATION:

Improve the general access to language technologies, such as proven or promising online language learning and assessment tools and apps, as well as writing and reading tools. This should include, but not be limited to:

- ensuring that all employees have access to a spell checker and grammar checker on their computer that is integrated with word processing and email software to improve their writing in both official languages; and
- the Translation Bureau (Public Services and Procurement Canada) continue to collaborate with the National Research Council of Canada and the private sector to experiment with new language technologies for writing, translating, and revising information in both official languages.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Privy Council Office's Innovation Hub launch an Official Languages Challenge to encourage innovative ideas to improve translation and learning tools.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The Public Service must continue to look at opportunities to strengthen its diversity, and to create an inclusive culture that is committed to learning, tolerance and excellence. It is critical to our ability to serve Canadians, to attract the best talent to address challenges, and to lead by example for other employers. Increasing the use of both official languages and creating an environment where all staff feel confident to use the language of their choice is foundational to this goal.

This report highlights the great progress that has been made to have the people and the policies to support a bilingual environment. It also shows where there is more work to be done to ensure the culture of the Public Service reflects this value, and that we have the right tools to implement our vision.

Tone is an important tool for changing behaviour. A culture of respect and inclusion will be most influenced by leadership, not rules. Managers are our greatest resource for leading organizational change, and we must explore the opportunities to accelerate change through recruitment and Talent Management Frameworks in this community.

In 2016, the Minister of Canadian Heritage launched public consultations to inform the development of a multi-year action plan (Action Plan) for official languages to support English and French linguistic minorities and to promote the country's two official languages. As part of these consultations, online surveys were used to seek input on a variety of themes, including ways to support and promote learning of a second official language, the impact of our official languages on diversity and multiculturalism, including the openness of Canadians to other cultures, and measures to promote Canada's two official languages. The Action Plan is scheduled to come into force in 2018 and will be an important influence on the objectives of this work and will increase the use of both official languages in the Public Service.

The recommendations in this report are opportunities to build on the progress that has already been made but should be implemented in a manner that complements other worthwhile objectives, such as increasing the representation of employment equity groups across the Public Service and attracting and retaining top talent in critical areas

such as the scientific community. They should also be implemented in a manner that supports the many innovative practices that are being explored and implemented across the Public Service. Like many complex issues, this is an area where we must continue to encourage experimentation, measure impact, and provide venues for those small steps to be transformed into bigger change.

We must also look at how we will measure success. The Public Service is implementing a Results and Delivery approach. The core objectives of this approach are to identify meaningful outcomes, track and measure progress on key indicators, and report publicly in a clear and transparent manner. These same objectives should be applied to Canada's official languages framework and to the recommendations of this report.

The current reporting structure for official languages has focused heavily on diversity and representation. This is important, and the current numbers show we have made progress. We also have to look beyond these numbers and consider what success would look like in an inclusive work environment, where both English and French are thriving.

The implementation of these recommendations should be supported by detailed delivery plans developed by the respective program leads and collaborating organizations, regular monitoring of key indicators, and periodic reporting to the senior leadership of the Public Service to ensure that improved outcomes are being delivered, lessons are being learned, and changes are being made to programs and policies based on evidence of what is working to improve linguistic duality in the Public Service.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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