



ARCHIVED - National Report on Service to the Public in English and French: Time for a Change in Culture - April 2001

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ARCHIVED - Summary

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Background

The *Official Languages Act* and Regulations concerning communications with the public stipulate that federal institutions must offer service in English and French in the National Capital Region and at their national headquarters or head office and must designate offices to provide such services in places where there is "significant demand" or where warranted by the "nature of the office". The Office of the Commissioner conducted an exhaustive study of the implementation of this provision in 1994, and follow-up studies were done between 1996 and 2000 in all regions of the country. This report presents the results of all the follow-up studies, comparing them with the results of the original study. Above all, it describes the conditions that must be created for federal offices designated bilingual to succeed in consistently providing the service to which the public is entitled.

This report takes into account comments that we have received from the Treasury Board, the Canadian Centre for Management Development and the Public Service Commission.

Findings

Since 1994, the number of offices and points of service designated bilingual has declined by about 25 percent. The numerous transformations within the federal administration over this period have certainly played a role in this. It is noteworthy that the effects of these transformations have not been perceived or experienced as improvements in service by the official language minority communities.

Quebec is the only province in which English is the language of the minority. The offices designated bilingual provide very good service there. Signage and documentation show that services are available in English and French. Telephone service in English was available in 96 percent of cases, and all the offices examined in our follow-up were able to provide service in English in person. Little progress has been made, however, in offering a greeting in both languages on the telephone, since this occurred in 59 percent of cases, while chances of receiving a bilingual greeting in person remained below 20 percent.

On the national level, we note little improvement with respect to the elements required to provide service in both official languages, such as bilingual signage and documentation. However, the pictogram announcing the availability of service in English and French is visible more often: eight out of 10 offices now display this sign in a suitable way.

The greeting in two official languages is supposed to be a distinguishing feature of offices designated bilingual. However, on the telephone, a consistently bilingual greeting was used only 60 percent of the time. As for service in person, barely 20 percent of the designated offices provided a bilingual greeting. Over the telephone, one can actually expect to receive service in the minority language seven times out of 10, while 76 percent of designated offices are able to provide the service in person. This situation has not changed since 1994. The provision of bilingual service on toll-free telephone lines, however, fell from 91 percent at the time of the original study to 75 percent during the follow-ups.

The staff of designated offices are better informed now about their linguistic obligations, but there is still a considerable discrepancy between theory and practice. There has clearly been a decline in the overall ability of designated offices to provide service in both English and French. In fact, this bilingual ability has fallen by 10 percentage points since the initial study, from 76 percent originally to 66 percent in the follow-ups. It was very disturbing to find that 10 percent of the offices we visited did not have any bilingual resource on-site. Furthermore, 13 percent of designated offices had only one bilingual employee. Finally, the federal institutions had not outdone themselves in announcing to the official language minority communities the services available in their language. If this situation is to improve, the culture of the institutions will have to undergo a profound change.

Conditions Conducive to Delivery of Service in Both Official Languages

In our annual report last year, we indicated that it is necessary to examine the issue of service to the public from the viewpoint of organizational culture. In this report, we further emphasize this approach as a tool that can be used to effect real change in all federal institutions.

An institution's organizational culture must be conducive to the provision of service in both official languages; this is a fundamental prerequisite if we wish to give linguistic duality its rightful place in institutions. Culture includes attitudes, behaviour, shared values and social and organizational interactions, but it also becomes entrenched through the institution's structure, systems and methods. The provision of bilingual services in offices designated bilingual must lie at the very heart of the service ethic and institutional culture in the public service. This is not the case at the present.

Serving the public in both official languages by offering service of equivalent quality must involve much more than merely applying a series of rules prescribed by law; it requires recognition of and respect for the uniqueness of the individual and of his or her language and culture. This is where leadership is vital, since the leaders make the greatest impact on cultural development and change. At both the political and the administrative level, our leaders must display a clear and sustained commitment to the values of linguistic duality. To the extent that senior management embodies the values of linguistic duality and sets an example through its own actions, lower-level management will feel more inclined to reflect these values in their respective areas of activity.

Strategic planning must reflect both the mission of the organization and the delivery of its services in keeping with the objectives of the *Official Languages Act*. Consistent organizational leadership will create an implementation and accountability program that is clear and fair for all those involved in ensuring that service standards are met.

Training is a strategic component in the way an organization operates. As an organization seeking excellence in public service management, the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) is the ideal agency to ensure that managers at all levels develop attitudes conducive to the sharing of common values and a knowledge of the realities and unique institutions of the two language communities. A review of its curriculum shows that little time is devoted to the values linked to linguistic duality and progress toward the equal status and use of English and French. The content of the courses offered by the CCMD must therefore fully reflect the social, economic, political and cultural reality and the aspirations of the members of linguistic minority communities.

We also believe that Treasury Board should play a more active role in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the official languages program in federal organizations. There are major deficiencies in the existing accountability systems, which must be rectified by adopting performance indicators on the use of English and French in communication with the public, developing adequate tools for the measurement of client satisfaction, and completing the required follow-ups with various organizations. The government should also set up recognition programs for institutions that distinguish themselves through initiatives involving the delivery of service to the public.

A culture conducive to the provision of service in both official languages must be supported by systems and policies that

reflect this culture. In this regard, Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission must make appropriate changes to their existing policies on the identification of the language requirements of positions to ease the strain on bilingual resources in designated offices. Similarly, the policy on staffing methods for bilingual positions should ensure that positions that involve providing service to the public are staffed imperatively as often as possible.

Finally, to help the government and its institutions deliver high-quality service in English and French in offices designated bilingual, and to make this an integral part of its culture, we propose the following guidelines.

Institutions that focus on providing quality service in both official languages must:

1. include linguistic duality at the heart of their priorities and their organizational culture while respecting the language of members of the public;
2. have a vision and clear objectives relating to official languages that they share with all the members of their organization and that form the basis of their strategic plan;
3. provide visible and consistent leadership for employees;
4. create a culture that encourages initiative and excellent service and recognizes the constant efforts made by everyone to improve service;
5. establish contacts with official language minority communities to determine their need for the services offered;
6. implement feedback mechanisms to measure client satisfaction;
7. establish performance standards and indicators to periodically assess how well they have achieved the objectives set; and
8. provide their employees with the necessary training, promote continuous learning and reinforce what was learned in the past.

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ARCHIVED - Part I - Service to the Public in English and French: National Report

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Introduction

Background

The *Official Languages Act* (OLA) and Regulations (Communication with and Services to the Public) stipulate that federal institutions must ensure that members of the public can communicate with and receive available services from them in English or French in the National Capital Region, at their national headquarters or head office, and in places where there is "significant demand" or where warranted by the "nature of the office". To this end, federal institutions are required to designate offices that must provide service in both official languages.

An exhaustive study of the application of this provision was carried out by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages in 1994 and, between 1996 and 2000, follow-up studies were conducted in each region. In 1998, the Office of the Commissioner published a progress report to determine whether there had been improvement and whether its recommendations had been implemented.

In our annual report last year we provided the results of the follow-up studies of the last four provinces, which we had just completed. We also gave the individual results for each region of the country, albeit without providing an overall report. Readers will probably notice some overlap and some repetition in Part I of this national report. However, we had to establish the facts observed before we could examine the causes of the shortcomings noted and propose possible solutions, which, in our view, is the most important part of this report.

Objectives of the report

This report provides a general overview of the results obtained in all the follow-up studies conducted across the country. It also presents a comparison of the results obtained in the follow-ups with those of the initial study.

Part II of the report more closely examines the deeper and perhaps less obvious causes of the shortcomings noted. It offers approaches that may help the political and administrative authorities show more enlightened leadership with a view to directing and supporting federal institutions in their efforts to ensure that quality service is indeed available in both official languages in all offices designated bilingual throughout Canada.

Managers in federal institutions have still not fully mastered the management of the physical elements associated with the provision of service in the two official languages.

We found that exterior signage had changed little since 1994. Interior signage had improved somewhat, but deficiencies persist. The management of bilingual documents (documentation, pamphlets, forms) seems to pose difficulties for the managers of designated offices. The increasing presence of documentation and pamphlets printed in English or in French instead of in bilingual format has no doubt contributed to this problem.

Although a definite improvement was noted in the use of the pictogram, which offices designated bilingual must use to indicate to the public that they provide service in English and in French, we would have expected this figure to be higher, considering the relative ease with which a pictogram can be mounted.

Table 1
Degree to which federal offices designated to provide service in both official languages meet their linguistic obligations (in %)

Elements of service	Study	Follow-up
Exterior signage	95	94
Interior signage	85	89
Documentation	91	85
Forms	95	92
Pictogram	60	80

3.2 Human elements of service in the two official languages

a) Active offer of service

The active offer of service must include an audible greeting in the two official languages, both on the telephone and in person, to inform the public that service is available in English and French.

Table 2
Degree to which federal offices designated bilingual greet the public in both official languages (in %)

Elements of service	Study	Follow-up
Consistent bilingual greeting on the telephone	55	59
Occasional bilingual greeting on the telephone	*	24
Bilingual greeting in person	23	20

* not verified during the study

As the figures in table 2 indicate, a bilingual greeting on the telephone was given consistently in 59 percent of cases, compared with 55 percent in the initial study. This is a meagre improvement. In the follow-ups, our auditors also found that an active offer on the telephone was made occasionally in 24 percent of offices.

Moreover, a bilingual greeting in person was provided in only 20 percent of the designated offices, compared with 23 percent in 1994. Clearly, managers of offices designated bilingual have not succeeded in integrating this practice into their daily operations.

Table 3
Degree to which federal offices designated bilingual provide quality service on the telephone and in person in both official languages (in %)

Elements of service	Study	Follow-up
Consistent service on the telephone	55	59
Occasional service	*	24

on the telephone

Service in person

23 20

* not verified during the study

b) Provision of bilingual service

The figures in table 3 show that service on the telephone in both official languages was provided consistently in only 69 percent of cases, compared with 80 percent at the time of the 1994 study. This is a significant loss of effectiveness. It should be noted, however, as in the case of active offer, that service on the telephone was occasionally available in another 21 percent of offices.

Service in person in both official languages provided by the staff of points of service designated bilingual has not improved since the initial study. We do, however, note good performance in some regions: service in person was available in French in 89 percent of the offices designated bilingual in British Columbia and in 90 percent of those in Prince Edward Island.

c) Linguistic quality of bilingual service

During the follow-ups in each province, the investigators evaluated the linguistic quality of the service provided to them in the two official languages on the telephone and in person. They found that the service provided on the telephone was satisfactory or better in 88 percent of cases. Service in person was found to be satisfactory or better in 94 percent of cases.

It is reasonable to conclude therefore that, when offices designated bilingual succeed in providing service in both official languages, this service is generally of good quality.

d) Toll-free telephone lines or dedicated lines for service in each language

The data from our follow-ups include service provided by means of toll-free telephone lines. As in 1994, we examined their features in detail.

The quality of service provided by means of dedicated lines in one language is generally excellent. Whether it is an automated service or one provided by an employee, communication takes place in the language indicated in the telephone directory and chosen by the member of the public.

It is a different matter for service provided by bilingual toll-free (1-800) telephone lines. While in 1994 such service was available in both official languages in 91 percent of cases, this figure fell to 75 percent of the cases examined in the follow-ups.

The federal institutions that provide service by means of toll-free telephone lines to all regions of the country generally provide excellent service in both official languages. The situation is different for toll-free lines serving the population of a few provinces or territories only. Due to budget constraints over the last few years, several federal institutions had to close offices and combine the services offered to the public in several regions at a single point of service. They then offered service using toll-free (1-800) telephone lines to compensate for the closing of local offices. The federal institutions that set up such services may not have had all the expertise required to provide service of comparable quality in both official languages.

e) Bilingual capacity of designated offices

The follow-up data show that this capacity is satisfactory in only 66 percent of the offices examined. A comparison with the 1994 study, which put this capacity at 76 percent, shows that there is cause for concern.

During the follow-ups, we found that 10 percent of the offices designated to provide service in both official languages had no bilingual employee on-site. In even more offices (13%), only one bilingual employee was available. Any absence of that employee deprived the office of its capacity to communicate and provide service in both official languages. This does not include offices where the limited bilingual resources were stretched to the absolute limit in order to provide service in French; for example, two bilingual employees out of 95, three bilingual employees out of 118. These designated offices can hardly claim to offer comparable services in English and in French.

This situation can be attributed in part to budget cuts, along with the lack of staffing of new positions in the public

service for most of the period when the follow-ups were conducted. The scarcity of qualified bilingual personnel is also a factor in certain regions. In addition, offices designated bilingual do not necessarily have more human or financial resources to meet this additional responsibility, compared with federal offices not subject to this obligation.

A number of managers told us about the difficulty they experience in sending employees on language training due to the lack of human resources. In locations far removed from large urban centres, it can also be difficult to find local language schools or teachers qualified to teach the second language.

f) Awareness of managers and staff

While managers and employees had at least a satisfactory knowledge of their obligations in 80 and 82 percent of cases, respectively, at the time of the initial study, our follow-ups found that the staff of designated offices had become much better informed (94%) of their responsibilities in this regard.

A number of factors no doubt account for this in various degrees. The awareness-raising sessions provided by staff of the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) probably played a role. Nevertheless, this heightened awareness has had little effect on the actual results, which are hardly outstanding.

g) Information for the public

TBS compiles a directory of offices designated to provide service in both official languages. This directory is based on information provided by the federal institutions themselves and is intended to inform the public on the location of services available in both official languages. During the follow-ups, we found a considerable margin of error (20%) in this directory of federal offices designated bilingual, which is available on the Internet. In 1994 and again in 1997, to better inform the public about the location of offices designated bilingual, TBS also published the list of offices designated bilingual in official language minority newspapers.

As well, the public can consult the blue pages of telephone directories, where federal services are listed. Although most federal institutions list their services in English and in French, this can be misleading since this does not necessarily mean that the services listed are available in both languages. That is why we had asked, in our progress report sent to TBS and Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), that offices providing bilingual service be clearly identified by a symbol. This measure will not be fully implemented in the various telephone directories across the country until January 2002.

Some official language minority communities also publish their own directories listing all the services provided to their respective communities. Some federal institutions make a point of listing their bilingual offices in these directories to better inform members of official language minority communities about the availability of service in their language.

Finally, we noted that a number of federal institutions had established ongoing communications with official language minority communities. These communications enabled the communities to make their needs better understood and helped the federal offices to better inform the public about their services.

Conclusion to the National Report

Our visits over the last four years to more than 500 federal offices designated bilingual and the resulting 1,368 recommendations lead us to conclude that, despite some limited progress, the delivery of bilingual service, and especially of service offered in French by designated offices, leaves much to be desired. On the one hand, the willingness of most of the managers in the offices we visited to take the necessary corrective measures was encouraging and led us to believe that the task is not impossible. On the other hand, we must conclude that very few federal institutions have succeeded in developing and instituting a real organizational culture of quality customer service, a major aspect of which is the availability of quality service in both official languages in their designated offices.

For offices designated bilingual to truly offer quality service in English and French, a number of favourable conditions relating to the machinery of government and government policy must be present. We would like to examine these more closely.



ARCHIVED - Part II - Time for a Change in Culture

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Conditions conducive to the delivery of bilingual services

1. Organizational culture and official languages

We can say quite confidently from the outset that the organizational culture of an institution must be conducive to the provision of service in both official languages in designated offices; otherwise, the delivery of such service will very likely continue to experience major shortcomings. Organizational culture can be defined as the concepts and profound beliefs shared by the members of an organization. It is closely linked to leadership, because the leaders of the organization have the greatest influence on the development of and changes in this culture. We will return to this issue of leadership later in the report.

Culture also includes attitudes, behaviour, shared values and social and organizational interaction. Therefore, culture pertains less to what an organization "has" than what it "is." It is implemented through the organization's structure, systems and methods, and official statements of its philosophy and values.

The government must strive to place the provision of bilingual service at the very heart of the service ethic in the public service and at the heart of the culture of its institutions as a whole. In the report of the study group on values and ethics of the public service, John Tait states that "from the point of view of public service values, it is important to remember that governing is much more than 'customer' service. It is also about Canadian values, national purpose, about the administration of law, about social ordering ..." Among the Canadian values to which he refers is respect for the official languages. Providing service of equivalent quality in both official languages is a matter of professionalism, respect, integrity and social justice.

Before we can hope to achieve full implementation of the official languages program in designated offices and in the government as a whole, public servants at all levels need to understand the social and human issues underlying the legislation. Senator Simard points out, in his report *Bridging the Gap: From Oblivion to Rule of Law*, that "linguistic duality is one of the main pillars on which Canada was built, a fundamental aspect of our country's history and future and a basic reality of the symbolic universe and daily life of millions of Canadians." Recognition of English and French is part of the federal basis of our country and this fact must be recognized.

Although our study was primarily concerned with language of service, we believe it is important to emphasize that

more by their actions than by their words. If they feel that linguistic duality is a fundamental value in their organization, they will set an example of effective conduct, through their actions and guidance, and will ensure that this value is shared at all levels of the organization.

Committed and consistent leadership concerning service to the public in both official languages means that managers intend to place the program at the centre of their priorities in their daily management of the institution. Strategic **planning** of activities must take into account both the **mission** of the organization and the delivery of service in keeping with the objectives of the *Official Languages Act*. The effort to obtain a commitment from everyone to provide good service presupposes a holistic approach, that is, an integrated, strategically consistent approach supported by a body of stable principles and values. This means that all levels of the organization must be committed to ensuring the quality of the service.

One of the main requirements for consistent organizational leadership is the provision of an **implementation and accountability** program that is clear, well defined and fair for all parties with a view to attaining the anticipated results. Performance indicators are essential tools in **evaluating** the effectiveness of various activities linked to the provision of service in offices designated bilingual and correcting any shortcomings observed.

With a view to improving the service, **training** must be regarded as a strategic element of an organization's operating method. In order successfully to effect a change in attitude and behaviour in a particular institution, attention must be paid to training at all levels, not only on a sporadic basis but as an ongoing activity.

4. Governing principles for quality bilingual service

To help the government and its institutions ensure that quality service is provided in English and French in offices designated bilingual, we have identified the following guiding principles.

Institutions that focus on providing quality service in both official languages must:

- include linguistic duality at the core of their priorities and their organizational culture while respecting the language of members of the public;
- have a vision and clear objectives relating to official languages that they share with all the members of their organization and that form the basis of their strategic plan;
- provide visible and consistent leadership for employees;
- create a culture that encourages initiative and excellent service and recognizes the constant efforts made by all to improve service;
- establish contacts with official language minority communities to determine their need for the services offered;
- implement feedback mechanisms to measure client satisfaction;
- establish performance standards and indicators to periodically assess the extent to which they have achieved the objectives set; and
- provide their employees with the necessary training, promote continuous learning and reinforce what was learned in the past.

5. Partners in synergy

A number of important actors in the political and administrative spheres have shown awareness of the great need for renewal in order to ensure that the culture of the public service is more imbued with linguistic duality.

5.1 Standing Committee on Official Languages

The Standing Committee on Official Languages is a major political forum for debating issues of overall linguistic policy. In view of the continuing deficiencies noted in the provision of service in both official languages in designated federal offices, the Commissioner is very eager to work with the committee to raise the profile of the program, especially with regard to the delivery of service to the public. In addition, the committee could play a greater role in examining possibilities for enhanced federal-provincial co-operation in community development.

5.2 Privy Council Office and Treasury Board

The Clerk of the Privy Council recently announced to deputy ministers and the chairs of the Council of Senior Federal

Officials that official languages was one of the five priorities he has communicated to the Prime Minister. We sincerely hope that this priority will be conveyed to all government ministers and we will accordingly follow with great interest the initiatives taken by the Privy Council Office (PCO) as a result of this commitment.

Further, the creation of a position of official languages program coordinator in the PCO raises hope that new life will be breathed into the program since the incumbent, a senior official, acts as an adviser to the Prime Minister, Cabinet and Privy Council Office. To carry out this role, the adviser will work in close co-operation with Treasury Board and the Committee of Deputy Ministers on Official Languages. It goes without saying that Treasury Board must play a leading role in view of its responsibilities for the development and coordination of official languages programs within the federal administration. We will elaborate on this role later in this report. The fact that the role of the Assistant Secretary, Official Languages, was recently enhanced and the mandate of its new incumbent at Treasury Board was renewed is a good sign. The Assistant Secretary also attends the meetings of the Committee of Deputy Ministers on Official Languages. We will closely follow the progress of this initiative.

5.3 Deputy ministers and heads of organizations

We are pleased to note that a renewed sense of leadership with respect to official languages is increasingly evident at the head of the federal administration. The crucial step now will be to transfer this new approach to the federal institutions themselves. The responsibility for implementing the official languages program in federal organizations resides primarily with the deputy ministers and the heads of those organizations. They must accordingly ensure that the values relating to linguistic duality are respected and integrated in their institutions and they should be accountable in this respect. They are also responsible for putting in place an accountability framework for senior officials and managers in their institutions to ensure that the official languages become part of the organizational culture; this framework should in fact be part of the annual planning cycle of federal institutions. The extent to which they do so should be **one of the criteria for appraisal and promotion**. The deputy ministers and heads should also be supported in these endeavours by official languages "champions" in their institutions who would promote and defend the values relating to linguistic duality. We will expand on the role of this "champion" later in the report.

The Commissioner accordingly recommends to the deputy ministers and heads of organizations that:

Recommendation 1

As part of their mission and the particular mandate of their organization, they ensure that the values relating to linguistic duality and the implementation of the official languages program are respected and integrated in their environment:

- by including them in their mission statement;
- by establishing appropriate annual objectives in this regard; and
- by accounting for the attainment of these objectives in their annual management plans submitted to Treasury Board.

5.4 Committee of Deputy Ministers on Official Languages

The renewed Committee of Deputy Ministers is now the key mechanism for coordinating the entire official languages program. Without questioning the fact that deputy ministers are individually responsible for the implementation of the program, the Committee of Deputy Ministers plays a key role because of the vital contribution it can offer through its coordinating function. It can be a major catalyst for change. The operational links that have been established between this committee and the Departmental Advisory Committee on Official Languages, the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resource Development, the Human Resources Development Committee for the English Linguistic Minority Community of Quebec, and the Committee of National Coordinators for the Implementation of Section 41 must now lead to real integration of the program into the culture of federal institutions.

5.5 Official languages champions in the departments

Following the adoption of a policy in 1998 by Treasury Board, each federal institution appointed an official languages champion to raise the profile of activities relating to official languages and to include them in the organization's

operational activities. A handbook called *Official Languages: An Integral Part of Decision Making*, which was developed for these champions by Treasury Board, suggests a number of activities to achieve these goals.

The champions meet about every nine months to discuss a variety of subjects related to the official languages program. According to comments that have been collected, these meetings provide a very stimulating forum for the pooling of initiatives taken in various organizations to further the implementation of the program.

If the champions raised their profile in their organizations, they could play a much more active role in the implementation of the official languages program and also exert greater influence on their deputy ministers, who are responsible for the program.

Most of the champions work at the national headquarters of their organizations, however, and there are very few of them in the regions. The comments received from managers and employees of federal organizations indicate that the involvement of these champions in the regions is very beneficial because they raise program visibility and employee awareness, especially with regard to service to the public. Each province has a champion who sits on the Council for Senior Federal Officials. Treasury Board could play a more active role by proposing that the network be expanded in a more systematic way and by monitoring more closely the results of the champions' meetings and the decisions made.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the deputy ministers and the heads of organizations that:

Recommendation 2

After the publication of this report, they define the mandate of their official languages champions to increase their visibility and allow them to play a more active role in the implementation of the official languages program.

5.6 Council of Senior Federal Officials

In addition, the regional Councils of Senior Federal Officials, comprising senior officials from federal agencies and departments in the regions, play an important executive role in integrating the delivery of service. Since TBS acts as liaison between the councils, it could study the possibility of using the regional councils (as well as their subcommittees of managers and federal employees) as lines of communication by which best practices may be shared and organizations may be encouraged to find innovative ways to serve their public.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 3

- as the agency acting as liaison between the regional councils, it use them to enhance the visibility of the official languages program in the federal administration across the country, as soon as possible after publication of this report; and
- it encourage the institutions that are part of the federal administration to share with each other the best practices they have developed for serving the public in both official languages and to suggest other innovative initiatives in this regard.

5.7 Regional directors of institutions

Regional directors of federal institutions are endowed with major decision-making and operational powers in their respective regions, and as such should ensure that the values related to the delivery of service to the public, including the guarantee of equal status for both official languages, are integrated into all operations in designated offices. These directors should therefore provide exemplary leadership for their regional managers and establish an operational framework that is conducive to service delivery. Regional directors must themselves be aware of their linguistic responsibilities, of course, and must have integrated these values into the organizational culture of the offices for which they are responsible. Moreover, regional directors should be evaluated on the extent to which they achieve official languages objectives - a practice that is far from usual.

5.8 Managers of designated offices

Following the example of regional directors, the managers of designated offices must also ensure that service values are an integral part of their everyday practices so that they can convey them to their staff. An accountability contract between the institution and its managers concerning the objectives to be achieved should include the provision of quality service to the public in both official languages so that the managers' success in implementing the program can be measured. Although this is done in some cases, it is not a standard practice.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 4

- before the end of December 2001, it require federal institutions to establish a formal accountability structure so that they can report on the extent to which the regional directors and managers of designated offices have achieved their objectives for the implementation of the official languages program; and
- it also require them to report on this in their annual assessment submitted to the Treasury Board Secretariat.

6. Sensitization and training of senior managers

In carrying out its mandate, the Treasury Board Secretariat has, among other things, launched a national awareness campaign on the official languages program among institutions subject to the OLA. These sessions are part of TBS's training activities and are designed for both employees and managers. As noted earlier in this report, these activities must place the delivery of service in both languages at the very heart of the operations of the institutions, as a fundamental value of their organizational culture.

As an organization striving for excellence in public service management, the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) provides an array of courses to prepare current and future managers and leaders of the public service to meet the challenges of managing programs and personnel. By its very nature, CCMD is very well-suited to ensure that managers at all levels are well aware of the government of Canada's commitment to linguistic duality, as officially entrenched in the Constitution and the *Official Languages Act*. It is vital, therefore, that the CCMD become a centre of excellence where current and future managers can be exposed to the principles and values related to linguistic duality. It should strive to develop attitudes that are conducive to the acceptance of differences, tolerance, sharing of common values, and knowledge of the realities and institutions of the two linguistic communities. The search for greater understanding of the social, economic, political and cultural reality and the aspirations of the members of the linguistic minority communities should provide a backdrop for the service ethic of the public service. The courses provided by CCMD must therefore fully reflect this reality, since managers must implement the principles of the official languages program in their respective institutions.

A review of CCMD's curriculum shows that little time is devoted to the values related to linguistic duality and the objective of promoting progress toward equality of status and use of English and French in all federal institutions and in Canadian society. One course offered jointly by CCMD and the Treasury Board Secretariat for management trainees has a section on the official languages, but no other course includes all the elements relating to the foundations of Canada's linguistic duality. Following the example of the three-day course offered on cultural diversity in Canada, CCMD should prepare all public service managers to meet the challenges posed by leadership, management, and the delivery of services to members of the two language communities and ensure that these managers thoroughly integrate the values of linguistic duality and implement the objectives of the official languages program in their organizations. To this end, CCMD should consult and co-operate with Treasury Board and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages to develop courses or practical workshops on this subject. Consultations between CCMD and Treasury Board are currently underway regarding this matter.

The Commissioner therefore recommends that the Canadian Centre for Management Development and the Treasury Board Secretariat:

Recommendation 5

Within 12 months of the publication of this report, develop, in consultation with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, a training program intended for all public service managers concerning Canada's linguistic duality, notably the attitudes and values that would contribute to the development of an organizational culture conducive to the provision of bilingual services in designated offices.

7. Treasury Board Secretariat and accountability

Although a number of organizations are responsible for the implementation of the federal government's commitments as set out in the *Official Languages Act*, Part VIII of the Act confers major responsibilities on Treasury Board for the general development and coordination of programs to implement Part IV in federal institutions, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Our follow-ups show that the delegation of decision-making powers with regard to official languages and the existing monitoring systems have failed to produce the expected results. In our 1998 progress report, we deplored the fact that Treasury Board was not monitoring designated offices well enough to achieve significant results. We certainly acknowledge Treasury Board's efforts to fulfil its mandate, but we must note that its present activities have not produced the desired results. Remedial efforts are therefore needed to breathe new life into the program and ensure that quality bilingual service is provided at designated points of service. In addition, Treasury Board should be much more rigorous in the studies, analyses and follow-ups it conducts in fulfilling its duty to ensure that institutions respond more fully to the spirit as well as the letter of the OLA.

It is essential to develop new tools and effective performance indicators for service to the public in order to truly determine the extent to which various institutions are meeting their obligations. These indicators must be based on concrete data; for example, the number of people from the minority community being served by the office. If the results do not meet expectations, Treasury Board should require that the institutions increase their efforts to reach their minority public by taking additional measures, such as newspaper advertisements and increased consultation with groups representing the minority communities. These indicators must unequivocally include a thorough knowledge of the minority group served. Beyond the action plans and corrective measures submitted by institutions, which often remain a theoretical exercise, Treasury Board must make these institutions responsible for achieving the program objectives and demand nothing less than optimal performance on their part. In its new management framework, *Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada*, TBS did not clearly establish performance indicators for managers pertaining to the dynamic aspects of the use of English and French in contacts with clients (e.g., active offer of services, the bilingual capacity of designated offices, staff awareness of the program).

The following example illustrates what should be expected of a designated office in terms of concrete results. In response to a lack of communication with the local Francophone community noted in one of our follow-ups, the Canadian Forces Recruitment Centre (CFRC) in Yellowknife, NWT, has firmly promised to use various means to maintain regular links with that community. Given its mandate and the clients it serves, it has agreed to focus its communications on French-language schools, which are the institutions of the official language minority that are most likely to be interested in the services of the CFRC. Particular emphasis has been placed on school principals, guidance counsellors and students. Plans include presentations in the schools and participation in job fairs. Consideration has also been given to including an advertisement in a directory of French-speaking agencies and companies providing services in French in the NWT, as is done in the Yukon.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 6

By the end of December 2001, it develop performance indicators that focus on results, while taking into account the dynamic aspects of the use of the two official languages in the delivery of service to the public.

Traditional methods of ensuring accountability have also been affected by the transformations, cuts, and delegation of power to various institutions. TBS dropped some of its linguistic monitoring activities for lack of funds. To make up for this deficiency, TBS recently created a performance measurement group mandated to evaluate the health of the official languages program. In addition, it expects to work with Statistics Canada on developing surveys to use as a measurement tool. In general, Treasury Board should also conduct surveys, or require institutions to do so, or use various other tools (focus groups, evaluation kits, direct observation, etc.) to evaluate client expectations and satisfaction with regard to the services offered in designated offices. It goes without saying that Treasury Board must first determine its expectations of the institutions regarding the requirements of the OLA and must ensure that these measurement tools are oriented toward achieving results.

These evaluation methods could prove especially useful for measuring the quality of services provided throughout an

entire process (e.g., job application, employment insurance claim, or travel, from purchasing the ticket to the trip itself and the arrival).

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 7

- it develop within the next 15 months, whether on its own or with Statistics Canada or any other established agency, the appropriate tools (surveys, evaluation kits, focus groups, etc.) to:
 - become well-acquainted with the clientele served and its profile;
 - measure how satisfied this clientele is with the services offered by federal institutions in relation to the provisions of the OLA; and
- require federal institutions to account for this in their annual plans submitted to Treasury Board.

As a result of the transformations and organizational changes in institutions that continue to shape the new face of the public service and other agencies subject to the *Official Languages Act*, current Treasury Board and Public Service Commission policies need to be updated. Treasury Board has already started work on this through its review of its language of work policy, but particular attention should be paid to policies dealing with the management of the program itself, especially the requirements and linguistic levels for positions, the staffing of bilingual positions, and the rights of incumbents. These matters ultimately have a significant impact on the delivery of service in designated offices. We will deal with the issue of language requirements and the staffing of positions later in this report.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 8

- within 15 months of the publication of this report, it complete the review and update of its current policies on the management of the official languages program and of its policy on the language of service, taking into account the cutbacks, transformations and organizational changes of all kinds that have marked the public service over the last few years; and
- it ensure through its monitoring and follow-up activities that the institutions implement the revised policies.

8. Coordination and recognition programs

There is general agreement in the official language minority communities and among public servants about the benefits of sharing the best practices of various institutions that have taken innovative steps to provide service in both languages, thereby contributing to the development of communities living in minority situations. The 1999 edition of Treasury Board's compendium of initiatives, *Official Languages: Words in Deeds*, lists many interesting practices. However, some initiatives that are important enough to affect an entire institution or a key part of it merit official recognition, as was done during the National Symposium on Official Languages held in 1998. No other similar activity has been held since then to highlight specific initiatives. For this reason, we support Senator Simard's idea of celebrating in a concrete way the commitment of people who take exemplary measures to implement the OLA in their workplace.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 9

Within 12 months after the publication of this report, it revive the recognition program to reward the performance of an employee, office or institution subject to the OLA that has taken exemplary measures in the performance of his, her or its duties to ensure that the Act was implemented.

Treasury Board's Official Languages Branch is working with the Service and Innovation Sector to meet the new challenges arising from the changes in the delivery of bilingual services and in community development and promotion. A practical handbook currently being prepared will report on best practices in the alternative delivery of services and will help managers evaluate the effects of the proposed changes on communities living in minority situations.

9. The key to service to the public: human resources

9.1 The triggering factor: active offer

The initial greeting that is received, whether on the telephone or in person, will have a decisive impact on the exchange that follows. One cannot underestimate the importance of and need for an active offer in both official languages when service is provided. Needless to say, an office that greets its clients bilingually will increase demand for service in the language of the minority, whose members will feel at ease in continuing in their language. The official language minority communities consulted in the preparation of this report again stressed the importance of this. A bilingual greeting and use of the client's language are a concrete recognition of the client's personal identity, as mentioned earlier.

Furthermore, the management of the designated office must stress to its employees that the active offer is an integral part of the functions of the office and the culture of the organization, as is the service that follows. For example, in the designated Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) office in Toronto, an employee assigned to reception in the office greets clients in both languages and then directs them to an official who can serve them in the language of their choice. Similarly, at the Canadian Heritage district office in Regina, Saskatchewan, the person in charge of the office ensures that clients are greeted in both languages and subsequently obtain service in their preferred language by assigning its bilingual staff to strategic locations. Both these examples clearly show how those responsible for offices designated bilingual have set the tone for their employees in order to ensure that the concept of active offer is part of the overall service. The increased awareness of official languages among those in charge is the triggering factor that has drawn attention to the linguistic aspect of service. Treasury Board addresses the issue of active offer during the awareness sessions it gives to institutions, but follow-up results have shown that this is insufficient.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 10

Immediately after the publication of this report, it make the verbal greeting in both languages for service in person and on the telephone a fundamental requirement in assessing the performance of institutions in the implementation of the official languages program.

9.2 Immediate, effective and courteous service to clients

The active offer of service in both languages must be followed immediately by communication in the language chosen by the client. This does not mean that all employees in offices designated bilingual must speak English and French, but rather that there must be adequate bilingual capacity to meet the demand. The client must be directed to an employee who is able to provide service in the client's language if the employee greeting him or her cannot do so. Management must ensure that the staff of the office show respect for the client's language as part of an organizational culture that focuses on quality service. We will examine this concept in greater detail with regard to staff training.

9.3 Toll-free 1-800 lines and dedicated lines for service in each language

Some means of delivering service over the telephone are better than others. Given the effectiveness of providing service in each language on a separate line, we strongly recommend that federal institutions establish such dedicated lines.

As well, it is clear that agencies that use bilingual toll-free (1-800) lines are not necessarily all equally successful. The results of our follow-ups indicated that service in both languages was available in only 75 percent of cases. In order to correct the shortcomings observed in the provision of service over toll-free lines, the Commissioner recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 11

- it strongly urge federal institutions to use dedicated telephone lines with different numbers, rather than bilingual lines, to provide service to the public in each of the two languages;
- not later than 15 months after the publication of this report, it lay down stricter rules for the use of bilingual

telephone lines, so that the institutions subject to the OLA can provide comparable service in both official languages; and

- it conduct the necessary follow-ups on a regular basis to ensure that these rules are applied.

9.4 Respect for clients: adequate bilingual capacity

We cannot overemphasize the importance of having sufficient bilingual capacity in a designated office to ensure that service of equal quality is provided in both languages. Only by ensuring that each office has adequate bilingual capacity and serves clients in the appropriate language can institutions give full meaning to the recognition of the linguistic and cultural identity of the members of the public it serves. Unfortunately, the follow-ups show a decline of 10 percentage points in bilingual capacity, compared with our initial study. This significant decline certainly does not help the provision of service in both official languages. The budget cuts and office closures of the last few years are partly responsible for this situation. Both the regional official languages coordinators and the managers in question should be involved in planning for the staffing of bilingual positions, since they should be able to assess the needs on the ground.

All designated offices, regardless of their size, must have enough staff to adequately meet the demand for service in the language of the minority. To this end and in order to correct the serious shortcomings described above, **it is our opinion that a sufficient number of positions assigned to provide service to the public should be designated bilingual in the designated offices to provide service in English and French.** This is all the more necessary in small offices that have few employees, since any temporary absence of this staff will deprive the office of its ability to offer bilingual service. **What is more, imperative staffing is the only viable option in such cases to ensure service of equal quality in both official languages, especially in those regions where the official language minority community is small in number and where the number of bilingual positions is often small.** The graduates of immersion programs can provide a significant recruitment pool in such locations.

A large office, on the other hand, cannot be satisfied merely to staff a strict minimum of bilingual positions, especially if the institution offers a wide range of services. We feel therefore that, as a rule, and as regards the provisions of section 91 of the OLA, which requires that the language requirements of positions be established objectively, an adequate proportion of the staff serving the public, in various areas of service, should be bilingual to ensure not only continuous service but also the quality of service in both official languages.

To the extent that the institutions staff the positions imperatively, they must set up protective mechanisms to deal with such a change. On the one hand, they will be responsible for giving their staff sufficient warning of their intention, while in the interest of fairness they will also have to give them an opportunity to take language training.

As to the level of bilingualism required in the designated offices, the official language communities consulted and the managers of various institutions agree that level B, especially for oral communication, is the minimum acceptable for carrying on a simple conversation. However, for employees involved in client service, whose duties require a greater knowledge of their second language, level C is necessary and the only acceptable level. In communities where staff make little use of their second official language and risk losing their knowledge of the language, periodic assessment is essential.

At the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency in Halifax, a large number of positions in the office (13 out of 56) require a knowledge of both languages at the intermediate and superior skill levels. All incumbents meet or exceed the requirements. This shows that for this organization the concept of quality service includes a linguistic dimension.

However, it would be appropriate to reintroduce the practice of periodic second-language evaluation of incumbents filling bilingual positions. The abandonment of this practice several years ago has had a negative impact on the maintenance of acquired linguistic knowledge and, consequently, on the provision of service in both languages. We therefore believe that periodic evaluation is required. The Public Service Commission believes that, if it is to have an impact on the efforts made by employees to maintain their knowledge, such an evaluation should be done every two years. TBS agrees with reintroducing the practice of regular evaluation but believes that a two-year interval would be too demanding from the operational and financial point of view because of the very large number of persons whose knowledge would have to be re-evaluated.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Public Service Commission that:

Recommendation 12

- within 12 months of the publication of this report, they re-examine and modify the current policy on the identification of language requirements of positions involving service to the public to correct the shortcomings noted in the follow-ups with regard to bilingual staff in designated offices;
- they take the necessary follow-up action with federal institutions as part of this re-examination and report on it in their annual reports to Parliament;
- in light of the changes proposed in recommendation 12 (a) to the criteria for identifying the language requirements of positions, bilingual positions involving service to the public be staffed imperatively as often as possible;
- they develop a strategy to inform employees of the changes to the policy on the identification of language requirements of positions and to provide them easier access to language training; and
- they reinstate the practice of confirming the second language skills of all incumbents of bilingual positions, through the Language Knowledge Examination, in order to ensure that their knowledge is regularly re-evaluated.

Furthermore, a guide that could be used by officials responsible for official languages to determine the number of bilingual positions required to serve the public in designated offices might also be useful as a planning tool for their institution, in accordance with section 91 of the OLA.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 13

- within 12 months of the publication of this report, it develop and make available to the institutions subject to the OLA an analysis grid along with standards to be used as an assessment tool to enable the institutions to determine the number of bilingual positions required to adequately meet real needs for service in both official languages; and
- at the appropriate time, it monitor these institutions to ensure that this assessment tool is implemented and to assess its implementation.

We find it regrettable that TBS has again postponed, until 2003, the requirement that incumbents in bilingual senior managerial positions (EX) attain the CBC level. Since actions speak louder than words, this measure unfortunately does not strengthen the image of the program and its application in designated offices. An organizational culture that values the presence of both languages depends to a large extent on the contribution made by managers, and any further extension must be ruled out. Any further postponement of the deadline would seriously compromise the credibility of the program.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 14

- it ensure that managers in federal institutions reach the CBC level by the new deadline of 2003; and
- it not postpone the deadline any further.

9.5 Well-prepared staff

The provision of quality service in French and English presupposes that the employees performing these duties have a good knowledge of the public's right to be served in the language of its choice. It is therefore essential that employees be reminded regularly, and not just once or twice a year as often happens in most offices, that the language aspect is an integral part of service delivery. Managers of designated offices must accordingly ensure that the language issue is at the heart of discussions at staff meetings, along with the other elements of service to the public, in keeping with the

organization's mission. After all, managers are responsible for making this a welcome challenge for all of their staff, a question of pride and of respect for the public.

It is clear that managers of designated offices must be better prepared and trained to take appropriate monitoring and assessment measures to ensure that the staff provides service in both languages in accordance with the standards of quality service to clients.

At the designated Human Resources Development office in Vancouver, a bilingualism committee, established by the office's management and including representatives of each division, ensures that the various components of the official languages program are implemented. The committee has both Anglophone and Francophone members and serves to strengthen the idea that bilingual service is everyone's business. Provision of service in English and French is now an integral part of the office's daily activities.

The new TBS video on service to the public, which was produced with the participation of federal agencies, may be an effective information and promotional tool for the designated offices. Moreover, revisions are expected to the introductory official languages course (P714) offered jointly by the Public Service Commission and TBS and designed for staff working in this sector. The revision is needed to strengthen the approach to official languages and to adapt it to organizational changes that the institutions have undergone in recent years.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 15

Not later than 12 months after the publication of this report, it complete the revision of the introductory official languages course offered jointly with the Public Service Commission and offer it to staff assigned to the official languages program in federal institutions.

To the extent that the institutions subject to the Act are responsible for implementing the official languages program by integrating it into their culture, the Treasury Board Secretariat should also take steps through the members of the Advisory Council on Official Languages to train the people responsible for official languages in these organizations to give training and awareness sessions themselves.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 16

It train people responsible for official languages in federal institutions, at the national and regional levels, so that they in turn can serve as resource persons for managers of their institutions. This would permit to support their efforts to increase understanding and acceptance of the challenges of linguistic duality and the underlying objectives of the OLA, including the provision of bilingual service to the public.

9.6 Relevant language training programs

Since 1997, demand for language training has grown significantly in response to measures to renew the public service and the need to train middle managers. Since the increase in demand cannot be met by existing Public Service Commission resources, there has been a critical increase in the number of candidates waiting for statutory training. This delay means that some people appointed on a non-imperative basis still do not meet the language requirements of their positions more than two years after their appointment. This situation could well have a negative impact on the provision of service in designated offices if the incumbents do not have the required knowledge of their second official language. The Public Service Commission must therefore obtain the necessary resources to reduce the waiting time for statutory language training.

Furthermore, current language training programs are essentially aimed at candidates whose first official language is English or French. The larger number of clients from visible minority groups in certain major urban centres whose first language is neither English nor French requires that these programs be redesigned. Accordingly, the Treasury Board will also have to take this situation into account when allocating resources to the PSC.

In fact, language training programs are so important that their orientation should be rethought to ensure that employees who acquire knowledge in their second official language are really able to use it and maintain it in the performance of their duties.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to Treasury Board that:

Recommendation 17

As soon as possible after the publication of this report, it take measures to ensure that the Public Service Commission obtains the necessary resources to eliminate the waiting time for statutory language training and to adapt their training programs to the needs of their present clientele.

The programs to maintain acquired levels of language knowledge that have been established in a number of designated offices make a substantial contribution to upholding employees' level of bilingualism and should be encouraged by managers in the same way as other staff development programs. To some extent, these programs support the efforts expected of employees holding bilingual positions. By occupying such positions, these individuals have assumed a responsibility and a challenge: to provide service to their fellow citizens in both official languages and to maintain or even improve the language skills they acquired, in some cases, at the expense of Canadian taxpayers. By recommending earlier that the language skills of the incumbents of bilingual positions be periodically assessed, we emphasized the employees' responsibility in this regard.

In some regions, where the official language minority is small and employees designated to serve the public make little use of their second official language, support programs are essential. At the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency in Vancouver, local management places special importance on development of the second language; many employees upgrade their language knowledge by means of a well-established refresher program. Institutions also offer incentives such as lunchtime lectures at which staff have a weekly opportunity to participate in activities in their second language. Others encourage their employees who have received language training to participate in professional training activities in their second language. In view of the Treasury Board policy stating that institutions must give employees reasonable assistance to maintain the level of knowledge acquired during language training, it is our opinion that the budgets of institutions should be adjusted and increased to maintain such programs or, where necessary, to create them.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 18

As soon as possible and not later than 12 months after the publication of this report, it encourage federal institutions to review and adjust the budgets allocated for refresher programs to ensure that employees who provide service to the public in offices designated bilingual maintain and upgrade their knowledge of their second official language.

9.7 Consultation and feedback mechanisms

In our follow-ups, we noted that the contacts established between institutions and the minority language communities contribute greatly to improving the service provided in the language of the minority. In Prince George, for example, the director for Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has forged ties with Francophone community representatives to determine their need for services in French. In his office, he has dispelled certain fears that his staff may have had concerning the official languages program, and bilingual service is now a permanent reality there.

In the Western Economic Diversification office in Saskatoon, management has established ongoing consultation with the Francophone community to identify its needs for economic development. Community representatives set their own priorities and now work with the staff of the office to ensure that these objectives are met. There are frequent meetings, and the office even consults community representatives when it announces competitions for positions that play a key role in delivering bilingual services.

Our observations show that sustained contact with the minority official language communities has a positive impact on the provision of bilingual service in designated offices, and the Commissioner recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 19

Immediately after publication of this report, it ask federal institutions to ensure that their designated bilingual offices establish and maintain regular communications with the minority official language communities to ascertain their needs and to inform them of the services provided.

9.8 Bilingual signage and documentation

The physical environment must unambiguously reflect the bilingual nature of the office so that clients have no doubt as to the availability of service in both official languages. The OLA requires signs in all federal offices to be in English and French, regardless of whether the office is designated bilingual. Exterior signage is the first visual point of contact with the public.

Interior signage in a bilingual office has the greatest impact, since it invites visitors to continue in the language of their choice or deters them from doing so. The mere presence of the TBS pictogram in an office is not sufficient to indicate that service is available. This pictogram (or several of them) must also be sufficiently visible and be strategically located in the office. In addition, all the signs must clearly identify in both languages the services provided in the office in question and the areas or wickets at which service is offered in English and French. If service is limited to certain wickets or workstations, the organization is responsible for identifying them as effectively as possible by means of electronic signs, badges or pins identifying the employees able to provide bilingual service, or by any other innovative means. **The client must feel at ease when entering an office that is designated bilingual and not have any doubt that he or she will be served in the language of his or her choice.**

In this regard, the manager responsible will ensure that all materials offered (pamphlets, forms, miscellaneous documentation) are available in both languages and that equal prominence is given to both versions. In terms of signage and the availability of adequate documentation in English and in French, we should note the examples set by the Western Economic Diversification office in Saskatoon and the Citizenship and Immigration office in Winnipeg.

The Commissioner recommends to the institutions subject to the OLA that:

Recommendation 20

Not later than the end of December 2001, they ensure with the help of the audit sector or any other responsible sector of the institution that signage and documentation are fully available in both official languages in offices that are designated bilingual.

9.9 Let your fingers do the walking in both languages

Besides the physical location of their offices, institutions also announce their services in the telephone directories, primarily in the blue pages, of the cities where they are located. We applaud the decision of TBS and PWGSC, starting in directories published in January 2002, finally to identify which offices provide bilingual service, as recommended in our 1998 progress report. We will follow these developments with great interest.

The directories published by some official language minority communities are also a source of valuable information for readers wishing to find out about the services offered in their language by various levels of government, including the federal government. The institutions themselves are responsible for informing the communities of the services offered, and the communities for clearly indicating their expectations.

On the other hand, the follow-ups show a 20 percent margin of error in the Internet directory of offices designated bilingual compiled by TBS (Burolis). Given our observations, TBS must spot-check the information provided by the institutions themselves to ensure the quality of the information recorded, as we suggested in our 1998 progress report.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 21

Not later than three months after the publication of this report, it take the necessary steps to require federal institutions to correct and update the information in Burolis concerning the linguistic designation of offices and conduct the appropriate monitoring to ensure that this is done.

9.10 The new technology speaks both languages

Since electronic communication technologies have evolved significantly over the last few years, federal organizations are advertising themselves and their services on Web sites. Although this issue was not raised during our study on points of service and the follow-ups, we feel that the organizations should be instructed to ensure that the information posted is available in both official languages at the same time and that the quality of both versions is equal. It is still all too common for errors to be brought to our attention by complainants, and one only has to browse through some of these sites to find deficiencies.

The new technologies could be excellent tools for communicating and creating contacts with the minority communities, especially those that are geographically and linguistically isolated.

10. New models of service delivery

In our 1998 report entitled *Government Transformations: The Impact on Canada's Official Languages Program*, we found that many changes in the federal government, such as devolution, the creation of partnerships, privatization, restructuring and downsizing, had brought about a subtle but cumulative erosion of language rights. As a result of these changes, service to the public in designated offices has not been left unharmed. The follow-ups conducted bear this out.

In our 1997 report on labour market development agreements (LMDA) and the *Employment Insurance Act*, we set out five guiding principles based on our conviction that fundamental language rights must be preserved by specific and sound mechanisms in the event of changes in government. These principles must guide the government and the institutions mandated to implement these changes:

- the preservation of the public' acquired language rights;
- the implementation of mechanisms to provide relief and redress;
- the creation of accountability mechanisms;
- a formal commitment to protect and promote the development of the official language minority communities;
- consideration of the language rights of public servants who are affected by the changes.

The scope of these institutional changes at the national and international levels has also given rise to new forms of co-operation between the government and the official language minority communities. The gradual implementation of Part VII of the Act has also helped to diversify methods of delivering federal programs. In a recent study entitled *Co-operation between the Government and the Communities: New Models for Service Delivery*, we examine three models of co-operation that seem to provide arrangements that offer the linguistic minority service equal to that offered to the majority.

10.1 Models of co-operation

Since they were not pleased with the lack of service in French from the Department of Human Resources Development Canada, the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario (ACFO) in London-Sarnia, further to an agreement with the department, now offers various services in French (employment counselling and a bilingual resource centre) on behalf of the department. The second initiative, Éducacentre, offers a range of programs designed to provide education and training services in French to adults in British Columbia. Éducacentre relies on various funding parties and signs contribution or grant agreements with both provincial and federal government departments to offer its programming. The quality of the services offered by this organization is impressive. The third model chosen was that of the National Committee for Canadian Francophonie Human Resources Development, which consists of equal numbers of representatives from Francophone minority communities and federal organizations. The services in question are national in scope and relate to the field of economic development. A similar organization exists to serve the Anglophone population of Quebec.

One example of co-operation is the initiative taken by the National Film Board in Edmonton. When the film rental service in Edmonton closed down, a local school was the fortunate recipient of the organization's documentary films in French. For a modest charge, the school library rents these films to the public. The board ensures that new films are sent on a regular basis so that the inventory is up-to-date.

10.2 Co-operation among the three orders of government

Following an initiative of the provincial government in Manitoba, the three levels of government (federal, provincial and municipal) have created a partnership to ensure delivery of services to the Franco-Manitoban community. Two bilingual government service centres or single wickets will open in 2001. The Sub-Committee on Official Languages of the Manitoba Federal Council plays an active role in carrying out the project.

The new models of co-operation, under which a group offers government service to an official language minority community, may help to enhance the vitality of these communities. They can be effective tools if they comply with the provisions of the Act and allow truly equal services to be provided. Needless to say, any model must also include appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In the study we published in June 2000, *Co-operation between the Government and the Communities: New Models for Service Delivery*, we examined these new forms of co-operation.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 22

It require federal institutions:

- to the extent that they develop models of co-operation with community groups for the provision of service, to take into account the five guiding principles concerning labour force development agreements, set out in our 1997 report and summarized above;
- to develop a framework for managing models of co-operation with community groups for the provision of service;
- to put appropriate mechanisms in place to monitor and assess the implementation of any new model of co-operation; and
- to report on this in their annual management report submitted to the Treasury Board.

General Conclusion

The road to linguistic equality and full recognition of the rights of official language communities is far from straight. The challenges can be overcome, however, as long as decisive political and administrative leadership and unambiguous commitment are shown. The corrective action already taken by some institutions as part of the follow-ups and the commitment of others to rectify the shortcomings are all likely to improve service delivery in designated offices. However, it is only by entrenching the principle of linguistic duality at the heart of their organization that institutions will truly succeed in ensuring its full recognition and implementation. It is high time for action to bring about change in the organizational culture of federal institutions.

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ARCHIVED - Appendix A

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Comparative Results of the 1994 Study and the Follow-ups in Federal Offices Designated Bilingual

ELEMENT	Northwest Territories		Yukon		British Columbia		Alberta		Saskatchewan		Manitoba		Ontario**		NCR*		Quebec**		New Brunswick		Nova Scotia		Prince Edward Island		Newfoundland		
	Study %	Follow-up 1999 %	Study %	Follow-up 1996 %	Study %	Follow-up 1998 %	Study %	Follow-up 1997 %	Study %	Follow-up 1997 %	Study %	Follow-up 1996 %	Study %	Follow-up 1999 %	Study %	Follow-up 97/98 %	Study %	Follow-up 1999 %	Study %	Follow-up 1997 %	Study %	Follow-up 1998 %	Study %	Follow-up 1996 %	Study %	Follow-up 1996 %	Study %
Exterior signage	100	93	85	56	94	92	96	90	91	100	96	100	94	100	94	92	98	100	99	98	93	98	94	80	100	94	100
Interior signage	89	85	85	77	61	75	88	90	81	88	81	96	83	90	73	97	94	94	93	92	92	93	80	70	80	100	100
Documentation	-	100	75	67	73	61	91	84	73	76	87	90	88	92	100	100	98	100	91	83	96	84	79	55	100	100	100
Forms	50	-	100	86	88	80	92	94	70	74	96	85	95	100	100	100	99	100	100	90	97	100	89	80	100	100	100
Pictogram	-	69	46	61	55	75	53	79	57	88	74	84	50	80	51	80	68	82	71	82	72	86	58	80	100	100	100
Bilingual greeting on the telephone	50	55	47	62	44	50	52	50	52	53	57	50	51	52	81	81	45	59	62	62	43	67	49	65	41	59	59
Bilingual greeting in person	17	0	14	12	4	19	8	12	18	24	43	39	12	22	56	41	16	18	19	16	8	11	36	6	0	7	7
Service on the telephone	100	57	91	66	90	64	84	62	60	67	76	56	70	68	92	97	96	96	84	77	78	73	69	65	70	47	47
Service in person	64	69	42	61	73	89	63	66	45	61	76	78	69	76	78	92	99	100	85	78	73	72	72	90	42	56	56
Bilingual capacity	50	50	37	48	62	80	75	60	59	38	71	63	64	66	74	92	98	92	81	77	77	60	62	72	74	50	50

* National Capital Region

** Outside the National Capital Region



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Recommendations

The Commissioner accordingly recommends to the deputy ministers and heads of organizations that:

Recommendation 1

as part of their mission and the particular mandate of their organization, they ensure that the values relating to linguistic duality and the implementation of the official languages program are respected and integrated in their environment:

- by including them in their mission statement;
- by establishing appropriate annual objectives in this regard; and
- by accounting for the attainment of these objectives in their annual management plans submitted to Treasury Board.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the deputy ministers and heads of organizations that:

Recommendation 2

after the publication of this report, they define the mandate of their official languages champions to increase their visibility and allow them to play a more active role in the implementation of the official languages program.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 3

- as the agency acting as liaison between the regional councils, it use them to enhance the visibility of the official languages program in the federal administration across the country, as soon as possible after publication of this report; and
- it encourage the institutions that are part of the federal administration to share with each other the best practices they have developed for serving the public in both official languages and to suggest other innovative initiatives in this regard.

Recommendation 4

- before the end of December 2001, it require federal institutions to establish a formal accountability structure so that they can report on the extent to which the regional directors and managers of designated offices have achieved their objectives for the implementation of the official languages program; and
- it also require them to report on this in their annual assessment submitted to the Treasury Board Secretariat.

The Commissioner therefore recommends that the Canadian Centre for Management Development and the Treasury Board Secretariat:

Recommendation 5

within 12 months of the publication of this report, develop, in consultation with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, a training program intended for all public service managers concerning Canada's linguistic duality, notably the attitudes and values that would contribute to the development of an organizational culture conducive to the provision of bilingual services in designated offices.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 6

by the end of December 2001, it develop performance indicators that focus on results, while taking into account the dynamic aspects of the use of the two official languages in the delivery of service to the public.

Recommendation 7

- it develop within the next 15 months, whether on its own or with Statistics Canada or any other established agency, the appropriate tools (surveys, evaluation kits, focus groups, etc.) to:
 - become well-acquainted with the clientele served and its profile;
 - measure how satisfied this clientele is with the services offered by federal institutions in relation to the provisions of the OLA; and
- require federal institutions to account for this in their annual plans submitted to Treasury Board.

Recommendation 8

- within 15 months of the publication of this report, it complete the review and update of its current policies on the management of the official languages program and of its policy on the language of service, taking into account the cutbacks, transformations and organizational changes of all kinds that have marked the public service over the last few years; and
- it ensure through its monitoring and follow-up activities that the institutions implement the revised policies.

Recommendation 9

within 12 months after the publication of this report, it revive the recognition program to reward the performance of an employee, office or institution subject to the OLA that has taken exemplary measures in the performance of his, her or its duties to ensure that the Act was implemented.

Recommendation 10

immediately after the publication of this report, it make the verbal greeting in both languages for service in person and

on the telephone a fundamental requirement in assessing the performance of institutions in the implementation of the official languages program.

Recommendation 11

- it strongly urge federal institutions to use dedicated telephone lines with different numbers, rather than bilingual lines, to provide service to the public in each of the two languages;
- not later than 15 months after the publication of this report, it lay down stricter rules for the use of bilingual telephone lines, so that the institutions subject to the OLA can provide comparable service in both official languages; and
- it conduct the necessary follow-ups on a regular basis to ensure that these rules are applied.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Public Service Commission that:

Recommendation 12

- within 12 months of the publication of this report, they re-examine and modify the current policy on the identification of language requirements of positions involving service to the public to correct the shortcomings noted in the follow-ups with regard to bilingual staff in designated offices;
- they take the necessary follow-up action with federal institutions as part of this re-examination and report on it in their annual reports to Parliament;
- in light of the changes proposed in recommendation 12 (a) to the criteria for identifying the language requirements of positions, bilingual positions involving service to the public be staffed imperatively as often as possible;
- they develop a strategy to inform employees of the changes to the policy on the identification of language requirements of positions and to provide them easier access to language training; and
- they reinstate the practice of confirming the second language skills of all incumbents of bilingual positions, through the Language Knowledge Examination, in order to ensure that their knowledge is regularly re-evaluated.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 13

- within 12 months of the publication of this report, it develop and make available to the institutions subject to the OLA an analysis grid along with standards to be used as an assessment tool to enable the institutions to determine the number of bilingual positions required to adequately meet real needs for service in both official languages; and
- at the appropriate time, it monitor these institutions to ensure that this assessment tool is implemented and to assess its implementation.

Recommendation 14

- it ensure that managers in federal institutions reach the CBC level by the new deadline of 2003; and
- it not postpone the deadline any further.

Recommendation 15

not later than 12 months after the publication of this report, it complete the revision of the introductory official languages course offered jointly with the Public Service Commission and offer it to staff assigned to the official languages program in federal institutions.

Recommendation 16

it train people responsible for official languages in federal institutions, at the national and regional levels, so that they in turn can serve as resource persons for managers of their institutions. This would permit to support their efforts to increase understanding and acceptance of the challenges of linguistic duality and the underlying objectives of the OLA, including the provision of bilingual service to the public.

Recommendation 17

as soon as possible after the publication of this report, it take measures to ensure that the Public Service Commission obtains the necessary resources to eliminate the waiting time for statutory language training and to adapt their training programs to the needs of their present clientele.

Recommendation 18

as soon as possible and not later than 12 months after the publication of this report, it encourage federal institutions to review and adjust the budgets allocated for refresher programs to ensure that employees who provide service to the public in offices designated bilingual maintain and upgrade their knowledge of their second official language.

Recommendation 19

immediately after publication of this report, it ask federal institutions to ensure that their designated bilingual offices establish and maintain regular communications with the minority official language communities to ascertain their needs and to inform them of the services provided.

The Commissioner recommends to the institutions subject to the OLA that:

Recommendation 20

not later than the end of December 2001, they ensure with the help of the audit sector or any other responsible sector of the institution that signage and documentation are fully available in both official languages in offices that are designated bilingual.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 21

not later than three months after the publication of this report, it take the necessary steps to require federal institutions to correct and update the information in Burolis concerning the linguistic designation of offices and conduct the appropriate monitoring to ensure that this is done.

The Commissioner therefore recommends to the Treasury Board Secretariat that:

Recommendation 22

it require federal institutions:

- to the extent that they develop models of co-operation with community groups for the provision of service, to take into account the five guiding principles concerning labour force development agreements, set out in our 1997 report and summarized above;
- to develop a framework for managing models of co-operation with community groups for the provision of service;
- to put appropriate mechanisms in place to monitor and assess the implementation of any new model of co-

operation; and

- to report on this in their annual management report submitted to the Treasury Board.

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Guiding Principles for Quality Bilingual Services

To help the federal government and its institutions deliver high-quality service in English and French in its offices across the country that are designated bilingual, we have identified the following guiding principles.

Institutions that focus on providing quality service in both official languages must:

1. include linguistic duality at the heart of their priorities and their organizational culture while respecting the language of members of the public;
2. have a vision of and clear objectives relating to official languages that they share with all the members of their organization and which form the basis for their strategic plan;
3. provide visible and consistent leadership for employees;
4. create a culture that encourages initiative and excellent service and recognizes the ongoing efforts made by everyone to improve service;
5. establish links with official language minority communities to determine their need for the services offered;
6. implement feedback mechanisms to measure client satisfaction;
7. establish performance standards and indicators to periodically assess how well they have achieved the objectives set; and
8. provide their employees with the necessary training, promote continuous learning and reinforce what was learned in the past.

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