



Best Practices Guide for Measurement of Demand

For persons responsible for official languages in institutions
Developed in collaboration with Statistics Canada

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to support institutions responsible for measuring the demand for communications and services by the public in the minority language to determine the language designation of some of their offices.

It also provides recommendations that may be useful for institutions with offices required to identify the language preferences of their restricted and identifiable clientele by contacting them directly.

Regulatory Framework

Sections 5(1)(d), (k), (n), 6(1)(d) and 7(1) of the [Official Languages \(Communications with and Services to the Public\) Regulations](#) (Regulations) provide that an office is designated bilingual if at least 5% of the demand for communications and services made by the public to that office, over a year, is in the minority language. Otherwise, it is designated unilingual, in the language of the majority.

As per sections 6(1)(b), (e), (f), and 7(2) (e.g., plane routes), the Regulations provide that an office subject to one of these rules is designated bilingual if at least 5% of the demand for services over one year is in French **and** at least 5% is in English. Otherwise, the office is designated unilingual in the official language in which there is at least 5% of demand for communications and services.

In the case of an office that serves a restricted and identifiableⁱ clientele 6(1)(a), the institution is required to ask each of its clients their language preference. The office will be designated bilingual if at least 5% of the clientele over one year prefers to receive its communications and services in French **and** at least 5% in English. Otherwise, the office is designated unilingual in the official language in which there is at least 5% of demand for communications and services, whether it is the language of the majority or not (for example, an office servicing a restricted and identifiable clientele may be designated French unilingual in a province where the language of the majority is English).

Although institutions are responsible for implementing the Regulations in their offices and determining the best way to measure demand, Section 6.3 of the [Directive on the Implementation of the Official Languages \(Communications with and Service to the Public\) Regulations](#) (Directive) offers a framework for this.

The measurement of demand must be completed as soon as possible, within a maximum period of two years from the date on which the office was created or from the date on which the provisions of the Regulations were reapplied in light of the most recent census data, as the case may be, as required by the Directive. The results of the measurement of demand and the methodology used must also be provided to the Treasury Board Secretariat through the System for Official Languages Obligations (SOLO).



Best Practices for Measuring Demand

Generally, measuring the demand includes four key stages:

1. [planning](#);
2. [developing the methodology](#);
3. [collecting responses](#); and
4. [reviewing the results report](#).

The recommended practices for each of these stages are outlined below. Depending on the specific situation of each office, institutions will be required to determine the practices that apply:

Planning

- Identify a coordinator who is responsible for measuring demand so that there is a single point of contact per institution.
- Identify a contact for each of the institution's offices impacted by the measurement of demand.
- Verify the existing internal data that may be used to measure demand.
- Determine if the demand should or may be measured by internal resources (e.g., an internal audit group) or by an independent party while favouring the collection of responses by an independent party not affected by the measurement of demand results.
- Arrange to obtain the necessary financial resources and plan the time required for the procurement and award of contracts.
- Use a proactive approach. For example, ensure that all the parties who will be involved in the demand-measuring process are informed in advance:
 - of required steps;
 - of the obligation to conduct such an exercise as set out by the Regulations;
 - that the purpose of the exercise is to measure the percentage of demand for communications and services in each official language for each identified office;
 - that the results will be used to determine the linguistic designation of each of the offices impacted by the measurement of demand (if the office is required to communicate with the public and provide services in French, in English or in both official languages); and
 - of the details of the response collection strategy and the expected collection dates once the information is available.

Developing the Methodology

The restrictions caused by the pandemic may have had an impact on the volume and traffic of clients in federal offices. In order to obtain the most accurate measure of demand, offices that are required to measure demand in 2022 and 2023 should:

- take into account the 2019 and 2022 data to determine the volume and traffic of clients over a year in order to estimate the most representative sample possible for the collection of responses; and
- allow more time for the collection of responses in case the sample is not reached within the timeframe planned in the methodology due to a lower response rate or lower actual customer volume than estimated.

Ensure that:

- for each of the offices, the following elements have been determined:
 - clientele served;
 - modes of contact used by the clientele (e.g., telephone, in-person visits, mail correspondence, email, chat, etc.);
 - general volume of service requests for each of those modes of contact (regardless of language - volume of transactions);
 - significant changes in client traffic over one year; and
 - what comprises a large enough sample to obtain sound results over a period representative of one year.
- a questionnaire is developed and used for all modes of collection identified, whether that be hard copy, by telephone, by Internet, etc.;
- a method for ranking the responses obtained for each office independently is created, regardless of the selected mode of collection;
- the respondent can complete the survey using the same method of contact that they usually use to contact the institution, whenever possible. When necessary, the contact method may change to adjust the way demand is measured (e.g., emergency, arrest, etc.);
- when the sample is likely to yield modest results or when results that are too low to provide sound evidence are identified (e.g., when a point of service very rarely receives service requests or only has little contact with the clientele) and that:
 - the reasons for potentially poor results are identified; and
 - possible mitigation strategies have been developed (e.g., expect to have to extend the response collection period). Those should be explained in the results report.
- the busiest and slowest periods of operation (as well as weekends) be considered to determine the best time to collect responses;
- an independent party to collect the responses is favoured to collect responses when possible;
- a paperless response collection method is considered to reduce the use of paper and indirect physical contact; and
- the period for collecting an office's assessment of demand falls within the two-year deadline set out in the Directive.

Collecting Responses

Ensure that:

- collection instructions are clear and properly understood, particularly by the persons responsible for collecting the responses. For example:
 - clients must select the official language in which they wish to respond to the survey themselves, without being influenced in any way whatsoever;
 - the methods of collection; and
 - note any change or interruption.
- ways to improve participation by facilitating the process are provided. For example:
 - for offices using paper questionnaires administered on site, boxes for collecting completed questionnaires should be available at each office; and
 - for respondents who receive a questionnaire by mail, a method for them to return the paper questionnaires at no cost must be provided.
- the offices responsible for collecting the responses are informed that they will be receiving the paper questionnaires and collection boxes to avoid losses and confusion;
- there is regular communication between the demand measurement coordinator and the person(s) responsible from each of the offices where demand is being measured to ensure that:
 - required material has been received and is being used as indicated; and
 - collection is taking place according to the methods and deadlines set out in the methodology stage to avoid the results being forwarded late to the TBS.
- during collection, each transaction and interaction that takes place is counted, regardless of the person using the service. Hence, it is possible to count several transactions done by the same person. One survey should be submitted, or the question should be asked, during each service request;
- the person responding to the survey, or the question does so on their own, without influence, to the extent possible (e.g., the person from the institution providing the service should not be completing the answer card or survey, only the client); and
- for collection of hard copies, at the end of the collection period, the questionnaires that could not be distributed should be gathered and counted – that count should be used to calculate the response rate. Questionnaires are to be kept until the report is submitted to the TBS in case a collection extension is necessary, to avoid delays and re-printing costs.

Reviewing the Results Report

Check that the report:

- specifies that the measurement of demand complies with Directive requirements and that it was measured in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations intended to determine if the office should communicate with the public and provide services in French, English, or both official languages;

- includes the collection plan (with collection instructions) and indicates that the plan has been followed and that there were follow-ups with employees to ensure this. If there were any changes, they should be explained in the report;
- explains that when a survey respondent has indicated that they want to be served in both official languages, the response is counted as a request for service in the minority language only;
- shows that the measurement of demand process has covered a sample representative of the clientele of each office, particularly by describing the usual modes of contact for the service request by the clientele as well as the modes of collection used for each office;
- provides the sample size, the mode(s) of collection used, the time (start and end date and time) of the collection, the total responses received for each of the two official languages or both, the estimated number and percentage of the demand in each official language, the response rate, and the confidence interval at 95%¹

Implementing the New Language Obligations

The Directive grants a maximum of one year from the date on which the new bilingual designation of an office has been determined to implement the necessary measures to meet its new obligations.

The following applies to an office that becomes unilingual following a measurement of demand:

- general circumstances of the Regulations (5(1)(d), (k), and (n)), the Directive requires that it continue to provide bilingual services until the minority population that it serves has been informed of the terms and conditions and the expected date that bilingual services will cease to be provided and the location of offices where they can receive services in their official language in person, by telephone, in writing or via a website. The office has a maximum period of one year to do so
- specific circumstances of the Regulations (6(1)(a), (b), (e), (f), 7(1) and 7(2)), the Directive grants a maximum period of one year from the date on which the linguistic obligations were determined to stop providing bilingual services. However, offices that have identified a restricted and identifiable clientele (6(1)(a)) should inform their clientele of the upcoming cessation of bilingual services

Requests for Information

If there are any questions, or for additional information, contact the Treasury Board Secretariat at info-ollo@tbs-sct.gc.ca.

ⁱ The services of these offices focus on a restricted clientele and are not available to the general public. The term “identifiable” means that the name of each client and the official language in which they prefer to be served can be determined. The institution has an up-to-date list of its clients.

The Directive contains a complete definition.

¹ Ideally the response rate should be 60% or more for the results to be representative of the clientele serviced. If the response rate is lower, explanations should be provided.