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Service Areas

The *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public)*
Regulations Reapplication Exercise (OLRRE)
Presentation notes—February 15, 2024

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Slide 1 – Service Areas and the OLRRE

- This presentation focuses on the rules relating to the service areas within the *Official Languages (Communications with and Service to the Public) Regulations*; and

- The Official Languages Regulations Reapplication Exercise, that we usually call the OLRRE.

- If you have been invited to participate in this session, it is because your institution is required to define the service area in order to confirm the language designation of one or more of your offices during the OLRRE process.

- The System for Official Languages Obligations (SOLO) will have notified you which of your offices must define a service area by assigning you a task in the system for each of the offices concerned.

- In this presentation, we will outline the steps and requirements involved in defining a service area and demonstrate how to record your results in SOLO.

- If you have any questions, you can ask them in the chat, and my colleagues will be happy to answer them. If you have any specific questions regarding your institution, please write to us at our address info-ollo@tbs-sct.gc.ca and we'll get back to you as soon as possible. The material used during this session, namely the PowerPoint presentation and notes, is also posted in the Regulations' Toolbox on GCwiki.

Slide 2 – OLRRE Updates

- The OLRRE was officially launched on September 21, 2023.
- The OLRRE module has been activated in the System for Official Languages Obligations (SOLO), and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) has completed the testing of the initial application of the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations.*
- The Regulations team worked with the IT group responsible for SOLO to finalize the necessary technical adjustments to the OLRRE module to ensure proper application of the Regulations.
- This information session is the second of four. You may have received an invitation to one or more targeted information sessions, depending on the group of provisions that apply to your institution's offices. The information sessions will cover:
  - Automatic rules; delivered on February 13. For those who could not attend this session, the PowerPoint presentation and notes are available in the Regulations' Toolbox on GCwiki.
  - Service areas: the topic of today's presentation

- Principle of proportionality and consultation for some institutions on February 20th
- Measurement of Demand for some institutions on February 21st
- SOLO will be accessible to all users again the week of **February 26,** once all information sessions have been completed. As a Person Responsible for Official Languages, you'll have attended the information sessions before taking the next steps in the OLRRE. You'll receive a message when SOLO is available.
- We are counting on your collaboration to perfect SOLO and ensure a smooth OLRRE. As this is a new Web application, we invite you to report any errors, whether they are technical problems, incorrect links or bugs related to the language of the interface.

Slide 3 – Steps of the OLRRE

- To give you an idea of where you stand in the exercise, let's look at our infographic illustrating the main steps of the OLRRE.
- At this point, you should have completed the SOLO training and updated your offices in the system. If you have not yet taken the SOLO training, please contact us after this training session and we will provide you with the links to the online training.
- This brings us to the third sphere of the pendulum - the general rules which include the steps related to defining service areas.

Slide 4 – Service Areas – Overview

- In some cases, the Regulations provide that the territory or geographic area served by an office must be defined to determine its linguistic designation. This is called the service area of an office.
- The service area is determined by the institution. It may be larger than the census subdivision where the office is located. It can include several regions, even an entire province.
- Once the service area is defined, the thresholds and criteria of the Regulations are applied to that defined geographic area. The diagram on this slide illustrates the thresholds and criteria that lead to the linguistic designation of an office under service area rules.
- First, we apply the new rule according to which if there is a minority language school in the service area of the office, the office is designated bilingual.
- If there is no minority school in the service area, we verify to see if there are at least 5,000 people from the linguistic minority in the office's service area. If so, it is designated bilingual, if not, it depends!
- Some offices will have to apply other thresholds and criteria, for example, if the service area overlaps provinces with two different official languages, such as Quebec and Ontario, the office is designated bilingual; or
- If there are at least 500 people from the minority representing at least five percent of the total population of the service area, the office is designated bilingual.

- In addition, in certain circumstances (in certain regions and for non-key services) the Regulations provide that when the service area of an office does not reach the thresholds, we must verify whether there is a significant demand or not by measuring the real demand for service in the minority language.
- The measurement of demand is another task within the OLRRE. ***Mention only during the first Service area presentation***: Information sessions on the measurement of demand are planned for those institutions concerned by this step. So we won't be discussing it in detail in this session.

Slide 5 – Directive Requirements and Deadlines

- While institutions are responsible for applying the Regulations and for defining their service areas, the *Directive on the Implementation of the Official Languages – (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations* (*Directive*) provides guidance on this subject.
- The key requirements and deadlines of the *Directive* relating to service areas are the following:
  - 6.1.3 - Ensuring that any office that has to define its service area fulfill its obligations in this regard as soon as possible. The office has a maximum of six months to do so from the date on which the office was created or from the date on which the provisions of the Regulations applied in light of the data from the most recent decennial census, as appropriate;
  - 6.2.3 - Reviewing the language designation of offices subject to the service area provisions of the Regulations five years after the publication of the data on the English or French linguistic minority population, as defined in section 2.1 of the Regulations, and updating the language designation of offices when there is a new minority language primary or secondary public educational facility in their service area. The institution has a maximum of six months from the date on which the updated list of minority language educational facilities was made available to do so.
- I invite you to consult the *Directive* for a complete list of requirements with the purpose of ensuring, while respecting the spirit of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*, a consistent and coherent implementation of the Regulations by specifying certain aspects.

Slide 6 – SOLO – Navigating Service Areas

- To access your service area tasks in SOLO, you must first select the "OLRRE" module in the system. This slide contains a screenshot of how to find this function.
- Once in the OLRRE module, select "Review OLRRE changes"; select your institution from the drop-down menu and click "View".

Slide 7 - Navigating Service Areas (con't)

- The next page will show you all the tasks you've been assigned as part of the OLRRE - the task column displays which tasks are for measurement of demand, service areas, proportionality consultations, and so on. But for the purposes of this presentation, we'll concentrate on service areas.

- On this slide, the example in the screenshot shows you an Agriculture and Agri Food Canada service area task.

- Click on "View" to generate the window shown in screenshot #5. Here you are asked to define your service area.

- Here, we want to pause to draw your attention to an important functionality of the system. For the majority of offices in the system, the service area that existed previously in the old Regulations Management System has been migrated to SOLO and will be what is loaded on this window. I would hence like to draw your attention to the yellow notification at the bottom of the #5 screenshot, indicating that the service area is still loading. It will not be possible for you to navigate beyond this page to next steps until the entirety of the service area has been loaded. Depending on the size of the service area, this could take a certain amount of time – especially if your service area encompasses several provinces or even the whole of Canada.

- Once the service area has loaded entirely, if your service area has not changed, you can simply click "Submit" and proceed to the next step.

- If you wish to modify the service area, you must click "Clear current service area" (green rectangle) before continuing to the next step. If this is a new office, you can simply proceed to draw the service area from screenshot #5 (red rectangle).

- SOLO offers 3 different icons to draw your service area – a cercle, a square or a pentagon. The pentagon allows users to draw irregular shapes.

Slide 8 – Draw the Service Area

- In the example at screen shot #6, we have used the pentagon tool to draw the service area. Point and click your cursor, then drag the line to the desired location. Repeat the process until your shape is complete. Once complete, click on "Finish" (red rectangle). You have now defined the service area for this office. The boundaries of the service area will include all census subdivisions or census metropolitan areas fully or partially selected as shown at screen shot #7.
- At this point, you can verify if you have captured every region in your service area by scrolling down on your screen and selecting "Service area demographic details" (red rectangle in screen shot #8).
- Once you are satisfied that you have correctly drawn your service area, click "Submit" (green rectangle at screen shot #8).

Slide 9 – Confirm the Service Area

- After having submitted your service area, you will be taken to screen shot #9. In this example, you can see that, based on the service area drawn in the previous step, this office retains its unilingual French language designation. This is only one possible outcome. Depending on the rules applicable to your service area, it is also possible that your office will change to a new language designation. SOLO will notify you accordingly and inform you of the rules applied.
- The yellow box at the top of the page indicates that the task is complete. If you are satisfied with the office information on screen, you can click "Acknowledge" (green rectangle) which will send the office information to TBS for a final verification.
- If, after reviewing the office information, you are concerned with the results shown, you can choose to click "Signal an issue" (red rectangle). An email will be automatically generated (screen shot #10) and you can write to us with the details of your concerns for the office in question.
- The concerns we would expect PROL to signal with this function would be if the address of the office has changed or is incorrect; or if you have concerns with the provision applied, etc.
- When signalling an issue, you will also see a notification is generated (green box at screen shot #11). Once you have sent us an email with the details of your concern, you may simply click "Return to tasks". We will contact you once we have reviewed the details of the office in question.

Slide 10 – Once the Language Designation has Been Confirmed

- Once the language designation of an office has been confirmed and validated, the Directive on the implementation of the Regulations gives newly bilingual offices up to one year to comply and implement their new obligations.
- In cases of newly unilingual offices, you have up to one year to inform the minority population served of the date the bilingual services will no longer be provided at that office and where they can receive services in their preferred official language.
- Once the timelines set out in the Directive have passed, the annual reviews on official languages will be the tool used by TBS to verify compliance.
- On the next slide, we provide an overview of the deadlines by rules group.

Slide 11 – OLRRE Critical Path

- For illustrative purposes, the tentative critical path is featured in this slide to provide a *general idea* of the deadlines you can expect.
- This critical path is tentative. The time period for activities of each group is subject to change.
- To coordinate the OLRRE across the federal government, there are compliance deadlines by rules group. This means that the one-year countdown for an office to implement its new language obligations will begin at the end of the rules group's

application period. Thus, the start of the countdown depends entirely on the rule that applies to the office in question.

- By way of example, you can see from the graph that the period for application of the service areas runs from winter 2024 to summer 2024. Thus, the one-year countdown for offices subject to the service area rules will begin after this application period.
- Rest assured that TBS will communicate exact deadlines and dates by rules group in due time as the OLRRE progresses and update the critical path and supporting material accordingly.

Slide 12 – Questions?

- As mentioned, this PowerPoint presentation and notes are available in the Regulations' Toolbox on GCwiki. On this slide you will also find a collection of the resources mentioned during the session.
- If you have any questions about this presentation, the OLRRE, or any questions specific to your institution, please feel free to contact us via our generic email.