



Official Languages Symposium

November 17-21, 2025

Executive Summary

The Official Languages Symposium was held from November 17 to 21, 2025, under the theme of “Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Support of Official Languages.” Organized by the Official Languages Centre of Excellence (OLCE) within the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada (TBS), the Symposium offered armchair discussions, workshops, information sessions, and best practice sharing. The hybrid event brought together approximately 2000 participants, including Persons Responsible for Official Languages (PROL), Persons Responsible for Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* (PRP7), Persons Responsible for Language Training (PRLT), Official Languages Champions, members of the Committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers on Official Languages (CADMOL), and public servants from across the country.

The Symposium demonstrated that federal institutions are eager to experiment AI to enhance official languages, recognizing its potential to make translation more accessible, improve language learning, increase linguistic security, and support employees in working in their preferred language. Over 400 AI projects are underway enterprise-wide, including AI-generated language learning tools and virtual tutors that were showcased during the event. Enthusiasm for AI is nevertheless balanced by concerns about quality, accuracy, security, and inclusivity. The Government of Canada is addressing these concerns through an AI Strategy focused on responsible, inclusive, and safe adoption of AI systems. The strategy embeds official languages compliance from the outset and establishes centralized governance to avoid duplication, reduce costs, and ensure consistent standards. An AI strategy specific to official languages is also under development.

Throughout the event government leaders encouraged public servants to embrace AI - to learn it, use it, experiment with it. They stressed that AI is a tool that will complement rather than replace bilingualism, emphasizing that language is built on meaningful relationships. Human oversight of AI-generated content remains critical to ensure accuracy and guard against bias.

Industry experts agreed, noting that AI is here to stay. They indicated that training and critical analysis of AI output are essential to position public servants as co-intelligent partners with AI. This will enable them to protect and promote official languages and associated cultures in an evolving digital landscape.

Official Languages champions and all public servants are urged to leverage AI to protect linguistic diversity and ensure it strengthens, rather than undermines, bilingualism. Public trust depends on adopting AI responsibly, inclusively, and transparently. At its core, the public service exists to serve Canadians and earn their confidence by understanding their language and culture—a responsibility rooted in human connection.

In keeping with the Symposium’s theme, the conference was supported by AI for transcription and simultaneous interpretation, using both KUDO and Wordly. The Symposium discussions are summarized below (click on the headings to see respective sections):

2025 Official Languages Symposium



Welcoming remarks

- Opening address by the Chief Human Resources Officer, Jacqueline Bogden

Armchair Discussion: Artificial Intelligence in Support of Official Languages, with:

Dominic Rochon, Chief Information Officer of Canada, TBS

Raj Thuppal, Executive Vice-President, Shared Services Canada

Jean-François Lymburner, CEO, Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada

Workshops and Information Sessions

- *Justice Canada* - supporting the implementation of Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*
- *Health Canada* - policy and tools to meet Part VII requirements
- *The OLCE* - results of government-wide questionnaire on the use of AI
- *CBC/Radio-Canada* - updates to the Mauril application
- *The Translation Bureau/The Language Portal of Canada* - overview of the Language Portal of Canada's tools and resources and the GCTranslate tool
- *The Public Health Agency of Canada* - tool to evaluate and monitor positive measures
- *The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages*- overview of the complaint process and the Commissioner's new powers under the modernized *Official Languages Act*
- *TBS, Privacy and Data Protection Division*– implementation of the 2025-2027 AI Strategy for the federal public service

Discussions and Best Practices

- Dragon's Den: Official Languages Edition

Conference of Official Languages Champions: Leadership in artificial intelligence (AI) for a more bilingual public service

- Opening address - Isabelle Mondou, Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage and Champion of the Official Languages Community in the federal public service
- Keynote presentation - University of Ottawa Professor and Research Chair in Technology-Mediated Language Learning and Artificial Intelligence Jérémie Séror
- Discussion panel, with:
 - Vidya ShankarNarayan**, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, People and Culture, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, TBS
 - Marc Brouillard**, Chief Information Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister, Digital Services Branch, Public Services and Procurement Canada
 - Daniel Quan-Watson**, Retired Deputy Minister and former public service champion for racialized employees

Exhibition Hall

- Kiosks hosted by federal institutions showcasing tools, resources, best practices and initiatives.

2025 Official Languages Symposium



Welcoming Remarks

Jacqueline Bogden, Chief Human Resources Officer, opened the week-long Symposium by emphasizing AI's transformative potential and the responsibility that comes with it. She cautioned against assuming that real-time AI translation can make learning a second official language unnecessary - a notion that risks undermining the principle of substantive equality enshrined in the *Official Languages Act (OLA)*. The Government of Canada embraces the responsible use of AI to complement - not replace - bilingualism. A government-wide questionnaire on the current and future use of AI in the context of official languages revealed widespread exploratory use of AI technologies, along with concerns about accuracy, privacy, and the risk of eroding bilingual capacity. Ms. Bogden kicked off the symposium by inviting participants to share ideas, concerns, successes and lessons learned in the spirit of collaboration and innovation to ensure AI strengthens official languages.

Armchair Discussion: Artificial Intelligence in Support of Official Languages

Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of the TBS People and Culture sector Vidya ShankarNarayan hosted an armchair discussion on "Artificial intelligence in support of official languages" with panelists who play a key role in establishing policies to ensure the responsible use of AI across government, working with industry to procure AI tools that meet government needs, and implementing AI technologies that can be deployed at scale. The three panelists were:

Dominic Rochon, Chief Information Officer of Canada, TBS

Raj Thuppal, Executive Vice-President, Shared Services Canada

Jean-François Lymburner, CEO, Translation Bureau, Public Services and Procurement Canada

The panel discussion highlighted the need to balance AI's extraordinary potential with responsible governance. AI can accelerate translation, enhance interpretation services, personalize language training, and support employees in working in their preferred official language. However, AI outputs depend on training and are vulnerable to errors, cultural misinterpretations, and "hallucinations". Human oversight remains essential to ensure quality, accuracy, and inclusivity and guard against bias. Public servants must be equipped to use AI tools effectively, understand their limitations, and critically assess outputs. In this context, the panel noted that jobs will not be replaced by AI; rather, in the long term, employees who cannot use AI may be replaced by those who can.

The panel also stressed the importance of central governance for AI tool development to avoid duplication, reduce costs, safeguard data, ensure quality, and prioritize scalable, enterprise-level projects. To this end, a central registry is being developed to track and align the over 400 AI projects currently underway across federal institutions. The panelists offered forum participants the following advice:

- **Learn and Upskill:** Use resources like the Canada School of Public Service and accelerator courses to learn about AI
- **Embrace AI:** Use and experiment with AI technologies to increase understanding of their potential and to remain competitive in the evolving workplace.
- **Collaborate and Share:** Share tools and data across departments and agencies to reduce redundancy and cost and achieve consistent quality and data security.
- **Engage in Governance:** Contribute information on existing AI projects to the central registry.



Closing the Armchair Discussion, TBS Associate Chief Human Resources Officer Francis Trudel echoed the panel's enthusiasm for experimenting with AI while respecting the need for human intervention. He noted that while navigating AI in the context of official languages may be complex, it is as worthwhile an endeavour as upholding the values of diversity and linguistic duality that are an integral part of our Canadian identity.

AI IN PRACTICE

Launched in September 2025, GCtranslate is an AI prototype for official languages translation developed by the Translation Bureau at Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). The tool is being piloted in 6 federal institutions and will eventually be implemented government-wide.

FUN FACT

When GCtranslate was implemented, French to English translations increased from 10 to 30 percent – a potential indicator that AI is enabling Francophones to work in their preferred official language.

Workshops and Information Sessions

The Symposium included two days of presentations from federal institutions, centred around best practices related to various aspects of official languages.

Justice Canada shared initiatives supporting the implementation of Part VII of OLA. These included fostering collaboration between the network of Coordinators Responsible for the Implementation of Section 41 of the OLA (Network 41) and regional coordinators through information sharing, courtesy visits and project follow-ups, as well as sharing lists of official language minority community (OLMC) organizations by region, and creating a Network 41 visual brand.

Health Canada highlighted its approach for meeting new Part VII requirements, including a proposed departmental policy outlining how to integrate Part VII obligations throughout the lifecycle of initiatives. It also developed an impact analysis tool, an official languages engagement checklist, and a tool for monitoring and assessing positive measures. These were supported by training on Part VII, research and data on OLMC needs and priorities, and attestations for Cabinet and Treasury Board documents.

The *OLCE* (symposium hosts) shared emerging AI trends, current practices and key challenges based on a government-wide questionnaire administered in September 2025 to PROL, PRP7, and PRLT. Most respondents reported using AI for official languages-related purposes and almost half indicated an intention to further explore the use of AI in this context. Concerns included quality and accuracy of information, language equality and equity, security and integrity, the possibility of replacing bilingualism, and potential biases. Respondents indicated a need for training, policy guidance, and sharing of tools and best practices.

CBC/Radio-Canada showcased the latest updates to the Mauril application, a free tool for learning English and French that offers 100% Canadian content and focusses not just on language learning but also on exploring Canadian culture. Recent updates include simplified onboarding, distinct



language learning and culture experience sections, varied learning exercises, and refreshed content.

The *Translation Bureau and the Language Portal of Canada at Public Services and Procurement Canada* provided an overview of the Language Portal of Canada's suite of tools and resources. It also showcased its AI-powered translation tool, GCTranslate, outlining the many benefits as well as the potential challenges and risks associated with machine-assisted technology.

The *Public Health Agency of Canada* highlighted its Official Languages Organizational Maturity Self-Assessment tool, designed to meet Section 41 obligations to establish evaluation and monitoring mechanisms in relation to positive measures. The tool is based on the Official Languages Maturity Model developed by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages and assesses the institutional readiness to meet expanded Part VII obligations.

The *Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages* explained the complaint process and the Commissioner's new powers under the modernized OLA, which include refusing or ceasing investigations under specific conditions, offering mediation as a faster, amicable resolution method, and establishing legally binding compliance agreements with federal institutions. In addition, the Commissioner can publish investigation summaries, issue formal orders to enforce compliance, and, pending new regulations, impose administrative monetary penalties for certain Part IV infractions.

Finally, the *Privacy and Data Protection Division of TBS* discussed the implementation of the 2025-2027 AI Strategy for the federal public service, which aims to ensure AI adoption is responsible, inclusive, and safe, while maintaining public trust. Given that AI services in the federal public service must comply with the OLA, the AI Strategy embeds this commitment as a core principle, requiring that official languages are considered from the outset in AI system design.

RESULTS OF OLCE GOVERNMENT-WIDE SURVEY ON AI

Of 136 respondents, 66% indicated their institutions use AI for official languages-related purposes as follows:

- 87% use it for translation
- 53% for transcription
- 42% for interpretation
- 37% for research
- 24% for language training

Discussions and Best Practices

The third day of the symposium brought together PROL, PRP7, and PRLT to explore how AI can enhance bilingualism and address related challenges. Activities included collaborative problem-solving, on-site kiosks hosted by various departments, and a "Dragon's Den: Official Languages Edition" session.

In the opening presentation, Carsten Quell indicated that the OLCE is developing a strategy for leveraging AI to strengthen bilingualism across the federal public service. Aligned with government



priorities to deploy AI responsibly and at scale, the strategy aims to improve efficiency and service delivery for Canadians while fostering a linguistically inclusive workplace. It is built on three pillars:

1. **Language training and self-assessment** – enabling personalized learning and instant feedback on proficiency.
2. **Translation and interpretation** – accelerating access to bilingual content and inclusive meetings through tools like GCtranslate and AI-powered interpretation.
3. **Discoverability of Francophone content** – ensuring French-language resources remain visible and accessible in an AI-driven environment.

The **Dragon's Den: Official Languages Edition** session featured three dynamic presentations showcasing official languages AI projects pitched to a panel of Dragons, ready to invest their fictional fortunes. The Dragons were:

- Carsten Quell, Executive Director, OLCE within TBS
- Brandon Lee, Director General, Grants and Contributions, Transformation Bureau, Global Affairs Canada
- Joshua Turner, Manager, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, Shared Services Canada

On behalf of an inter-departmental project team, the Department of National Defence and TBS pitched a proposal demonstrating an AI-driven learning tool with a virtual AI tutor designed to enhance language training accessibility and equity while realizing cost savings. Impressed by the interactive AI tutor and the solidly researched prototype, the Dragons supported the initiative.

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) pitched an Artificial Language Assistant (A-LAN-A) that offers unlimited language practice, objective feedback, progress-tracking and 24/7 accessibility. Using a “fail fast” approach, the CRA developed a prototype in a short-time frame and tested it over a three-month period. Preliminary results revealed that learners progressed best with a combination of AI learning and human coaching, as human tutors can best respond to a learner’s individual progress and sustain motivation. The Dragons praised the development and testing approach taken.

The last pitch was made by the Canada School of Public Service. It centred around a language pairing program that offers a digital solution to help employees find a language partner with whom they can practice their second official language skills. The Dragons appreciated the achievable, cost-efficient, and widely scalable initiative.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

“Technology supports learning, but humanity transform it”

-- *Abdi Aden Chil, Learning Advisor and Project Coordinator*

Conference of Official Languages Champions

The Symposium also dedicated a day of discussions for Official Languages Champions and members of the Committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers on Official Languages under the theme of “Leadership in artificial intelligence (AI) for a more bilingual public service.” Activities included collaborative problem-solving, on-site kiosks hosted by various departments, and a keynote speaker from the University of Ottawa.

2025 Official Languages Symposium



As Champion of the Official Languages Community in the federal public service, Isabelle Mondou, Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage, emphasized the critical role that official languages champions play in ensuring AI protects and promotes official languages. She underscored global concerns about the predominance of English online - AI's primary source of content - and stressed the urgency of action to safeguard cultural and linguistic diversity. While acknowledging the alarmingly rapid pace of AI development, Ms. Mondou noted Canada's extensive experience in protecting language and culture. She shared three key messages with conference participants:

1. AI is not someone else's issue - it is now integral to the official languages portfolio.
2. You are not alone – lean on networks, resources, and best practices.
3. Preserving our cultures and languages requires leveraging AI.

Ms. Mondou stressed the need to identify practical ways to use AI to advance official languages, whether through small-scale initiatives or policy development. She noted that this is no longer a theoretical discussion: it is an urgent, actionable priority with significant potential for impact.

University of Ottawa Professor and Research Chair in Technology-Mediated Language Learning and Artificial Intelligence Jérémie Séror delivered a presentation on “Reimagining communications and bilingualism in the age of speaking machines.” He discussed the rapid rise of AI since ChatGPT's launch, comparing its impact to the invention of the printing press. AI tools now permeate daily life, offering powerful capabilities, such as generating text, images, translations, but also raising concerns about bias, misinformation, and overconfidence in machine outputs. Emphasizing the concept of “affordances” (perceived and actual possibilities for action that an AI system offers to its users), Mr. Séror explored how technology shapes human behaviour and the need to identify both visible and hidden possibilities early. Key cautions included the black-box nature of large language models, their reliance on English-dominant data, and the risk of false affordances like assuming AI is neutral or makes language learning obsolete. While AI can accelerate translation and expand linguistic access, human oversight remains essential for accuracy, cultural nuance, and meaningful communication. Mr. Séror urged conference participants to foster critical thinking, ethical awareness, and collaborative learning, so that humans are positioned as co-intelligent partners with AI to protect and promote languages in an evolving digital landscape.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Hallucination happens because the system doesn't really have a direct awareness of the world beyond what's in its parameters and what it's been told to do. There's no lived experience. There's no external perception. There are no feelings. It's just an internal statistical landscape. That's a very different relationship to text and to truth and to languages than we have as human beings.

-- Jérémie Séror, *University of Ottawa Professor and Research Chair in Technology-Mediated Language Learning and Artificial Intelligence*

The Conference also included a panel discussion on “Leadership in Artificial Intelligence for a More Bilingual Public Service,” which was moderated by Gaveen Cadotte, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Public Service Renewal, at the Privy Council Office. The panel included:

- **Vidya ShankarNarayan**, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, People and Culture, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, TBS

2025 Official Languages Symposium



- **Marc Brouillard**, Chief Information Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister, Digital Services Branch, Public Services and Procurement Canada
- **Daniel Quan-Watson**, Retired Deputy Minister and former public service champion for racialized employees

The panelists emphasized that AI has expanded access to translation, enabled Francophones to work in their preferred official language, strengthened linguistic security, and improved connections with speakers of the other official language. They also noted that AI tools can support learning and maintaining a second official language, helping us better serve Canadians. However, these tools are not a substitute for bilingualism. The purpose of the public service is to serve Canadians and build a stronger country. To achieve this, the public must trust that institutions genuinely strive to understand them, their language, and their culture. This responsibility is rooted in human interaction.

The day ended with a collaborative activity where participants worked in groups to discuss various scenarios related to leadership in the context of official languages.

Exhibition Hall

The following institutions hosted kiosks showcasing tools, resources, best practices and initiatives.

Canada School of Public Service

- [Official languages learning path](#)
- [Best practices for creating content in French](#)
- [Decision Tree to include Non-Government of Canada Web content in learning products](#)
- [Official Languages in the Production and Use of Podcasts at the School - Job Aid](#)

Canadian Heritage

- [Analysis Tool – Incorporating Official Languages Considerations \(Part VII of the Official Languages Act\) into the Delivery of Canadian Heritage Grant and Contribution Programs](#)
- [Inventory of official languages clauses in funding agreements](#)
- [Checklist for taking Official Languages Act Part VII Obligations into Account in Decision-Making](#)
- [Official Languages Evaluation Tool – Positive Measures and Impact Analysis \(Part VII of the Official Languages Act\) in the Design of Policies and Programs at Canadian Heritage](#)
- [Official Language Minority Communities Dashboard](#)

CBC / Société Radio-Canada

- [Mauril Toolkit - Everything you need to become Mauril ambassador](#)

Employment and Social Development Canada

- [The Language Learning Companion](#)
- [Part VII lens in practice at ESDC](#)
- [Infographic of Official Languages Lens Part VII of the OLA: Federal institutions' commitments and duties](#)

Health Canada

2025 Official Languages Symposium



- [Impact Analysis Tool Part VII of the Official Languages Act](#)
- [Health Canada Monitoring and Self-Assessment Tool of Positive Measures under Part VII of the Official Languages Act](#)

Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

- [Key stages of a compliance agreement \(2025\)](#)
- Infographic + video: [The complaint process: On the road to compliance](#)
- [All Eyes on Official Languages: Official languages workshops for federal public servants](#)
- [Effective practices for chairing bilingual meetings and externally sourced presentation](#)
- [Pamphlet - Active offer: A culture of respect, a culture of excellence](#)
- [Bilingual Teams meeting backgrounds](#)
- [Public service supervisors and language-of-work requirements \(Part V of the *Official Languages Act*\) \(2025\)](#)

Official Languages Centre of Excellence (OLCE) at Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada (TBS)

- [Community of Official Languages - OLCE GCwiki](#)
- [The OL Connection - OLCE Newsletter](#)
- [Annual Reports on Official Languages](#)
- [Language Training Hub - wiki](#)
- [Guidelines on Second Official Language Training](#)
- [Official Languages Accountability and Reporting Framework](#)
- [Committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers on Official Languages \(CADMOL\)](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada

- [PHAC Official Languages Action Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Found out more about the Public Health Agency of Canada!](#)
- [Social determinants of health and health inequalities](#)
- [Part VII Internal SharePoint Hub – Empowering Official Languages at the PHAC](#)
- [PHAC's Official Languages Organizational Maturity Self-Assessment](#)
- [PHAC's Logic Model Framework for Part VII of the Official Language Act](#)
- [Infographic of the Science in French PHAC's Initiative](#)

Translation Bureau – Language Portal of Canada

- [Resources of the Language Portal of Canada](#)
- [Language Navigator](#)
- [The Artificial Intelligence Terminology Concept Map](#)
- [The Our Languages blog](#)
- [A few tips for using AI when writing](#)
- [Official Languages Hub](#)