



Orientation guide for persons responsible for official languages

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1. Introduction

This guide is intended for newly appointed persons responsible for official languages (PROL). It provides a roadmap to help you carry out your mandate, with suggestions for actions, tips, and best practices. The guide is also intended to complement the policies, guidelines, and other documents published by the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS).

Your role

As the PROL for your institution, you provide advice and guidance on all aspects of Parts IV, V, VI and XI (section 91) of the *Official Languages Act* (OLA) to senior management, managers, human resources specialists, and employees. You perform your duties on behalf of the Deputy Head, who is ultimately accountable for your institution's compliance with the OLA, its related regulations, and Treasury Board (TB) policy instruments.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of other responsibilities that you may have as the PROL:

- Coordinate the preparation and submission of your institution's Official Languages Review and other data on official languages as part of the annual monitoring exercise or any other reporting conducted by TBS;
- Manage your institution's account for the System for Official Languages Obligations (SOLO);
- Represent your institution on the Departmental Advisory Committee on Official Languages or the Crown Corporations Advisory Committee on Official Languages (committees managed by TBS's Official Languages Centre of Excellence (TBS-OLCE));
- Participate in an internal committee or working group on official languages within your institution;
- Contribute to the development of an official languages action plan for your institution;
- Coordinate complaints concerning your institution, including those filed with the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada;

PARTS OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT

Part I: Proceedings of Parliament

Part II: Legislative and Other Instruments

Part III: Administration of Justice

Part IV: Communications with and Services to the Public

Part V: Language of work

Part VI: Participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians

Part VII: Advancement of Equality of Status and Use of English and French

Part VIII: Responsibilities and Duties of Treasury Board in Relation to the Official Languages of Canada

Part IX: Commissioner of Official Languages

Part X: Court Remedy

Part XI: General (includes article 91)

- Coordinate follow-ups to studies or exercises conducted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL);
- Collaborate in TBS-OLCE consultation exercises;
- Act as an ambassador for official languages within your institution.
 - You can organize events or share information through existing communication channels to make employees aware of their official languages rights and obligations;
- Liaise between TBS-OLCE and your federal institution;
- Support your institution's official languages champion;
- Collaborate with the person responsible for Part VII of the OLA (PRP7) in your institution;
- Develop official languages tools and resources to support your institution;
- Review the analysis of official languages obligations in Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board Submissions prepared by your institution;
- Collaborate on initiatives related to language training or maintaining official language skills within your institution (e.g. language twinning program);
- Collaborate on or coordinate various monitoring exercises (e.g. on linguistic profiles of positions, service to the public, language of work, bilingualism bonus, etc.).

Are you wondering where to start? Here are some ideas to explore.

2. Proposed integration for your first few weeks

WEEK 1 - Update contact details and access, and familiarize yourself with your organization

Your contact details and access

It's important to ensure that key contacts are aware that you are now the person responsible for official languages in your institution and to ensure that you have the necessary accesses to carry out certain tasks.

- If you haven't already done so, ensure your name is on the [list of PROL published on Canada.ca](#). If a change is needed, notify TBS-OLCE by e-mail at olceinformationcelo@tbs-sct.gc.ca.
 - After this update, your name will also be added to the mailing list for *The OL Connection* newsletter which is published by TBS-OLCE. This tool contains information that will be important to you.
- Follow the steps below to obtain access to SOLO, which is restricted to PROL
 1. Watch the [Video: SOLO Training](#).
 2. Create an account on the [home page](#). TBS-OLCE will confirm your access. If you have questions, contact TBS-OLCE at info-ollo@tbs-sct.gc.ca.
- Inform OCOL, by emailing them at information.information@clo-ocol.gc.ca, that you are the person designated to coordinate responses to complaints.
- If not already done, join the PROL community collaboration platform by following these steps:
 1. Access the [GCcollab](#) platform and create an account and profile.
 2. Request access to the closed group called "[Community of Official Languages](#)". The TBS-OLCE team will accept your request as soon as possible.
- Add the [Community of Official Languages GCwiki](#) to your list of favorites. This is a directory of official languages resources

CHECKLIST FOR YOUR FIRST WEEK

- Contact details and access
- Organizational OL action plan
- OL policies, guidelines and procedures
- Organizational infrastructure for OL governance
- Public Service Employee Survey
- OL sub-delegation document

During your first few days in your new role, you will need to familiarize yourself with how your organization handles official language issues.

Here are a few documents with which you should become familiar, and which will help you throughout your mandate.



Suggestion: while you're reading, make note of the questions you might ask your colleagues.

The organization's official languages action plan

This document will show you your organization's official languages priorities.

If your institution does not have a dedicated official languages plan, consult your organization's strategic plan (sometimes referred to as a corporate plan), which may contain an official languages component.

Official languages policies, guidelines, and procedures

TBS-OLCE develops and recommends to TB the regulations, policies, and directives that facilitate the implementation of the OLA. Federal institutions must meet and report on the requirements set out in these instruments.

However, taking into account TB policy and regulatory framework, many federal institutions have developed their own internal policies, guidelines, and procedures on official languages to support their mandate and the nature of their operations. For example, some have a separate policy on the linguistic identification of positions, on the management of official language complaints, or on language training.

It is your responsibility to determine whether your institution has developed such tools and to familiarize yourself with their content. It is recommended that you concentrate on in-house tools during your first week and familiarize yourself with the TB tools afterwards.

Organizational infrastructure for official languages governance

You'll also want to check whether there's an organizational chart that illustrates how your organization positions official languages and who the key players are. For example:

- Do you know who your organization's Official Languages Champion and Person Responsible for Part VII of the OLA (PRP7) are? The [List of persons responsible for official languages, official languages champions and persons responsible for Part VII of the Official Languages Act \(OLA\)](#) can serve as a starting point. These colleagues will be very helpful as you carry out your mandate.

- The Official Languages Champion supports the development of an integrated vision of the official languages program within the organization. They are seen as an ambassador for official languages, and it is in this capacity that they can help you establish sound official languages practices. The Official Languages Champion may, in turn, consult you on more specific issues.
- As a PROL, your focus is on Parts IV, V, VI and XI (section 91) of the OLA. The PRP7, on the other hand, focuses on all issues relating to Part VII of the OLA. That said, you could work together on initiatives such as the accountability reporting exercises, developing action plans, managing complaints, and organizing promotional activities.
- Is there an official languages committee or other platforms that would allow you to take the pulse of your institution with regard to official languages. If so, check out its mandate, the role of its members, as well as what is expected of you.. For example, are you expected to assume responsibility for the committee's secretariat and organization?
- Is your organization one of the 27 departments with a representative on the [Committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers on Official Languages \(CADMOL\)](#)?
- Is there a person responsible for managing language training at your institution?
- Have you identified other colleagues with whom you will need to collaborate, such as staffing and classification advisors?

Public Service Employee Survey

The [Public Service Employee Survey \(PSES\)](#) provides useful information for improving people management practices in the federal public service. Each edition of the PSES includes recurring questions, particularly on official languages, to measure progress from one cycle to the next, as well as new or updated questions to reflect current priorities and initiatives. Responses related to your institution's use of official languages could provide you with possible avenues for action. TBS-OLCE also uses PSES results as a reporting mechanism.

Official languages sub-delegation document

TBS and the Public Service Commission (PSC) delegate part of their authority to the deputy heads of institutions subject to the *Public Service Employment Act* by means of a sub-delegation instrument. Deputy heads may further sub-delegate certain responsibilities to their managers, such as those related to institutional reporting exercises, the linguistic identification of positions, the staffing of bilingual positions, or language training for employees. A sub-delegation instrument likely exists within your institution, and it would be useful for you to familiarize yourself with official languages authorities, such as the functional managers (director general and assistant deputy minister) responsible for official languages.

WEEKS 2 and 3 - Familiarization with official languages in the federal government

The second and third week in your role may be a good time to familiarize yourself with official languages from a broader perspective.

Take the FON 413 course - Managing Official Languages Obligations

This [introductory official languages course](#) is available on the Canada School of Public Service website, and is designed specifically for PROL, PRP7, and managers. The content of this course will enable you to:

- explain the key concepts of the OLA and answer questions about its application in the workplace;
- recognize governance mechanisms and understand who does what when it comes to official languages; and,
- know how to collaborate within the institution and on interdepartmental committees, in order to develop a coherent approach to official languages management.

CHECKLIST FOR YOUR SECOND AND THIRD WEEK

- FON 413 course
- Learning path for all
- Learning path for PROL
- Systems for managers and PROL
- Legislative, policy and regulatory framework
- Key OL stakeholders

Consult the official languages learning path " for all " - (evergreen document)

This learning path¹ includes a range of learning products that will help you acquire general knowledge and skills on the following topics:

- The legislative and policy framework for official languages;
- Governance and the accountability and reporting framework;
- The inner workings of and key players in official languages;
- Tools for implementing the official languages program;
- The roles and powers of Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages;
- Key resources on official languages.

Consult the official languages learning path for PROL - (evergreen document)

This learning path² has been specially developed to deepen your knowledge and skills as a PROL. You'll find learning products and other resources on topics such as:

¹ At the time of publication of this guide, this learning path is being developed.

² At the time of publication of this guide, this learning path is being developed

- Official languages monitoring and compliance;
- Official languages governance and planning in a federal institution;
- Language requirements of positions and staffing rules relating to official languages;
- Creation and maintenance of a workplace conducive to the use of both official languages.

Systems for managers and persons responsible for official languages

Familiarize yourself with [existing official language systems](#), including :

- SOLO, which serves various purposes:
 - It enables federal institutions subject to the OLA and the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations* to keep an up-to-date list of their offices and their linguistic designation for communications with and services to the public. It's up to you to keep this list up to date. To do this, find out who to contact to obtain current information about your organization's various points of service, as this will enable you to verify whether your office information is accurate. Your organization's facilities team could be a good place to start. Note that the list of federal offices is available to the public via the external interface called [Burolis](#).
 - It enables federal institutions to complete actions required as part of the [Official Languages Regulations Reapplication Exercise \(OLRRE\)](#), which aims to keep the linguistic designation of federal offices up to date, based on specific rules. This exercise is carried out every ten years and spans several years.
 - It enables federal institutions required to submit an Official Languages Review to enter the information requested.
 - It allows federal institutions that do not use the Position and Classification Information System (PCIS) to submit annual statistical data on their official languages workforce data.
- The PCIS, a human resources system, is designed to collect information from federal institutions on a variety of subjects, including official languages. You may need to contact your staffing and classification teams—who typically have access to the PCIS—to ensure that the official languages data is properly entered for accurate reporting. Please note that some institutions do not have access to this system.

Legislative, policy and regulatory framework

The following are the policy and legislative mechanisms that govern the implementation of the OLA, which has been granted quasi-constitutional status by the courts and includes some provisions that are derived from the [*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*](#).

- The [*Official Languages \(Communications with and Services to the Public\) Regulations*](#) are a legislative instrument that clarifies the application of Part IV of the OLA.
- The [*Policy on Official Languages*](#) sets out the requirements for the effective and consistent implementation of the OLA and its regulations by institutions.
- The [*Directive on Official Languages for People Management*](#) supports the *Official Languages Policy* by setting out requirements for the linguistic identification of positions, the staffing of bilingual positions, and the equitable participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians in federal institutions.
- The [*Directive on the Application of the Official Languages \(Communications with and Services to the Public\) Regulations*](#) supports the *Official Languages Policy* by defining various operational aspects related to the application of the Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations. This directive will help you meet your obligations under Part IV of the OLA.
- The [*Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services*](#) supports the *Official Languages Policy* by setting out the official language requirements that federal institutions must comply with when communicating with or providing services to the public or federal public servants.
- The [*Public Service Official Languages Exclusion Approval Order*](#) intends to provide an appropriate balance between ensuring that persons appointed meet the official language proficiency requirements of bilingual positions and fostering the access of unilingual Canadians to bilingual positions in the federal public service.
- The [*Bilingualism Bonus Directive*](#) was developed jointly by bargaining agents and participating public service employers. It sets out the conditions governing employee eligibility for the bilingualism bonus.
- The [*Qualification Standards in Relation to Official Languages*](#) support the *Directive on Official Languages for People Management*. They define second-language proficiency levels in three language skills (written comprehension, written expression and oral communication) that apply to positions requiring the use of both official languages. These second-language proficiency levels are used to establish the linguistic profile of bilingual positions.

- [*Public Service Official Languages Appointment Regulations*](#) set out the provisions applying to persons who are excluded from merit with respect to proficiency in both official languages and specify the deputy head's responsibilities and obligations when appointing a person who enters into an agreement to become bilingual

Key stakeholders responsible for the implementation of the OLA

Several key stakeholders play a role in implementing OLA requirements across the federal government. More details can be found in the [Official Languages Accountability and Reporting Framework](#). It defines the responsibilities of key stakeholders (see list below), as well as the accountability and reporting requirements. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with this framework.

- Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Commissioner of Official Languages
- Justice Canada
- Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Minister of Citizenship and Immigration
- Public Service Commission of Canada
- National Joint Council of the Public Service of Canada
- Standing Committees on Official Languages
- Committee of Assistant Deputy Ministers on Official Languages
- Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions
- Departmental and Crown corporation official languages advisory committees
- Network of persons responsible for Part VII in federal institutions

WEEK 4 - Explore reporting in your organization

Your fourth week in your role will be a return to exploring official languages within your organization. This time, the focus is on reporting and elements that support it.

The accountability reporting exercises

The accountability reporting exercises include mechanisms that enable TBS-OLCE to monitor and verify the official languages compliance of federal institutions. They are as follows:

1. The monitoring exercise, which includes official languages reviews and official languages data on the workforce of federal institutions.
2. The official languages compliance auditing exercise
3. The official languages policy and program evaluation exercise
4. The PSES results

The first mechanism, the monitoring exercise, has been in place for many years. You can consult publications presenting your organization's past results related to this exercise. This will give you a better understanding of the status of official languages in your organization. In addition, these results will give you a succinct picture of the measures that have been put in place over the past year, as well as your organization's successes and challenges.

With regard to points 2 and 3, TBS-OLCE is working to establish mechanisms for official languages audit and evaluation exercises.

Finally, federal institutions' PSES results are also used by TBS-OLCE for reporting purposes.

To find out more about these mechanisms, please consult the [GCwiki page on reporting](#).

The annual reports on official languages

Under the Act, Parliament receives three annual reports on official languages. These reports come from:

1. Treasury Board;
2. Canadian Heritage;
3. the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada.

The Treasury Board, through TBS-OLCE, submits an annual report on official languages to Parliament. This report provides an overview of how federal institutions have met their

CHECKLIST FOR YOUR FOURTH WEEK

- Accountability reporting exercises
- Annual reports on OL
- Complaints file

official languages obligations over the course of a fiscal year. Among other things, it presents the results of the TBS-OLCE reporting exercises.

The Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) submits an annual report to Parliament on official languages issues within its mandate. PCH is responsible for supporting the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, and for informing the Canadian public about initiatives and measures taken by the entire federal government in the context of official languages.

Each year, Canada's Commissioner of Official Languages reports to Parliament on OCOL's activities for the previous year. This report includes information on the performance of certain federal institutions and the number of complaints lodged against them.

Complaints file

The complaints file may include complaints received internally or those filed with OCOL. It will give you an overview of some challenges your institution is facing, which may help you in planning your work priorities. For example, you may ask yourself: should I develop a promotional plan to raise awareness of employees' rights and managers' responsibilities regarding language of work? Or, if my organization has specific challenges that have been highlighted and have been the subject of specific recommendations in recent reports by the Commissioner of Official Languages, such as the issue of bilingual services and communications for the travelling public, where do things stand and what role could I play in moving them forward?

You will likely be the person who receives the official languages complaints directed at your institution. It is important for you to be aware of any processes that your institution may have in place to investigate and resolve such complaints.



Tip: An important indicator of compliance is the nature and number of founded complaints your institution receives. Some institutions will amend their official languages action plan by adding objectives when the same kind of situations occur frequently within the organization.

WEEK 5 - Familiarization with your organization (continued) and meetings with your "partner colleagues"

The fifth week in your role may be a good time to meet with colleagues from other disciplines who play a role in implementing official languages in your organization. Preparing a list of questions in advance will enable you to maximize your time and that of your colleagues. It's also important to have a clear understanding of your organization's mandate, plans and priorities, in order to ensure that these questions are aligned with your organization's operations.

CHECKLIST FOR YOUR FIFTH WEEK

- Plan and hold meetings with your colleagues
- Understand your organization's mandate and priorities

Plan and hold meetings with your colleagues

The reading and training you've completed over the past four weeks have taught you a great deal about official languages and your organization. Now it's time to find the answers to all your questions. The best way to do this is to schedule meetings with colleagues who work directly or indirectly in official languages.

Understand your organization's mandate and priorities

Better understanding your organization's mandate and priorities is an asset in your work as a PROL. This knowledge will help you effectively apply the various obligations arising from the OLA and related TB policy instruments and align this work with the organization's operations. For example, in your outreach work with senior management, you'll gain credibility if you demonstrate a clear understanding of how the organization operates and how you can integrate official languages into its activities.

Here are some examples of documents that will help you get to know your organization:

- Minister's mandate letter
- Corporate plans
- Reports on departmental results
- Annual reports tabled in Parliament
- Organizational structure
- Briefing material during changes in senior management (e.g. new minister)

Usually, these documents can be found on your organization's corporate website (Canada.ca - under "transparency") or intranet. The [Open Government Portal](#) also contains a wealth of information that may be of interest to you.

3. Recurring activities throughout the year: a few ideas

Some official languages activities and responsibilities are part of a recurring or ongoing cycle, and it will be important for you to factor them into your schedule. Depending on the size and mandate of your institution, these activities and responsibilities may vary, as may the level of effort they require. Here are just a few examples:

Your institution's official languages action plan

Federal institutions usually implement an official languages action plan that extends over several years.

If your plan is about to expire, start developing the next action plan.

If your plan is still in effect, it's a good idea to review it every six months to assess progress and identify areas of concern. This will enable you to make any necessary adjustments to get back on track and ensure that the organization complies with its official languages obligations.

Official languages annual monitoring exercise

The annual monitoring exercise is one of the mechanisms used by TBS-OLCE to collect data and information from federal institutions to monitor their compliance. Data collection is carried out annually, while information gathering, through an official languages review, is usually required every two years. TBS-OLCE establishes the review cycle and identifies participating federal institutions from year to year.

In the winter, TBS-OLCE sends an email to the deputy heads of all identified federal institutions to launch the annual monitoring exercise. PROL and PRP7 (where applicable) receive a copy of this email, as well as a tasking email specific to their institution, to start the data and information gathering process. This exercise is conducted through SOLO and is generally completed by the end of May each year.

Addressing complaints

There are two possible avenues for official languages complaints: they can be made directly within the federal institution or submitted through OCOL.

CHECKLIST FOR RECURRING ACTIVITIES

- Your institution's OL action plan
- OL monitoring exercise
- Complaints process
- Analyses of OL obligations in MC or TB submissions
- OL promotion plan
- Online OL resources and tools
- OL Committee
- Collaboration with HR partners
- Language training and linguistic security
- Key dates for OL activities

Internal complaint mechanisms enable the organization to rectify issues by taking appropriate action, thus avoiding the more formal complaints filed with OCOL. Some federal institutions have a well-developed process in place for this type of complaint. You'll need to familiarize yourself with this process or, if no process is currently in place, propose steps to establish one.

Complaints filed with OCOL follow a different process. Before launching an investigation, OCOL evaluates each complaint to determine whether it is admissible. If the complaint is deemed admissible, a notice of investigation is sent to the deputy head of the federal institution concerned, with a copy to the PROL and to the persons identified by the federal institution for the complaints process. This notice may contain an invitation to mediate. If so, an approach should be adopted by the federal institution to determine how to handle this type of invitation.

Your institution probably has a procedure in place for investigation processes. If it does not, you may wish to follow the approach below; however, this approach does not take into account invitations to mediation or compliance agreements:

1. Upon receipt of the notice of investigation, review the complaint and identify the area of primary responsibility;
2. Submit the notice of investigation to the identified sector, indicating that investigation questions will follow;
3. Submit investigation questions to the identified sector, taking care to note the prescribed deadline. Please note that investigation questions are sent directly to the PROL and to the people the federal institution has identified to OCOL for the complaints process;
4. Once the answers to the questions have been approved (according to the approval levels established by each federal institution), forward them to the person in charge of the investigation at OCOL;
5. On receipt of the investigation report (submitted to the deputy head – copy to the PROL), you will have a specified number of days to provide comments. Forward the investigation report to the relevant department for this comment period;
 - If no changes are necessary, notify OCOL. A notice of closure will be sent to you.
 - If adjustments are required, notify OCOL. A notice will be sent, followed by a revised report. The investigation is then considered closed.

The OCOL website has a section on [handling complaints](#) and an [infographic illustrating the steps involved](#). We invite you to consult them to learn more.



Tip: Take advantage of your discussions during the complaints handling process to reiterate the importance of always properly documenting official languages analyses and measures, so that responses to investigative questions can be supported with concrete evidence.

Review the analysis of official languages obligations in Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board Submissions

As a PROL, you may be asked to contribute your expertise and review the analysis of official language obligations prepared for Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board Submissions.

The [Guide for Drafting Memoranda to Cabinet — Official Languages Impact Analysis](#), the [Guide to Preparing Treasury Board Submissions - Analysis of Official Languages Obligations](#) and the [Official Languages Requirements and Checklist](#) are practical resources to help you with this task. Your institution, particularly the team responsible for parliamentary affairs, may have other useful resources for you.

Official languages promotion plan

A promotion plan is useful for identifying activities in line with the strategic priorities already set out in the organization's official languages action plan. These activities will help the organization achieve expected results and may even lead to a reduction in the number of official languages complaints.

Here are a few examples of activities that could form part of your promotion plan:

- Dissemination of information on the rights and responsibilities of managers and staff members
- Tools and tips on official languages
- Messages from the Official Languages Champion
- Organization or promotion of activities organized by other entities surrounding key official languages days, such as:
 - The *Rendez-vous de la Francophonie* - held throughout the month of March each year, around the *Journée internationale de la Francophonie*, which is celebrated on March 20. An event is always organized across the federal public service to mark this important day.
 - The Symposium on Official Languages - organized by TBS-OLCE and usually held in November.
 - Official Languages Day - held annually on the second Thursday of September. The event is organized by the Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions of the Federal Public Service.

As a PROL, you'll be able to take advantage of these opportunities to promote official languages within your institution. Information about these events will be communicated to

you in advance, so that you can promote them and include them in your own promotion plan, where appropriate. Don't forget to call on your internal communications team for support!



Tip: You could develop a bank of short vignettes to inform employees of their official languages rights and obligations. You could then collaborate with your internal communications team to plan their distribution, at regular intervals, according to a pre-established schedule (here's an example: *Did you know that employees located in bilingual regions have language-of-work rights? To find out more, check out this [resource](#).*).

Take stock of official languages online resources and tools

Every organization shares resources with its employees in a variety of ways, whether via the intranet, GC tools (GCcollab; GCwiki), the MSTeams platform or other forms of internal online communication. Using these different communication platforms can make it difficult to ensure that all resources available are always up to date.

To effectively take stock of online resources and tools, you may want to focus on one of the following tasks every three months:

- Review the content of one of your communications online platforms to ensure that the information it contains is complete and current, with the aim of reviewing all your platforms over the course of a year.
- Identify documents that need updating and draw up a revision plan.
- Check hyperlinks.
- Take advantage of existing resources if you're not already using them or make the most of your online platforms. For example, consider creating an official languages group in MSTeams to share resources, best practices or promote events, and try to keep this channel active.
- Share your success stories with other PROLs on the GCcollab of the PROL community.

It's important to look at existing resources but remember to establish a plan for the development of new tools that can support OLA implementation and meet identified needs within your organization, such as guidelines, procedures, training, analysis grids, checklists and so on. This can require a great deal of work, which is why it's important to clearly identify your needs and establish reasonable priorities and deadlines, based on the overall context and reality of your organization.



Tip: You can use the MTeams' "poll" function to collect official languages data that could be useful for taking the pulse of the organization or for reporting purposes.

Official languages committee

Many federal institutions have an official languages committee made up of representatives from each sector of the organization with an interest in official languages. If this is not the case for your organization, discuss with your manager and/or the official languages champion the possibility of establishing one.

An official languages committee provides an opportunity to engage on more strategic issues, or to create a network that can plan such things as events to mark Official Languages Day, for example. You could schedule quarterly meetings or, when there are few discussion items, send written updates on what's happening on the official languages front.

Collaboration with Human Resources partners

Find out if your institution generates any reports or tools that might be relevant to your role as a PROL. For example, in some institutions, the PROL receives a report on non-imperative appointments to ensure that people who need to become bilingual are following a language training program and making progress. You could also organize monthly meetings with Human Resources experts (e.g. classification, staffing, learning, HR systems) to discuss issues affecting official languages and share information.



Tip: Don't overlook collaboration with colleagues from other disciplines in everything you do!

Language training and linguistic security

Promoting second official language training (SOLT) is an effective way to foster a workplace that supports the use of both English and French. The [Directive on Official Languages for People Management](#) states that federal institutions are responsible for providing language training to employees who wish to develop their second language skills in order to advance their career.

As a PROL, you can encourage employees in your institution to:

- Use and maintain the language skills required for their position;
- Discuss their SOLT needs for career development with their manager—both at the start of their career and throughout their professional journey;

- Establish an agreement with their manager outlining mutual responsibilities during language training;
- Include chosen language training options in their learning and development plan.

The [Language Training Hub](#), a resource platform developed in 2024 by TBS-OLCE, can be a valuable tool to support you in this role. There you will find resources to help you guide employees in your institution on the various learning options available.

Some federal institutions have a designated person responsible for second official language training (or general training) for staff. You may wish to meet with them to discuss SOLT-related issues and explore how you can collaborate. For example, could you develop a joint engagement plan within your organization? After all, creating a bilingual workplace where people feel comfortable using their second official language is only possible when senior leadership, managers, and employees all commit to fostering a culture of bilingualism.

In addition to facilitating language training, promoting a culture of linguistic security is another way to improve the use of English and French in the workplace. Linguistic insecurity refers to feelings of discomfort, unease, or anxiety caused by fear of not measuring up, of disturbing others, or of being judged when using one's first or second official language. The sources of linguistic insecurity vary from person to person and may include:

- Individual characteristics;
- Workplace environment;
- Perceptions;
- Organizational culture;
- Cultural and social context

There are tools available to help you better understand linguistic security (or insecurity) in the public service. Here are a few:

- OCOL Infographic: "[Understanding Linguistic Insecurity](#)";
- Canada School of Public Service job aid: "[From Linguistic Insecurity to Linguistic Resilience](#)".

Annual calendar - Important activities related to official languages

Table 1: Key dates related to official languages activities

MONTH	ACTIVITY
January	
February	
March	1-31: Rendez-vous de la Francophonie 20: International Day of La Francophonie End of March: Call-out for official languages review
April	
May	31: Deadline for submitting data and information for the official languages annual monitoring exercise
June	3 rd week: National Public Service Week (official languages awards in some organizations)
July	
August	
September	2 nd Thursday: Official Languages Day
October	
November	Official Languages Symposium
December	

4. Special projects

Projects can contribute to the sound management of the official languages program within your organization. Below are a few examples:

Building a corporate memory

Many federal institutions experience a high turnover in their official languages coordination teams. If your organization has tools to track the advice and guidance it provides, as well as its internal procedures, make sure you keep them up to date. If these tools don't exist, consider developing them. This will ensure consistency in your organization's management of official languages for years to come.

Internal monitoring

The OLA places great importance on compliance by federal institutions. Your organization should have mechanisms in place to monitor adherence to requirements under the OLA, enabling it to put in place targeted measures and to be well equipped to respond to monitoring exercises conducted by TBS, OCOL or the PSC.

Your organization's audit or research team can support you in organizing various activities, including:

- Monitoring the active offer and respect for official languages in communications and service to the public.
 - For example, you could conduct a monitoring exercise to determine whether the active offer of service is respected within your institution (monitor the active offer on the telephone (voice mail in particular), by e-mail (signature blocks), in person (wearing a pin or displaying a sign stating that service is available in English and French)).
- Compliance with the principle of substantive equality (see [The Supreme Court of Canada Decision in the CALDECH \(Desrochers\) case and Analytical Grid](#))
 - For example, you could conduct a study, based on your institution's program architecture, to assess the extent to which the principle of substantive equality is considered in your institution's strategic planning, its development and review of policies and programs, and in its reviews of program expenditures. Your legal services unit can support you on this.
- A study on the payment of the bilingualism bonus:
 - You could conduct a study to ensure that employees who are eligible for the bilingualism bonus receive it. The study would also aim to identify

CHECKLIST FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Building a corporate memory
- Internal monitoring
- OL awards
- OL in emergency plans

employees who may be receiving the bonus without being entitled to it; this would require you to take corrective action. Such a study would be in line with the Government of Canada's objective of sound financial management, as well as with Section 34 of the *Financial Administration Act*. The bilingualism bonus support document³ and the [Bilingual Bonus eligibility checklist](#) are useful resources to keep and share with your human resources colleagues.

- Internal surveys on language of work or access to language training.

Official languages awards

Some institutions offer an official languages award as part of their recognition program. If this is not the case in your organization, consider the merits of such an initiative.

Official languages in emergency plans

The COVID-19 crisis highlighted some shortcomings in the mechanisms for communicating effectively and simultaneously in both official languages with staff and members of the public. This led to a number of initiatives, including the development of a [bank of pre-translated messages for communications during emergency or crisis situations](#). Review it and ensure it is shared with the relevant teams in your institution, particularly the team responsible for security. Also take the opportunity to contact the people who develop your institution's emergency plans and suggest that they review them to ensure that official language considerations are taken into account. Is there a mechanism in place to ensure prompt translation? The report [A Matter of Respect and Security: The Impact of Emergency Situations on Official Languages](#) may help you reflect on this subject.

³ At the time of publication of this guide, the bilingualism bonus support document is being developed.

5. Toolbox

Information portals on official languages

- [Official languages in the public service](#)
Various resources on official languages. These include the list of bilingual regions for language-of-work purposes, the Burolis directory, the TB's policy instruments, the President of the TB's annual reports on official languages, as well as the list of official languages specialists.
- [Official languages and bilingualism](#)
Various resources on official languages. These include PCH publications, the Government of Canada's Official Languages Support Program and Action Plan for Official Languages.
- [Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada](#)
OCOL's website is full of resources on OL, including summaries of certain parts of the OLA, court judgments and investigations, as well as the complaint management process.
- [Community of Official Languages Gcwiki](#)
Collection of official languages resources. Among other things, a list of OL events, tools on the different parts of the OLA and the TBS-OLCE newsletter.
- [Language Training Hub](#)
Collection of resources on the second official language training framework within the federal public service. Among other things, it includes guidelines, guides, and learning paths.
- [Official Languages Hub](#)
Collection of resources on official languages, provided by various departments and organizations.
- [Council of the Network of Official Languages Champions](#)
Information on the roles and responsibilities of the Council and various useful resources for OL champions.
- [Statistics on languages in Canada](#)
Statistics Canada presents the latest data, analysis, and references on languages in Canada.

6. For further information

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact TBS-OLCE: OLCEInformationCELO@tbs-sct.gc.ca