



Best Practices Forum on Official Languages

Workshop: Introduction to Official Languages (OL 101)

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
Official Languages Centre of Excellence

February 8, 2024

Outline

- Legislative Foundation
- Treasury Board Responsibilities and Policy Instruments
- Federal Institutions' Responsibilities
- Key Stakeholders
- Resources
- Questions

Legislative Foundation

Two key legislative acts support the equal status of English and French in Canada

Constitution Act, including the
**Canadian Charter of Rights and
Freedoms**

Official Languages Act
(OLA)

Treasury Board (TB) Areas of Responsibility Under the OLA

The scope of the OLA and the President's responsibilities include some 200 institutions, i.e., not only the Core Public Administration but also Crown corporations, separate agencies and privatized entities, such as Air Canada.



Part IV

Communications with and services to the public

- 10,000+ points of service
- All types of communications
- Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations



Part V

Language of Work

- English and French are the languages of work in federal institutions
- The work environment in bilingual regions is conducive to the use of both official languages



Part VI

Participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians

- Equitable representation
- Equal advancement opportunities

Part XI

Section 91 – Staffing

- Language requirements of positions must be established objectively, based on the duties of the position

Part VII

Advancement of Equality of Status and Use of English and French

- Regulations
- Positive measures

Modernization of the OLA - New Responsibilities for TB

Key legislative changes under the President of the Treasury Board's responsibilities:

Leadership and horizontal coordination

- ✓ The President of the Treasury Board is now the minister responsible for exercising leadership within the federal government for the ***implementation, coordination and good governance*** of the OLA.

Compliance monitoring

- ✓ Treasury Board's previous discretionary policy authorities for communications with the public (Part IV), language of work (Part V) and equitable participation of English and French-speakers in the federal public service (Part VI) have now become mandatory, meaning that TBS must monitor the compliance of federal institutions, and evaluate and audit OL policies and programs of federal institutions.
- ✓ The new OLA also includes an obligation to monitor whether federal institutions are considering the inclusion of language clauses in FPT agreements, whether they are taking positive measures to support the development of official language minority communities (OLMC), and whether they have considered OLMC needs when disposing of real estate.

Regulations for Part VII

- ✓ Treasury Board must lead the development of regulations for Part VII (in consultation with Canadian Heritage).

Implementation of Responsibilities

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Through the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer's **Official Languages Centre of Excellence**, TBS is responsible for the general direction and coordination of the policies and programs for the implementation of Parts IV, V, VI, VII (positive measures) and XI (Section 91)



Develop

Develops official languages regulations, policies and directives

- Policy on OL
- Directive on OL for People Management
- Directive on OL for Communications and Services
- OL Regulations
- Directive on the Implementation of the OL Regulations
- Qualification Standards



Monitor

Monitors the delivery of OL programs within federal institutions

- OL Reviews
- Management Accountability Framework Questionnaire
- Public Service Employees Survey
- Data collection from HR information systems



Support

Supports federal institutions in the implementation of the OL program

- Engagement activities
- Communication
- Policy interpretation

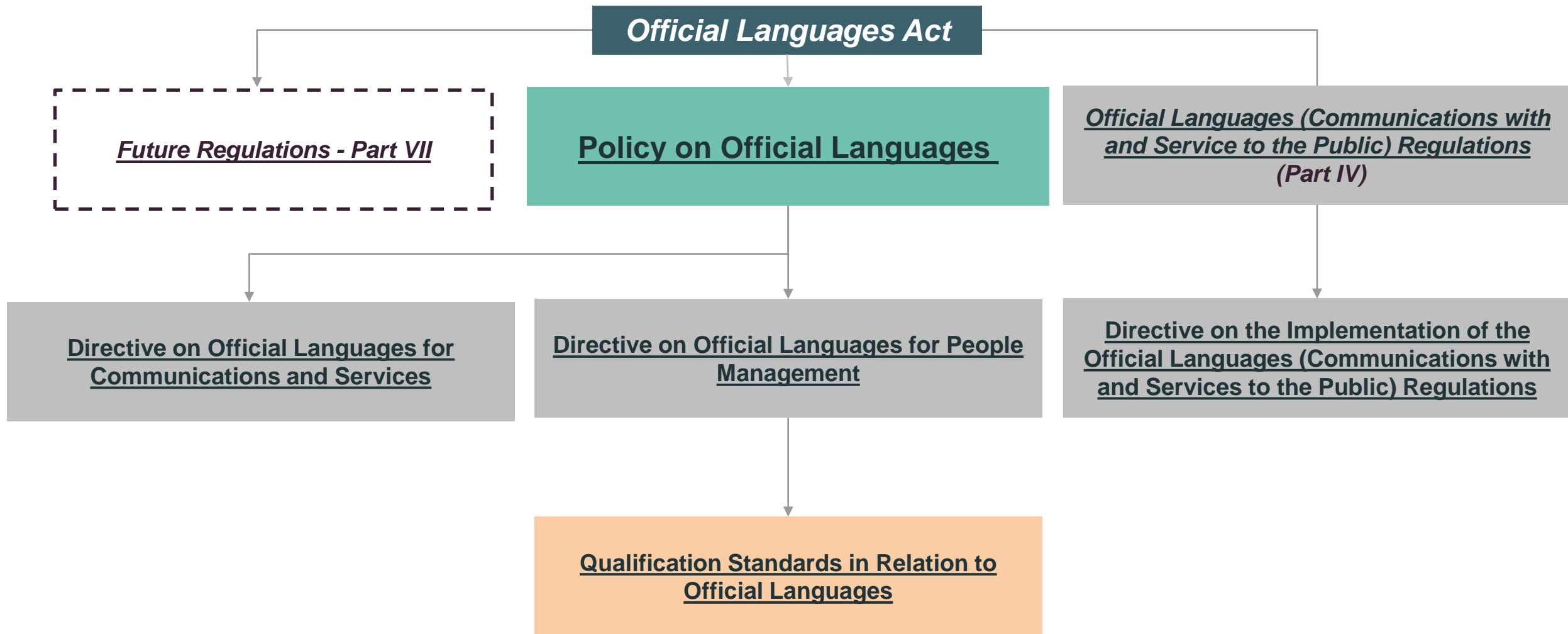


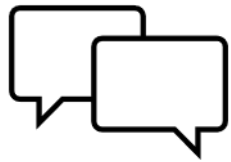
Report

Submits an annual report to Parliament on the status of OL programs in institutions subject to the OLA (Parts IV, V and VI)

- [Annual Report on Official Languages](#)

Treasury Board Policy Instruments





Federal Institutions - OLA Part IV

Communications with and services to the public

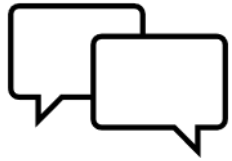
Institutions communicate with and serve members of the public in both official languages at all offices or points of service designated bilingual (6.2.2)

Institutions ensure that third parties offering services on their behalf respect the public's rights (6.2.5)

Institutions actively offer their communications and services in both official languages (6.2.1)

Institutions ensure that their linguistic obligations are met when using any form of media to communicate with the public (6.2.3)

- ✓ Head or central office of the institution
- ✓ Offices in the National Capital Region
- ✓ Offices of institutions reporting directly to Parliament
- ✓ Other offices in circumstances set out in the Regulations



Federal Institutions - OLA Part IV

Active offer of service – Role of the employee

What?

A bilingual greeting that serves as a clear indication to members of the public that they can access your services in the official language of their choice

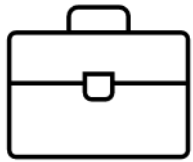
How?

- Use a bilingual greeting when serving clients in person or by phone
- Record bilingual telephone messages
- Display bilingual signs, including the **active offer symbol**
- Make forms and publications available in both official languages

Who?

All employees and third-party representatives must provide an active offer of service when serving members of the public who have not previously indicated their official language preference





Feral Institutions - OLA Part V

Language of work – Bilingual Workplace

English and French are the official languages of work in federal institutions.
A work environment conducive to the use of English and French in bilingual regions.

Bilingual regions

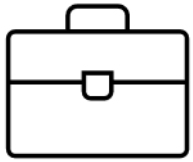
Employees whose positions are located in bilingual regions have the right to the following in the official language of their choice:

- personal and central services
- work instruments
- supervision (for employees occupying bilingual positions – all employees as of June 2025)
- training and development activities

Unilingual regions

- The language of work is the official language of the majority in the province or territory
- The treatment of both official languages in the work environment must be comparable between regions, i.e., comparable treatment of both official languages from one “unilingual” region to another

Important: the obligation to communicate with and serve members of the public in the official language of their choice takes precedence over employees’ language-of-work rights

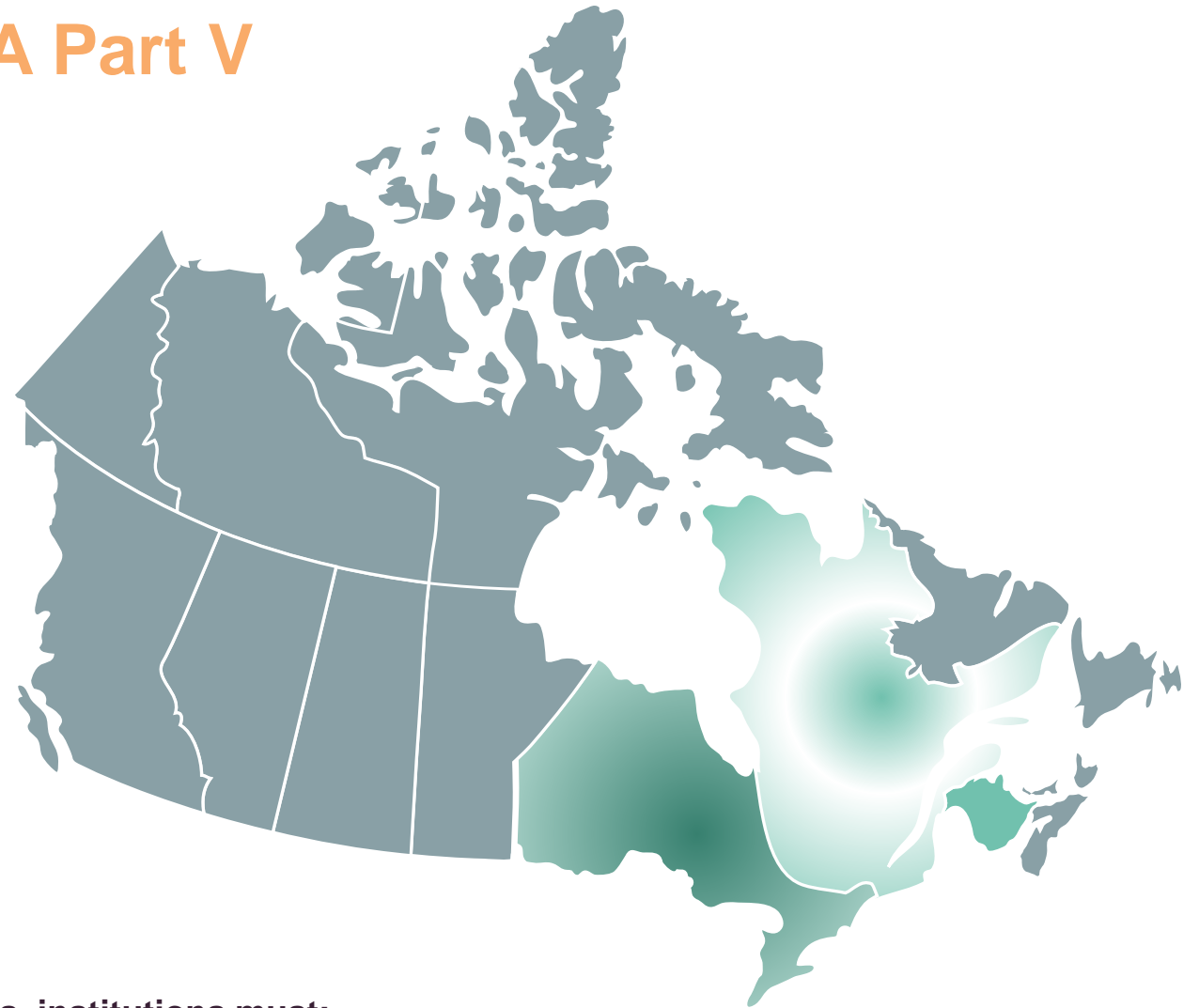


Federal Institutions - OLA Part V

Bilingual regions

Bilingual Regions include:

- The National Capital Region (NCR)
- Parts of Northern and Eastern Ontario
- The Montréal region
- Parts of the Eastern Townships
- The Gaspésie and Western Québec
- New Brunswick



In bilingual regions, institutions must:

- take all reasonable measures to create a work environment that is conducive to the use of both official languages
 - ensure management has the capacity to function in both official languages



Federal Institutions - OLA Part VI

Participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians

Government commitment to ensuring that English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians have equal opportunities to obtain employment and advancement in federal institutions

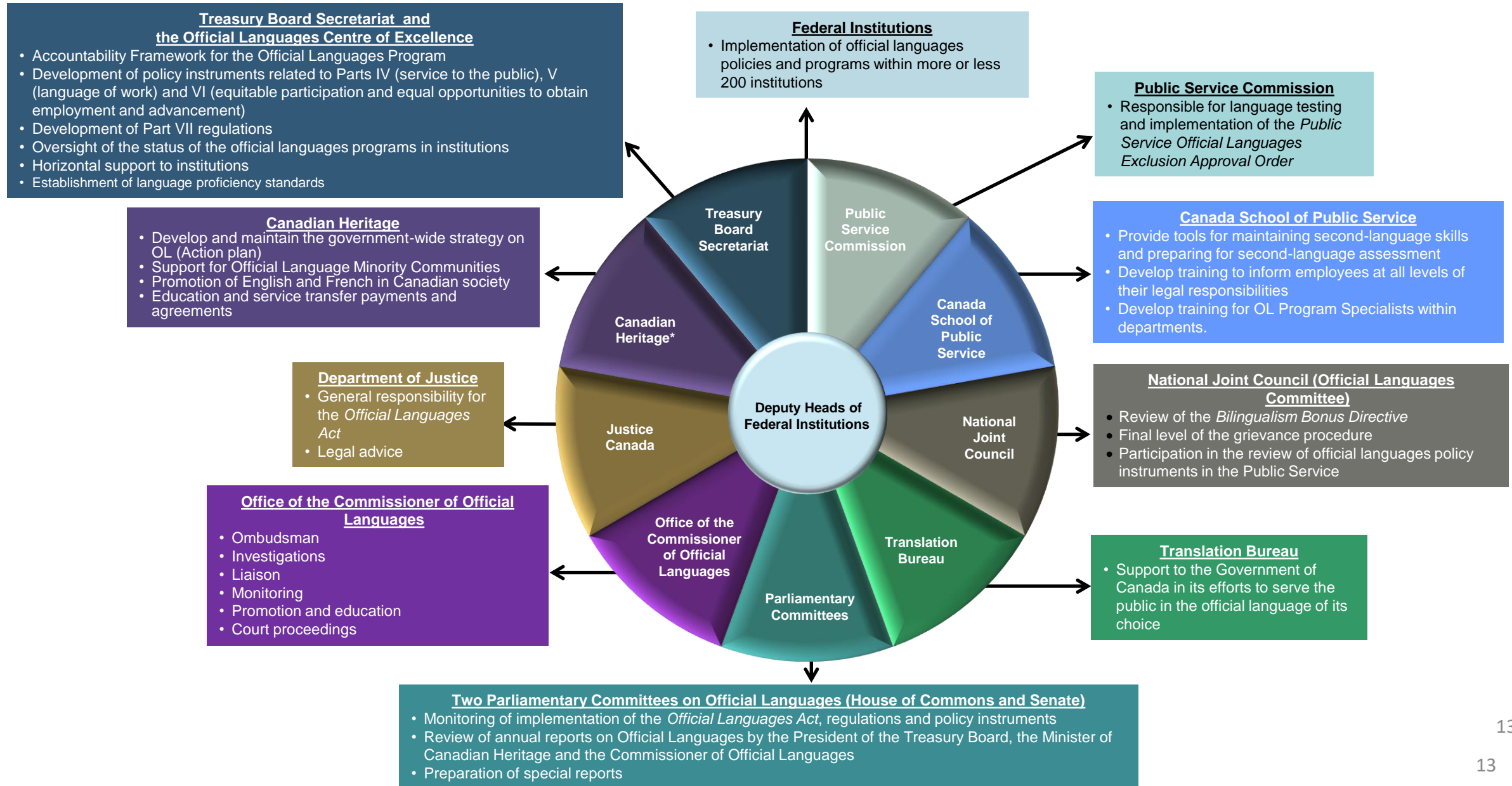
Government commitment to ensuring that the workforce of federal institutions tends to reflect the presence of both official language communities of Canada, taking into account the institutions' mandates, the public they serve and the location of their offices

In fulfilling this dual commitment, federal institutions:

- Must respect the merit principle and the non-discrimination principle when staffing positions
- Cannot set aside jobs for one language group over the other
- Cannot set position quotas or numerical targets to achieve better participation by the two language groups

Recruitment Measures

Government stakeholders



Resources

<p>Explore <u>GCwiki</u> Community of Official Languages Provides a collection of OL resources and allows you to stay up to date on OL meetings and events.</p>	<p>Collaborate <u>GCcollab</u> Community of Official Languages Enables access to the network of the federal OL community to share best practices and ask questions.</p>
<p>Discover <u>Language Portal of Canada</u> A government wide collection of OL resources managed by the Translation Bureau. Easily search <i>thousands</i> of resources with just a few clicks.</p>	<p>Work in the official language of your choice <u>Language of Work (Part V)</u> Tools to help you understand and respect employee language of work rights (Supervision, bilingual meetings, bilingualism bonus, non-imperative staffing, and more!)</p>
<p>Communicate with and serve Canadians <u>Communications with and services to the public (Part IV)</u> Tools to help fulfill responsibilities under Part IV of the OLA (Active offer, Burolis, glossaries and more!)</p>	<p>References <u>A collection of resources and references on official languages</u> Promotion of English and French, map of OLMCs, and more!</p>
<p>News <u>The OL Connection</u> A bi-monthly newsletter published by the OLCE on everything related to official languages.</p>	<p>Questions? Contact TBS's Official Languages Centre of Excellence <u>OLCEInformationCELO@tbs-sct.gc.ca</u></p>

Questions?

