



Information Sheet

Public Service Employees' Experience with and Attitudes Towards Official Languages

In 2002, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat obtained the results of two major studies: *Attitudes Towards the Use of Both Official Languages within the Public Service of Canada* and the *Public Service-wide Employee Survey – 2002*, which included six questions on language of work.

Findings from the two studies complement each other: the 2002 employee survey provides data on language of work in the Public Service, while the study on attitudes tells us what public service employees think about various issues related to official languages.

Service to the
public

There is broad and solid support for providing services to clients in their official language of choice (92 % of public service employees agree that this is important).

Challenge for persons
responsible for official
languages and official
languages champions

- How can we build on the foundation of positive attitudes and support for service to clients in their language of choice?
- Does your institution need to improve access to professional training in employees' language of choice?
- Do employees in your organization have access to language training? Is access a barrier to career advancement?
- What steps can you take to encourage use of both languages in meetings — both to respect employees who wish to use their own language and as a means for others to learn and maintain their second language?
- Although results of the two surveys are encouraging, there is still much work to do.

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Language of work

Most employees in bilingual regions, including unilingual employees, are at ease with the use of both languages in meetings. In these regions, 93 % of bilingual employees and 73 % of unilingual employees state that they are at ease with linguistic duality in meetings.

Particularly with regard to supervision and writing in the employee's official language of choice, the situation is better than we had thought. In bilingual regions, 92 % of Anglophones and 84 % of Francophones feel free to use their preferred official language with their supervisor; 94 % of Anglophones and 72 % of Francophones can draft documents in their preferred language.

English is still used more frequently than French in meetings, and Anglophone employees are more likely than Francophone employees to be supervised and to be able to write in their language. In bilingual regions, 86 % of Anglophones and 74 % of Francophones feel free to use their preferred language in meetings, and 92 % of Anglophones and 84 % of Francophones use their language with their supervisor.

Access to language training is perceived as a barrier to career advancement, particularly by Anglophone employees in bilingual regions. In those regions, 25 % of Anglophones state that lack of access to language training is a barrier.

Professional training in the employee's preferred official language is not as readily available as it should be. Nevertheless, 84 % of Anglophones and 76 % of Francophones state that they have access to training in their preferred language.