

ANNEX 2 – Discussion Guide Outline

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DISCUSSION GUIDE OUTLINE
Guide to be adapted for use in either Focus Groups
or Individual Interviews
(Specific wording to be adapted as appropriate)

Italic font specific to Interviews

Locations: See schedule

Project: Official Languages and Employment Equity Groups

Introduction (5 min.)

1. Introduction of moderator / Interviewer
2. Subject: We're going to be talking about a variety of things, but mostly about the things that affect upward mobility in the public service...
3. Explanation of the focus group process:
 - **Conversation recorded, voluntary participation;**
 - **Strict confidentiality observed here**
 - Camera in operation
 - Role of moderator and participants;
 - I don't work for the government, no vested interest in how you respond to my questions
 - Your participation here is voluntary, but we are counting on you to help us out. We need your honest, straightforward opinions. Your opinions really do count.
 - Expression of opinions;
 - Length: about 90 minutes?
4. Round-table introduction of participants: Current occupations. A little about their families, background

1. WARM-UP

- Tell me a little about yourselves...
- *Tell me about your story as an employee of the federal government. Probe: Career track including length of time in, department track, language used most often at work, languages possessed and acquired, postings, advancement, etc. PROBE:*
 - *unique/particular/important to your story?*
- Explore attitudes and feeling re work in the federal government

Process will begin with any of the following broad sections and move from topic to topic as seems appropriate. Topics below are not necessarily in order of importance.

2. BROAD EXPLORATION OF PS MOBILITY DYNAMICS

(Unaided probing of OL/EE dynamic, consistent probing of “perception versus reality: is this a real problem? If so, how and why? If not, where does it come from?)

Typically, what are the factors that come into play in a given public servant’s advancement or career mobility? (LIST and PROBE THE FOLLOWING AS APPROPRIATE FOR EACH ONE):

- Do you all agree? If not, why not?
- Is this typical/specific to all organizations or just the public service?
- Does this factor affect public servants equally in all departments/regions? If not, how not?
- Does this factor affect public servants (equally, differently, evenly) in any other respect? If not, how not?
- As an organization, how well/poorly does the public service handle/deal/manage this factor? Do you all agree?
- Do you sense that every/anyone else in the public service would be just as inclined to identify/perceive this factor in the same way? If not, how and why?

Strengths / Weaknesses / Assets / Liabilities

- What particular strengths can an individual (*did you*) bring to the table with respect to his/her/*your* mobility?
- What particular weaknesses can an individual (*did you*) bring to the table with respect to his/her/*your* mobility?
- *What's particular about your own story? If you had to identify anything in your own abilities, liabilities, assets, etc that would account for where you are, what would it be?*
- If you had to identify anything in people's abilities, liabilities, assets, etc that would account for where or how far they go in the ranks, what would it be?

Can we talk about "The System", by which I mean the broad public service and the more systemic things at play? Is there anything to discuss here (List and probe as appropriate)

- Generally-speaking, how does the public service at large handle issues related to mobility?
- How/Where/With whom does the public service:
 - Do best?
 - Do worst?
 - Move people most quickly?
 - Move people least quickly?

I've heard people mention the term "systemic barriers".. What does this mean to you, and can you identify any? PROBE: Has this affected you? How? Other people in some consistent fashion? Who? How? (PROBE THOROUGHLY)

3. SPECIFIC OFFICIAL LANGUAGE PROBING

(This line of questioning should be handled not as a discreet 'section' of the interview process, but rather *in situ*, and as appropriate to the flow of the conversation)

In your own words, can you explain to me what the "Official Languages" policy is?

- What do you think about it?
 - Were you aware of the policy before you started working for government? (ie, how is it seen from the outside vs from the inside?)

- To what extent is it something you think about?
- How well do you feel you understand the policy? (how about the people around you? Above you?.,etc.)
 - is it too complicated to understand?
 - do you see it as an added value or an added burden?
- In your view, is such a policy necessary?
 - When is it necessary? Describe the circumstances.
 - Does it ever "get in the way?" Explain how.
- Can you tell me about how you feel about these things?
- *How has it affected you personally?*
- Does it affect any group more specifically/powerfully/differently than others? Which groups? Why? How? Do you all agree?

What does this policy mean in everyday working life?

- To you personally? To the people around you? To those who speak only the language of the majority around you?
- To those who speak the language of the minority around you?
- To employees whose mother tongue is something other than English or French?
- Who (in terms of people, organizations, entities, communities, etc.) does this policy affect? How?

What are the principles (find and use substitute terms as well for this, i.e: "moral imperatives, practical imperatives", etc.) behind the use of the official languages policy?

- Where and how do you subscribe/not subscribe to these?
- Where and how do your employer/superiors/colleagues/etc. subscribe or not subscribe to these?

Can someone tell me how they see what the role of the policy is vis-à-vis visible minority communities?

- How does it affect them? Does it affect all visible minority groups the same way? If not, why/how not?
- Does it ever disadvantage them? How?
- Does it ever advantage them? How?

How do you feel about the policy?:

- About using your / a second language?

Anything to say about language training?

- Are there opportunities to learn the second language at government expense?
- Are there opportunities to use the second language in the workplace after completing language training.?
- Is the public service a good place to get training in the second language? Why? Why not?
- Is the public service a good place to use your second language? Why? Why not?

3. SPECIFIC OL-EE PROBING

(This line of questioning should come at the apparent conclusion/exhaustion of the indirect line of questioning outlined above)

We've been discussion official languages and visible minorities more or less directly for a while now, and from many different angles. Let me put explicitly together now and let's talk specifically about how the two interact....

- Of all the things we've discussed, what, in your view, is the most important thing that comes to mind about the relationship between the official languages policy, visible minority, and mobility within the public service?
- *Personally, how has this interrelationship affected you? Has the official languages policy been a help or a hindrance to your advancement within the ranks? Do you feel your experience has been typical? Atypical?*
- Are there any myths about the relationship between the official languages policy, visible minority, and mobility within the public service? What would they be?
- Are there any hidden truths about the relationship between the official languages policy, visible minority, and mobility within the public service? What would they be?
- If you could change policies, or even just the way the policies are administered, what would you suggest?

THANK AND TERMINATE