



Information sheet:

Planning bilingual meetings and events

The primary goal of a meeting or conference is to bring people together to share information. Language requirements should be integrated into the planning process from the beginning to ensure that individuals may participate fully in the official language of their choice.

Commitment and responsibility

Your plan should ensure that all participants feel comfortable in the language of their choice.

- Confirm commitment by your organization's senior management that both official languages will be recognized as an important element of the event.
- Put in place a planning committee to assume the responsibility for ensuring that the language requirements are addressed for every aspect of the meeting or event.

Effective Planning

To create an effective plan, consider the following:

- Know your participants. Include a language preference question in your registration form.
- Identify the services that your organization will be required to provide to meet the language needs of participants. (for example: program content, reception, signage, documentation, advertising, media relations, contracts, food services and other onsite services)
- Endeavour to have both French and English presenters. Advise all presenters early in the process that they need to be prepared for a bilingual audience.
- Advise service providers and contractors that their services must be available in both languages.
- Budget early on for the provision of bilingual services.

Remember that there are other important considerations when planning an inclusive meeting or event. Organizers should address the needs of participants with disabilities and respect religious or cultural differences.

Creating a checklist

Prepare a meeting or event checklist to ensure no item is forgotten and that the plan is executed respecting specific deadlines. Refer to the **Additional resources** below to assist you in preparing your own checklist.

Additional resources

Welcome – Getting the most from both official languages at popular events of national or international significance, Treasury Board Canada

http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/tbs-sct/tb_manual-ef/Pubs_pol/hrpubs/TB_A3/WELCDOC_e.html

Guidelines on how to prepare, present and participate in a bilingual conference, University of Ottawa

www.uottawa.ca/services/tlss/stlhe2004/pages/guidelines.htm

Guide to planning inclusive meetings and conferences, Treasury Board Canada

www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/TB_852/gpimc-gprci_e.asp

Checklist for the organization of special events, Canadian Heritage

www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/cpsc-ccsp/pe/list_e.cfm